

**MANUFACTURING LANDSCAPE:
THE REPRESENTATION OF SUBURBS, BIRMINGHAM 1780-C.1850**

By
LIN CHANG

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY OF ART
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON
DECEMBER 2010

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores how suburbs during the British Industrialisation (1780-1850) were represented. 'Industrialisation' is well researched in many disciplines. In history of art, the landscape imageries produced during this period are usually categorised and approached as rural/natural landscape painting and (urban) topographic views. However, the categorisation could overlook the representation of the place in between: the suburb. This thesis therefore views the suburb in terms of the impact of industrialisation on the form and the extent of the city, and thus regards the suburb not only as a modern, middle-class and residential district we are familiar with today, but also as the developing edge not only of a built environment but also of a linked set of social and economic changes.

The main case study is Birmingham. Birmingham developed from a small provincial settlement into the manufacturing centre of the country between 1780 and 1850. How to perceive, recognise, and represent the suburb made as a result of this rapid urban growth and industrialisation posed a challenge for local artists. This thesis focuses on nearly a hundred topographic views they produced, and argue that these pictures represent the idea of suburb.

I will analyse the pictures in a semiotics way. Chapter one begins with the imagery of the town and explores the difficulty of representing the (industrial) suburb. Chapter two continues to investigate the representation of suburb through imageries of Nature. Chapter three focuses on the topographic view tradition of the town. Chapter four argues that the imagery of the suburb represents a modern life in it. Chapter five explores how the periphery of the town was developed for residential purposes and how this process might be represented in pictures.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank my supervisor, Tom Gretton, for his endless advice, interest, patience, support, and confidence in my doing this challenging research topic. I also thank Andrew Hemingway, my second supervisor, for guiding me with his brilliant insights and warm encouragement.

I also thank Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, especially Jo-ann Curtis, Victoria Osborne, and Tom Heaven, and Birmingham Central Library for providing access to, knowledge of, and permission to take photos of their collection to conduct this research. Jo-ann in particular provided me with the most direct assistance when I worked in the archive with her throughout the past four years. I should also thank all the Birmingham friends and scholars whose conversation with me over the city helped me shape a clearer idea of its environment, history, and art, including Barbara, Chris and his dad, and Richard Clay, Malcolm Dick, David Hemsoll, Shena Mason, and Connie Wan.

Back in London, I would like to thank my department and college for providing PhD students with such a resourceful, liberal, and supportive environment and academic network in Bloomsbury. I am also thankful to UCL Graduate School for being so generous in offering a hand to research students, from funding to training courses. I would also like to thank my English teachers who taught me how to polish my academic English, especially Claire who read through my chapters.

In addition, library is essential for this research and I am grateful for the resources provided by UCL libraries, Senate House Library, British Library, and Birmingham Central Library. I spent the final months of this degree writing in the University of Bath Library, and in the libraries at University of California, Santa Barbara thanks to the affiliation provided by Prof. Ann Bermingham.

Financially, I shall first thank National Science Council, Taiwan for providing a major fund through its Taiwan Merit Scholarship Program (TMS; ref. no NSC-095-SAF-I- 564-057-TMS). Before the TMS became available in 2008, I relied on the money from my family, Uncle Yi-Ren Wang, and Aunt Tina Mao; I am deeply grateful to them. I also received kind financial support from our departmental research studentship, William Blake Bursary, and the conference fund from the Taipei Representative Office in London.

This thankful list is not complete without mentioning my friends and family: I thank all my friends in Taiwan, UK, and many other places around the world for their hearty friendship and spiritual support that saw me through in the past four years. Mum, Dad, and sister unfailingly gave me their love and support; I am deeply grateful to them. Grandma, Grandpa, and Lily (my dog) did not live long enough to see me complete the degree, which is impossible without their love. My beloved Shih-chieh became my husband in the midst of this research and gave me his greatest love and support during and beyond this degree; I really thank him.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Abstract	
Acknowledgements	
Table of Content	(in this page)
	page number
List of Figures	a-f
Introduction	1-45
Chapter One	
The Iconography of the Suburb: a Struggle in Vision	46-77
Chapter Two	
The Suburb as a Specific Place: Aston, and its Visual Representation	78-108
Chapter Three	
Birmingham Topographic-view Tradition and Practice: the circle of the Barber and the Lines Families	109-145
Chapter Four	
Modern Life and the Suburb	146-188
Chapter Five	
Country House Views as Representation of the Suburb: the New Moneyed Class and the Old Landed Class	189-222
Conclusion	223-236
Figures	no page number
Bibliography	i-xi

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures for Introduction

Fig. 1-1 George Cruikshank, *London Going out of Town (The March of the Bricks and Mortar)*, 1829. Engraving. British Museum.

Fig. 1-2 Philip James de Loutherbourg, *Coalbrookdale by Night*, 1801. Oil on canvas, 68 x 106.5 cm. The Science Museum, London

Fig. 1-3 J. M. W. Turner, *Leeds*, 1816. Watercolour, pen and ink on paper, 29.2 x 43.2 cm. Yale Center for British Art

Fig. 1-4 J. M. W. Turner, *Dudley*, c.1832. Watercolour and bodycolour on paper, 28.8 x 43 cm. Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool

Fig. 1-5 J. M. W. Turner, *View of London from Greenwich*, 1825. Watercolour and gouache over graphite. 21.3 x 28 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Fig. 1-6 Maps and Plans of Birmingham

a. Samuel and Nathaniel Buck, *The South West Prospect of Birmingham* (detail), 1731. Pencil, pen, ink and grey wash on paper, 27 x 55 cm. BMAG

b. Samuel Bradford (surveyor), Thoms Jefferys (engraver), *Plan of Birmingham*, 1750. (This image scanned from P. Line, *Birmingham: a New History in Maps*, Stroud, 2009)

c. Thomas Hanson (surveyor), *Plan of Birmingham*, 1778. (This image scanned from P. Line, *Birmingham: a New History in Maps*, Stroud, 2009)

d. James Drake (publisher), *A New Map of Birmingham: Exhibiting its Present State and Progressive Increase*, 1825. Archive and Heritage Services, BCL

e. Robert K. Dawson (surveyor), *Birmingham from the Ordnance Survey*, 1831. (This image scanned from P. Line, *Birmingham: a New History in Maps*, Stroud, 2009)

f. *Panoramic View of Birmingham*, c.1848 (published by Ackermann & Co, London). Engraving. 41.9 x 70.4 cm. BMAG (1969P7)

Figures for Chapter One

Fig. 1-11 David Cox, *High Street, Birmingham*, 1825-27, Pencil on Paper. 20.5 x 27.7 cm. BMAG (1984P45)

Fig. 1-12 David Cox, *High Street Market, Birmingham*, 1826-27. Pen and ink and brown wash on paper. 17.8 x 23 cm. BMAG (1978P25)

Fig. 1-13 David Cox, *The High Street Market, Birmingham* (engraver: William Radclyffe), 1827. Steel Engraving (proof), image: 16.2 x 23.9 cm. BMAG (1911P203)

Fig. 1-14a, b, and c Details of Figs. 1-11, 1-12, and 1-13.

Fig. 1-15 Thomas Hollins (drawer), *A View of High Street, Birmingham, Copied from a Large Print published in 1812* (engraver unknown), year unknown [after July 1st 1812]. White Chalk on Engraving, approx. 18.3 x 23.5 cm. BMAG (1996V146.53)

Fig. 1-16 Thomas Hollins, *A View of High Street, Birmingham* (aquatint by J. C. Stadler), year unknown [after July 1st 1812]. Aquatint, approx. 14x 19 cm. BMAG (1988V1518)

Fig. 1-17 Author unknown (probably kinsman to Thomas Hollins), *High Street, Birmingham*, 1826.

Oil on panel. BMAG (1968P48)

Fig. 1-18

a. Author unknown, *Japanned Tray-View of the Bull Ring, Birmingham - View of High Street, Birmingham*, 1830-40, Japanned Iron. 56 x 80cm. BMAG (1942F83)

b. Author unknown, *Japanned Tray-View of the Bull Ring, Birmingham - View of High Street, Birmingham*, c.1815-35, Painted and Japanned Iron. 56 x 78cm. BMAG (1937F394)

Fig. 1-19 Graphic board installed on the railing of Nelson's statue. Photo by Lin Chang 05/07/2009.

Fig. 1-20 Seven prints collected in volume three, Wilkinson collection, BMAG

a. 1996V146.55 b. 1996V146.56 c. 1996V146.57 d. 1996V146.58

e. 1996V146.60 f. 1996V146.61 g. 1996V146.62

Fig. 1-21 J. M. W. Turner (printer and publisher: John Walker and John Storer), *Prospect of Birmingham*, 1795-11-02. Hand-coloured Engraving, 18.5 x 25 cm. BMAG

Fig. 1-22a. J. Lycett (printed and published by R. P. Stone) *West View of Birmingham*, 1826-11-01. Lithography, 15.3 x 30 cm. BMAG (1996V146.3)

b. J. Lycett (printed and published by R. P. Stone) *East View of Birmingham*, 1826-11-01. Lithography, 15.3 x 30 cm. BMAG (1996V146.2)

Fig. 1-23 Thomas Creswick, *Distant View of Birmingham*, 1828. 20.5 x 28.9 cm, Oil on panel, BMAG (1896P86)

Fig. 1-24 Thomas Radclyffe (printer, who revised the original picture by Thomas Creswick), *View of Birmingham from Bordesley Fields near the Coventry Road*, c. mid 19th Century. 11x 15 cm, BMAG (1996V146.12)

Fig. 1-25 S. T. Davis (engraver: T. A. Prior; publishers: W. Harvey and C. Knight), *Birmingham from the South*, mid-19th Century. Engraving. 17.9 x 27cm. BMAG

Fig. 1-26 Author unknown, *The Town of Birmingham*, mid- or later 19th Century. Newspaper illustration, 12.5 x 18.7 cm. BMAG (1996V146.11)

Fig. 1-27 John Constable, *Salisbury Cathedral on the Meadows*, 1826. Oil on canvas. 151.8 x 189.9 cm. Private collection.

Fig. 1-28 Henry Burn (printer: C. F. Cheffins; publisher: Thomas Simpson), *The View of Birmingham from Highgate Fields*, July 1845. Lithography, 36x 48.5cm, BMAG

Fig. 1-29 Henry Burn, *View of Leeds, from near Halifax New Road*, 1846.

Fig. 1-30 Author unknown, *General View of Birmingham*, 19th Century. 9.4 cm x 14.6 cm. BMAG (1996V146.15)

Fig. 1-31 *Bird's Eye View of Birmingham in 1886*.

Figures for Chapter Two

Fig. 2-1 Samuel and Nathaniel Buck, *Aston Hall*, early 18th Century. Engraving, 64.5x 82.5 cm, split and pasted over two pages on the volume of *Warwickshire Drawings*, Aylesford Collection, Archive and Heritage Services, BCL.

Fig. 2-2 Samuel Lines, *Aston Hall and Park*, 1799. Watercolour, 21x 31 cm. BMAG

Fig. 2-3 Joseph Vincent Barber, *View of Aston Hall from the Staffordshire Pool*, date unknown.

- Watercolour, 24.6 x 35.1 cm. BMAG (1946P41)
- Fig. 2-4 Joseph Vincent Barber (engraver: William Radclyffe), *Deer in Aston Park (Aston Hall: Twilight)*, 1829 (published as plate no. 25, *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire*, 1862).
- Fig. 2-5 Joseph Vincent Barber (engraver: William Radclyffe?), untitled, 1829 (published as a vignette on p. 61, *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire*, 1862).
- Fig. 2-6 David Cox (drawer and printer), *Aston Hall near Birmingham*, 1814 (published as an illustration of D Cox's *Treatise*. Etching, (approx.) 21 x 30 cm)
- Fig. 2-7 The Barber family (probably), *Part of Beauford Forge, 27-Aug-1808*. Pencil on Paper, 24 x 18.8 cm. BMAG (1969P33)
- Fig. 2-8 David Cox (engraver: William Radclyffe), *Aston Hall*, after 1837, Engraving. 11 x 15.9 cm. BMAG (1996V145.89)
- Fig. 2-9 Joseph Wright of Derby, *Sir Brooke Boothby (detail)*, 1781. Oil on Canvas, 148.6 x 207.6 cm. Tate Britain
- Fig. 2-10 Joseph Vincent Barber (engraver: William Radclyffe), *Aston Hall from the Avenue*, 1828 (published as plate no. 26, *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire*, 1862). Engraving, 11x 19 cm. Private Collection
- Fig. 2-11 George Stubbs, *Haymakers*, 1785. Oil on panel, 89.5 x 135.3 cm. Tate Britain
- Fig. 2-12 George Stubbs, *Reapers*, 1785. Oil on panel, 89.9 x 136.8cm. Tate Britain
- Fig. 2-13 Joseph Vincent Barber (engraver: W. Radclyffe), *Aston Village*, 1829 (plate no. 24, *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire*, 1862). Coloured engraving. Private collection.
- Fig. 2-14 David Cox (engraver: W Radclyffe), *The Aston Viaduct*, after 1837. Engraving, 10.9 x 15.1 cm. BMAG (1966V145.106)
- Fig. 2-15 Author unknown, *The Railway Viaduct, Birmingham*, year unknown [after David Cox's drawing]. Newspaper illustration, 7.8 x 14.9 cm. BMAG (1966V145.105)
- Fig. 2-16 David Cox, *A Train on a Viaduct*, year unknown. Pastel and Watercolour on Paper, 8.3 x 11.3 cm, Tate Britain
- Fig. 2-17 David Cox, *A Mountain View*, North Wales, c.1818-20. Watercolour over Graphite on wove Paper, 20 x 29.2 cm. Yale Center for British Art.
- Fig. 2-18 David Cox, *Moonlight Landscape*, the 1840s. Watercolour over Black Chalk on Rough Grey-brown Wove Paper (heavyweight blue ream paper discoloured), 27 x 44.1 cm. Yale Center for British Art.
- Fig. 2-19 David Cox, *Crossing Moors*, 1858. Watercolour and Black Chalk on Wove Paper, 19.3 x 25 cm. Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design.
- Fig. 2- 20 David Cox, *Sun, Wind and Rain*, 1845. Watercolour over Traces of Graphite and Black Chalk with Scratching out on Wove Paper, 46.4 x 60.5 cm. BAMG (1925P2690).
- Fig. 2-21 J. M. W. Turner, *Rain, Steam and Speed-the Great Western Railway*, 1844. Oil on Canvas, 91 x 121.8 cm, National Gallery.
- Fig.2-22 David Cox, *the Night Train*, c.1849. Watercolour over Traces of Black Chalk with Scratching out on Wove Paper, 28.4 x 38 cm. BMAG (1925P67).
- Fig. 2-23 David Cox, *the Night Train*, 1849. Watercolour on Wove Paper, 53.4 x 75.6 cm. Leeds City

Art Gallery.

- Fig. 2-24 Author unknown, *The Queen's Visit to Warwickshire.-Aston Hall*, c.1858. Coloured print. 24.2 x 34 cm. BMAG (1966V145.86)
- Fig. 2-25 Author unknown. *The Queen's Visit to Birmingham*, c.1858.
- Fig. 2-26 *Birmingham News*, June 15 1858, BMAG
- Fig.2-27 H Warren (printer: A .Willmore; publisher: William Mackenzie, London & Edinburgh & Glasgow), *Aston Hall*, mid- or late 19th century. Engraving, Private Collection
- Fig. 2-28 Author unknown, *Aston Hall*, mid- or late 19th century. 8.3 x 12 cm, BMAG (1966V145.90)
- Fig. 2-29 Original drawing by Allen E. Everitt. *Sir Thomas Holt Baronet, (from a portrait in the possession of Mrs. Robins, of Allesley Hall) Founder of Aston Hall*, first published 1854. Engraving. 23.4 x 15 cm. (BMAG 1996V145.87)
- Fig. 2-30 Author unknown, *Aston Hall*, mid- or late 19th century. 7.5 x 11 cm BMAG (1966V145.92)
- Fig. 2-31 Author unknown (probably based on Joseph Barber's drawing) (engraver: R. Thomas; publisher W. Emans), *Aston Hall*, May 30th 1829. Engraving, 10.7 x 14.7 cm. BMAG (1966V145.91)
- Fig. 2-32 Author unknown, *Aston Hall*, late 19th century. Newspaper illustration, 13.4 x 15 cm. BMAG (1966V145.88)
- Fig. 2-33 Author unknown (Publisher: Rock &Co, London), *Aston Hall, Birmingham*, 1 Jan 1874. Engraving, 10 x 12.5 cm. BMAG (1966V145.93)

Figures for Chapter Three

- Figs. 3-1through 3-7 Attributed to Joseph Barber, untitled watercolour sketch series, c. late eighteenth century. Watercolour on paper, approx. 25 x 36 cm each. BCL.
- Fig. 3-8 Joseph Barber, *Pont Llan, Beddgelert Bridge*, 1799. Pen and ink with ink wash on paper, 20.3 x 28 cm. BMAG (1926P605)
- Fig. 3-9 Joseph Vincent Barber (Engraver: William Radclyffe), *Leamington Priors and Warwick from Newbold Hill*, 1829 (plate no. 31, *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire*, 1862)
- Fig. 3-10 P. Derwait, *Birmingham* (Engraver: William Radclyffe),1829 (plate no. 21, *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire*, 1862)
- Fig. 3-11 Charles Barber (engraver: W. Radclyffe) , *S. E. of Birmingham*, 1813. Engraving, approx. 21 x 29 cm. BCL.
- Fig. 3-12 Peter Rubens, *An Autumn Landscape with a View of Het Steen in the Early Morning*. c. 1636. Oil on oak, 131.2 x 229.2 cm. National Gallery, London
- Fig. 3-13 Peter Rubens, *Landscape with a Rainbow*. c. 1636. Oil on oak, 135.5 x 233.5 cm. Wallace, London
- Fig. 3-14 Albert Cuyp, *View on a Plain*, c 1644. Oil on oak, 48 x 72.2 cm. Dulwich Picture Gallery, London
- Fig. 3-15 attributed to Charles Barber, *S. E. of Birmingham*. Ink on paper (aquatint?), 17.5 x 22 cm. BMAG (1940V900)

Fig. 3-16 *East View of Birmingham*, 1779.

Fig. 3-17 Samuel Lines, *View from no.3 Temple Row West, Birmingham*, 1821. Pencil on Paper, 33.7 x 49.7 cm. BMAG (1893V31).

Fig. 3-18 Samuel Lines, *Birmingham from the Dome of St Philip's Church*, 1821. Oil on Canvas, size. BMAG (1893V72)

Fig. 3-19 Samuel Lines, *The Old Wagon Office Temple Row West*, 1820. Pencil on paper, 17.4x24.7 cm. BMAG (1893V 64)

Fig. 3-20 Lines, *Christ Church from No 3 Temple Row Roof*, (undated). Pencil on paper, 33.8x 22 cm BMAG (1951V85)

Fig. 3-21 Frederick Thomas Lines, *Site of Athenaeum Upper East of Temple Street*, 1824. Pencil on paper, 18.5x27 cm BMAG (1893V65)

Fig. 3-22 Samuel Lines, *Site of the Athenaeum from Temple Row* (Signed at back: "Temple Row"), June 1827. Pencil on paper, 29.5x 38.4 cm (BMAG 1893V38)

Fig.3-23 Henry Harris Lines, *Birmingham from Camp Hill*, 1835-10-01. Watercolour. 22.8 x 29 cm. BMAG (1897V16)

Fig. 3-24 Henry Harris Lines, *A Friend Who Has Seen Better Days in Arden*. 1825. Pencil on paper, 44.8 x 42.7 cm. BMAG (1951P65)

Fig. 3-25 Frederick Henry Henshaw, *Yardley*, 1841. Oil on Canvas, approx. 75 x 90 cm (estimation). BMAG (1929P201)

Figures for Chapter Four

Fig. 4-1 William Williams, *Monument Lane, Edgbaston.*, c. 1780. Oil on canvas, 107 x 137 cm. BMAG (1952P23)

Fig. 4-2 "Ward & Kate's" [?](See the bottom left corner of the image), Cover of *Edgbastonia: a Monthly Local Magazine*, 1881-93. Possibly woodcut or engraving. Image scanned from the bound copy of the magazine held in British Library.

Fig. 4-3 Claué Monet, *View of Argenteuil, Snow*, 1875. Oil on canvas, 55 x 68 cm. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas city.

Figs. 4-4a and b Samuel Rostill Lines, *Aston Furnace*, 1830. Pencil on Paper, BMAG (1993P69)

Fig. 4-5a, b, and c John Linnell, *Three Studies of Kensington Brick Kiln*, 1812. Ink on paper, approx. 10.3 x 14.4 cm each. Private collection.

Fig. 4-6 Claude Monet, *The Railway Bridge, Argenteuil*, 1873. Oil on canvas, 60 x 99 cm, Niarchos Collection, London

Fig. 4-7 Samuel Lines, *Old Birmingham Taken Down for New Street Station*, 1849. Pencil on paper, 32.5 x 47.5 cm. BMAG (1893V56)

Fig. 4-8 Today's Curzon Street Station is forsaken. This photo shows its side (to our left) and back (to our right). Photo by Lin Chang July 2009

Fig. 4-9 John C. Bourne, *Building the Stationary Engine House, Camden Town*. 1837-4-26.

Fig. 4-10 George Scharf, *The Birmingham Railway in Progress...on the Hampstead Road*,

- May 1836. Pencil drawing, 27.4 x 43.5 cm. British Museum.
- Fig. 4-11 Attributed to Henry Harris Lines, *Floodgate, Perry Mill*, April 29th/30th, 1830. Pencil on paper, 26 x 21 cm. RBSA(2007X.487).
- Fig. 4-12 the Lines family, *Perry Barr*, November-19-1830. Pencil on Paper, BMAG
- Fig. 4-13 Claude Monet, *Sunday at Argenteuil*, 1872. Oil on Canvas, 60x 80.5 cm. Louvre Museum
- Fig. 4-14 Henry Harris Lines, *Birmingham and the Old Asylum from the Lozells*, 1826-07-28. Pencil on paper, 30.4 x 48.8 cm. BMAG
- Fig.4-15 Claude Monet, *The Flower Bank, Argenteui*,1877.Oil on canvas, 54 x 65 cm. Maryland.
- Fig. 4-16 Ford Madox Brown, *An English Autumn Afternoon (English Autumn Afternoon, Hampstead- Scenery in 1853)*, 1852-54. Oil on canvas, 71.8 x 134.6 cm (oval). BMAG

Figures for Chapter Five

- Fig. 5-1 *Approximate Locations of the Houses Discussed in Chapter Five*
- Fig. 5-2a-i Phillip Henry Witton Junior (engraver: William Ellis) *Views of the Ruins of the Principal Houses Destroyed during the Riots at Birmingham*, 1791. (a. cover; b. plate one, with image and text; c. plate two; d. plate three; e. plate four; f. plate five; g. plate six; h. plate seven; i. plate eight)
- Fig.5-3 Johann Eckstein, [Exact title unknown], c. 1791. [Media and dimension unknown.] Susan Lowndes Marques Collection, Portugal
- Fig. 5-4 Humphrey Repton, *View towards Birmingham*, 1792. Watercolour on Paper, size. Frances Loeb Library, Harvard University.
- Fig. 5-5 Thomas Bardwell, *Perry Barr Hall*, c. late 1720. Oil on Canvas, 92.7 x 133.3 cm. BMAG
- Figs. 5-6a-h Charles Radclyffe, eight plates of *Views of Perry Barr Hall, the Seat of John Gough, Esq.* 1838. Engraving, approx. 29 x 21 cm. BMAG
- Fig. 5-7 *Today's Perry Barr Hall*
- Fig. 5-8 *The East Prospect of Edgbaston Hall in Warwickshire, Seat of Sir Henry Gough Baronet, 1730.* Aylesford Collection, Archive and Heritage Services, BCL
- Fig. 5-9 Author Unknown, *Edgbaston Hall*, 1810. Aylesford Collection, Archive and Heritage Services, BCL
- Fig. 5-10 T Radley (drawer and engraver) (publisher: W. Emans), *Edgbaston Hall, the Residence of Dr Ed. Johnstone*, Oct 10th 1829. Private collection.

Figures for Conclusion

- Fig. 5-11 Percival Skelton (drawer), *Old View of Birmingham*, Originally published in Samuel Smiles' *Lives of Boulton and Watt*, 1865, as its first image on the back of its cover)
- Fig. 5-12 British School, *Birmingham by Moonlight*, 1800-1850. Oil on board, BMAG (1984V2000)

Introduction

When it comes to the 'suburb', what images spring to mind? Detached houses with their own gardens? Residential blocks in a grid pattern? A middle-class life style? Edges of a city with factories, warehouses, and bus garages? Dilapidated mortar walls covered with graffiti and weeds? The final stops of a metro line? Purpose-built industrial parks? These many mental images illustrate how highly diversified the idea of suburb is.¹ Indeed, while most people of our time agree the suburb to be a residential area forming part of a metropolis, town planning scholars emphasise that the suburb also refers to urban fringes which were used as a site of industry, particularly toward the end of the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century as a town developed industries on its periphery and therefore encroached upon its immediate countryside.² Based on this, my thesis explores how industrial development immediately outside a town powered the conception of the idea of suburb and how the suburb as urban fringes with industrial usage might be represented in pictures.

In this introduction I will begin with the cultural context in which the countryside and the city changed their meanings and the suburb began to emerge. After this, I will provide historical accounts for the period of 1780-c.1850. Then, I will discuss why Birmingham is a particularly interesting example. After defining the topic (the type of space, the period of time, and the town), I will focus on the question about visual representation. First, I will introduce how Birmingham as a rising industrial town had a need to be represented and seen by the nation. I shall also briefly

¹ Harold James Dyos, *Victorian Suburb: a Study of the Growth of Camberwell* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1973), see the foreword by Sir John Summerson.

² Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopia: the Rise and the Fall of Suburbia* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), pp. 6-7. F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester University Press, 1982), p. 6.

discuss the visual representations of other industrial cities and sites to compare and contrast. I will then introduce the aesthetic of the Picturesque to explore how it stimulated as well as retarded the visual representation of the suburb. In addition to reflecting the old aesthetic, the representation of the suburb might also signify a new genre and a modern life. Therefore, I will further complicate my research question by discussing the representation of the suburb in relation to the representation of modern life. After this, I will introduce how art and culture developed in Birmingham, and how local artists began to produce visual products for their fast-changing environment. I will point out how the suburb in this process was overlooked, noticed, or represented. Finally, I will account for my research methodology, including how I narrow down to this research topic using literature from various disciplines, a possible theory to interpret the iconography of the suburb, my archive, primary sources, and how each chapter is constructed.

Defining the Topic

The city, the countryside, and the suburb

The city and the countryside are not just two distinctive forms of environments. They are two cultural categories which influence each other and undergo series of changes in their meaning.³ As argued by Raymond Williams, the English literary representation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries shows the countryside as the economic and cultural centre of men's life.⁴ Toward the eighteenth century, however, enclosures of commons and other changes like commercial development redefined the relationship between men and the countryside.⁵ Until the nineteenth century,

³ Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Hogarth, 1985)

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-45.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-107.

moreover, as England became more and more industrialised, people moved to towns to make a living and the countryside was longer the place for business.⁶

Cities, similarly, continue to change its meaning. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, English cities were seen as a place for trading and legislation; in the eighteenth century the cities were further associated with prosperity and elegance.⁷ In the meantime, as cities began to grow and accommodate more people, some problems with traffic and hygiene had been noticed.⁸ Toward the end of the century, moreover, faced with wars, political turbulences and economic changes, some people started to idealise their past through memories of a lovely, peaceful and countryside life.⁹ In Victorian times, moreover, large cities had worsening problems with disease, poverty, crime and moral collapse, and therefore came to be understood as unpleasant places to live in.¹⁰ A vivid description of the urban plights can be seen in Charles Dickens' (1812-1870) *Oliver Twist* (1838).¹¹ To summarise based on the above findings, the city grew rapidly since the late eighteenth century as the nation started to industrialise, and this urban growth had dramatically changed the relationship between the countryside and the city and their respective meanings.

Yet, exactly how did the city grow and encroach upon the countryside? How did the encroachment look like? How was the encroached-upon space, or the space in between the countryside and the city, understood? How was this peripheral, suburban space utilised, developed, industrialised and urbanised? How did the industrial development outside a city bring new meanings to its urban fringes? Could such a place be understood as a third category beyond the countryside and the city?

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 181-96.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

⁸ Joyce M. Ellis, *The Georgian Town 1680-1840* (New York: Palgrave, 2001) p. 87-97.

⁹ Malcolm I. Thomis, *Responses to Industrialisation: the British Experience 1780-1850* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1976) p. 121.

¹⁰ Dorothy and Alan Shelston, *The Industrial City 1820-1870* (London: Macmillan, 1990) pp. 112-3.

¹¹ Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (London: Penguin Books, 2002)

In the medieval and early modern times, urban fringes had already been used as a place to live or work.¹² In those times, these areas could have been a relatively more stable place without much development, but toward the mid-eighteenth century, just as cities began to expand, their urban fringes also became much more developed and exploited.¹³ As a result, urban fringes were no longer a static boundary with limited human activities, but a dynamic place of confrontation, development, and ambiguity. Thus, I regard urban fringes as an important form of the suburb not only because they physically have a 'suburban' location, but also because they underwent industrialisation and urbanisation and could help formulate the idea of the suburb.

George Cruikshank's (1792-1878) *London Going out of Town* illustrates the above situation (Fig. 1-1). The print was produced in 1829 amid a contemporary controversy over the preservation of the area around Hampstead Heath, a London suburb since the eighteenth century.¹⁴ In the picture, bricks and mortar which stand for industrial development and urbanisation encroach upon Hampstead. Haystacks and cattle, which represent country life, are running away hopelessly, trying to escape from being dismembered, like the tree trunk in the foreground. Before evacuating, the haystacks did try to fight, using, alas, their traditional forks too unsophisticated to defeat the weapons produced by modern industries. The background to the right, consolingly, has a sky that is not smoked and some trees that are still alive. Unfortunately, as this final unsullied land is located on the diagonal route of the army who march from the bottom-left corner, its fate is obviously fragile. This caricature is indeed a poignant visualisation of a battle between the countryside and the city, but the exact battlefield, even if Cruikshank does not show it, is a suburb.

Why did Cruikshank represent the confrontation and the struggle without

¹² Fishman, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-9.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-15.

¹⁴ John Summerson, *Georgian London* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1970) pp. 269-72.

representing the suburb? Was it because the idea of suburb was overlooked and underrepresented by its neighbours, the countryside and the city? Why was it difficult for the artist and his contemporaries to understand this particular type of space in between? If this particular type of space was sensed, was there a ready concept, whether as a word or an image, for the contemporaries to communicate the idea? Even if the word 'suburb' had been available at the time, would it be the right concept to signify this place? What would be an appropriate and socially agreeable form to perceive, recognise, communicate, and represent the suburb as developing urban fringes? Based on these difficult and complex circumstances, to represent the suburb, I think, not only means to represent a struggle, but is a struggle itself.

Aiming to explore this struggle and difficulty, my thesis views the suburb in terms of the impact of industrialisation on the form and the extent of the city, and thus regards the suburb as the developing edges not only of a built environment but also of a linked set of social and economic changes. I shall investigate how the suburb might be represented as a third and independent category instead of an appendage of the city or the countryside. In addition to the above definition, the following definitions of the suburb will also be adopted in the thesis:

1. A Residential district forming part of a metropolis. This is the most common definition of the suburb. In chapter four I shall focus on a residential suburb of Birmingham, Edgbaston, which was developed since the late eighteenth century.
2. The fringe, the edge and the periphery, usually within few miles or walkable distance, of a town or a city. These edges may be a rural environment with unspoiled Nature; they could also be used in an agricultural, industrial, recreational, or residential way.¹⁵ The suburb discussed in chapters one, three and five is this type.

¹⁵ Christopher Rex Bryant, L. H. Russwurm and A. G. McLellan, *The City's Countryside: Land and its Management in the Rural-urban Fringe* (London and New York: Longman, 1982).

3. The settlements, including manors, villages, hamlets, or parishes that had existed as an independent or a self-contained unit before being absorbed by the expanding town or city. The suburb discussed in chapters two and five belongs to this type.

4. A 'satellite' town that exists next to a large metropolis. Such towns had usually existed for a long time before being related to the neighbouring metropolis as a result of its growth. An example is Argenteuil, eight miles to the north-west of Paris, to be discussed in chapter four.

The distance between the town and the metropolis is usually many miles, so transportation is needed, such as railways or automobiles. The residents of the town are usually white-collar workers making a living in the metropolis who wish to maintain the quality of their life by separating their work from their family life. This pattern of the suburb as a satellite, residential district is pretty much the modern, middle-class suburb, or suburbia, we are familiar with, which developed since the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁶

In our time, the suburb still has its highly diversified forms, such as a new and purpose-built town with all amenities from shops to hospitals¹⁷, or a high-technology settlement where people not only live, but also work in the high-tech companies grouped in the settlement, such as the Silicon Valley in California, USA or the Science and Industrial Park near Hsin-chu City in Northern Taiwan.¹⁸ These new faces of the suburb continue to challenge our idea of a built environment, reshape the landscape of between the countryside and the city, and urge their own definition and visual representation.

¹⁶ Fishman, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-38.

¹⁷ Fishman, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-17.

¹⁸ Shenglin Chang, *The Global Silicon Valley Home: Lives and Landscapes within Taiwanese American Trans-Pacific Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006)

The period between 1780-c.1850

The research period is set between 1780 and 1850 because the decades are “the classic period of Industrial Revolution.”¹⁹ Since I shall discuss the suburb made as a result of industrialisation, I should explore its visual representation within the most relevant period. Yet instead of using ‘Industrial Revolution’ to denote the seven decades, I will use ‘Industrialisation’ (with a capital I) or ‘industrialisation’ (without the capital I) more often. I have decided this because academic studies before the 1980s use the term ‘Industrial Revolution’ to describe the power and influence those industrial developments had brought to British society.²⁰ Such terminology was like a British equivalent to the French Revolution, for both of them caused great changes to their respective societies and the world, too. Those publications also less frequently use ‘Industrialisation’ (with the capital ‘I’).²¹ Around the 1990s, except for some occasions in which the impression of ‘revolution’ needs to be emphasised²², most literature turned to ‘Industrialisation’ (with the capital ‘I’) to specify what Britain had experienced during that time. This usage embraces discussion of social and cultural dimensions more than just mechanical progress. In addition to this proper noun, I will also use ‘industrialisation’ (without the capital ‘I’) more often to mean a general process that a place goes through when its local industries begin to develop and influence its society. This applied and extended meaning provides the phenomenon of industrialisation with more room to be examined in a trans-cultural and trans-historical perspective.

Meanwhile, towards the 1850s, passenger railways became widely available. In 1838 in Britain, there were only 5.4 million passengers travelling on the railway; by

¹⁹ Thomis, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

²⁰ See Thomis, *op. cit.*. See also Eric Hopkins, *The Rise of the Manufacturing Town: Birmingham and the Industrial Revolution* (1989; Stroud: Sutton, 1998).

²¹ Alasdair Clayre (ed.), *Nature and Industrialization* (Oxford: Open University Press, 1977).

²² As in Stan Yorke, *The Industrial Revolution Explained* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 2005).

1850, the number had increased to 67.4 millions.²³ As more people travelled by railway and could travel further, their vision of the landscape and topography were expanded. British landscape painting could, therefore, enter into another phase and this is part of the reason why I end the research period in 1850.

In addition, the seven decades were an important period in which English middle class rose and became influential. For example, Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall argue that provincial merchants not only made a fortune in doing business in the town, but also moved out of the town to settle in the suburban area to begin their new life and build their ideal homeland.²⁴ As my thesis concerns itself with how the suburb was understood and represented, this type of suburban development is an important aspect to consider. Moreover, as I view the suburb to be a cultural category rather than just a location, how the suburb relates to the rise of the middle class, provides accommodation for them and interact with their new ways of life should be taken into account. My chapter four will concentrate on this.

Art-historically, these seven decades saw British landscape painting, having previously followed the masters from the European Continent, shape its own tradition and become a national genre.²⁵ In addition to natural landscape painting, topographic views that provide minute records of a place were also popular at the time. They were produced not only for military purposes²⁶ or for serving the need of the landed class as a visual record of their possessions²⁷, but also to satisfy the growing interest in

²³ Brian R. Mitchell, *European Historical Statistics 1750-1975* (London: Macmillan, 1980) p. 630.

²⁴ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987; Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991) pp. 13-69, pp. 357-96.

²⁵ Luke Herrmann, *British Landscape Painting of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), p. 7. See also his *Nineteenth Century British Painting* (London: Giles de la Mare, 2000).

²⁶ Ann Bermingham, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000). John Bonehill and Stephen Daniels (eds.), *Paul Sandby: Picturing Britain* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2009)

²⁷ John Harris, *The Artist and the Country House: a History of Country House and Garden View Painting in Britain, 1540-1870* (London and New York: Sotheby's, 1979; 1985) and Nicolas Grindle, "The Wise Surveyor": *Surveying and Representation in British House and Estate Portraiture*,

domestic tourism and in the past (known as Antiquity)²⁸, and to fulfil the aesthetic ideal of the Picturesque (The Picturesque will be discussed later in this Introduction.) Moreover, with the increasing development of the market for prints in the second half of the eighteenth century, aquatinted and other topographical views began to be published and bought more frequently. This trend was supported by prints published in newspapers, especially after the development of wood engraved illustrated newspapers in the 1830s.²⁹ Since the particular space of suburb is itself a topographic and landscape feature, I have to take the history of landscape painting and topographic views into account and hypothesise that the suburb had struggled for its own visual representation between these two genres. (An explicit art historic literature review on the two genres is given later.)

However, there are some exceptions when I go beyond the year of 1850 and that is why I use 'c.1850' rather than just '1850'. In chapter one, in order to compare how factories and chimneys became more frequently drawn and painted in pictures, I mention several anonymous prints which might have been produced after the mid-nineteenth century, although their original drawings were very likely to be based on pictures which had already been in circulation in the first half of the nineteenth century. In chapter two on Aston Hall and Park, in order to show what the venue looked like after it was turned into a public park in 1858, some prints made after the year are discussed. In chapter four, I discuss a local magazine published between 1881 and 1893. Also in chapter four, in order to find out how the suburb related to modern life and how this relation was represented in pictures, I begin with French Impressionist painting of modern life made after 1860.

c. 1675-1715 (University College London Thesis, 2002).

²⁸ Esther Moir, *The Discovery of Britain: the English Tourists* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964)

²⁹ Timothy Clayton, *The English Print, 1688-1802* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997)

Birmingham

After justifying the type of space and the period of time, I will explain my interest in this particular city. In the early eighteenth century, Birmingham was just a small town in Warwickshire. The town started to develop in manufacturing since the middle of the century, and in 1777 it was described as “Europe’s workshop” by Edmund Burke (1729-97), a political theorist and philosopher, in the House of Commons.³⁰ William Hutton (1723-1815), Birmingham’s first historian, proudly said “the buttons, buckles, swords, and guns, of Birmingham, are in greater repute than those of any other place in the world.”³¹ The metal products were called “toys” at the time.³² In the early nineteenth century, Birmingham began to have its representatives in Parliament.³³ In 1889, the town upgrade into a city. Today, Birmingham is the country’s second largest city. Compared with other English cities, like Bristol or Manchester, which also developed industrially during the nineteenth century, the urban growth of Birmingham was faster and unprecedented. As my thesis concerns itself with the visual representation of the suburb as industrial urbanisation, how the environs of Birmingham under its intense industrialisation and rapid urbanisation are represented in pictures makes an interesting topic to explore.

In terms of population: in 1700, Birmingham only had 8 to 9 thousand people and was not even the top ten largest city of England; in 1750, the town had 24,000 residents and became the fifth largest town of the country; by 1801 the population had almost tripled to 74,000, making the town the fourth largest town in England; in 1841,

³⁰ Victor Skipp, *A History of Greater Birmingham: Down to 1830* (Birmingham: Victor Skipp, 1980) p. 51. See also William Hutton, *A Brief History of Birmingham: Intended as a Guide to Inhabitant and Stranger* (3rd edition) (Birmingham and London, 1805), the title page.

³¹ Hutton, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

³² Skipp, *op. cit.*, *A History of Greater Birmingham*, pp. 50-4.

³³ Gordon Cherry, *Birmingham: A Study in Geography, History and Planning* (Chichester: John Wiley & sons, 1994), pp. 33-59.

the town remained the fourth largest English town with its population reaching 183,000.³⁴ A large amount of this growing population was related to manufacturing. For example, professional artisans from all over the nation migrated to the town to make a living; they became the major force supporting the economical development of the town.³⁵ Some offspring of the artisans developed a career in fine art, and became the town's first group of artists, such as the Barber and the Lines families to be discussed in chapter three. Besides, the town also attracted entrepreneurs, industrialists, merchants, and traders to set up their business in manufacturing. They organised, invested, improved, and expanded their business and therefore contributed to the economy of the town.³⁶ A famous example was James Watt (1736–1819), whose improvement of the steam engine in 1776 is regarded as the power of the Industrial Revolution.³⁷ He moved from Scotland to the town to run a modern manufactory with Matthew Boulton. Boulton's manufactory was significant because it swept away the derided name of 'Brummagen' meaning cheap, low-quality goods, by providing high-quality, fine metal products.³⁸ Overall, in a broad sense, those related to manufacturing (workers, workshop owners, business partners, etc) were the new and influential residents of Birmingham between the late eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth century.

To accommodate so many people, more space was needed. This can be seen in maps.³⁹ In the prospect of 1731 (Fig. 1-6a), the town looks a like large village without evident industrial or extractive activity. In Bradford's plan of 1750 (Fig. 1-6b), we see

³⁴ Rosemary Sweet, *The English Town 1680-1840* (London: Longman 1999), p. 3.

³⁵ Cherry, *op. cit.* pp. 66-73.

³⁶ Skipp, *op. cit.*, *A History of Greater Birmingham*, pp. 54-5.

³⁷ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (ODNB), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/> last accessed 10/04/2010.

³⁸ Cheery, *op. cit.* p. 225.

³⁹ Paul Line. *Birmingham: a New History in Maps* (Stroud: The History Press, 2009). The three plans made in 1750, 1778, and 1831 I discuss here are base on his formulation in chapters 4, 5, and 7; see pp. 30-64.

a clear distinction between red town houses and green fields. In Hamson's plan of 1778 (Fig. 1-6c), moreover, red town houses increase and encroach upon the green fields, forming many rectangles with green fields inside and red town houses outside all over the periphery of the town, especially in the north-west corner. I regard this encroachment as an initial form of suburban development. In a borough map made in 1831 (Fig. 1-6e; the red line stands for the boundary of the borough), we see not only the town centre, but also the neighbouring parishes (marked in brown lines), including, counter-clockwise from the top, Duddeston, Deritend, Bordesley, and Edgbaston. This suggests that the idea of a Greater Birmingham began to form.⁴⁰

Indeed, the settlements and places on the urban fringes had a complex relationship with the town. Some were villages of neighbouring counties, like Handsworth and Perry Barr in Staffordshire. Others were manors like Aston. Still others were simply places or outskirts on the periphery of the town, like Lozells. The challenge then becomes how to understand the role of these places in relation to the expanding town, and to communicate, conceptualise, describe and represent them in images or words.

Now we know how fast Birmingham grew and encroached upon the countryside, exactly how was the space used? In the town centre, more and more civic constructions were added to serve local residents' needs, including water pumps, lamps, pavements, the Town Hall, a new theatre, etc. Around the developing edges of the town were its economic power houses: manufactories. Unlike Leeds or Manchester with large-scale wool or cotton industries, the factories in Birmingham did not rely on large machines and were smaller in size (like a workshop, but Boulton and Watt's manufactory is an exception). Unlike the Black Country where heavy industries were developed deep in the countryside, the Birmingham manufactories

⁴⁰ Skipp, *op. cit.*, *A History of Greater Birmingham*, p. 7.

had to be close to the town centre to benefit from its immediate market, labour, and commercial links.⁴¹ As a result, the periphery of Birmingham, as seen in the top-right, top-left, and bottom-right corners in the 1848 panorama (Fig. 1-6f), are covered with hundreds of manufactories and their chimneys, presenting a complete different view from that of an independent and large industrial site near the Black Country, as portrayed in de Louthembourg's *Coalbrookdale by Night* (Fig. 1-2). In addition, as the town centre of Birmingham is a plateau and canals had to be built around, not across it, so those manufactories which relied on the canals to import raw material and to export finished products, had to be scattered on the periphery of the town. Chapter one will discuss the visual representation of both the town centre and its industrially developed edges.

Further beyond the industrialised urban fringes was the town's immediate countryside. Although it maintained a rural way of life and could provide artists with a pastoral scene to represent, as will be discussed in chapter three, it could not avoid urbanisation and industrialisation. For example, it was built with railways and developed for recreation purposes, like Aston Hall and Park (chapter two), or was built for residential purposes, like Edgbaston (chapter four). Besides, although there were country houses in the immediate countryside, they gradually became 'suburban' houses because of the encroachment of the town (chapter five). Additionally, I should point out, a residential suburb like Edgbaston was at first designed for the upper middle class only. Suburban housing for the lower middle class and the urban poor did not begin in Birmingham until the 1870s.⁴²

Overall, the unusual industrialisation and urbanisation of Birmingham complicate the development of its suburbs. This unprecedented spatial experience of

⁴¹ Cherry, *op. cit.* pp. 34-42.

⁴² Cherry *op. cit.*, pp. 66-73.

the suburb could therefore challenge local artists upon what could be represented visually.

The Problem about Visual Representation: an Art Historical Context

Representing a rising industrial city

In 1973 E. D. H. Johnson argued in his article 'Victorian Artists and the Urban Milieu' that Victorian genre painting does not show an appreciation of industrialisation and that Victorians artists did not provide a proper treatment to the industrial circumstances surrounding them:

By and large, Victorian painters were slow to find in the great industrial centres any aesthetic qualities equivalent to those which attracted them to the rural towns and villages of England and the unspoiled cities on the Continent. This limitation is attributable perhaps as much to their limited notions of the scope of the topographical manners as to their avoidance of certain kinds of subject-matter...⁴³

Seeing this limitation, Johnson suggested:

A rewarding field of investigation awaits the art historian who undertakes to explore the work of nineteenth-century provincial painters of the urban scene, especially those from the midlands and north, for whom the manufacturing centres were an integral part of the English landscape.⁴⁴

Following this line of inquiry, in 1988 Wolff and Seed in their edited book *The Culture of Capital* argue that early nineteenth-century English industrial cities developed their urban culture and needed their own visual representations to express their material prosperity and rising importance.⁴⁵ In the book, Arcsott, Pollock, and Wolff in their article 'The Partial View: the Visual Representation of the Early

⁴³ E. D. H. Johnson, 'Victorian Artists and the Urban Milieu' in H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff (eds.), *The Victorian City: Image and Realities* (in 2 volumes) (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973) pp. 449-74; p. 465.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 464.

⁴⁵ Janet Wolff and John Seed (eds.), *The Culture of Capital: Art, Power, and the Nineteenth-century Middle Class* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), see its introduction, pp. 1-15.

Nineteenth-century Industrial City’ propose that prospects of a city surrounded by factories with their smoking chimneys are adequate visual representation to this end.⁴⁶ They focus on the prospects of Leeds and Manchester. They find a visual formula in these prospects: the distant townscape is always encircled by endless smoking chimneys, which appear to be a visual “continuum” with the scenery of the countryside.⁴⁷ They also find the foreground is always a rural scene, staging the distant industrial city like it once did for a castle in a pastoral landscape painting (for example Fig. 1-29).⁴⁸ Moreover, they think the juxtaposition of the rural and the industrial/urban suggests how the rising city appropriates and utilises the adjacent countryside for its own development.⁴⁹ The authors justify our interest in industrial townscape imageries and point out the cultural and social significance of the images of factories and chimneys, but they still dichotomise the countryside and the city and neglect the area in between and the possibility of suburb as industrial urbanisation.⁵⁰ My thesis will therefore argue that the images of the developing edges of Birmingham, particularly those of industrial usage, urge to be read as a third realm and category beyond the city and the countryside—the suburb.

As well as the topographic views discussed by Arscott, Pollock, and Wolff, the first half of the nineteenth century saw the production of many other pictures of English industrial cities. I shall briefly introduce a few examples and point out how the suburb as developing urban fringes is represented in them.

J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851) produced a series of landscape and topographic watercolours between 1810 and 1837. In 1816 he produced a watercolour of Leeds (Fig. 1-3). Through painting the industrial mills in the distance, the artist shows a

⁴⁶ Caroline Arscott, Griselda Pollock, and Janet Wolff, ‘The Partial View: the Visual Representation of the Early Nineteenth-century Industrial City’ in Wolff and Seed eds., *ibid.*, pp. 191-233.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 217-26.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 228-9.

positive attitude toward Industrialisation and his patriotism toward the (industrial) power of Britain.⁵¹ Besides, the view-point, Beeston Hill, is depicted here not only as a green slope (to the left), but also as a site of labour and work (to the right); this further suggests the artist's emphasis on the development and business of the city.⁵² In fact, whether greenery or labourers, this painting has actually represented an awareness of the edges of the city and pointed forward to a preliminary form of suburban space. On the lawn to the left, we can see people hang dyed clothes on a rack. Compared with the city's mechanised wool industry, the dye business could appear more traditional, less advanced, and gradually marginalised to the edge of the city. Thus, the artist not only depicts a developed and prosperous city in the distance, but also, through visualising the marginalised business in this transitional area, presents the city's developing edges of social and economic changes.

In his *Dudley* (Fig. 1-4) painted in 1832, moreover, the focus is not just the city, but the entire environment that had been industrialised. The painting reminds us of *Coalbrookdale by Night* (Fig. 1-2). First, both sites are industrial and near the Black Country. Second, both paintings are nocturnal scenes with dramatic expression of light and colour. However, while the motifs in *Coalbrookdale by Night* are mostly related to industry, the motifs in *Dudley* were more complicated because they include symbols of both a pre-modern and a modern world: castle, church spires, factories, and canal. Ruskin in 1878 observed the castle being ruined and the church spires being almost invisible among clouds; thus he believed the painting suggests "the passing away of the baron and the monk" and "what England was to become".⁵³ I agree with his observation, but I would like to add that it must be a suburban

⁵¹ Stephen Daniels, 'The Implication of Industry: Turner and Leeds' in *Turner Studies* vol. 6 no. 1 (London: Mallord Press and Tate Gallery, 1986), pp. 10-7.

⁵² Yung-Yuan Yang, *The Ideology of Prosperity: Industrial and Urban Landscape in the Art of J.M.W. Turner* (London: University College London Thesis, 1998) p. 87 and p. 115.

⁵³ John Ruskin, *Notes by John Ruskin on his Drawing by J. M. W. Turner, R. A.* (London: 1887; London: the Fine Arts Society Gallery, 1900), p. 34.

view-point that this panoramic view —where we see both the city centre of Dudley, as represented by the castle and the church spires, and its immediate countryside, as seen built with the factories and the canal— became possible.

Like these provincial industrial cities, the capital city, London, and its developing edges also underwent industrialisation, urbanisation, and modernisation, and encouraged a representation of suburb, too. Again by Turner, *View of London from Greenwich* (Fig. 1-5) made in 1825 can be read as a ode to the prosperity of the nation, and the steam boats on the River Thames a sign of technology advancement and the coming of a modern world.⁵⁴ What is more, I think, connecting Greenwich and London through the river traffic powered by the modern type of transportation, Turner might imply the link between the village and the capital, and foresee the relation between the metropolis and its suburb-to-be.

Like the steam boat, the railway, especially passenger railways since the later 1820s, was another industrial and modern motif favoured by London topographic artists. For example, John Cooke Bourne (1814-96) and George Scharf (1788-1860) respectively produced a series of pictures on the construction of the London and Birmingham railway (Figs. 4-9 and 4-10). As my chapter four will find out, the artists not only elaborated on the appearance of the railway and the construction site, but also noticed its location at the urban fringes and its potential to help expand urban space and form suburbs.

Overall, how to represent a rising industrial city, its encroached-upon countryside and developing edges, and how to interpret the representation, is an important question to ask. While the visual representation of industrial London, Leeds, Dudley and Manchester has been studied, the pictures of industrial Birmingham also require a thorough examination.

⁵⁴ Yang, p. 256.

The Picturesque

From the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century the dominant aesthetic of landscape and topographic art is the Picturesque, meaning “looks like a picture.”⁵⁵ This could pose a problem for the local artists of Birmingham as they witnessed and tried to represent the rapidly growing town and its industrially developed edges, for these scenes were not necessarily a picturesque motif to represent. I shall briefly introduce the background of the aesthetic and point out how it poses a problem for the representation of the suburb.

Unlike Romanticism or the Sublime which derived from literary criticism, the Picturesque is a purely visual theory. The Picturesque aesthetic started to be discussed in the early eighteenth century as a fashionable idea concerning landscape gardening among the landed class. For example, Lancelot Capability Brown (1716-83) combined different elements from Nature to landscape a garden.⁵⁶ Edmund Burke mentioned earlier distinguished between the beautiful and the Sublime, and therefore helped clarify the Picturesque in relation the two ideas.⁵⁷ Uvedale Price (1747-1829), the author of *An Essay on the Picturesque*, believed that the sensibility of the Picturesque is learnt from the masterpieces of landscape painting and can be expanded into a wider appreciation of natural scenery.⁵⁸ Richard Payne Knight (1751-1824), Price’s neighbour and friend, believed like him that Claude’s paintings provided ideal models for landscaping.⁵⁹ Unlike Capability Brown, Price and Knight, Humphrey

⁵⁵ William Vaughan, *British Painting: the Golden Age from Hogarth to Turner* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), p. 191.

⁵⁶ Roger Turner, *Capability Brown and the Eighteenth Century English Landscape* (New York: Rizzoli, 1985).

⁵⁷ Edmund Burke, *An Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful* (London: Cassell, 1801).

⁵⁸ Uvedale Price, *An Essay on Picturesque, as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful; and, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape* (London: J. Robson, 1794).

⁵⁹ Richard Payne Knight, *The Landscape: a Didactic Poem. In Three Books. Addressed to Uvedale Price, Esq.* (London, 1794; 1795).

Repton's (1752-1818) vision of the Picturesque was not limited purely to natural scenery; he sometimes included a distant townscape as part of a picturesque setting for a garden he designed.⁶⁰ Later John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843) wrote a number of encyclopaedias on horticulture and landscape gardening, which were also influential on the contemporary idea of the Picturesque.⁶¹

But it was William Gilpin (1724-1804) who popularised the idea of the Picturesque and made it a well-accepted aesthetic in the appreciation and representation of landscape.⁶² As early as 1768, he published an article to discuss the concept based on the prints of old masters' paintings.⁶³ In 1770, after visiting several natural scenic spots in Wales and Southwest England, the theorist published *Observations of the River Wye* that teaches people how to select proper elements from natural landscape to compose a picturesque gaze:

Nature is always great in design; but unequal in composition. She is admirable colourist...but is seldom to correct in composition, as to produce an harmonious whole. Either the foreground, or the background, is dis-proportioned: or some awkward line runs across the piece: or a tree ill-placed...The case is, the immensity of nature is beyond human comprehension...The artist, in the meantime...lays down his little rules therefore, which he calls the *principles of picturesque beauty*, merely to adapt such diminutive parts of nature's surfaces to his own eye, as some within its scope.⁶⁴

In 1792, moreover, his *On Picturesque Beauty* provided specific principles for the idea. For example, being picturesque is different from being beautiful: the former

⁶⁰ An example of how Repton included distant townscape as part of a picturesque setting is Moseley Hall near Birmingham; this will be discussed in chapter five.

⁶¹ John Claudius Loudon, *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture* (Shaftesbury: Donhead, 2000).

⁶² Vaughan, p. 191

⁶³ William Gilpin, *Essay upon Prints, Containing Remarks upon the Principles of the Picturesque Beauty; the Different Kinds of Prints; and the Characters of the Most Noted Master* (London: J. Robson, 1768).

⁶⁴ William Gilpin, *Observations of the River Wye, and Several Parts of South Wales, &c, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty; made in the Summer of the year 1770* (London: R. Blamire, 1782; republished Richmond: Richmond Publishing Co., 1973) The quotation is from the 1973 edition, p. 18.

should be rough and rugged, as found in cottages, ruins and peasants; the latter, on the other hand, is neat and smooth such as the images of mythological gods.⁶⁵ This particular principle about cottages and ruins will be mentioned again in my chapter three. Overall, even though the general public could not afford a Grand Tour to Italy as the aristocracy did, they could still follow Gilpin's suggestions and appreciate the landscape at home: both the real landscape through domestic tours and the represented one through prints.⁶⁶ By the turn of the century, the term gradually became a more general and loose idea to describe any visually pleasing scenes. For instance, around 1812 an anonymous critic described the distant countryside in a drawing of Birmingham as "the picturesque appearance of the adjacent country" (more details will be given in my chapter one).⁶⁷

Hence, under the influence of the Picturesque, how Birmingham artists could perceive, recognise, and represent the industrially developing edges and the encroached-upon countryside— which were not necessarily "great in design"⁶⁸ or visually pleasing— became a challenge.

The representation of modern life

We have established two challenges. First, the rising industrial city had a fast changing environment and needed to be seen by the nation. Second, the aesthetic of the Picturesque made it difficult to imagine how the industrial environs of Birmingham might be represented visually. These problems are further complicated by a third question: how do the pictures of the industrial environs of Birmingham represent a modern life?

⁶⁵ William Gilpin, *Three Essays: on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and, on Sketching Landscape: to which is Added a Poem on Landscape Painting* (London, 1792; 1794)

⁶⁶ Vaughan, *op. cit.* p. 191.

⁶⁷ John Alfred Langford, *A Century of Birmingham Life* (2 vol.) (London and Birmingham: Marshall, 1868) pp. 202-3.

⁶⁸ Gilpin, *op. cit.* *Observations of the River Wye*, 1782; see p. 18 in the 1973 reprinting.

According to E. D. H. Johnson, cited earlier, Victorian topographical and genre artists gave visual forms to their growing cities and the various industrial constructions in them, but they did not represent a modern spirit that could correspond to the new life their painted objects promised to bring.⁶⁹ Even in the paintings by fine artists, Johnson argues, the urban and modern environment serves as a setting rather than a subject; for example in William Holman Hunt's (1827-1910) *The Awakening Conscience* (1853-4) or in John Constable's (1776-1837) *Waterloo Bridge from Whitehall Stairs* (1817).⁷⁰ Such a limitation, the author further suggested: "might have been overcome had they [the Victorian artists] been more receptive to the liberating influence of contemporary trends in French art."⁷¹

Why was the French art a model? The key lies in the representation of modern life. The art historian believed that while the English art works show "staid conventionality", the works by Manet, Monet, Pissarro, Sisley, Van Gogh and Toulouse-Lautrec "are characterized by a greater reliance on purely pictorial values and by a corresponding absence of all extraneous concerns, anecdotal, socio-moralistic, or documentary."⁷² Thus, the French art represent a "lively interest in the life of the day" and exemplify "how far modern art may reflect modern life"⁷³. Although Johnson did not further distinguish between the modern and the industrial, or explain the relationship between industrialisation and modern life⁷⁴, his argument indeed expands the meaning of an industrial scene and justifies my interest in looking for the representation of modern life amongst industrial imageries.

However, I must point out, while Johnson set the scene in the urban milieu and

⁶⁹ E. D. H. Johnson, *op. cit.* p. 452-65.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 457 and p. 464.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 465. The words in the square bracket are my annotation.

⁷² *Ibid.*, the first quotation is from p. 465; the second quotation is from p. 473 in his footnote 60.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 465.

⁷⁴ My understanding of the difference between the industrial and the modern is: an industrial life is not necessarily a modern life, but a modern life is usually supported by industrialised society.

was keen to find the representation of modern life within it, the French art and its vision of modern life were actually, as found by Nicholas Green and T. J. Clark in their respective studies, based on not only the modern city of Paris, but also on its developing edges and encroached-upon countryside.⁷⁵ In other words, it is the consideration of the suburb that makes the vision of an industrial, modern life more complete.

Perhaps an additional issue of interpretation is that some art historians do not agree with the English vs. French comparison of art. For example, some question how such comparison is possible.⁷⁶ Some ask why English art is not Modern art simply because it is not avant-garde in the French way.⁷⁷ On the other hand, some art historians do look for English equivalents to French Modern art and painting of modern life, and argue that the English equivalents are equally Modern, but in a different way. For example, there was Impressionism in British art, too.⁷⁸ Or, although the Pre-Raphaelites do not use quick brushes to show changing lights, the verisimilitude found in their painting and the painstaking details which help achieve the visual effect still capture a fleeting moment of modernity.⁷⁹ Or, Walter Sickert and his Camden Town Group are arguably English painters of modern life because they not only represented modern subject matter, such as a tube station, but also adopted thick, quick brushworks to create a gross painting surface like the French Impressionists did.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Nicholas Green, *The Spectacle of Nature: Landscape and Bourgeois Culture in Nineteenth Century France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990) T. J. Clark, *the Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984)

⁷⁶ Charles Harrison, 'England's Climate' in Brian Allen (ed.) *Towards a Modern Art World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press) pp. 207-23

⁷⁷ David Peters Corbett and Lara Perry (eds.), *English Art 1860-1814: Modern Artists and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) pp.1-2.

⁷⁸ Kenneth McConkey, *British Impressionism* (Oxford: Phaidon; New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989), pp. 138-51.

⁷⁹ Elisabeth Prettejohn, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Tate, 2000), pp. 94-8.

⁸⁰ David Peters Corbett, *Walter Sickert* (Princeton: Princeton University press; London: Tate, 2001), pp. 26-39.

I should clarify that I do not join the debate why English art must be compared with its French contemporary. Nor will I comment on how Modern or avant-garde the English art really was. Instead, what I think the French painting of modern life (both inside of Paris and in its suburbs) can provide my study with is straight-forward: how does the rise of middle class redefine existing spaces (the countryside and the city) and demand a new space (the suburb)? How does the migration and commuting from a bigger urban core (like Paris, London or Birmingham) into its satellite settlement (like Argenteuil, Hampstead, or Edgbaston) help form the idea of the suburb? How does urbanising countryside, the edges of an expanding city, or an absorbed old town demonstrate a new landscape vision and urge a new genre of visual representation? And simply what is the right iconography, for example images of railways, of a home in a detached house, or of promenade, to signify that modern life and that new genre?

Overall, following Johnson's proposal of comparing the nineteenth century French and English art, my chapter four will compare the pictures of Birmingham suburbs with the French Modernists' painting of the environs of Paris. I will find out: while the post-1860 French Modernists and Impressionists used avant-garde visual vocabulary (like thick brushstrokes and flattened objects) to represent a suburban and modern life, the 1780-1850 English topographical artists had to struggle through (or rely on) the recording nature of the topographic view tradition and the normative aesthetic of the Picturesque to represent it.

To summarise, standing between the countryside and the city, covering a fastening industrialising environment, under a need to be seen by the nation, influenced by the tradition of topographic view and the Picturesque, entangled with the issue about representing a modern life, the representation of the suburbs of Birmingham is never going to be easy.

Art and institutions in Birmingham

I should also briefly introduce how art in Birmingham developed. Accompanying the town's economic growth was a series of civic improvements, political reforms, and investments in art, culture, education, etc.⁸¹ The idea of culture in Birmingham in the early nineteenth century may seem "harshly materialistic" because it was mainly concerned with having more civic buildings, for example the Town Hall completed in 1834 in the form of a Greek temple.⁸²

The development of art also had a practical beginning. As mentioned earlier, Birmingham as the manufacturing centre of the nation attracted many smiths, artisans, craftsmen, and artists from all over the country since the mid-eighteenth century.⁸³ Some of their offspring became fine artists, for example the Barber and the Lines families and their circles. These artists started to run drawing classes, organise artistic societies and hold exhibitions, and therefore developed several art institutions in the town.⁸⁴ In 1843, the Birmingham Government School of Design was founded, but it is unclear whether the school has successfully sustained the notion of 'the Birmingham School'. Even though the name of 'the Birmingham School' is resurrected in 1990, it functions more like a collection of two hundred years of Birmingham artists without identifying a critical stylistic features.⁸⁵ Thus, I will not adopt the notion of the Birmingham School in this thesis. In fact, if we consider how rapidly the town grew and how local residents sought recognition and representation amongst the nation, perhaps it was a sign, a representative image, rather than a school, that could satisfy the need.

Speaking of a sign or a representative image, there was an interesting

⁸¹ Hopkins *op. cit.*, p. 135.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Cherry *op. cit.* pp. 66-73.

⁸⁴ Victoria Osborne, 'Cox and Birmingham' in Scott Wilcox (ed.), *Sun, Wind, and Rain: the Art of David Cox* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 69-83

⁸⁵ Stephen Wildman, *The Birmingham School* (Birmingham: BMAG, 1990) pp. 5-12

phenomenon. With local people's growing interest in their own town, and with some keen publishers' determination to introduce the rising town to the nation, a large number of local topographic views were produced.⁸⁶ Some came in book and newspaper illustrations, others individual art works (these publications will be listed later). Moreover, many of them were copied and made into later pictures, which did not necessarily replicate the information of the original images and were very often copied again still later. With a growing market, some highly-motivated publishers, and continuous copying and repetition, there must have been a huge picture 'database' of the topographic views in and around Birmingham during 1780-c.1850.

Indeed, during my archival surveys, I have seen about five hundred different topographic views and landscape imageries, and several hundred reproductions or copied images. Faced with so many original pictures and so much repetition, what can we imagine about the visual culture of Birmingham? In terms of the original pictures, a large number of them show newly-built buildings, such as the Town Hall, St Philip's Church, Christ Church, the Grand Junction Railway, the London and Birmingham Railway, the post office, botanic or pleasure gardens, manufactories, stations and various shops. Based on these depictions, one might generalise that the visual products of Birmingham during its industrialisation were not innovative, stylish, or striking, but descriptive, simple, unchallenging, straightforward, and merely topographical. However, if the standards with which one considers the visual culture of industrial Birmingham as merely documentary, plain and unsophisticated are the standards formulated from other cultural centres which have a longer history in their art development, like London or Norwich, then how can one trust that these standards remain valid when they are applied to the different context of Birmingham, a city

⁸⁶ Joseph Hill, *The Book Makers of Old Birmingham: Authors, Printers, and Book Sellers* (Birmingham: Shakespeare Press for Cornish Brother Ltd., 1907)

growing from a provincial settlement into a huge metropolis in just two hundred years? Therefore, this thesis argues that such topographic views, especially those of the newly-built, were self-advocating visual products that properly represent the town and should have their own discourse.

Moreover, as those topographic views were constantly reproduced and copied, the large amount of repetition they present seems to form a pictorial system in which the images of those new buildings and landscape objects become like visual signs that signify a newly developed and modernised environment. Therefore, as the town grew and developed its visual culture, how the town itself and its surroundings were represented in pictures makes a fitting point to start from, and it is in following this line of inquiry that this thesis explores the representation of the suburb of Birmingham.

Methodology

Literature review

I consulted six different areas of studies to form my research question and to conduct this research: Urban History, Cultural Geography, History, Town Planning, Local Studies of Birmingham, and History of Art. In the following I will explain why the former five disciplines were helpful and list relevant literature, and provide an explicit literature review on History of Art.

a. Urban History

While art historians pay little attention to the representation of the suburb, the discipline of Urban History regards the suburb (both as urban fringes and residential districts) as having its own geographic presence and historical context. Speaking of the geographic presence and historical context of the suburb, London, arguably the

birthplace of the modern suburb, must be taken into account.⁸⁷ John Summerson's *Georgian London* published in 1970 already regards the city as consisting of many other settlements on its periphery (villages, manors, hamlets, etc), and this can be read as forming the preliminary form of London suburbs.⁸⁸ Donald Olsen's *The Growth of Victorian London* published in 1976 further illustrates how London grew, merged with and encroached upon the immediate settlements (which were also developing and growing at the time), and how the poor remained staying in the urban slums while the upper middle class started to moved out of the city and settled in the suburban areas.⁸⁹ H. J. Dyos in 1973 studied a specific suburb as such, Camberwell, and illustrates the complex formation of the suburb.⁹⁰

According to these urban historians, I formulate: the suburb was not merely the result of the encroachment of central London upon the countryside, but also the growth of the suburban settlements themselves, which expanded in size, reached to the city, and, through public transportation like railways or undergrounds, became linked and even merged with the city. As a whole, the urban history of Georgian and Victorian London offers a clear picture of urban growth and suburban development. The complexity and the various factors found in this London pattern provide me with an approach to visualising 1780-1850 Birmingham and its suburbs-to-be.

Also in 1973, H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff edited *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*.⁹¹ The essays in the volumes combine to provide a thorough engagement of Victorian cities, including population, transportation, recreation, housing, slums, visual representation, hygiene, poverty, industrial constrictions, changes in faiths, and so on. E. D. H. Johnson's article on how Victorian artists failed

⁸⁷ Fishman, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-38.

⁸⁸ Summerson, *op. cit.*

⁸⁹ Donald Olsen, *The Growth of Victorian London* (London: Batsford, 1976)

⁹⁰ Dyos, *op. cit.*.

⁹¹ H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff (eds.), *The Victorian City: Image and Realities* (in 2 volumes) (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973)

to represent the industrial spirit and modern life of their cities, cited earlier, comes from this important publication.⁹²

As well as the urban history of London, general urban history of Georgian and Victorian towns were also consulted. Rosemary Sweet and Joyce Ellis respectively write a book on English towns between 1680 and 1840.⁹³ Both of them provide useful information on how towns developed and looked like in the Georgian time. Dorothy and Alan Shelston's *The Industrial City 1820-1870*, though does not discuss much of Birmingham, still illustrates how Victorian industrial cities in general were like.⁹⁴

b. Cultural Geography

Because Cultural Geography explores the cultural aspects of a built environment, I relied on the discipline to begin my inquiry into the difference as well as interrelation between the countryside and the city, and to form my idea about the suburb as a third realm. For example, though sometimes categorised as literary criticism, Raymond Williams' *The Country and the City* mentioned in the beginning is an important source to start with.⁹⁵ It discusses how, in English literature, the two most important yet contradictory types of human settlement were understood and represented. Keith Thomas' *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* provides explicit discussion on how human society changed their attitudes toward Nature.⁹⁶ For instance, Shakespeare described the Forest of Arden in Warwickshire as "a desert inaccessible under the shade of melancholy boughs."⁹⁷ But in the second half of the eighteenth century, growing trees became fashionable among landlords;

⁹² E. D. H. Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 449-74.

⁹³ Rosemary Sweet, *op. cit.* and Joyce M. Ellis, *op. cit.*.

⁹⁴ Dorothy and Alan Shelston, *op. cit.*.

⁹⁵ Williams, *op. cit.*.

⁹⁶ Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* (London: Penguin 1983)

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 194

one wrote in 1763: “I think the beauty of a country consists chiefly in the wood.”⁹⁸ Moreover, during the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth century, “books on handsome trees, famous trees, ancient trees and how to draw trees poured off the presses.”⁹⁹ Overall, Thomas’ study provides me with a general background to begin with.

Recent publications like Marilyn Palmer’s *Industry in the Landscape, 1700-1900* regards industry as a main force that changes landscape.¹⁰⁰ Although she focuses on real landscape, not its visual representation, the book still provides useful information on industrial landscape. John Wylie’s *Landscape* is an informative source on how ‘landscape’ makes a visual and cultural category.¹⁰¹ Besides, cultural geographer Stephen Daniels publishes several articles and books on the visual representation of English countryside and towns, where he provides interesting interpretation of the representation of suburb (More details of his publications are given later in the section on history-of-art literature.)

c. History

I consulted History books mainly to set my research period (the British Industrialisation) and to more fully understand what was happening in that period. Malcolm Thomis’ *Responses to Industrialisation: the British Experience 1780-1850*, cited earlier, helped define my research period.¹⁰² Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall’s *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, also cited earlier, not only helped define the research period, but also discussed the

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 212

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 213.

¹⁰⁰ Marilyn Palmer, *Industry in the Landscape, 1700-1900* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994). *Factory in the Garden* (2 books, one on Wedgwood and the other Bourneville)

¹⁰¹ John Wylie, *Landscape* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007).

¹⁰² Thomis, *op. cit.*.

rise of middle class and their need of new social and domestic space.¹⁰³ Esther Moir's *The Discovery of Britain: the English Tourists* consulted earlier discusses the social and economic background behind the fashion of the Picturesque.¹⁰⁴ A general and informative history on the British Industrialisation is Alasdair Clayre's *Nature and Industrialization*, also consulted earlier.¹⁰⁵ Besides, Peter Jones's argument that the British Industrialisation was as a form of knowledge-based economy, though not adopted as a theory in my thesis, provides interesting perspectives.¹⁰⁶ For historical statistics, I relied on B. R. Mitchell's formulation.¹⁰⁷ In addition, my research introduces many historical figures, so Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB) was frequently consulted.¹⁰⁸

d. Town Planning

Town planners not only recognise the historical and geographical presence of the suburb like urban historians do, but also approach the suburb as a planned living environment. The book I rely on most throughout the thesis is Robert Fishman's *Bourgeois Utopia: the Rise and the Fall of Suburbia*.¹⁰⁹ While arguing that suburbia (the collective form of modern, residential suburbs) is the ultimate representation of bourgeois culture, Fishman also clearly points out that the suburb had actually been a site of industry which made it difficult to be defined and approached.¹¹⁰ As he analyses how residential suburbs were planned around London, Manchester, Paris, New York, and Los Angeles, he also emphasises that the unplanned, anarchic

¹⁰³ Davidoff and Hall, *op. cit.*.

¹⁰⁴ Moir, *op. cit.*.

¹⁰⁵ Clayre, *op. cit.*.

¹⁰⁶ Peter Jones, *Industrial Enlightenment* (Manchester University Press, 2009)

¹⁰⁷ Mitchell, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁸ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (ODNB), *op. cit.* consulted between 03/2009 and 12/2010.

¹⁰⁹ Fishman, *op. cit.*.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 6.

development at urban fringes (whether for industrial or residential usage) might well be the earliest but neglected form of the suburb. Another scholar F. M. L. Thompson edited a book on suburbia and also pointed out the suburb as industrially-developed urban fringes.¹¹¹

In addition to the two books, I shall give a brief review of how the discipline approaches the suburb. Those published before the 1970s focus on suburbia as an Anglo-American cultural product and tended to attribute its growth to the post-war economy and the popularity of automobiles.¹¹² The literature published in the 1980s, as by Thompson and Fishman, not only continues to discuss suburbia as a middle-class way of living, but also pays more attention to how industrial development played an important role in the development of the suburb during the nineteenth century. In the 1990s and 2000s literature, the suburb is re-examined via post-colonial or feminist perspectives, providing me with more room to rethink the suburb in a trans-historical and trans-cultural way.¹¹³

Intriguingly, in most cases, the idea of a planned environment seems to dominate the way the discipline understands the suburb: a suburb must be planned, built, and have a certain function and actual buildings in it so that it can be recognised and approached as a proper place. In other words, the suburb could only be perceived when built or planned. This could mean: if it appears in its primitive or natural state or not built properly, the suburb as urban fringes may have a problem being perceived because there is nothing there to use as a sign to signify what type of space it is. My thesis, while exploring how a suburb is represented through the image of various industrial and residential buildings in it, concerns itself more with the difficulty to

¹¹¹ F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester University Press, 1982), p. 6

¹¹² Robert C. Wood, *Suburbia: Its People and Their Politics* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1958); William M. Dobriner, *Class in Suburbia* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1963).

¹¹³ Roger Silverstone (ed.), *Visions of Suburbia* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997). Mark Clapson, *Suburban Century: Social Changes and Urban Growth in England and the USA* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003). Shenglin Chang, *op. cit.*.

represent and the problematic conception of the idea of suburb.

e. Local studies of Birmingham

As this research focuses on Birmingham, knowledge of the town is essential. Since the late eighteenth century, there had been several significant attempts to write a comprehensive history of the town. The earliest written history of the town was by William Hutton during the late 1790s, mentioned before.¹¹⁴ In the 1860s, John Alfred Langford also wrote a history of Birmingham.¹¹⁵ Between 1878 and 1885, John Bunce published two volumes on history of Corporation of Birmingham.¹¹⁶ Since the 1880s, a librarian Robert K. Dent started a series of investigations into the town's unique past and published two important books: *Old and New Birmingham: a History of the Town and its People, with Nearly 200 Illustrations from the Most Authentic Sources* in 1880¹¹⁷ and *The Making of Birmingham: being a History of the Rise and Growth of the Midland Metropolis* in 1894.¹¹⁸ An interesting feature of the two books is that they are lavishly illustrated with drawings, paintings, and newspaper illustrations made during the first half the nineteenth century. Some of the pictures Dent chose are also the pictures I will explore in the thesis. While Dent did not consider the art history of those pictures and merely used them as 'evidence' to show once-existing places, I will concentrate on the pictures as works of art and explore their social and cultural backgrounds. In 1952 Gill wrote another history of Birmingham.¹¹⁹ In the early 1980s, Skipp proposed that a Greater Birmingham could

¹¹⁴ Hutton, 1805, *op. cit.* This thesis consults his third edition, which is more concise and easier to find information from it.

¹¹⁵ Langford, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁶ John Thackray Bunce, *History of Corporation of Birmingham* (2 volumes) (Birmingham: Corporation, volume 1, 1878; volume 2, 1885)

¹¹⁷ Robert Kirkup Dent, *Old and New Birmingham: a History of the Town and its People, with Nearly 200 Illustrations from the Most Authentic Sources* (Birmingham: Houghton and Hammond, 1880)

¹¹⁸ Robert Kirkup Dent, *The Making of Birmingham being a History of the Rise and Growth of the Midland Metropolis* (Birmingham: J. L. Allday; London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co, 1894)

¹¹⁹ Conrad Gill, *History of Birmingham* (2 volumes) (London: Oxford University Press 1952)

begin as early as in the 1830.¹²⁰ The author in the 2000s continues to consider the impact of the industrialisation of Birmingham and believes it has a direct relation to the up-to-date phenomenon of globalisation.¹²¹ In the late 1980s, Hopkins' *the Rise of the Manufacturing Town: Birmingham and the Industrial Revolution* cited earlier became one of the most consulted publications on the town.¹²² After Hopkins' book, Cherry's book on the geography, history, and planning of the town is also a widely-consulted source.¹²³

Noticeably, the books above all try to provide a historical account of the town. In doing so, they seem to suggest that Birmingham used to have a clear extent, boundary and identity. Yet, as my thesis will discover from nearly a hundred views around the town, such a clear boundary or extent might not necessarily have existed.

Some authors focus on specific themes. Chinn specialises in the history of the city's working class.¹²⁴ Pevsner's series on the architecture of Birmingham also provides essential knowledge of local buildings and architecture.¹²⁵ The year 2009 was the bicentennial of the industrial giant Matthew Boulton. A large exhibition was held. Its exhibition catalogue is a comprehensive guide to Boulton and his time.¹²⁶ In the midst of my research in 2008, I learned that Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery started, in collaboration with local scholars, a cross-disciplinary project on the suburbs around Birmingham called *Space and Places*. The project should be the first and the most ambitious research carried out on the topic of suburbs in the field of

¹²⁰ Skipp, *op. cit.*, *A History of Greater Birmingham*.

¹²¹ Victor Skipp, *Industrial Revolution 'Then' and 'Now' or Understanding Globalization (the Birmingham Experience)* (Diss: Greyhound Books, 2002)

¹²² Hopkins, *op. cit.*.

¹²³ Cherry, *op. cit.*.

¹²⁴ Carl Chinn, *Homes for People: Council Housing and Urban Renewal in Birmingham* (Studley : Brewin, 1999)

¹²⁵ Andy Foster, *Birmingham* (Pevsner Architectural Guides) (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005)

¹²⁶ Shena Mason (ed.), *Matthew Boulton: Selling What the World Desires* (Birmingham: Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, with Yale University Press, 2009).

local studies. I was not involved in the project and at the time I submitted this thesis I have not read the publication of their results. Additionally, three publishers: Brewin, Philimore, and The History Press, published a great variety of books on the history of the West Midlands and I had relied on those books when I started this research. In the following chapters I shall mention more relevant local studies, such as those on the Lunar Society, Edgbaston, and etc.

f. History of Art

However, the visual representation of the suburb has not been much studied in History of Art. After consulting the literature of the five disciplines to construct my research question, I shall, mostly importantly, review the history-of-art scholarship to find what has already been researched and what results are available in order to identify the research gap which my thesis aims to fill.

As I regard the suburb as a third realm between the two cultural categories, the countryside (Nature) and the city, I shall begin with how art historians discuss the visual representation of the two categories. Herrmann gave the genre a chronological analysis.¹²⁷ Vaughan regarded it as an integral part of the tradition of British painting which can be characterised by two features: modernity and naturalism.¹²⁸ Both Solkin and Rosenthal regard landscape painting as a continuous practice in British art.¹²⁹ Hawes further highlighted Nature as the theme of such painting.¹³⁰ Barrell noticed the neglected elements, such as signs of labour, being manipulated in landscape

¹²⁷ Herrmann, *op. cit. British Landscape Painting of the Eighteenth Century*, and *op. cit. Nineteenth Century British Painting*.

¹²⁸ Vaughan, *op. cit.* p. 7.

¹²⁹ Michael Rosenthal, *British Landscape Painting* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1982). David Solkin, *Richard Wilson: the Landscape of Reaction* (London: Tate, 1982).

¹³⁰ Louis Hawes, *Presences of Nature: British Landscape Painting 1780-1830* (London and New Haven: Yale Centre for British Art, 1982).

imageries.¹³¹ In *The History of British Art* edited by David Bindman, Nicholas Grindle's article 'New Ways of Seeing: Landscape Painting and Visual Culture c.1620-c.1870' discussed how landscape might be seen from new angles and how these new ways of viewing could result a change in landscape representation.¹³²

In the meantime, some studies in British landscape painting tend to identify core characteristics. Corbett and others examined the representation of Englishness.¹³³ Holt investigates the possibility of modernity.¹³⁴ Barringer explained it was "opulence and anxiety" that characterise British landscape painting made during the past two hundred years.¹³⁵ As far as industrial landscape is concerned, Daniels¹³⁶ and Yang¹³⁷ examined how Turner represents prosperity through the depiction of industrial objects.

If we consider the interrelation between the imagery of Nature and urban culture, there have been some interesting findings. Herbert examined how rural and peasantry imageries could function in a modern city.¹³⁸ Hemingway approached riverside and seascape imageries in relation to their meaning in a middle-class and urban environment.¹³⁹ Daniels investigates what role the periphery of the town had played in the urban-countryside relation.¹⁴⁰

¹³¹ John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape* (1980; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹³² Nicholas Grindle, 'New Ways of Seeing: Landscape Painting and Visual Culture c. 1620-c.1870' in David Bindman (ed.), *The History of British Art* (2nd volume) (New Haven and London: Yale Centre for British Art and Tate Britain, 2008), pp. 121-43.

¹³³ David Peters Corbett et al. (eds.), *The Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past in English Art 1880-1940* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

¹³⁴ Ysanne Holt, *British Artists and the Modernist Landscape* (Hants: Ashgate, 2007).

¹³⁵ Tim Barringer, *Opulence and Anxiety: Landscape Paintings from the Royal Academy of Arts* (Compton Verney: Compton Verney, 2007) pp. 9-27.

¹³⁶ Stephen Daniels, *Fields of Vision: Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994) pp. 112-45.

¹³⁷ Yang, *op. cit.*.

¹³⁸ Robert Herbert, 'City vs. Country: the Rural Image in French Painting from Millet to Gauguin' in *Artforum*, vol. 8, no. 6 (February 1970), pp. 44-55.

¹³⁹ Andrew Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery and Urban Culture in Early Nineteenth-century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹⁴⁰ Stephan Daniels, *Humphrey Repton: Landscape Gardening and the Geography of Georgian England* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 207-54.

If we consider another genre of landscape representation, topographic views, there are also many important findings which encourage us to think about the possibility of the suburb. For example, we have discussed the general functions of topographic views (military usage, land survey, Antiquity, the Picturesque and domestic tourism) and hypothesised that the genre might capture the image of the suburb because it minutely records the appearance of a place.

Besides, E. D. H. Johnson's article 'Victorian Artists and the Urban Milieu', cited earlier, argues that the imageries of industrial cities should not only show industrial development, but also a modern spirit derived from that industrialisation.¹⁴¹ Arscott, Pollock, and Wolff's 'The Partial View: the Visual Representation of the Early Nineteenth-century Industrial City', also cited earlier, argues that the townscape views with the image of factories and chimneys in them are proper visual representation of the rising industrial cities of the time, such as Leeds and Manchester.¹⁴² As I discussed the two articles earlier on, I already pointed out their neglecting of the suburban space.

Another important publication on topographic views is Maxine Berg's 'Representations of Early Industrial Towns: Turner and His Contemporaries', which emphasises that natural landscape imageries are not enough as a visual source to understand the complex socio-economic conditions of the British Industrialisation.¹⁴³ Her visual analysis of a drawing by Turner will be consulted in my chapter one as I shall explore the same picture but have different interpretation.

Last but not least, 'panorama' as a form of topographic views also needs to be mentioned. A panorama refers to a 360-degree, round, and all-seeing view of a town

¹⁴¹ E. D. H. Johnson, *op. cit.* pp. 449-74

¹⁴² Arscott, Pollock, and Wolff, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-233.

¹⁴³ Maxine Berg, 'Representations of Early Industrial Towns: Turner and His Contemporaries' in Michael Rosenthal, Christiana Payne, and Scott Wilcox eds., *Prospects for the Nation: Recent Essays in British Landscape, 1750-1880* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997) pp. 115-31; see p. 131.

and its surrounding countryside. Although the popularity of the panorama during the nineteenth century has been studied, the question of how the suburb might be included in these panoramas has not been discussed.¹⁴⁴

We now have a complete list of how art historians approach landscape representation, including natural landscape painting, urban topographic views, and their interrelation. However, only a few authors directly explore the representation of the suburb. One such is T. J. Clark who, in his *Painting of Modern Life*, discussed the conception of the suburb and a suburban life, and how their visual representation urges a different reading and a new genre.¹⁴⁵ More details of his argument will be given in my chapter four. In Ann Bermingham's *Landscape and Ideology*, there is an independent chapter on "suburban experience" and how it might be integrated into (Constable's) natural landscape painting.¹⁴⁶ Alastair Wright also discussed the suburban landscape vision of Madox Brown's *An English Autumn Afternoon*, which I will also examine in my chapter four.¹⁴⁷

In conclusion, as a form of built environment, the suburb is easily overlooked and underrepresented between its two powerful neighbours, the countryside (Nature) and the city. In History of Art literature, similarly, the discussion of the representation of the suburb is also limited and overwhelmed by the discourses on landscape painting and topographic views, and this research is to help fill the gap. I would like to draw on two of the above authors to conclude how the representation of the suburb might be considered. Vaughan regarded modernity and naturalism as two key issues

¹⁴⁴ Ralph Hyde, *Panoromania* (London: Trefoil, in association with the Barbican Gallery, 1988)

¹⁴⁵ Clark, *op. cit.* pp. 147-204.

¹⁴⁶ Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: the English Rustic Tradition 1740-1860* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987) pp. 158-93.

¹⁴⁷ Alastair I. Wright, 'Suburban Prospects: Vision and Possession in Ford Madox Brown's *An English Autumn Afternoon*' in Margaretta F. Watson (ed.) *Collecting the Pre-Raphaelites: an Anglo-American Enchantment* (Hants: Ashgate, 1997) pp. 185-97.

central to British art during its most productive and expressive centuries.¹⁴⁸ Barringer considered opulence and anxiety as the underlying motifs of British landscape painting over the past two centuries.¹⁴⁹ To further Vaughan's idea, I think that while townscape imageries present modernity, and (countryside) landscape painting embodies naturalism, the representation of the suburb could show both modernity and naturalism and, together with townscape and landscape imageries, more thoroughly reflect the real looks of the British Industrialisation. Equally, to further Barringer's idea, the representation of suburb can reflect both opulence and anxiety in the same time because it is a place that accommodates both development (which brings opulence) and ambiguity (which brings anxiety).

Theory

In addition to the art historical arguments and theories listed above, the thesis in general adopts the theory of semiotics. I view the images of the countryside (Nature) and the city as two distinctive systems of visual signs. Although the countryside and Nature are different— one being a rural area with fields, farms, and cottages; the other referring to forests, mountains, and wilderness— my thesis still takes their visual representation as one category. It is because both of their visual representation contain images of greenery and natural motifs and could therefore make a contradictory system of visual signs to that of the city. Between the two powerful systems of visual signs, I hypothesise the image of the suburb as a third system of visual signs.

I consult three semiologists of three different generations. First of all, I follow Saussure's (1857-1913) interpretation of the signifier and the signified.¹⁵⁰ I regard the

¹⁴⁸ Vaughan, *op. cit.* p. 7.

¹⁴⁹ Barringer, *op. cit.* pp. 9-27.

¹⁵⁰ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (eds.) Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye,

three types of environment as three different signs that carry their individual meanings. For example, as discussed earlier, the city, the countryside, and the suburb (especially as a residential district) all have their different meanings. While the city and the countryside (Nature) are familiar signs which have operated in the human society for a long time, the suburb is relatively newer and not fully explored.

Moreover, according to another semiologist, Norman Bryson (1949-), to recognise a visual sign not only lies in an individual's perception of colours, shapes, lights, and volumes, but lies also in the interpretation of the social and cultural meaning of what he or she has perceived.¹⁵¹ “‘Recognition’ is social. It takes one person to experience a sensation, it takes (at least) two to recognize a sign.”¹⁵² That is, when a picture is presented to our sight, an immediate sensation occurs and forms our perception. This perception is not a form of communication unless we attach to it its socially and culturally agreed meanings.¹⁵³ Following this, the thesis asks: how could the artists or the viewers of 1780-c.1850 know it was the suburb that they were painting or viewing had there not be a fully formulated and conceptualised idea of ‘suburb’ around the time?

Furthermore, there is an important question about what exact objects should an artist paint or draw to signify the suburb, i.e. the ‘iconography’ of a suburb. Located between the countryside and the city and developed for various purposes, suburbs can accommodate many different objects, such as farmhouses, manufactories, fields, trees, roads, and so on. These individual objects, when painted in pictures, make different

Albert Riedlinger; Roy Harris. (trans.) (London: G. Duckworth, 1983; 2008 printing) pp. 65-74.

¹⁵¹ Norman Bryson, ‘Semiology and Visual Interpretation’ in Norman Bryson et al. (eds.) *Visual Theory: Painting and Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). pp. 61-73. In pp. 62-4, he distinguishes the “Perceptualism” approach (the “perception” of shapes, colours, etc) from the “Semiology” approach (the “recognition” of signs). My following chapters use both the words ‘perception’ and ‘recognition’ when it comes to discussing the formation of a visual sign; I do not use the word ‘perception’ in the Perceptualism way as Bryson does.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-73.

visual signs themselves. For example, farmhouses can stand for a rural life and manufactories can signify industrial development. While these objects have diversified meanings, visualising all or a selection of them as located along the edge of a city could form a new, conglomerated sign to signify the particular space of suburb, and the meaning of this new visual sign can be manipulated: if the artist wants to present a 'rural suburb', he or she could just visualise rural objects; if he or she wants to emphasise industries all around a town in its suburbs, manufactories and industrial buildings have to be painted. In this way, the images of those ordinary landscape and topographic objects somehow become 'iconographical' because they are not just separate visual signs with their basic meanings, but combine to carry new meaning for a newly-perceived environment.

Drawing on these semiotics theories, my chapters frequently involve detailed visual analysis of pictures to find out what exactly composes or represses a representation of suburb and how the pictorial elements are arranged to signify or conceal the developing edges of the town.

Last but not least, there is a linguistic side to the semiotics which also provides a method for interpreting the pictures in question. According to Roland Barthes (1915-80), every sign has three relations: one interior and two exterior.¹⁵⁴ The first relation, the interior one, works between the signified and the signifier.¹⁵⁵ The second relation is

A virtual one that unites the sign to a specific reservoir of other signs it may be drawn from in order to be inserted in discourse...this second type of relation is therefore that of a system, sometimes called paradigm; we shall therefore call it a *paradigmatic* relation.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Susan Sontag (ed.), *A Roland Barthes Reader* (London: Vintage, 1993). pp. 211-2

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 211-2.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.211-2.

The third relation is

an actual one that unites the sign to other signs in the discourse preceding or succeeding it...the sign is longer situated with regard to its (virtual) “brothers” [the paradigm, the second type of relation], but with regard to its (actual) “neighbours”...We shall call the third relation the *syntagmatic* relation.¹⁵⁷

The first relation between the signifier and the signified has been discussed. The second relation, the *paradigmatic* one, can help us group similar pictorial motifs together. For example, trees and rocks may be categorised as natural signs, and markets and blocks of houses may be grouped as urban signs. The third relation, *syntagmatic*, helps us understand what the whole picture tries to express with all its pictorial elements connected. Combining the second and third relations, I further compare a picture to a word. In this way, I find that some specific parts of a picture could function like a prefix or a suffix of a word. For example, in a prospect of Birmingham, the foreground consisting of various rural and natural motifs can be taken as a pictorial ‘prefix’ that attaches to the distant townscape in the front. Thus, this foreground could complete the meaning of the prospect just like a prefix completing the meaning of a word (chapter one).

Overall, the semiotics theories are the theoretic framework of this thesis and I read my pictures in a semiotic way.

Archive and primary sources

My main archive is Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery (BMAG), especially its department of prints and drawings where topographic views are held, and the department of fine art where landscape painting is held. When I was conducting this research and writing the thesis, BMAG was also digitalising their catalogue, so I

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 211-2. The words in the square bracket are my annotation.

sometimes relied on the information publicised on their website.¹⁵⁸ My supportive archive is Birmingham Central Library (BCL), especially its map collection and Archive and Heritage Services.¹⁵⁹ Besides, the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists (RBSA) holds a number of drawings by the Lines family which are the subject of a doctoral research at the University of Birmingham and were exhibited as *Rediscovering the Lines Family: Drawings of Birmingham and beyond in the Nineteenth Century* in 2009.¹⁶⁰ I visited the exhibition in April, 2009 and will mention one of the exhibited drawings in chapter four. In addition, although not of much help, the Prints and Drawing Room and the collection centre at Kensington Olympia, British Museum were also visited.

As mentioned earlier, during my visits to the two main archives, I saw about five hundred different topographic views and landscape imageries produced between 1780 and 1850, excluding the countless reproductions and copied images. Many of them have not been systematically researched before and a number of the many pictures I have selected are researched for the first time.¹⁶¹ The media of these five hundred pictures are drawing, etching, engraving, lithograph, aquatint, watercolour, ink and oil. I do not include photography because the topographic photographs of Birmingham were not available until the late nineteenth century.

I shall also list some contemporary publications which I will carefully examine in my chapters. Wilkinson's Collection, BMAG, contains four red hard-back albums

¹⁵⁸ <http://www.bmagic.org.uk/>, consulted between 11/2007 and 12/2010.

¹⁵⁹ With the permission of the two institutes, I took photos of their collection to conduct my research, but I did not have professional equipment and excellent photography skills, so some photos, which I show in this thesis, turned out to be badly-focused or askew, for example figures 3-1 through 3-7.

¹⁶⁰ Connie Wan, *Rediscovering the Lines Family: Drawings of Birmingham and beyond in the Nineteenth Century* (Birmingham: Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, 2009); the exhibition was held in the middle of Wan's doctoral research.

¹⁶¹ BMAG held several exhibitions on various themes. As well as the Matthew Boulton exhibition, there were exhibitions on David Cox (accessed 04/2009) and 'Birmingham Seen' (accessed 12/2009), and a display of the nineteenth-century oil painting of the scenery around the town (accessed 07/2009) and another display on British watercolours exhibited in conjunction with a Swedish museum (accessed 04/2010).

whose pages are stuck with more than two hundred cuttings of pictures in total. All the cuttings come in categorised themes, such as churches, new streets, city centre, railways and halls. As well as having different themes, the cuttings vary in size, media, and source. The ways in which the albums juxtapose the pictures of the same theme provide a clear way to view the pictures and encourage me to compare and contrast each of them.

Besides, there are dozens of contemporary publications dedicated to introducing Birmingham, with many of them lavishly illustrated with prints made for the first time. For example, *Graphic illustrations of Warwickshire* contains 32 brand-new made plates to introduce the antiquarian and natural beauty of the county.¹⁶² It was first published in 1829. In 1836 it was republished under a new title *Warwickshire Illustrated: Historical, Descriptive, and Graphic*. In 1862, it was republished again under the original title. I use the 1862 version because its images, text, and editing are the most complete among the three versions. James Bisset engraved the first complete commercial directory of Birmingham, *A Magnificent Survey*, in 1808, with almost every page illustrated with an image of an individual company.¹⁶³ James Drake's *The Picture of Birmingham* concisely introduces the places around Birmingham.¹⁶⁴ As with *Graphic illustrations of Warwickshire*, I consulted Drake's later version of 1831 and 1837 which have the more complete information rather than the first version of 1825. For a full list of the contemporary publications whose illustrations form the subject of this thesis please refer to the bibliography.

¹⁶² William Radclyffe, *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire* (London: Beilby, Knott and Beilby, 1829; Birmingham: Underwood, 1836, 1862)

¹⁶³ James Bisset, *A Poetic Survey round Birmingham; with a brief description of the different curiosities and manufactories of the place ... Accompanied by a magnificent directory; with the names, professions, &c., superbly engraved in emblematic plates* (Birmingham: James Bisset, 1808)

¹⁶⁴ James Drake, *The Picture of Birmingham, being a Concise but Comprehensive Account of that Place; Intended for the Information both of Residents and Visitors* (Birmingham: James Drake, 1825; 1831; 1837)

Outline of each chapter

Chapter one explores the difficulty of representing the suburb as a result of industrial development; townscape views will be examined to find out the iconography of the suburb. While chapter one finds the representation of the suburb not so much an independent image in a townscape view, chapter two tries to find if the suburb can be represented in a more focused way as a proper visual theme. Besides, as chapter one explores townscape views, chapter two seeks the presence of the suburb via the representation of Nature. The pictures of Aston village and Aston Hall will be focused on in chapter two. Chapters one and two can be seen as making a pair because they approach the iconography of suburb from contradictory realms: the town and Nature.

Chapter three focuses on two important local artistic families, the Lineses and the Barbers, and explores how they contribute to the topographic view tradition of Birmingham. I will find in it the influence of the Picturesque and an unusual artistic ambition to symbolically protect the local environment from urbanisation through making drawings of it. Chapter four explores the social and cultural significance of the suburb by focusing on the representation of modern life. I will first discuss the rise of middle class and how the suburb as developing urban fringes provided a new space for them. The classic residential suburb of Birmingham, Edgbaston, will be introduced here. Then I will further investigate how the middle class' modern ways of life were represented in pictures, using T. J. Clark's formulation of the French painting of modern life. Chapters three and four also make a pair as they involve the question about genre (the Picturesque) and categorisation (topographic views or landscape painting).

Chapter five follows what chapter four has brought forward: the rise of middle class and their settling in the periphery of the town. Chapter five will concentrate on how the rising social class (industrialists, merchants, professionals, etc) moved away

from the over-crowded and polluted town centre into the country houses in the periphery of the town, which used to belong to the gentry. Besides, as the town grew bigger and bigger, those country houses, the chapter will find, actually became ‘suburban’ houses. Overall, the five chapters not only concentrate on the pictorial details, but also, through such visual engagement, illustrate the radical and challenging interrelation found in the experience of a new environment, the conception of a new thing, the recognition of a new sign, and the representation of a new idea during the fast-changing days of the British Industrialisation.

Abbreviations

BMAG=Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery

BCL= Birmingham Central Library

RBSA=Royal Birmingham Society of Artists

ODNB= Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

Chapter One The Iconography of the Suburb: a Struggle in Vision

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, ‘suburb’ means “the country lying immediately outside a town or city; more particularly, those residential parts...” and the word has been in use since the Middle Ages.¹⁶⁵ The reason why ‘suburb’ could exist as a word for such a long time may be that cities, the nuclear settlements to which suburbs are attached, have existed for a long time, too. So the areas on the periphery of a city could also be recognised and bear a name. Yet since suburbs have been developed for both industrial and residential purposes, why should the idea of suburb be particularly residential?¹⁶⁶ This chapter argues that the decades of Industrialisation already saw suburbs represented as the developing edges of a town or city undergoing industrialisation and urbanisation.

However, being able to see these edges, recognise their existence, and give them a pictorial form was not easy at all. Firstly, before the suburb could be defined, the image of the town should be defined first. Although the people in Birmingham were proud of their town and keen to enhance its visibility through various publications, they did not seem to reach a consensus about what exact image could most appropriately represent it.¹⁶⁷ This was particularly difficult to do since the town itself had not yet been properly represented in pictures, let alone its indistinct or anarchic edges. As a result, while local artists started to work out their representations of the town, those edges were very likely to be neglected or manipulated.

Secondly, even if the suburb had been noticed by artists, its being marginal and in between the town and the countryside made it difficult to be drawn or painted: both rural motifs like haymaking and urban objects like town houses had to be visualised at

¹⁶⁵ *Oxford English Dictionary*, <http://www.oed.com/>, last accessed 01/12/2010.

¹⁶⁶ Fishman, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-102.

¹⁶⁷ See the sections on Archive and Literature Review in Introduction.

the same time. Whether artists emphasised the rural, the urban, or both, the result of juxtaposing these different visual signs became a strange assortment that is difficult to understand or conceptualise.

Thirdly, such being the case, the manufactories which proliferated along the edges of the town might have been a distinctive sign to represent the environs of the town. Yet, intriguingly, while cartographers recognised the sight of manufactories and drew them, as seen in the 1848 panorama (Fig. 1-6f), artists, as this chapter will show, seem to have been reluctant to give a visual form to the unprecedented view and unsightly chimneys before they finally accepted them as part of the townscape.

I call the above complexity, limits, challenge and difficulty of representing the suburb, a struggle in vision.

I will investigate numerous topographic views of Birmingham made between 1780 and c.1850 to find out such a struggle. Section one focuses on the views of the town centre; section two focuses on prospects. Section one begins with how local artists eliminated the problematic sight of suburbs and manufactories to construct an idealised image of the town centre. David Cox's and Thomas Hollins' pictures of the heart of the town will be examined. Although their pictures emphasise very different aspects of the town, both of them were liked and frequently reproduced ever after, for example in the forms of individual prints, newspaper or book illustrations, and metal products. Interestingly, however, although both artists' works were frequently imitated and accepted as the standard representation of the then Birmingham, later artists imitating these images actually started to accommodate chimneys and factories in the background while still using the settings copied from Cox's or Hollins' drawings. The second half of section one will focus on this later change.

Section two changes perspectives and focuses on 'prospects', the views that see Birmingham from a distance from different directions (The only exception is Fig.

1-31, a view of the town centre made in 1886). In these prospects, suburbs seem to have a fuller form than in the views of the town centre. I will discuss how this fuller pictorial form developed in an iconographical way. I formulate three stages. On the first stage, I shall discuss how artists started to notice the suburban space and represented it in a naive way: simply transcribing what they saw on that space, from trees to workshops, on paper. On the second stage, I observe an integration of these objects into a belt-like distribution that stands between the town in the background and the countryside in the foreground. This might be a prototype of the image of the industrial suburb. On the final stage, I shall point out a clear, large image containing many factories and their smoking chimneys being formed. I will argue that this image can be considered a pictorial ‘topos’ and a sign of the town. (Explanation of the term ‘topos’ will follow). In the meantime, section two will also point out how these prospects were copied or imitated by later artists, and how such repetition might help reinforce viewers’ recognition and conception of the industrial suburb.

Theoretically, I read the images of various motifs as different signs, for example cows as signs of rural life, and manufactories as signs of industry. I shall also read the collection of these images as forming another sign, for example churches and town houses together signify the town, and the mix of factories and cows signifies the urbanised countryside, or ‘suburbs’ by my definition. When it comes to interpretation of specific pictures, Maxine Berg’s analysis of Hollins’ and J. M. W. Turner’s pictures will be referred.¹⁶⁸ In addition, Arscott, Pollock, and Wolff’s argument mentioned in Introduction will be consulted again in section two.¹⁶⁹ Over all, this chapter will conclude that, being always between the two more well-represented categories, the countryside and the city, the suburb as developing urban fringes is a difficult idea and

¹⁶⁸ Berg, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-31

¹⁶⁹ Arscott et al, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-233

its visual representation a struggle in vision. Any images of Birmingham in which its periphery is shown covered with manufactories should not be taken for granted. Such images are significant and iconographical, for they not only represent how artists and viewers gradually accepted an industrial scene, but also signify the conception of the (industrial) suburb.

I. The representation of the suburb in the views of the town centre

Two standard views: the 1810s and 1820s

David Cox (1783-1859) is a minor master of the nineteenth century. He was born and received his early artistic education in Birmingham and then developed his career in London. He stayed closely in touch with the artistic network in Birmingham and produced a large number of local topographic views.¹⁷⁰ One of the best known is a view looking south at the marketplace with St. Martin's Church in the background (Fig. 1-13).

This picture first appeared as number twenty-three of the thirty-two illustrations in *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire* first published in 1829. The pictures in the album were engraved by William Radclyffe, Cox's friend. Cox was not yet a big name and Radclyffe showed confidence in Cox by recommending him to make drawings for six pictures for that album.¹⁷¹ Later on, as mentioned in the Introduction of this thesis, the album proved popular and was reprinted and republished several times; it can therefore be inferred that this particular picture by Cox also became widely seen.

Posthumously, this image continued to be reproduced. It was selected in Dent's *The Making of Birmingham* in the late nineteenth century.¹⁷² It was also made into a tiled wall painting installed in Woodman Public House in Birmingham during the

¹⁷⁰ Osborne, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-83.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

¹⁷² Dent, *op. cit.*, *The Making of Birmingham*, 1894, p. 133.

1890s (1988F1542). In the twentieth century, the view is still considered by some scholars as representative of early Victorian Birmingham: Hopkins uses it as the tenth illustration in his widely known book mentioned in the literature review.¹⁷³ Cherry's equally popular book also shows the image as its Figure 3.5.¹⁷⁴

Being seen publicly in various media so frequently, this image seems to have come to standardise the way Birmingham should have looked. Yet it must be asked what sort of standard it provides and whether the image is really representative. In order to produce his best work, Cox had worked on numerous preparatory drawings and sketches since 1825. One preparatory drawing is possibly done with a camera obscura (Fig. 1-11). The drawing outlines the selected location, sets out the streets and architecture, and puts one human figure in the centre to give proportion. Another preparatory work is an ink sketch (Fig. 1-12). This sketch adds more human figures, such as shoppers, pedestrians, vendors and their stalls into the foreground. The additions in the ink version are adopted for the final version (Fig. 1-13). At first sight, the main difference between the pencil drawing and the ink sketch lies in one being an empty stage and the other a scene in action; as for the final version, it does not seem to substantially revise what the ink version provided, except that the facades, walls, roofs, and people's dress are shown with more detail and in a more refined manner.

Yet if we take a close look at the downhill lane to the left in all three pictures, we can see some intriguing changes (Fig. 1-14). This lane actually connects to Digbeth High Street, which links to Deritend, a long, narrow parish to the south-east of the town centre (Fig. 1-6e; see the area of Deritend in brown lines). Cox was born and grew up in Deritend.¹⁷⁵ In the pencil drawing (Fig. 1-14a), the lane is the only road seen from the site and without it the square would have no access to the areas

¹⁷³ Hopkins, *op. cit.*, the tenth illustration (not page-numbered)

¹⁷⁴ Cherry, *op. cit.*, figure 3.5, p. 55.

¹⁷⁵ Nathanael N. Solly, *Memoir of the Life of David Cox* (London, 1873).

behind. The entrance to the lane is clearly shown and its downhill path is visible (Fig. 1-14a); it seems that Cox felt comfortable enough to visualise the link, the lane, between the heart of the town and his birthplace. This lane is not only a functional route for the outer areas to connect to the town centre, but is also a symbolic ‘umbilical cord’ between the artist’s origin and destination. When Cox began to enrich and refine the picture, the entrance to the lane became blocked by vendors and stalls, as seen in the ink sketch (Fig. 1-14b). When the artist worked towards the final version, the entrance to the lane remains blocked by the market people, but its pathway is made visible again with human figures in gradually reduced sizes scattered along the slope (Fig. 1-14c). Thus the final version can be seen as a compromise between the pencil drawing and the ink sketch in terms of whether the lane should be made visible: its entrance remains blocked but its path is kept negotiable. In this way, the artist’s personal reference to his origin is preserved and manipulated as a seemingly unproblematic and pictorial device melting into the main theme, the marketplace, where the hustle and bustle remain core and rich.

It is important to point out that Deritend was regarded as an “out-part” of Birmingham¹⁷⁶ and was “surrounded by workshops and small forges” while Cox grew up.¹⁷⁷ Yet *The High Street Market, Birmingham* neither visualises any “out-parts” nor shows their topographic features. The only reference or representation of Deritend is the manipulated lane leading to it. This shows how the idea of “out-part”, or suburb, is difficult both in perception and representation. Moreover, even if Cox meant to show Deritend in this image of Birmingham, the forges and factories in Deritend were probably not a pleasant scene to paint or draw. Thus, the idea of the suburb became repressed not only because of its ambiguous location, but also because of the objects

¹⁷⁶ Hutton, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹⁷⁷ Solly, *op. cit.*, p. i.

it accommodated.

Giving up the difficult idea of suburb and the unsightly workshops, *The High Street Market, Birmingham* (Fig. 1-13) could concentrate on presenting the intended townscape: a genre scene with a busy morning market. There are three peddlers, a dozen stalls, another dozen shops, their awnings stretched along both sides of the street, and countless people in this marketplace. Although the crowds block us from seeing what is sold by most of the stalls, we can still see rabbits and poultry being sold in the foreground. While the rabbits were already dead and hung on the racks to the left, the poultry vendors sell both dead and living geese and ducks. The ducks (or geese) are so energetic that a country woman has to lean across a basket to catch one with her robust arms. The poultry is also so meaty that a dog is slavering over them. The living ducks and geese mean they are driven into the town alive, suggesting a short distance and a close connection between the countryside and the town. These living geese and ducks imply that the countryside relies on the town for its market, and the town relies on the countryside as its supplier of fresh food and agricultural products. This town-countryside relationship could suppress the suburb from being perceived. As a result, not showing the suburban area and the manufactories in it, Cox's picture clearly tells the viewers that Birmingham preserves an old way of life and is not just a place where things were made.

Moreover, if we examine the context in which this picture was first made, we can find more about the market scene. Among the thirty-two pictures in *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire*, only two are townscape views, and both were drawn by Cox. Since the other thirty pictures illustrate the rural and antiquarian beauty of the county¹⁷⁸, the two townscape views should also follow the overall editorial plan by looking pastoral. The first townscape view is *The High Street Market, Birmingham*

¹⁷⁸ Other plates on rural scenery will be discussed in my chapter 3.

(Fig. 1-13); the other is *Warwick* subtitled *St Mary's Church & County Hall*. *Warwick* does not centre on a marketplace. It depicts a public meeting in front of St Mary's Church. *Warwick* is not where Cox was born and grew up, so he might not have a strong opinion about its visual representation, but when it comes to Birmingham, his birthplace, Cox might have a clearer vision. As a result, he produced this idealised image in which manufactories and their smoking chimneys were out.

While Cox portrays a genre scene, another artist represents what the town should look like in a very different way. More than a decade earlier than Cox's picture, a civil engineer, Thomas Hollins, produced his version of the High Street in 1812 (Fig. 1-15).¹⁷⁹ The original drawing cannot be found, so here I use a print which BMAG infers to be the earliest reproduction of the original art work. The High Street market is replaced by a spacious and flat square. The steepness and crookedness of Cox's narrow lane on the left is removed and replaced by the wide entrance to Digbeth High Street. In addition to the entrance to Digbeth High Street on the left, the entrance to Jamaica Row on the right is also clearly seen. Showing the three wide roads in a 'Y' shape (with the access to one road in the foreground and the access to the other two roads in the middle-ground), Hollins declares the town centre to be spacious and user-friendly, and it is no surprise that a formally-dressed middle-class couple are taking a walk in it.

Indeed, all the details in this picture strive to present a polite and improved Birmingham with a finished infrastructure.¹⁸⁰ The roads are flattened. The blocks are neat. The pavements are done. The shop windows are nice and clean. The street lamps are installed. The railings outside St Martin's Church and around Nelson's statue are shining. To the right, the vehicle is most probably a stagecoach, given that

¹⁷⁹ The picture was wrongly attributed to the author's father, William Hollins (1763-1843); this error had been repeated ever since. I acknowledge Jo-Ann Curtis at BMAG for spotting this.

¹⁸⁰ Berg, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-21, but her discussion is based on a reproduced image on a metal tray.

stagecoaches were in service in the exact place around that time.¹⁸¹ People then were excited about the coach service, for it was an “admirable combination of speed and punctuality” and the early morning service could allow travellers to “see the light of the same day in Birmingham and in London.”¹⁸² Between the stagecoach and the Church stands a pyramidal water pump designed by Thomas Hollins’ father, William Hollins, arguably the first architect of Birmingham.¹⁸³ Like all the other facilities portrayed in the picture, the pump is also a utilitarian construction, which “had been long beneficial to the public” and stands for “Birmingham taste and science”.¹⁸⁴ Moreover, on the pavement to the far left, three gentlemen are in conversation at the door of a ‘printing office’ (see the sign on the wall of the first floor of the building); this can be read as a sign of literacy, socialisation and bureaucracy. Overall, the civil engineer’s vision of Birmingham is planned, developed, organised, improved, polite, user-friendly, and rich: the qualities the town would need to possess or advertise after its development in manufacturing.¹⁸⁵

Although Thomas Hollins’ picture looks so different from Cox’s, the way they treat suburbs is similar: both pictures compress the space where suburbs should be by closely juxtaposing the town and the countryside. In Cox’s version, although he still keeps the lane to Deritend as a link between the town centre and its periphery, the actual suburban space is eliminated (Fig. 1-13). Besides, the living ducks and geese suggest a close town-countryside relationship where suburbs are excluded. As for Thomas Hollins’ representation, what can be seen surrounding the town is not its developing edges but rolling hills. The rolling hills are executed in dashed lines and quick strokes, and most of them are left blank. This indicates that the civic engineer

¹⁸¹ George Yates, *a Historical and Descriptive Sketch of Birmingham* (Birmingham: Beilby, Knott and Beilby, 1830) p. 207.

¹⁸² Drake, *op. cit.*, 1831, pp. 102-3

¹⁸³ Yates, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

¹⁸⁴ Drake, *op. cit.*, 1831, p. 101.

¹⁸⁵ Berg, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-21.

wishes to concentrate on the townscape. The hilly countryside is beyond his, let alone the ambiguous space of suburb. A contemporary comment could explain this:

We are happy to announce that an ingenious artist of this town, Mr Thomas Hollins, has succeeded in making a very beautiful drawing of the High Street. The view takes in the whole-prospect from nearly the top of High Street, including the elegant statue erected to the immortal Nelson, St. Martin's Church, and the picturesque appearance of the adjacent country. We understand that Mr Hollins intends to publish a print from it immediately; and we are convinced that it will afford satisfaction to every person connected with the town of Birmingham, from the excellent style of the painting, and from the judicious point of view from which the artist has taken it.¹⁸⁶

The critic seems to enthusiastically agree with the viewpoint taken and to believe that it provides a proper representation of Birmingham. More importantly, within this image, suburbs are left out and only “the picturesque appearance of the adjacent country” should be seen.¹⁸⁷

This “very beautiful drawing” is no less popular than Cox’s image. For example, the engraving I use here is a reproduction (Fig. 1-15). There was also an aquatint made later (Fig. 1-16). Besides, probably Thomas Hollins’ kinsman made an oil painting (Fig. 1-17).¹⁸⁸ The oil painting and the white-chalked engraving have the same light scheme. The white-chalked surfaces in the engraving (Fig. 1-15), including the plinth of Nelson’s statue, the west-facing facades of the buildings to our left, and the horizontal extension behind the walking couple, are faithfully transcribed in oil paint in lighter colours to suggest exposure to the sun. Besides, the overall intention of showing the spacious and neat roads remains unchanged in the

¹⁸⁶ Langford, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-3.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

¹⁸⁸ The author of this oil painting is usually wrongly attributed to Thomas Hollins as a result of the wrong attribution of the original drawing to William Hollins.

oil version.

Moreover, Thomas Hollins' drawing also provided a pictorial basis for two japanned trays (Fig. 1-18).¹⁸⁹ The image in the tray with a golden frame (Fig. 1-18a) repeats the scene of the engraving (Fig. 1-15). The image inside the tray with a silver frame (Fig. 1-18b) makes changes to the figures. The silver tray shows a group of children to the left: two boys in hats and two girls in aprons. Besides, the man in a hat walking on the curved edge to the bottom-right of the silver tray is placed in an interesting position as if walking on the two-dimensional pavement and the three-dimensional tray at the same time. This image on the silver tray is published again in our time. In today's Birmingham it is made into a graphic board, introducing Nelson and his time, hung on the railing around the plinth Nelson's statue (Fig. 1-19). Last but not least, Thomas Hollins' picture, like Cox's, is used as illustration in Hopkins' book.¹⁹⁰ Overall, as Thomas Hollins' picture was no less popular and imitated than Cox's drawing, its visual exclusion of the suburb, whether unconscious or intentional, could have been influential and have continued to 'prevent' its viewers from being aware of the suburb as developing urban fringes.

In addition to showing a close relationship between the town and its countryside and being equally popular, what other features do the two images have in common? For example, how did they standardise the way in which the town should be presented? Basically, Cox's version is crowded market full of vendors, shoppers, and town and country men and women. Thomas Hollins' vision is a less-crowded intersection, neatly framed by roads, shops, and utilitarian constructions. Besides, Cox's scene is in the morning (see sunlight from the east/left hand side), the business hours for the market, while Thomas Hollins' view is in the afternoon (see sunlight

¹⁸⁹ <http://www.bmagic.org.uk/objects/1942F83> and <http://www.bmagic.org.uk/objects/1937F394>, last consulted 08/03/2009.

¹⁹⁰ Hopkins, *op. cit.*, the second illustration.

from the west/right hand side), the perfect time for a promenade. Then how can the two contradictory systems (a busy market for the lower-middle class in the morning vs. a spacious and public domain for the (upper-)middle class to promenade in the afternoon) contribute to a unified standard? It is because both of the systems are advertising:

While Thomas Hollins' picture demonstrates an eagerness to show that Birmingham is capable of providing civic improvement immediately after its industrial development, Cox's work turns the eagerness into a proposal that Birmingham can be considered an old market town, as decent and full of history as one can find compared to any other old towns in this country and on the European Continent. In other words, Cox tends to represent a timeless Birmingham and Thomas Hollins a timely Birmingham. Both of them are advertising how good-looking the new town can be, with one in an imaginary way and the other a flattering way. Together they set up a standard view: a townscape without industry and developing edges.

Later views

However, there were subtle changes to this standard in later years. While later artists continued to adopt Cox's and/or Hollins' ways of representing the town centre, they started to include manufactories and their chimneys in the background. Although such representation was based on the reality that manufactories had proliferated in and around the town since the early nineteenth century¹⁹¹, the fact that these later artists became aware of the industrial signs and their presence along the edges of the town should not be taken for granted.

An interesting example is an aquatint made after Thomas Hollis' original

¹⁹¹ Cherry, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-6.

drawing (Fig. 1-16). The aquatint repeats almost every object seen in the original picture (Fig. 1-15), including the middle-class couple, the stagecoach, the water pump, the gentlemen outside the print office, the woman with a basket followed by a dog, the pavements, the shop windows, and even the ‘picturesque’ countryside in the background to the right. However, the background to the left in this aquatint, instead of looking unspoiled like the background to the right, is actually filled with chimneys and factories.

More examples are the pictures made after the mid-nineteenth century (Figs. 1-20). They are collected on four consecutive pages of volume three, Wilkinson Collection, BMAG. I consider these images as made after Thomas Hollis and Cox and around the second half of the century because the figures in them are in Victorian costumes and the shops, street lamps, and vehicles in them also look like later additions to the High Street. I have tried very hard with the help of the BMAG staff to trace the original prints or drawings of each of the press cuttings, so that we can know their production years, authors, and etc, but none was found. As a result, I could only use their access numbers, which range from 1996V146.55 to .62, excluding 1996V146.59 because its motif (a portrait of St Martin’s Church) does not fit in our discussion.

The civil engineer’s wide and user-friendly High Street is imitated in 1996V146.55, .57, and .62. Among the three prints, 1996V146.55 (Fig. 1-20a) follows Hollins’ vision by showing middle-class couples promenading, with a couple in the centre of the foreground taking their child with them. 1996V146.57 (Fig. 1-20c) not only shows walkers, but also riders and cabs. 1996V146.62 (Fig. 1-20g) has a flattened and wide High Street, but it strangely replaces middle-class users with the poor, such as the deformed, refugees, labourers and urchins.

Cox’s timeless market town is also adopted in 1996V146.60 and .61. 1996V146.60 (Fig. 1-20 e) shows only a corner of the market and has a man holding a

sign in his left hand to the centre of the foreground, but the picture appears more crowded and messy than Cox's. 1996V146.61 (Fig. 1-20f) looks like copying Cox's picture because of four similarities. Firstly, the roofed stalls are similarly arranged in the middle ground against St Martin's Church. Second, the foreground is similarly occupied by vendors, but without stalls. Third, there is also a peddler to the right who has his goods in a basket on his head. Fourth, there is also a group of women gathering to the right of the picture. A difference from Cox's representation is the omnibus to the left.

Interestingly, the merits in Cox's and Hollins' representations can be combined. In 1996V146.56 and .58 (Figs. 1-20b and 1-20d), we not only see a marketplace, but also a wide road shared by vehicles and pedestrians. Particularly in 1996V146.56 (Fig. 1-20b), what resembles the civil engineer's vision are: the High Street is similarly wide and flat; the entrances to Digbeth High Street and Jamaica Row are also clearly shown; the pavements are spacious and clean; the street lamps are tall and modern. What resembles Cox's vision is in the middle ground, where a market starts by Nelson's statue and ends by St Martin's Church. Based on these details, 1996V146.56 provides a doubly-standardised view of Birmingham: the town not only had to look modern, but also historic.

In this combined scene (1996V146.56; Fig. 1-20b), surprisingly, factories and their chimneys are included, too. At the end of Digbeth High Street which leads to Deritend, we no longer see a blocked entrance (as in Cox's picture) or a cleared thoroughfare (as in Thomas Hollins'). We see a big smoking chimney and a giant kiln, and many other factory-like buildings occupy the hill. At the end of Jamaica Row, "the picturesque appearance of the adjacent country"¹⁹² is replaced by chimneys and their smoke. As well as 1996V146.56, 1996V146.55 and .62 (Figs.

¹⁹² Langford, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

1-20a and 1-20g) also represent the two corners in the background as full of industrial buildings. These two corners therefore look like two ‘niches’ fixed on the backgrounds of the pictures. If I may borrow the idea of ‘prefix’ and ‘suffix’ from morphology, I will compare the picture to a word and compare the small niches to a pictorial ‘suffix’ that completes the meaning of the whole image by attaching to its end.

If we try to identify the industrial buildings in these ‘niches’ using the 1848 panorama (Fig. 1-6f), the ‘niche’ at the end of Digbeth High Street to the left is probably composed of Birmingham Gas Works, Iron Plate Works, Deritend Tannery, chemical works, and etc. The depiction of these specific factories was not only based on the topographic reality, but also suggests how the ‘power station’ behind the town’s rising economy and civic pride became recognised. Following this, the space where these factories were located, the suburb, might also become more recognised than before.

To sum up, based on the aquatint and the seven prints made after Cox’s and Hollins’ pictures, we see the earlier artists’ visions (an old market town/ a polite and improved new town) being copied or combined. Yet the later pictures do not follow the tone of a close rural-urban relationship. Rather, these anonymous pictures, especially the aquatint, 1996V146.55, .56 and .62, started to include the developing edges of the town and let this new type of settlement squeeze between the town and its surrounding countryside. Although the industrial settlement still looks tiny like a ‘niche’ that ‘suffixes’ the pictures in their backgrounds, such a visual representation is significant to the conception of the suburb.

In this section on the standard views of the town centre, we began with Cox’s famous view of a genre scene in a crowded marketplace. We found how the picture manipulates the link to the artist’s origin and omits signs of industry. We also noticed

how this vision proved popular, well-accepted, and representative of an historical Birmingham. Then we explored another standard view by Thomas Hollins. The civic engineer realised his professional vision by showing a cleared and widened road full of urban utilities. We also know that his proposal was no less liked or copied in both contemporary and posthumous societies. Cox's timeless and Hollins' timely Birmingham set up a visual standard: an ideal appearance of Birmingham must not have unsightly industries and suburbs.

Following this, we then explored how later pictures copied and repeated the same ideal. Yet on some occasions, particularly when reflecting topographic changes, the later pictures began to visualise signs of industries in their backgrounds. This visualisation makes an image of the suburb. Although it looks as small as a niche, it still signifies the conception of the suburb and the struggle it takes to represent it.

II. The representation of the suburb in prospects

However, one may argue that the town-centred views we have seen so far do not necessarily provide a complete view of the surroundings of the town. Thus, this section changes the viewpoint by seeing the town from a distance. We will examine ten prospects and one city-centre view. Through examining these prospects we will find three different stages of representing the suburb: an initial form made of individual objects, then a prototypical image of the suburb in which those objects are integrated more closely together, and finally a clear image that functions as a sign, or a pictorial topos, of the suburb.

An initial form

In this section I will examine three pictures, one by J. M. W. Turner in 1795, and two by a local topographer/artist Lycett in 1826. I will find in them an initial method used

to represent the space of the suburb: literally draw each of the objects observed from the particular site. The artists' noticing the objects and buildings in a certain place means they started to be more aware of that particular environment and that they may then start to use the objects and buildings they have seen as signs to signify that place. So I consider being able to notice and then draw these objects an initial stage for an artist in becoming aware of a suburban environment. I will sometimes use the word 'item' to describe these objects and to emphasise how separately visualised they are, in order to distinguish them from another phase of visual representation (integrating the items into a scene) to be discussed in the next section.

J. M. W. Turner was commissioned to make drawings for topographic engravings of the scenery of the country since he was eighteen years old, and *Prospect of Birmingham* was made in this context in 1795 (Fig. 1-21).¹⁹³ The drawing was engraved by John Storer and John Walker to be published in the *Copper-Plate Magazine*.¹⁹⁴ I use a coloured version here because it helps me point out certain objects correctly.

The prospect shows the distant townscape against a heightened background and the surrounding countryside on a lower foreground within a V-shaped valley. The middle ground is large and loaded with a considerable number of items. Behind the carriage is a row of X-shaped racks, possibly for hanging dyed clothes produced by local minor clothes industry of the time.¹⁹⁵ To the right are a dye workshop (yellow-walled) and its warehouse (cream-walled). Behind them stand some trees. To the right of the trees are an empty field and then a massive warehouse, with an orange roof and white wall; to the left of the trees behind the X racks are clustered houses.

¹⁹³ Luke Herrmann, *Turner Prints: the Engraved Work of J. M. W. Turner* (New York: New York University Press, 1990), p. 10.

¹⁹⁴ John Walker, *The Copper Plate Magazine or Monthly Cabinets of Picturesque Prints Consisting of Sublime and Interesting Views in Great Britain and Ireland Beautifully Engraved by the Most Eminent Artists from the Paintings and Drawings of the First Masters* (London: John Walker, 1792).

¹⁹⁵ Skipp, *op. cit.*, *A History of Greater Birmingham*, pp. 37-8.

These houses look like those inside the town centre: both are in rosy colours and have the same shape. But this cluster of houses in the middle ground is obviously separated from the urban ones. What separates them is a row of blackish buildings spanning the edge of the town. The blackish houses are possibly factories or manufactories, for they are portrayed as smaller, shorter, and packed more closely together; some of them have chimneys. The blackish line is not only located at the edge of the town, but also maintains the visual unity of the town. Neat and pinkish urban houses are grouped with church spires, while a mixture of houses, dye houses, farmhouses, trees, empty fields, and a warehouse is kept outside the town.

This mixture at the edge of the town is too deliberately depicted to be ignored and is therefore a clear representation of the suburb. It has been argued that to include the countryside in a city's domain, as illustrated in this print, embodies Adam Smith's ideal in which a city should cooperate with its surrounding countryside to operate a regional economy, especially as there is a cart symbolising the connection between the two domains.¹⁹⁶ Yet I think this picture not only shows the city-countryside economy, but also, through the delicate depiction of the landscape items, shows what is squeezed but expanding between the two domains.

Apart from what J. M. W. Turner observed from the south side of the town, the other parts around Birmingham also offer something to signify its developing edges. For instance, Lycett produced two topographic surveys seeing the town from both the west and the east. *West View of Birmingham* made in 1826 (Fig. 1-22a) is a rare example which introduces the topography of the west side of the town. According to the 1825 map (Fig. 1-6d), most of the land to the west of the town is marked 'Gardens', which could be market gardens where vegetables are grown to supply the urban need. Here in *West View*, gardens as such can also be found in the field divided

¹⁹⁶ Berg, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-9.

into small square plots in the centre of the picture (in front of two big, white houses) and another similar field further behind to the right. In addition to the divided fields, other fields also come in regular shapes, as they are separated by paths, avenues of trees, fences and bushes. While some fields are sown with crops, many fields appear to be fallow or pasture with some cows.

On the same day as *West View of Birmingham* was published, Lycett's other work *East View of Birmingham* (Fig. 1-22b), was also published. While *West View* offers only its bottom-left corner as pasture for the cows, *East View* offers its entire foreground for cows to feed in and rest. Moreover, while the fields in *West View* appear more divided and therefore less spacious, the fields in *East View* look larger with fewer avenues of trees or paths cutting through them. To the left of *East View*, two people are surveying the scene while one raises his left arm towards the town, as if a measuring the distance to the town or the size of the land. Despite the fine differences, the two views provide an agricultural and symmetrical view of the town's east and west edges through an assortment of landscape items.

J. M. W. Turner's prospect shows the south side of the town as under industrial usage around 1795. Lycett's views show how the east and west sides of the town were still used for farming around 1826. The three pictures show how the edges of the town developed differently between the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century. Hence, both artists expressed their awareness of the developing edges of the town and provided an initial representation of the suburb.

Besides, judging from the symmetry in Lycett's views (Figs. 1-22a and 1-22b), the two images might have been commissioned works to focus on the specific fields in those areas. So the viewpoint had to be farther away from the town among the fields. As a result, his *East View*, for example, shows a large proportion of fields and puts industrial buildings into a thin line along the edge of the town. Yet two years later,

equally depicting the east side of the town, another artist, Thomas Creswick (1811-69), chose to present a townscape not beyond the green and rolling fields, but closer to the town through its industrially developed edges (Fig. 1-23).

A prototype of the image of the suburb

In this part of discussion I will examine four prospects (two original works and two copiers) to find out how individual items became integrated and formed a prototypical image of the suburb. While J. M. W. Turner and Lycett gave suburbs their initial image as a collection of buildings and landscape items, the artists in this section paid more attention to how these separated items, when depicted together, might have meaning. I will explore how they integrated the separate items into a scene and convey an awareness of the suburb using this integrated scene.

By ‘items’, as I have explained in the previous section, I meant a single pictorial element or motif, such as a river or a scene of haymaking. By ‘integrated’ I mean those single pictorial elements being painted more closely together in a fixed area, usually in the middle-ground, of the picture. The difference between an individual item and an integrated scene is that the former looks separate from other objects and do not necessarily connect to its neighbours, and the latter contains many objects which are painted closely together to form a group (rather like Barthes’ “*paradigmatic relation*”).¹⁹⁷ While the mere representation of individual items, as found in the previous section, shows an initial stage in which artists start to notice the suburb, the integration of those items suggest that they no longer merely signify themselves as being trees, huts, or warehouses; they combine to signify something else: a newly built-up place.

Thomas Creswick’s *Distant View of Birmingham* gives the suburb a fuller form

¹⁹⁷ Sontag, *op. cit.*, p. 211-2; see also the theory section in my Introduction.

by integrating those items into the space they occupy (Fig. 1-23). Unlike J. M. W. Turner's clear borders between the town and the suburb (the blackish line of small houses) and between the suburb and the countryside (the green slopes and the river bank) or Lycett's clear separation between the town and its market gardens, Creswick deliberately blurs the boundaries between each area. Although the foreground mostly accommodates rural elements, such as a river, waterfront weeds, trees, meadows, sheep, a single storey farm house with two slanting roofs (to the left of the horse-rider), it still contains at least two manufactories and one kiln. The two manufactories can be identified by the two giant, smoking chimneys between the trees to the right and in the centre of the picture. The conic kiln is located perfectly behind the left corner of the ridge of the farm house; behind the right corner stands a square church tower. While the two manufactories with smoking chimneys mix well with the other buildings nearby, the kiln also blends well with the church tower.

Using this mixture, Creswick clearly portrays the farther end of the foreground as a developing edge of some economic changes. Behind this edge is the middle-ground, a more packed, mixed and integrated space for industrial usage. To express this unique sight, the painter outlines each building with quicker brush strokes, rougher shapes, darker colours, and consecutive lines. These effects not only highlight the middle-ground, but also integrate the buildings into their location. As for the distant townscape in the background, in addition to blurring it by a smearing of colours and a light tint that spreads all over the atmosphere, Creswick also inserts a few chimneys and a windmill (along the skyline to the left) to maintain the impression of a busy Birmingham. As a whole, the painting blurs the boundary between the town and its countryside by highlighting the town's developing edges (in the farther end of the foreground) and providing a considerable volume of space to accommodate its industrial urbanisation (in the middle-ground). As a result, an industrial suburb is

integrated and clearly portrayed.

The formation of the suburb not only relies on what form the artist gave it, but also on whether society could recognise that space and its unique landscape. The painting was executed by the artist in his teens before he departed for London to develop his career.¹⁹⁸ Since the sign of industry is accepted along with the fact that Creswick painted the scene when he was just a teenager, it is reasonable to infer that the impression of Birmingham as industrial could have already been ‘recognised’ by people (after all, “it takes (at least) two (people) to recognize a sign”)¹⁹⁹. Moreover, like Cox who grew up in an environment full of workshops²⁰⁰, Creswick, whose father settled in Birmingham to do business in cutlery²⁰¹, might well have learnt about the town’s unique conditions for manufacturing during his childhood. This background is not necessarily the reason why Creswick was able to give a fuller form to the landscape of manufacturing, but must have at least familiarised the artist with the town’s main mode of economy and the resultant scenery. Therefore, leaving aesthetics aside, Creswick’s childhood memories worked up in his youth, and his society’s subsequent acceptance is also important to the conception of the suburb.

Creswick’s representation proved popular as it was made into a print renamed *View of Birmingham from Bordesley Fields near the Coventry Road* (Fig. 1-24). Without the media of oil painting, the print lacks the soft and tender atmosphere Creswick achieved. As a result, the outline of each vertical appears sharper and more rigid. Thus the factories look less integrated and it is harder to see them as forming a belt. Nevertheless, the print suggests how the original painting had been accepted by society and how this acceptance could help the viewers recognise the unique economy

¹⁹⁸ Wildman, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

¹⁹⁹ Bryson, *op. cit.*, p. 65. See also the section on theory in Introduction.

²⁰⁰ Solly, *op. cit.*, pp. i.

²⁰¹ Wildman, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

of the town, the resultant landscape, the development of the urban fringes, and the formation of the suburb.

Creswick's representation of an integrated surface makes a prototypical representation of the suburb, but is not the only one. More and more images with a similar pictorial scheme flooded onto the market. One example is S. T. Davis's *Birmingham from the South* (Fig. 1-25). Davis's work is also popular and copied, as seen in a later print (Fig. 1-26) and also in Dent's *Making of Birmingham* as an illustration explaining how manufacturing in the town rapidly increased around the 1840s.²⁰² Like Creswick's painting, Davis's picture also integrates factories into a bigger image at the edges of the town and blurs the boundaries between the core town, its suburbs, and the countryside, presenting a prospect of consecutive and well-connected layers.

The southern suburb in Davis's picture is enlarged and filled with more industrial buildings and economic activities than Creswick's east view. For instance, on the edge of the town are grouped more factories in grey and black. They are packed closely together and lose their individual identity. Standing side by side, they make a frontier line of workshops. Above them hover clouds of greyish air, fusing with the smoke emitted from the chimneys. In addition, both sides of the River Rea are enlarged and flattened; these two plains accommodate many figures and cattle. Moreover, while in Creswick's painting the skyline is dominated by church spires, in Davis's version the religious verticals are no longer the majority; more and more giant chimneys share the skyline. Specifically, the churches include, from the east to the west (from the right to the left), St Martin's Church (whose tapering spire has the darkest tint), St Philips' Cathedral (in the distance with a cupola), Christ Church (now demolished), and St Thomas's Church (to the furthest left). Between St Philip's

²⁰² Dent, *op. cit.*, *The Making of Birmingham*, 1894, p. 308.

Cathedral and Christ Church also stands the Town Hall with its Greek-temple façade. But these five landmarks of religious and civic importance are outnumbered by more than twenty smoking chimneys.

Overall, the expansion of urban space, the increase in the number of manufactories, the utilisation of the river banks, and the change of skyline may well have been the topographic reality of the town due to industrial growth, but the visualisation of these changes can also be read as an awareness and a confident representation of the unprecedented experience of the suburb as industrial urbanisation. With items integrated and the whole picture enriched, Davis's representation not only presents a prototypical image of the suburb like Creswick's painting did, but further renders the image into indivisible scenery of the townscape.

A later print copying Davis's work seems to provide the same density and integrity and teach the same scheme (Fig.1-26). The anonymous print seems to overemphasise the industrial skyline and then tries to compensate what has been overdone with some additional signs of Nature, like trees and the rainbow. The rainbow is particularly interesting because it resembles Constable's *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows* (Fig. 1-27). The spire of St Martin's Church is excluded from the span of the rainbow arch, while Constable's rainbow embraces Salisbury Cathedral. Even though Constable did not usually represent contemporary issues in his art, his painting the cathedral is still interpreted as showing concerns about the threats to the Anglican Church, especially as he was a close friend of the nephew of the Bishop of Salisbury.²⁰³ According to the interpretation that what is beneath the rainbow is something that the artist cares about, we can also interpret the things under the rainbow in this Birmingham picture to be the embodiment of the anonymous artist's concern: manufacturing was thriving, the town was expanding, the economy

²⁰³ Anne Lyles (ed.), *Constable: The Great Landscapes* (London: Tate, 2006) pp. 178-81.

was growing, the townscape and the local topography were also changing, and all these need to be seen and represented.

There is one more visual pointer that emphasises the spectacle of the industrial suburb: the three ladies regarding the scene with their backs to viewers. According to their shawls, skirts, and hats, they are most probably urban middle-class ladies. It is then curious why these urbanites appear in the immediate countryside of the town. It might be that they walk outside the town to enjoy the view after the rain when the sky and the ground are washed and a rainbow appears. We do not see any vehicles with male drivers or any male escorts. Probably the ladies come to this place by themselves on foot. This suggests that the area they are visiting is a safe and proper place.²⁰⁴ The path they take is next to the gate in the foreground (this gate appears in many other south prospects of Birmingham, as will be discussed later in this chapter). Therefore, the urban group's route and visit signify exchange and interaction among different types of built environment, and the place which accommodates such exchange is the suburb.

From J. M. W. Turner's and Lycett's 'items' to Creswick's and Davis's 'integration' of items, and from the prototypical image provided by Creswick and Davis to a reinforcement of such a prototypical image as made by their copiers, the representation of the suburb has a clearer form and can be read like an iconography. Earlier on when I was discussing the prints of the town centre made after the mid-nineteenth century (Figs. 1-16 and 1-22), I pointed out how the industrial suburb in them was portrayed like a 'niche' that 'suffixes' the background. Here I reiterate the morphological idea of prefix and suffix: the prototypical images of the suburb portrayed by Creswick, Davies and their followers can be seen as a pictorial device

²⁰⁴ More discussion on how the middle class utilised the suburb and made it a socially and culturally significant place is in my chapters four and five.

that ‘prefixes’ the townscape in the fore- and middle- grounds and completes the meaning of the whole prospect.

The industrial suburb as a topos and a sign of Birmingham

This final section explores how the prototypical image might be further developed. A further development could be a pictorial ‘topos’. Topos comes from Greek, *topo*, meaning ‘place’; in English there are other words having the same root, like utopia (a non-existing place) and topography (the graphic records of a place); it is a literary term referring to a plot or a story where certain protagonists appear and certain situations happen and lead to some (usually predictable) ending.²⁰⁵ Applying ‘topos’ here, I mean a topographic representation where certain pictorial motifs (manufactories) are arranged in certain ways (densely distributed in the periphery of the town) to denote a certain meaning (how the urban fringes developed and how the economy of the town thrived). Four townscape views will be discussed. The first was made by Henry Burn in 1845 (Fig. 1-28). The second is an anonymous print produced also in the nineteenth century (Fig. 1-30). The third was probably made in or after 1858 to commemorate Queen Victoria’s first visit to Birmingham (Fig. 2-25). The fourth is an officially commissioned engraving made in 1886 (Fig 1-31). I will argue that the four prints not only confidently represent the suburb as a place of industry, but also provide a pictorial topos for the suburb and a visual sign for the prosperous town.

The first illustration is Burn’s *The View of Birmingham from Highgate Fields* (Fig.1-28). This seemingly tranquil and sweet prospect actually has some manipulation that covertly makes viewers accept the industrial suburb it focuses on. In the centre of the engraving, a milkmaid holding a bucket on her head and a milking stool by her waist is in conversation with a hunter who leans against the bars of a gate.

²⁰⁵ *Oxford English Dictionary, op. cit.*

Burn seems very fond of this motif. In his *View of Leeds, from near the Halifax New Road* (Fig. 1-29) made one year later, the man, the woman and the gate appear again. In the Leeds picture, the man and the woman are farther from each other: the milkmaid remains next to a gate and carries a little girl with her and the hunter stands to the far left under a tree. Since hunting was the right of country landowners, the hunter is very likely to be a landed country gentleman or a farmer. It is then very interesting that he is shown separated from the landless servant by a gate. Moreover, while separated, the hunter seems to have freedom to choose if he wants to interact with the milkmaid (by the gate, as in Fig.1-28) or not (Fig. 1-29). The gate may therefore have a class, moral, or sexual implication. According to Arscott, Pollock, and Wolff, *View of Leeds, from near the Halifax New Road* “posits a fixed boundary and relationship between the rural and the non-rural.”²⁰⁶ But I think in *The View of Birmingham from Highgate Fields* (Fig.1-28), between the two poles of the rural and the non-rural there is a middle ground and some developing edges that challenge the rural-urban dichotomy and deserve to be read as an independent and third realm:

The ground where the woman stands is rolling and evenly vegetated on both sides. The fallen tree trunk by the pond to the left suggests a wilder, more natural environment. The ground behind the fence where the hunter wanders seems more spacious; it has a central path which goes downward to the right-hand side and descends to the pond where cows are drinking. While the milkmaid is the only user of her ‘territory’, the hunter’s ‘territory’ is used by both man and beast. The next layer behind the hunter seems more used, shown by the farm house by five poplars. Dividing the land into layers of different degrees of exploitation, Burn gradually releases and smoothes over their visual impact.

These layers have a visual effect which gradually smoothes the difference

²⁰⁶ Arscott et al., *op. cit.*, p. 219.

between the urban and rural environments and combine to form a new space. Crossing the farmhouse and poplars lie carefully divided fields. This layer is thin and long; more open land, huts and cows can be found at its right end. Further into the fields to the left are three workshops with chimneys. The three may appear separate, but there are many more workshops and manufactories along the edge of the town, taking advantage of being close to the industrial core. The forest of chimneys encompasses the final layer, the townscape, where endless buildings gather. From far to near, these layers demonstrate a gradual decrease in human involvement (urban settlement, then suburban industries, then farming, and then country life) as well as a gradual increase of rurality. These layers, and the subtlety they are rendered with, make viewers accept the industrial appearance of the developing edges and feel that it is natural for Birmingham to look industrial with so many chimneys around it.

In this prospect of Birmingham, items, layers and belts seem endlessly repeated and mixed. It seems that to represent the suburb is not only about integrating items, but also about repeating them. This can be monotonous, but it is through the monotony that we see a struggle in vision and the limits of representing such a marginal, expanding, and unprecedented space: there is simply no received iconography to register that particular realm onto one's vision. Because of the repeated items and layers, the print presents a descriptive assortment, but it is also because of the juxtaposition and repetition that the picture becomes prescriptive: it provides a visual formula, however meretricious, of how to visualise Birmingham and its periphery during the decades in which the town reached its climax of industrialisation and development.

The next example is poignant (Fig. 1-30). Unlike previous images which merely bathe church spires in smoke, this image allows industrial buildings to engulf the churches. St Martin's Church (which has the highest spire in the centre of the

picture) appears to have no other neighbours but manufactories; St Thomas's Church to the left is completely buried in an industrial district, where a gutter-like canal flows by. These workshops and manufactories are so many and look so large that the suburban space is not enough for them. As a result, they could only develop inward and colonise the town centre. The town centre therefore has extremely limited room for religious consolation and civic improvement and becomes a huge and busy complex comprising endless manufactories and chimneys. Even though the foreground is reserved for trees and grass, the overall scenery still looks very packed and breathless. This merciless exaggeration makes the town look like an inferno, especially as the clouds surge into strange shapes and the sunshine penetrates them like inauspicious lightning; this may be why the figures in the bottom-left corner appear scared and intended to walk away.

Ironically, the print is titled '*General View of Birmingham*' without specifying where exactly around Birmingham this scene is. The title implies that the picture simply aims to show how many manufactories there were in Birmingham and how industrial the town looks. The idea behind the picture is poignant and exaggerated, but it might be a consensus: nothing visually signifies Birmingham better than an industrial suburb filled with manufactories. In doing so, a pictorial topos of Birmingham, though poignant, is proposed.

Another example of how the industrial background and suburban development of the town were recognised is *The Queen's Visit to Birmingham* (Fig. 2-25). Queen Victoria visited Birmingham for two times, the first time being in 1858 to inaugurate the opening of Aston Hall and Park, located one and a half miles to the north of the town. This print imagines the royal guests appreciating the distant townscape from the back garden of the hall. The townscape they are looking at comprises countless tall and smoking chimneys. The presence of the chimneys in front of the queen strongly

indicates that the artist thinks the industrial development in the suburb of the town is characteristic and representative of Birmingham and presentable to the queen.

An officially commissioned print can be read as a positive conclusion of this series on topos (Fig. 1-31). The engraving whole-heartedly accepts Birmingham as industrial and confidently uses industries as a sign to promote the town. The image was made in 1886, when the town had most of its civic constructions completed and expected its upgrade into a city in 1889. In addition to showing the ‘city’ centre with the Town Hall, Council House (the block in the middle), Christ Church, the old library, the square with a Gothic shrine and a fountain, Mason College (the forerunner of the University of Birmingham), and so on, the view does not omit the developing edges: bunches of railways, piles of factories, forests of chimneys, and fogs of smoke cover the entire background. This generous inclusion and bold representation show how the emerging city began to appreciate its unique past and new face of industry.²⁰⁷ As a result, the industrial scene is represented, the face of the city is perfected, an enthusiastic topos is formed, and a sign of Birmingham is ready.

To sum up, throughout the ten prospects and the final engraving, we see how the idea and the image of the industrial suburb were gradually constructed in three phases. Because of the pictorial evolution and the iconographic significance, any image of Birmingham with manufactories and chimneys in it should not be taken for granted.

When examining the prospects of Leeds and Manchester showing numerous factories and chimneys, Arscott, Pollock, and Wolff argue:

²⁰⁷ David Hemsoll et al., *Building the Future: Birmingham's Architectural Story* (Birmingham: the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, 2009)

Representations of towns and cities, or such urban features as factories, require to be read across a complex map of historical shifts, new economical relations and unsettled meanings. It is crucial to remember, of course, that many industrial installations were built in rural areas, dependent as many initially were on water power and transport.²⁰⁸

I agree with the “complex map” about history and economy, but after exploring how manufactories and the suburb combined to ‘earn’ their visual representation in the Birmingham pictures, I think that “representations of towns and cities, or such urban features as factories” is not clear enough because those factories were not built inside the town, but outside the town as the frontier of its urbanisation and continue to encroach upon the immediate countryside, encouraging us to seriously consider the idea of the suburb.

This chapter started with the definition of ‘suburb’ in the English Language and hypothesised that Birmingham during its industrialisation already saw the suburb in the form of industry. However, being able to represent (for artists) and to see (for viewers) the suburb is a struggle in vision: the image of the town (centre) had not been confirmed, the suburban space appeared unprecedented; and the manufactories on the suburb could have been too unsightly to be painted. With these difficulties and limitations, the representation of the suburb might not be an independent image and could only have a ‘relative’ existence in townscape views.

We examined two types of townscapes views: views of the town centre and also its prospects. Section one investigated Cox’s ‘timeless’ market scene (Fig. 1-13) and Hollins’ improved and ‘timely’ High Street (Fig. 1-15). We found how both pictures provided a visual standard to represent the town and excluded the sight of industries and developing urban edges. We also explored how later prints depicting the same venue continued to repeat the standard, but began to include signs of industry and the

²⁰⁸ Arscott et al. *op. cit.*, p. 214.

industrial suburb (Figs. 1-19 and 1-20). Although the depiction look likes a small 'niche', 'suffixing' the townscape view in the background, it is still an important representation of the industrial suburb.

In order to find a fuller and larger visual form of the suburb, we turned to prospects. We first found that the suburb in the prospects by J. M. W. Turner (Fig. 1-21) and Lycett (Figs. 1-22a and 1-22b) are signified through an assortment of landscape items. Then we found how these items were integrated, i.e. painted more closely together, in Creswick's (Fig. 1-23), Davis' (Fig. 1-25) and their followers works (Figs. 1-24 and 1-26). This integration is a prototypical image of the (industrial) suburb. Finally, whether in beautiful layers (Fig. 1-28) or by poignant exaggeration (Fig. 1-30), whether an imaginative or commissioned work (Fig. 2-25 and Fig. 1-31), we found a pictorial topos and a visual sign of the town.

In conclusion, 'views of town centre' portray the image of the suburb as a 'suffix', a niche in the background. Prospects, on the other hand, portray the image of the suburb as a 'prefix' in the foreground. Although the 'suffix' and the 'prefix' are not independent images, they still signify how much struggle and difficulty it took to represent the unprecedented experience of the suburb as industrial urbanisation.

Chapter Two The Suburb as a Specific Place: Aston, and its Visual Representation

Chapter one explored how the suburb as the periphery of the town was represented in townscape imageries. The suburb in these images is always sandwiched between the foreground and the background, and its iconography becomes either a ‘belt’ ‘prefixing’ the pictures near the foreground or a ‘niche’ ‘suffixing’ them near the background. Thus, the representation of suburb exposes a difficulty in perception and conception, and a struggle in vision.

Is it possible, however, that the suburb can be represented as something independent and well-focused? This chapter addresses the idea of suburb as a specific place or a settlement and investigates its iconography. While chapter one considered the suburb in relation to the town, this chapter will consider it in relation to the opposite of the town, Nature. Besides, unlike the representation of suburb found in chapter one which only has a ‘relative’ existence (relying on the presence of the town), this chapter hopes to find for the representation of suburb a clear and self-referring image.

The place of Aston, both as a manor to the north and a parish to the north-east of Birmingham (Fig. 1-6e), will be focused. Except for two drawings, the rest of the pictures to be discussed in this chapter are the views around Aston Hall (about one and a half miles to the north of St Martin’s Church). According to my archival findings, there were nearly a hundred views of Aston and Aston Hall produced between the late eighteenth and the late nineteenth century. This number is far greater than those of the views of other settlements around Birmingham. This great number enables the views to tell a more complete story about how a settlement under the pressure of the expanding town was viewed and represented. Although Aston was not

officially included in Greater Birmingham until 1911²⁰⁹, its changing relation to the city had already characterised it as an ambiguous yet interesting suburb, and it is therefore no wonder why in the 1890s Dent already called Aston a “suburb”.²¹⁰

I shall briefly introduce the history of Aston and Aston Hall and explain how the flow of argument of this chapter is structured parallel to that history. Section one focuses on the representations made before 1837, when Aston was still a rural village in Warwickshire.²¹¹ Aston Hall was built in the sixteenth century for the Holte family who lived there until the early nineteenth century. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, as my archival findings show, Birmingham artists began to make drawings and paintings for the village and the hall. Section one will try to explain the popularity of Aston (Hall) as a pictorial theme and explore how the place was represented, despite its proximity to the busy town, like an unspoiled source of Nature.

Indeed, Aston Hall being a country house in a natural and tranquil setting remote from Birmingham may well have been an illusion, especially after the Grand Junction Railway opened in 1837. Section two therefore focuses on the representation of the industrial side of the area. I will begin with two drawings of two smaller-scale and local factories. I will discuss how they are represented as not destructive of their environment. I will then argue how the coming of the railway breaks the rural illusion and forces recognition of the forming of the suburb. Besides, as artists began to show railways, trains, or locomotives in their art, how these industrial and new subjects were depicted will also be discussed.

While the above pictures show how Aston had been industrialised by the

²⁰⁹ In November 1911, Aston, Yardley and several other places around Birmingham were included in the metropolis under the Greater Birmingham Act. See *Chronology of Birmingham 1883-1950* provided by Birmingham City Council, last accessed 19/07/2011.

<http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/cs/Satellite?c=Page&childpagename=Lib-Central-Archives-and-Heritage%2FPageLayout&cid=1223092760254&pagename=BCC%2FCommon%2FWrapper%2FWrapper>

²¹⁰ Dent, *op. cit.*, *The Making of Birmingham*, 1894, p. 340.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 340.

railway, section three explores how the feeling of Nature came back as the place became a public park. Queen Victoria came to Birmingham in 1858 to inaugurate the opening of Aston Hall and Park. Following this event, I will argue, the views made in or after 1858 represent the venue as a modern place occupied by middle-class visitors. Although the pictures were produced later than the scope of the thesis (1780-c.1850), I shall still use them to show how the ambiguous status of this suburb-to-be became more clearly defined after the mid-nineteenth century.

Overall, although Aston had been a settlement separate from Birmingham and did not officially become its suburb until 1911, the pictures made between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth century already see the place as a suburb, for they portray the ambiguity, changes, development and mixture Aston had confronted. After all, the process by which a town develops and encroaches upon (urbanises) its surrounding areas is exactly the story of the suburb; local artists might not have a precise vocabulary to tell the story, but their pictures do represent a suburb under formation.

I. Aston before 1837

The earliest picture of Aston Hall I could find is an engraving made in the early eighteenth century by Samuel and Nathaniel Buck (Fig. 2-1). The artists travelled extensively in England and made numerous topographic views during the early eighteenth century. Their oeuvre reflected the cultural practices of contemporary society in many ways, such as the fashion of the Antiquity.²¹² This particular engraving emphasises the architectural details of the county house, including its spacious front terrace, delicate façades, bay windows, gables, gabled walls, towers,

²¹² Mark Hallet and Jane Rendall (eds.). *Eighteenth-Century York: Culture, Space and Society* (York: Borthwick Institute, 2003).

gate houses and side gardens. The clarity of these architectural details not only helps us trace how the country house had been renovated in the following centuries, but also contrasts with the way in which later artists viewed the hall: they began to pay attention to the natural environment of the hall. In the following I will explore five pictures as such (Figs. 2-2 through to 2-6).

The first one is Samuel Lines' (1778-1863) *Aston Hall and Park* (Fig. 2-2). By the time he produced the painting, Samuel Lines was still as a workshop apprentice, not yet a drawing master which he later became.²¹³ Thus the watercolour is probably a practice piece. Yet even a practice piece like this shows an interest in the natural setting of the hall.

In terms of colour scheme, the painting uses cold colours like blue and green to emphasise the greenery of the place. According to the green leaves of the trees and the direction of the sunlight, the painting sees the hall from the north in a summer afternoon. Yet the heat of summer is cooled with the green-and-blue tint. The tint can be observed from the various layers of grey, blue, green and yellow, which are well diffused and diluted upon the surface of each painted object, including the trees, the pond, the ground and the hall. The colouring conveys a cool atmosphere and makes the painting appear tranquil and sweet.

In terms of composition, the picture can be divided into three grounds. The foreground is completely shaded. It has a pool, some reeds and trees on the right. An indistinct path winds and stretches from the shadow into the middle ground, where the sunlight suddenly appears and shines on the crowns of the white-trunked trees. Behind the trees is a pond with higher lawns on both sides. The background has at its centre the profile of the hall painted in a greyish and misty manner. The fore and middle grounds form a stage to frame the hall: the foreground is covered by

²¹³ Wan, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

vegetation to the right and the middle ground is similarly covered to the left, thus creating an empty area in the centre to seat the hall. While the foreground is in shadow and the middle ground sunlit, the background turns shadowy again even as it centralises the subject of the painting, Aston Hall. Although 'staged' in the centre, the hall is not portrayed with clear architectural details. By contrast, it looks vague, modest, controlled, and dimmed like a silhouette, as if it will fade out into the misty sky at any moment. Overall, while Buck's engraving focuses on the fine exterior of the hall, Samuel Lines' watercolour might mean to include the entire area, as suggested by the title *Aston Hall and Park*, instead of just the hall.

Another local artist, Joseph Vincent Barber (1788-1838), had a similar vision. His *View of Aston Hall from the Staffordshire Pool* (Fig. 2-4) is dedicated to the green environment. It is unknown where and what exactly the Staffordshire Pool was. It might be the pool in the foreground of the painting. If this is the case, it is then strange why the pool was named after Staffordshire, since the area was in Warwickshire, not in Staffordshire which is farther north. It might be that the water in that pool came from or went to Staffordshire, but this needs further verification. In today's Aston, there are 'Staffordshire Pool Road' and 'Staffordshire Pool Close'.

Compared with Samuel Line's picture which has a northern viewpoint, Joseph Vincent Barber's version has a north-western viewpoint and this angle can include more view of the building. Except for the different angles, the two pictures have many in common. For example, the right half of Joseph Vincent Barber's painting looks almost exactly the same as Samuel Lines' entire picture, especially considering the round-top trees in the middle ground in both paintings. Besides, there is also a three-layered composition in Joseph Vincent Barber's painting: a shadowed and darker foreground, a lit and lighter-colour middle-ground, and then the hall seated in the distant centre.

While Samuel Lines applied clumpy colours to represent Nature, Joseph Vincent Barber provided clear and detailed depiction of each plant. For example, in the foreground the foliage of the ashes is well illustrated and each twig has a clear direction of growth. The trees bend towards the right and parallel the weeds underneath, whose slim stems also slant to the right. Along the viewers' side of the bank grows a broken line of vegetation, which the artist patiently painted with dot brushes in dark-green pigment. On the far side of the pool are three groups of round-crowned trees to the right, and some overgrowth to the left. There is also a lonely round-topped tree standing by itself near the corner of the hall.

Both Samuel Lines and Joseph Vincent Barber express their interest in Nature through painting Aston Hall. Although the hall was located very close to the town, its relation to the urban environment is not represented in the two paintings at all. Instead, both watercolours represent the hall and its environment as unspoiled Nature without any reference to urbanisation or industrialisation. In doing so, Aston and Aston Hall became a symbol that Birmingham at the time, however prosperous and rapidly-growing with manufacturing, still preserved a feeling of Nature in its periphery.

The belief that Birmingham should be surrounded by Nature does characterise Joseph Vincent Barber's style as an artist. Apart from the watercolour, he made another four representations of a rural Aston Hall, including three plates (Figs. 2-4, 2-10, and 2-13) and one vignette (Fig. 2-5), all published in *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire*.²¹⁴ Appearing four times in the same album, Aston Hall needed to have

²¹⁴ William Radclyffe, *op. cit.*, *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire*, 1829 and 1862

The album in total has thirty-two plates. Joseph Vincent Barber made drawings for eight plates. He and another artist Westall A.R.A were the only two artists who respectively made drawings for eight plates. The other five artists of the album, including David Cox, only made drawings for one to six plates each. Joseph Vincent Barber's eight drawings include *Kenilworth Castle* (two plates), *Charlecote* (one plate), *Ragley and Alcester* (one plate), three plates on Aston Hall to be discussed in this chapter, and *Leamington Priors and Warwick from Newbold Hill* (one plate) to be discussed in chapter three.

different faces, and Joseph Vincent Barber knew how to do it. He drew a nocturnal scene of the south side of the hall with deer (Fig. 2-4), a scene of haymaking in the avenue in front of the hall (Fig. 2-10), a view seeing the hall from a distant meadow with a brook (Fig.2-13), and a daytime version of Aston Hall with deer (Fig. 2-5). I will discuss the two pictures with deer in the following, and the other two images in section two.

The first picture with deer in it is called *Deer in Aston Park* or *Aston Hall: Twilight* (Fig. 2-4). The view sees the hall from the south, so the moon in the sky is rising from the east and the sun is setting in the west, where a small part of sky remains lit and white (to the left of the background between a tree and the hall). Thus “twilight” here means dusk, not dawn. Under the pale moonlight, the scene looks like a tender invitation from the dark. The foreground is lowered and separated from the middle ground by a *haha*, a sunken fence. The *haha* starts at the foot of the wall outside the west exterior of the hall and a sunken slope can be seen next to the big tree to the left. The *haha* divides the man-made building from the natural and wild world. Above the *haha* stands Aston Hall, which looks as if falling asleep by nightfall. Below the *haha* are a herd of seventeen bucks, does and fawns, plus one buck standing at the edge of the wood to the right, and two alert rabbits outside their lair at the bottom-right corner. While the sign of civilisation goes to sleep, the signs of Nature (the animals) wake up. Although deer are usually put in a country park to add gracefulness, Joseph Vincent Barber’s representation of them provides a wild, natural atmosphere to the picture.

The artist’s another view with deer is a daytime scene (Fig. 2-5). Daytime could reduce the mysteriousness of the environment and the deer which are being walled in the front yard of the hall appear less wild and more domestic. Nevertheless, the artist’s vision remains consistent: instead of introducing human figures (as in the case of

Buck's work, Fig. 2-1), he continues to use deer as the sole company of Aston Hall. Interestingly, this day-time version, with its simpler composition and less pictorial elements, was imitated and copied more frequently by later artists, as seen in Figs. 2-30 and 2-31, than the nocturnal scene. Over all, the two pictures with deer illustrate Joseph Vincent Barber's vision of Aston Hall as a source of Nature. In doing so, the artist set up one mode of representing the town's suburban area and was consistent with it.

Like his friend Joseph Vincent Barber, Cox also places Aston Hall among Nature in his art, although he is not as consistent with this method. In the following I will discuss Cox's initial approach and explore his changes in section two. Teaching and practicing landscape painting throughout his lifetime, Cox produced several publications expounding his theme. The first is *A Treatise on Landscape Painting and Effect in Water Colours: from the First Rudiments to the Finished Pictures with Examples in Outline, Effect, and Colouring* (from now on referred to as *A Treatise*), published in instalments from March 1813 to February 1814.²¹⁵ However, Cox found beginners need simpler exercises, so he started to produce soft-ground etchings particularly for younger artists to copy. These works were published regularly between 1816 and 1820 and ended up as a collection of sixteen volumes.²¹⁶ In 1841, he also published a book dedicated to watercolour landscape painting.²¹⁷

In *A Treatise*, there is a soft ground etching of Aston Hall (Fig. 2-6). Before I examine the picture, I will discuss how it is arranged in the book. The book is the earliest collective output of Cox's expertise and could contain what he was most eager

²¹⁵ David Cox, *A Treatise on Landscape Painting and Effect in Water Colours: from the First Rudiments to the Finished Pictures with Examples in Outline, Effect, and Colouring* (London: S&J Fuller, 1814).

²¹⁶ David Cox, *Progressive Lessons on Landscape for Young Beginners* (London: S&J Fuller, 1816). David Cox, *The Young Artist's Companion* (London: S&J Fuller, 1820).

²¹⁷ David Cox, *A Series of Progressive Lessons Intended to Elucidate the Art of Painting in Watercolour* (Birmingham: Ackermann & Co., 1841)

to impart or represent. Therefore, this specific representation of Aston Hall is of particular interest. *A Treatise* contains two parts: text and “examples” (pictures). The text has six sections: (1) publishing information, (2) “Advertisement”, (3) “General Observations of Landscape Painting” (four pages of Cox’s concepts and principals on landscape painting), (4) “On Outline” (four pages), (5) “On Light and Shade, and Effect” (eight pages), and (6) “On Colouring” (two pages). The last three words in the title of the book, i.e. “Outline, Effect, and Colouring” actually refer to sections (4), (5), and (6).

After the text come forty-three pages of pictures. They can be divided into (a) etchings (twenty-five pages) for readers to copy with pencils, (b) monochrome aquatints (sixteen pages) to be copied with washes of India ink, and (c) coloured aquatints (two pages) to be copied with watercolours. The sequence of pictures is in accordance with that in the text: (a) to go with (4) (etchings to go with “On Outline”), (b) to go with (5) (monochrome aquatints to go with “On Light and Shade, and Effect”), and (c) to go with (6) (coloured aquatints with “On Colouring”). According to this we find a step-by-step pedagogy that teaches the readers “from the first rudiments to the finished pictures”, as claimed by the title of the book.

Among the twenty-five pages of etchings, the twenty-first is the soft-ground etching of *Aston Hall near Birmingham* (Fig. 2-6). The twenty-five-etching series starts with still life such as jars, baskets, boxes and fences. Then the objects become doorways, façades, bridges, cottages and mills. After these are etchings of trees, fields, boats, and landscape with both buildings and natural elements, such as *Aston Hall near Birmingham* (Fig. 2-6). According to Cox’s text in the section “On Outline”, which these etchings should go with,

...the pupil will find his progress greatly accelerated by the dedication of his leisure moments to copying objects of

still life- a practice which will be found replete with advantages, when he studies combination of subjects for composition of landscape scenery.²¹⁸

Put towards the end of the etching series, which serves as a model for practicing how to draw outlines with pencils, this particular etching on Aston Hall requires advanced drawing skills as it contains many different objects: weeds, walls, trees and architecture, each of which needs considerable practice in order to perfect.

If, say, a hard-working pupil has practiced very well in drawing the outlines of all the etchings provided before *Aston Hall near Birmingham*, then what is the lesson here “when he studies combination of subjects for composition of landscape scenery”²¹⁹, as visualised in this etching? The lesson may be observation of Nature. “The best and the surest method of obtaining instructions of Works of other is not so much by copying them, as by drawing the same subjects from Nature immediately after a critical examination of them, while they are fresh in the memory.”²²⁰ That is, even though the etchings were made for copying, towards the end of the etching series Cox still introduces a complicated landscape of Aston Hall, whose outline is not easy to copy, to remind the readers to go for their own “critical examination” and “fresh memory” of “Nature.” So the etching of *Aston Hall near Birmingham* not only serves as a model for copying its outlines, but also as an anti-copying model to encourage spontaneous contact with Nature.

Yet there is a problem with what Cox means by “Nature”: he writes “Nature” but draws Aston Hall. What makes Aston Hall “Nature”? There are two possibilities. The first possibility is the scene demonstrates the power of Nature. The picture shows the back of the south wing, a side wing, not the main wing. The south wing stands on a higher ground which is separated from the lower ground by a dilapidated wall and a

²¹⁸ Cox, *op. cit.*, *A Treatise*, p. 10.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12 (the text is in the section “On Outline”).

haha (possibly the same as that in Fig. 2-4). On the lower ground to the right is a big tree behind a small door. There are three old and skinny dogs, with two in search of something (maybe food) in the messy and thick grass. The tree, the messy grass, and the piles of unknown plants at the bottom of the picture to the right have verisimilitude because each stroke, thick or thin, dark or light, is clearly drawn and etched. They are indeed Nature's products and Cox also thinks:

A greater degree of minuteness, however, ought to be observed in the Outline of the fore-ground of a picture, where the features of object assume a more specific appearance,.....it will be necessary to make correct drawings from Nature, of weeds, plants, bark of trees, and such objects as usually constitute the foreground of a landscape.²²¹

By "Nature" here Cox means exact objects, such as weeds, which must be in the foreground. Then how about the thing beyond the foreground: the dogs, the wall, and the hall? If examined carefully, the wall can be seen as ruinous and the dogs are aged and skinny. Besides, the hall itself was a historic building. The objects beyond the foreground are therefore also part of Nature because their old appearance embodies the passing of time and the power of Nature.

The second possibility lies in how Cox locates Aston Hall in relation to Birmingham. He names this work *Aston Hall near Birmingham*. The textbook to which the etching belongs was published in London and targeted at a nationwide readership. It proved successful and the artist was involved in the publication of more books that teach similar themes (discussed earlier). If the name of the etching were just '*Aston Hall*', readers from other parts of the country might not necessarily know where it is. So 'Birmingham' needs to be added to the title of the etching. But mentioning Birmingham does not mean the artist has to provide something of

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10 (the text is in the section "On Outline").

Birmingham. Instead, he provides something wild, overgrown, and worn by time: nothing like the general, industrial impression contemporary society would have of the rising, manufacturing town. Clearly, Aston Hall here is made part of Nature by the artist. Although Cox regards weeds and plants as natural objects²²² and never says artificial things are Nature, the way he draws the man-made hall and mixes it with the other signs of Nature shows how the peripheral site was appropriated as a source that provides the town with a link with Nature.

This section considered how Aston and Aston Hall were represented before 1837. Buck's engraving (Fig. 2-1) made in the early eighteenth century focuses on the architectural beauty of the country house. Compared with this, the pictures made afterwards by local artists shifted the focus by emphasising the greenery around the hall. While Samuel Lines painted a cool and misty atmosphere (Fig. 2-2), Joseph Vincent Barber minutely painted the plants as signs Nature (Fig. 2-3). Moreover, in Joseph Vincent Barber's commissioned pictures on Aston Hall, he often uses animals like deer to suggest the natural and even wild environment of Aston Park (Figs. 2-4 and 2-5). Such representation can be attributed to the growing popularity of natural landscape imageries in the art market of the time, such as the publication of *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire*. David Cox's soft-ground etching (Fig. 2-6) also represents Aston Hall as a part of Nature. To sum up, although the village was close to the manufacturing centre, local artists and residents still wished to maintain its natural status through visual representation.

II. Aston circa 1837

Aston used to have minor industries before the nineteenth century, but they did not change the way in which local artists saw the place. Yet in order to build the Grand

²²² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Junction Railway in the early nineteenth century, a huge viaduct of nine meters high was erected above the River Tame and cut through the pasture nearby. The magnificent avenue of trees in front of Aston Hall also had to be made shorter. This industrial development seemed to break the rural and natural imagination found in the previous section.

This section starts with two drawings of minor industries located in the countryside and discusses how they are represented as harmless to the environment. I will then explore the serious impact of the Grand Junction Railway using two sets of pictures. The first set shows what the avenue in front of Aston Hall looked like before and after the railway. The second set shows how the village of Aston looked like before and after the railway.

In section one I mentioned that Joseph Vincent Barber produced four pictures showing a natural Aston Hall. Section one discussed only two of them; the other two pictures will be considered here. Besides, I also mentioned in section one that Cox changed his representation of Aston Hall and started to seriously look at the railway. This change will be discussed in this section, too. I will argue that in doing so he shaped a pictorial metaphor of the coming of the suburb. Overall, section two investigates how artists represented the urbanising countryside circa 1837 and how their visual representations helped form the recognition of the suburb.

A forge (Fig. 2-7) and a furnace (Fig. 4-4) once existed in Aston. *Part of Beauford Forge* (Fig. 2-7) shows a wheel outside a shabby forge. The forge might be abandoned, as suggested by the broken windows above the wheel and the ruined wooden struts by the wall and on the roof. The artist gives explicit details to the wheel by showing its pedals, the nails on them, and the gears fixed inside. The other equipments are also drawn, like the groove under the wing that is fixed onto the axis of the gear, and a rectangular container to the left of the wheel. The artist portrays the

machine and the building like a still life, not a manufactory in operation. Viewers can hardly sense any disturbance from such an installation.

Like the forge, the furnace is also depicted as harmless. Samuel Lines' third son, Samuel Rostill Line (1804-33), made a drawing of Aston Furnace in 1830 (Fig. 4-4). The drawing shows a giant chimney and a vast pit to the right. The pit and the central path form a large triangle (see the superimposed lines in Fig. 4-4a). There are two interesting designs about the triangle. Firstly, while the interior of the triangle looks white without many details, outside the triangle are many more factories which enrich the whole drawing. The void interior and its crowded outskirts propose a visual balance. Secondly, to add something to the interior of the triangle, some plants are drawn to the left, including some bushes, four trees, and a gate. The four trees are drawn very clearly and arranged in an interesting way. They are separated like potted plants and displayed like four different botanic species exposing their individual features to viewers.

In addition, the space between each of the trees is roughly even, so that the four trees, the tall chimney, and a poplar to the extreme right form a series of verticals which have equal space between each of them (see the red arrows in Fig. 4-4a). The trees can also be linked to the hut in the centre of the drawing, and then to the dome in the background to form another series of equally-spaced verticals (see the pink arrows in Fig. 4-4a). After studying these patterns, I believe the artist's concentration is not on showing any environmental impact, but on how to clearly portray each object and make a good drawing.

The two factories were accepted as part of the environment and represented as harmless by the artists, but the reality of Aston was more than that. According to Dent's studies, Aston was under pressure from development since the early nineteenth century:

...the [Aston] park was...already menaced...Streets will have been cut across it in various directions; the trackway [sic] of the iron horse will have encroached upon its magnificent avenue; and the quietude of the village of Aston will have been broken up for ever.²²³

That “trackway of the iron horse” is the Grand Junction Railway. The railway was approved of by Parliament in 1833. It linked Birmingham to the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, making it possible for the manufacturing town to connect to the industrial North. Such a connection also helped form a more complete rail system for the nation, and Aston was the first stop after Birmingham on this important route.²²⁴

Cox produced a drawing that well illustrates the impact of the railway (Fig. 2-8). It looks peculiar and problematic with the railway and the north-going locomotive. The strange combination of a quaint hall and a modern locomotive causes a visual confusion as we do not know upon which subject we should look first or focus on most. The fact that an old thing (Aston Hall) and a new thing (the locomotive) are depicted in one image presents a clash and by recognising such a clash, viewers find it difficult to understand the meaning of the whole representation. Such being the case, Cox’s own writing may provide some clue for understanding the picture.

In the selection of subject from the Nature, the Student should ever keep in view the principal object which induced him to the sketch: whether it be mountains, castle....The prominence of this leading feature in the piece should be duly supported throughout; the character of the picture should be derived from it; every other object introduced should be subservient to it....The union of too great a variety of parts tends to destroy, or at least to weaken the predominance of that which ought to be the principal in the

²²³ Dent, *op. cit.*, *The Making of Birmingham*, 1894, p. 340. The words in square brackets are my annotation.

²²⁴ The information of this paragraph is formulated from Norman W. Webster, *Britain’s First Trunk Line: the Grand Junction Railway* (Bath: Adams and Dark, 1972) and Thomas Roscoe, *The London and Birmingham Railway; with the Home and Country Scenes on Each Side of the Line* (London: Charles Tilt; Birmingham: Wrightson and Webb, 1838)

composition.....All objects which are not in character with the scene should be most carefully avoided, as the introduction of an unnecessary object is sure to be attended with injurious consequences.²²⁵

Section one showed that as Cox tends to centralise Aston Hall in a natural environment (Fig. 2-6), the hall should therefore be taken as “the principal in the composition”. It follows that such a principal should be the visual focus and “duly supported throughout.” Yet obviously the black and big locomotive that breaks in “weakens” the “predominance” of the principal. Is the locomotive therefore an “unnecessary object”? Does it bring “injurious consequence” to the scene?

Such a discrepancy between what is written and what is drawn suggests a change Cox had to face and a change he made for his art: faced with the construction of the railway and the environmental changes it brought, the artist himself might have to adjust his ways to represent the local landscape. I cannot find any text recording Cox’s attitude toward the railway and its being built on the specific site, but I see, from this drawing (Fig. 2-8), that he manages to continue his practice of landscape representation in the face of such a giant change. Therefore, the drawing with dual principals (Aston Hall and the locomotive), instead of expressing criticism or glorification of the industrial achievement, simply shows what there were in the place and how a landscape artist like him adjusts his painterly skills to accommodate both subjects. What was written in 1814 may not be the best guide to understand a drawing made some decades later, but by comparing them, we can see what it was like to represent the town’s urbanising countryside and developing edges, i.e. its suburbs.

In the same way as the juxtaposition of the locomotive and the hall puzzles viewers, the men sitting behind the railway on the avenue are also intriguing. The party of five plus a dog appear to be taking a rest in the middle of their work, for they

²²⁵ Cox, *op. cit.*, *A Treatise*, pp. 6-7.

pile their goods and carts aside. Yet the men somehow look too relaxed to be workers, especially the reclining man to the left. His posture makes him look like Joseph Wright of Derby's Sir Brooke Boothby (Fig 2-9). Since he puts on airs like a landed gentleman, it may be more suitable for him to be included into the picturesque middle- and back-grounds, where the hall is, rather than into the industrial foreground with workers and the railway. It is difficult, therefore, to categorise this resting group. Pictorially, they complete the country house view by becoming its decorative figures, just like the cattle scattered in the avenue. In terms of narration, they could also cooperate with the locomotive, for they are physically close to it and might board the train and load their goods on it. It seems that they fit anywhere and yet nowhere. Indeed, they are on the crossroad between the vertical avenue that leads to Nature and Antiquity and the horizontal railway that leads to either the manufacturing town or the industrial North. This crossroad signifies a dilemma and the resting group signifies society facing the dilemma. Perhaps the point of reading this drawing does not lie in finding a solution to the dilemma, but rather in discovering what kind of representation can be foreseen from this unprecedented situation. Therefore, I think the visualisation of the resting men and the union of Aston Hall and the Grand Junction Railway urge the drawing to be read as a representation of a suburb under formation.

Further insights can be gained from the representation of the avenue made before the construction of the railway. In Joseph Vincent Barber's *Aston Hall from the Avenue* (Fig. 2-10), the avenue is twice the length as that in Cox's picture (Fig. 2-8). Cox's avenue starts from near Aston Church (to the right-hand side), which is, in Barber's drawing, hidden in a dense wood and can only be spotted by its spire sticking out halfway along the avenue. The loss of nearly half the avenue could mean a loss of freedom in representing the venue: while Cox found the railway impossible

to avoid in visual representation, Barber in 1828 seemed to have more freedom in drawing the avenue as he liked it: he showed haymaking in front of the hall. Haymaking has always been a common activity in the countryside. Yet having seen how the artist brings Nature to Aston Hall with the deer (Figs. 2-4 and 2-5), haymaking is very likely to be another sign he exploits to create a rural atmosphere around the hall. In other words, local residents of Aston could of course make hay in 1828, but deliberately placing haymaking in the avenue of the hall might be a manipulation, rather than a naïve record of agricultural society.

As well as manipulating the location for haymaking, the haymakers are also idealised. There are several groups of haymakers along the avenue. I will concentrate on two most peopled groups: the group around a wagon to the right and the group with a farm manager on horseback in the centre.

The wagon group looks like a reverse image of George Stubbs' *Haymakers* of 1785 (Fig. 2-11), as Barber's wagon faces the left and Stubbs' faces the right. Barber's has a black horse, a white horse, two men working on the top of the wagon and another two on the ground to cooperate with them. These look similar to Stubbs', which has two horses (both black), two men on the top of the wagon, and another two men working next to the wagon. Stubbs' painting has three women and Barber's has none while Barber's has a man doing some harrowing next to the white horse which Stubbs' does not have. Another group by Barber (with a farm manager on horseback in the centre of the picture) is like a reverse image of Stubbs' *Reapers* of 1785 (Fig. 2-12). Barber's manager faces the right and Stubbs' faces the left. Stubbs paints a woman and four men, all at work, whereas Barber draws two standing men talking to the manager and five resting men.

Both of Stubbs' paintings idealise rural life through the clean dress and polished

appearance of the labourers.²²⁶ In light of this, Barber's two groups also demonstrate an easiness and casualness which may not be common in a real agricultural life. Even if Barber draws many other figures without referring to Stubbs', such as the resting man with a hat turning his back in the foreground and a couple in conversation under the tree to the left, they look more like acting than working, and could again be a manipulated sign of a pastoral life, presenting a sharp contrast with Cox's visualisation of the industrial reality.

Joseph Vincent Barber himself may never have known that this work became visual evidence of how long the avenue of trees had been before the construction of the railway. He moved to Rome in 1837, the year in which the railway was opened, and died there of malaria the following year.²²⁷ His consistency in idealising and naturalising Birmingham suburbs in his art posthumously makes his works a contrast to those reflecting industrial development and topographic changes, such as Cox's. Next I will explore another set of images depicting the views of before and after the railway, again by Joseph Vincent Barber and Cox.

This time our focus moves from the avenue to the whole village. Cox's *The Aston Viaduct* (Fig. 2-14) shows how the railway viaduct lay across the River Rea and cuts through the meadow. Only the tops of Aston Hall and the spire of Aston Church can be seen among trees in the background to the left. In the middle ground, the viaduct of ten arches (with each arch nine meters high) is installed between two slopes. Two trains travel on the railway. One is closer to viewers, looks bigger, goes south (Birmingham), and has a man waving directions in front of it. The other is much smaller and travels above the connection between the viaduct and the slope at the rear. The two trains could stretch the length of the viaduct by becoming its extension at

²²⁶ Judy Egerton, *George Stubbs, Painter* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 472-7.

²²⁷ <http://www.bmagic.org.uk/objects/1946P41> consulted 20/11/2009.

both sides.

Besides the viaduct, to the right there is a smaller brick bridge in a horn shape. The brick bridge and the blackish work next to it might have existed in the area earlier than the viaduct. In the same place we can also see some cows. In the foreground, there are a pond and two men with two horses next to the pond. The men are watching the passing train. Interestingly, some dark, dense and thick-stroked weeds, which we have seen in the artist's etching (Fig. 2-6), fill out the foreground here again. If the vigorous vegetation was intended to signify wildness around Aston Hall in that earlier work, then its reappearance here along with the industrial monster certainly demonstrates how the countryside became industrialised.

Moreover, I found in the archive a newspaper illustration which is very likely to have copied Cox's original drawing. As a later and probably imitated image, *The Railway Viaduct, Birmingham* (Fig. 2-15) renders the topographic details less carefully. For instance, in the background, the fine gables of Aston Hall are over-simplified into some ordinary roofs. In the middle ground, the smaller bridge next to the viaduct is strangely widened into a violin-shaped bridge to accommodate a man in its narrowest section. The house next to the bridge has a lighter tint and looks less like a workshop. In the foreground, Cox's two men with two horses become a man with a dog and a couple behind them. The couple walk on what used to be a pond in Cox's picture. In addition, Cox's signature dark and dense grass is replaced by barrenness in the bottom-left corner. Although the later image introduces two giant trees at both sides, they do not seem to improve the picture.

However, this later print still has a merit. Although Cox's version shows two trains, the distant one is nearly too small to be seen. But in the copier's version, the southbound and the northbound trains are equally visible and are not blocked by trees. Thus, although the rough topographic features expose the later artist's lack of skills,

the two visible trains at least show his/her eagerness to highlight the railway as the theme of the picture. Through the fact that Cox represented the railway and that his representation was copied later on, we can infer that the railway began to demand its presence in visual representation and might help contemporary society become aware of the industrialisation and urbanisation of the neighbourhood.

Unlike the work by his friend Cox, Joseph Vincent Barber celebrated a rural Aston. Cox's *The Aston Viaduct* (Fig. 2-14) take an eastern view-point and shows the hall to the left and the church to the right, whereas Joseph Vincent Barber's *Village of Aston* (Fig. 2-13) has a northern view-point and shows the hall to the right and the church to the left. A large part of Joseph Vincent Barber's picture is greenery, with human settlement pushed to the left-hand side of the river in the background. The River Tame flows through the centre of the picture, implying its nurturing the entire village. The river turns more than five times and forms more than seven headlands, which can be picturesque but unrealistic. Besides, the cows on the right bank appear too big compared with their fellows across the river to the left. As a whole, arranged to be the first illustration of Aston in *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire*, this dream-like and fairy-tale landscape is trying to determine the way the readers regard Aston as: rural and never industrialised or urbanised.

To sum up, through the two pairs of comparisons (on the avenue and the village), we see Aston as if it is developed from a rural village around 1828 into an railway-linked appendage of Birmingham after 1837, even though it was until 1911 that Aston became part of Greater Birmingham. I am not in the position to challenge the act or to debate its history, but I suggest that although the official decision finally defined whether a place became a suburb of the metropolis, how artists represent the place is no less critical in shaping people's recognition of it as a suburb.

The final part of this section will closely examine how Cox applied the railway

as a new subject to his landscape art. I will find how the railway is represented like a messenger, or metaphor of the suburb. It has been pointed out that Cox produced numerous representations with trains in them.²²⁸ Interestingly, while Cox drew the railway and trains as large and clear in his topographic views (Figs. 2-8 and 2-14), the objects become tiny in size in his finished landscape paintings (Figs. 2-20, 2-22 and 2-23). John Gage regarded these smaller trains by Cox as “a passing interest” and “distant tribute” paid to Turner’s *Rain, Steam and Speed-the Great Western Railway* (Fig. 2-21).²²⁹ However, in the following I will argue that Cox’s depicting trains in his landscape painting might directly benefit from his confrontation with the Grand Junction Railway, and the small size of the image of those trains might result from some careful consideration, rather than just an imitation of Turner’s work.

We have already seen two train imageries by Cox in print (Fig. 2-8 and 2-14). Here Fig. 2-16 is rare example of Cox painting a train in watercolour. The shift in media suggests that the artist started to consider how to apply the topographic novelty to the field of landscape painting. Although the posthumous title of the watercolour sketch does not specify which viaduct, it is most probably the Aston Viaduct because of three reasons. First, the ten tall arches shown in this sketch (four in the middle in clear shapes and two pairs to the furthest right and left roughly outlined in ‘M’ shapes) are exactly the feature of the Aston Viaduct. Second, the direction of the train in this sketch is the same as that of the train in the topographic print (Fig. 2-14). This indicates the subject in the watercolour sketch is based on the observation of a real thing. Third, the train in the watercolour sketch looks as if it is extended by the smoke above it, painted in consecutive and rounded lines that curve like clouds. This is exactly the imagery Cox designs for the trains on the Grand Junction Railway (Fig.

²²⁸ Wilcox (ed.), *op. cit.* p. 206-7.

²²⁹ John Gage, *Turner: Rain, Steam, and Speed* (New York: The Viking Press, 1972), pp. 65-6.

2-14): the trains in the print lengthen the viaduct by becoming its extension at both sides.

Now we know it was most probably the Aston Viaduct that Cox began with, where exactly in the painting should the viaduct and the train be placed? The distant horizons may be a good place. In his other landscape paintings, such as *A Mountain View* (Fig. 2-17), *Moonlight Landscape* (Fig. 2-18), and *Crossing Moors* (Fig 2-19), I notice how a line representing the horizon is drawn and how masses of colours are applied in different directions to distinguish earth from sky. If we look closely at each horizon in the paintings, we see its colouring done in a thicker way than that of the round masses which represent the sky or the earth. Cox might so paint to test the behaviour of the papers,²³⁰ but it seems more likely he thought these empty horizons need some highlighting, colouring, filling, i.e. some visual forms. To the landscape painter, there may never be a finalised way to fill that horizon, but trains, especially those long and running ones brought to his attention following the construction of the Grand Junction Railway, could be a good option. As a result, he might then start to paint long and running trains in the distant horizons in his landscape painting.

An example is *Sun, Wind and Rain* (Fig. 2-20). It shows a smoking train running across the distant horizon watched by a man leaning on a fence. The distant train looks very tiny, especially compared with Turner's *Rain, Steam and Speed-the Great Western Railway* (Fig. 2-21).²³¹ Perhaps small, insignificant trains are what Cox found most suitable. Few years after *Sun, Wind and Rain*, the artist produced two nocturnal paintings with equally small trains in them (Figs. 2-22 and 2-23). The paintings minimise the size of the train and emphasise landscape effects, such as moonlight, night sky, and the overall atmosphere. Interestingly, one painting shows

²³⁰ Cox experimented on painting on different kinds of wrapping paper. Peter Bower, 'A Remarkable Understanding: David Cox's Use of Paper' in Wilcox (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 97-111

²³¹ Gage, *op. cit.*, *Turner: Rain, Steam, and Speed*, pp. 11-43

how a black horse bravely ‘watches’ the spectacular train pass by while its fellow horses run away frightened (Fig. 2-22); the other painting shows how all the horses are scared by and running away from the train (Fig. 2-23). It seems that while the topographic prints represent the train as a manifestation of industrialisation and the coming of the suburb (Figs. 2-8 and 2-14), in the landscape painting the train looks much smaller and thus become a metaphor, rather than clear sign, of the suburb.

Section two started with two drawings of two small factories (Figs. 2-7 and 4-4). They contrast the serious impact the Grand Junction Railway had on visual representation. Two sets of pictures of the railway were shown. The first set contained Cox’s drawing of the locomotive crossing the avenue of trees in front of Aston Hall (Fig. 2-8) and Joseph Vincent Barber’s earlier and imaginative picture of haymaking in the same venue (Fig. 2-10). This pair illustrated the dilemma brought about by the Grand Junction Railway when people try to identify whether the railway or the hall should be the focus. The second set consisted of Cox’s *The Aston Viaduct* (Fig. 2-14), a later print copying it (Fig. 2-15), and Joseph Vincent Barber’s *Village of Aston* (Fig. 2-13). Barber’s consistent style of showing Nature surrounding Birmingham denies any hints of suburban development, while Cox’s visualises the reality of the railway. The anonymous print that copied Cox’s composition also makes an example of how the railway became recognised by society. Since the railway becomes such an important sign, we then explored how Cox developed trains from within the context of local topographic views (Figs. 2-8 and 2-14) to creative landscape paintings (Figs. 2-20, 2-22, and 2-23). We found that Cox manipulated trains as a metaphor of the suburb by painting them tiny and distant in the horizon.

III. Aston circa 1858

After the natural atmosphere (section one) and the industrial reality (section two),

what comes next for the representation of Aston? When the Grand Junction Railway was first opened, it was used for freight. In 1846, after it was merged with the London and Birmingham Railway, the route started to take passengers.²³² We could infer that more people could travel to Aston via trains, but what was there to see? The opening of Aston Hall and Park in 1858 could offer something. This section will explore how the hall is represented after its opening. Although the pictures were produced later than the scope of the thesis (1780-c.1850), I shall still explore them because they illustrate how the suburb-to-be ended its ambiguous status by becoming a recreational, modernised, and middle-class place.

Before I explore the relevant pictures, I should mention the backgrounds and significance of the utilisation of Aston Hall and Park. The hall had been occupied by its landlords, the Holtes, for centuries. James Watt Junior (1769-1848), the son of the industrial giant James Watt, leased the property in 1834. He was very fond of it, including its furniture, architecture, gardens, and the avenue. He made a will to open the hall and the park to the public. To fulfil this, a few years after James Watt Junior died in 1848, 'Aston Hall and Park Company (Ltd) was initiated to raise donations from the upper and upper middle class to run the campaign. At the beginning, access to the park was not free to all.²³³

In 1858 the ultimate goal of opening the park and the hall free to everyone was realised. On the 15th of June, 1858 Queen Victoria came to Birmingham for her first time to inaugurate the opening of the hall and park. The place became a remarkable addition to local amenities. In fact, the latter half of the nineteenth century saw three major sites open on the periphery of the town to provide the growing population with more greenery and space for recreation, including Birmingham Botanic Gardens (in

²³² Webster, *op. cit.*.

²³³ This paragraph is based on *Birmingham News*, June 15, 1858, see Fig. 2-26.

Edgbaston)²³⁴, a Vauxhall pleasure garden near Duddeston, and Aston Hall and Park. Besides, the opening of Aston Hall and Park reflected that Aston was under the pressure from urbanisation so that some kind of protection or zoning of green space became necessary. Overall, this new public open space attracted more people to visit it than in the past, when only artists seemed to come to make sketches.

Following the significant utilisation of Aston Hall and Park, the visual representations of the site also changed. The first change is the addition of middle class figures. The royal opening seemed to bring the hall its first systematic pleasure-seekers. These royal visitors are imagined socialising on the front terrace (Fig. 2-24) or enjoying, from the back yard, the distant townscape filled with smoking chimneys (Fig. 2-25).²³⁵ After these royal visitors came middle-class visitors, who are represented in Figs. 2-26, 2-27, 2-28, 2-32, and 2-33.

Since these figures started to fill the place, what did they do? This is the second pictorial feature I find: the figures are always shown enjoying the park and the park appears possessed by them. For example, in the newspaper report on the inauguration of the hall and the park (Fig. 2-26), James Watt Junior's enthusiastic letter on the property was published. Through his praise, such as "one of the most perfect specimens of the mixed style of architecture of Elizabeth and James" or "a magnificent terrace"²³⁶, the editor(s) obviously hope the middle-class readers, who will become the users of the park, will anticipate its pleasures and appreciate what a great hall and park they had been given access to. The image above the text has the same function. It shows the façade of the hall in clear details. Attracted by the architectural beauty, three groups stop to look at the building. Their presence and

²³⁴ Phillada Ballard, *An Oasis of Delight: the History of the Birmingham Botanic Gardens* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1983; Studley: Brewin, 2003)

²³⁵ The image is seen from the web page of a local history society <http://astonhistory.net/id77.html> and some other private web pages on local history. I have not seen this image used elsewhere in an academic or official publication. It is therefore difficult to provide further information about the image.

²³⁶ Line 5, column 1; line 4, column 2 in *Birmingham News*, June 15, 1858, *op. cit.* (see also Fig. 2-26)

admiration foresee how from 1858, visitors could come and enjoy the hall in this way.

Another example is the resting group in Fig. 2-27. The people are resting on the lawn outside the south wing of the hall. The sitters are mostly young ladies. They are dressed up, but the ways they sit are casual and relaxed. For instance, one lady to the right of her group is reclining and turning her back to viewers. Another lady to the left is lying slightly backward and using her two arms to support her body. Some ladies sit with their legs folded on one side or crossed. These ladies are very likely to be girls led by their governess, the lady in black to the left, to go outdoors for a session of their tuition, whether it be singing or reading. A governess is common in a Victorian middle-class household to supervise the children (usually many) of that family. Her role is somewhere between a servant and a member of the family. She has to take care of the children, in all aspects of their dress and manners and impart knowledge and skills. Her and her students' appearance in Aston Park strongly implies that the Park became a safe, proper, and socially-accepted place. After accommodating country labourers (the haymakers) around 1828, as visualised by Joseph Vincent Barber (Fig. 2-10), and then railway workers circa 1837, as shown by Cox (Fig. 2-8), Aston Park finally attracted middle class ladies.

Fig. 2-28 is another scene of Victorian domestic life being staged by Aston Park. A happy family promenade on the avenue in front of the hall. They are walking toward the east and the sun from the west casts shadows in front of them. They are very likely to be on their way home after a day of pleasure in Aston Park. They might also be on their way to the Aston railway station to catch a train home, if the narration is set post 1846, when the Grand Junction Railway started to take passengers.²³⁷ The figures look happy because the three (two daughters and possibly their governess or elder sister) with a dog are hopping with delight; the couple (possibly husband and

²³⁷ Webster. *op. cit.*

wife) also looks relaxed and free, as seen from the husband's raised arm and the wife's facing her husband. While the couple walk behind, their daughters and their governess cannot wait to play with the dog on this wide and beautiful avenue.

As well as directly showing middle-class figures, there is an indirect way to represent those users' 'possession' of the park. Allen Edward Everitt (1824-82) produced a picture showing the landlord of the hall, Baronet Holte, standing in front of his property (Fig. 2-29). Before this single print, the picture had appeared as an illustration in *A History of the Holtes of Aston, Baronets*, published by the artist's antiquarian grandfather in 1854.²³⁸ The hardback had fifty subscriptions, but many of its original illustrations were copied and reprinted, just as the case of Fig. 2-29. Thus, the scholarly book had a limited numbers of readers, but a far larger group of middle-class audience fed on its informative images to understand the past of their new pleasure ground.

Based on these examples, the post-1858 pictures of Aston Hall and Park represent the venue like a middle-class property not only because they literally show middleclass figures, but also because they portray the suburb as if in their possession.

The last change I observe from the post-1858 representations is intriguing: the wild, natural atmosphere seen in section one was desired once more. Open-to-all, green, spacious, energising, and middle-class as it became, Aston Park inevitably lost the wild and natural feeling it used to inspire before being developed into a pleasure ground. So some artists tried to restore that feeling by visualising deer and a flower bed.

The images with deer offer a reconstructed look of the past of the hall and are probably made in the mid- or late nineteenth century (Figs. 2-30 and 2-31). We are

²³⁸ Alfred Davidson of Aston, *A History of the Holtes of Aston, Baronets: with a Description of the Family Mansion, Aston Hall, Warwickshire* (Birmingham: E. Everitt, 1854)

sure that the two prints visualise the view before 1858 because they do not show the horseshoe walk, which might have been designed for Queen Victoria's visit or for public usage when the venue was open, as seen in the newspaper illustration (Fig. 2-26). Instead, the two prints show deer which are very likely to be based on Joseph Vincent Barber's vignette in *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire* (Fig. 2-5), although they copy the original picture in a less delicate way.

Interestingly, while the later prints were right to abandon the horseshoe walk in order to present a genuine image of the past, they could have been wrong about the deer: what Joseph Vincent Barber stress was not so much that specific animal as the wild and natural environment of the park. In other words, deer could only be Joseph Vincent Barber's representational tool to create that atmosphere. Yet the later artists of the two prints seemed to emphasise that it was exactly deer that lived in Aston Park. In doing so, the later artists expose the strangeness of the borrowed motif and the awkwardness of their re-enactment of a natural setting.

In addition to deer, a flower bed was depicted (Fig. 2-32 and 2-33). Little is known about the flower bed; all we know is that it did exist in the late nineteenth century for a while and could have been built beside the horseshoe walk.²³⁹ The flower bed itself was built to beautify the view of the frontal of the hall; the pictorial representation of the flower bed, moreover, reinforces that natural and pleasant atmosphere. In this way, the images of both the flower bed and the deer could have a similar function. Yet unlike the deer which could suggest wildness, the flower bed shows more regulation, control, and utilisation of Nature as the flowers are planned and planted out, not naturally grown, and the railing around it also implies a degree of protection and management. Through the two prints with the flower bed, it is clear

²³⁹ I consulted the curator, Gurminder Kenth, and the ranger, James Harrison, of Aston Hall and Park and they could only say that the flower bed did exist but there is no further information (24/04/2010).

that Aston Hall and Park was no longer wild or rural countryside, but a controlled, managed, and shared suburb of the town. Even if a feeling of Nature continued to be what the venue could offer, the connotation of Nature has changed from wilderness to planned greenery.

Overall, the post-1858 images present a new face for Aston Hall and Park through (1) showing middle-class figures (2) representing the place like a middle-class property and (3) reconstructing a feeling of Nature. These images turn over a new leaf for the complicated but fascinating status of Aston.

This chapter approached the suburb as a specific place. We wanted to find out if the suburb could be portrayed in a thematic and well-focused way. As chapter one explored the representation of suburb in relation to townscape, this chapter set to approach the representation via the countryside or rural landscape. We concentrated on Aston (both the village and the hall) and structured our argument parallel to the local history.

Section one explored the growing popularity of the images of Aston Hall and their natural-looking style. Through the rural and natural imagery, the artists showed their resistance against urbanisation and industrialisation from Birmingham. Section two was concerned with how the Grand Junction Railway influenced the way the suburb was represented. We also explored how Cox developed the railway as a new pictorial subject, in both his topographic views and his natural landscape painting. After the natural atmosphere and the industrial aspect, section three concluded the study by showing Aston becoming a middleclass and recreational site in the late 1850s. Therefore, although Aston had been a settlement separate from Birmingham and did not become its official suburb until 1911, this chapter has proved that the

visual representations in question are no less critical in the conception of Aston as a suburb of Birmingham.

I would like to mention a fact before I conclude. In *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire* on the page where Joseph's Vincent Barber's vignette of Aston Hall appears, the text below the image is actually a complete section introducing Birmingham, as clearly indicated by the heading, "Birmingham" below the image (Fig. 2-5). Although the editor(s) could do it because it was convenient to set up the page this way, and the album actually has many other pages whose text and vignettes do not necessarily point to the same places, I think that using an image of Aston Hall to decorate the first page on Birmingham clearly indicates that the village began to be taken as within the extent of the growing town.

Overall, in terms of how the urbanising countryside at the edge of the expanding town should be represented, this chapter found: the images first show a close connection with Nature, then reflect a broken relationship with her as urbanisation forces in, and finally reestablish a connection with Nature as the place became a green and recreational suburb. As we aimed to understand the images of suburb via the representation of Nature, we can conclude that the pictures in this chapter represent Nature as first adored, then damaged, but finally restored.

Chapter Three

Birmingham Topographic-view Tradition and Practice: the circle of the Barber and the Lines Families

While chapters one and two define the iconography of the suburb, this chapter shall explore how the relevant pictures can be contextualised within the larger category and older tradition of the making of English topographic views. The drawings and paintings by two important local artistic families, the Lineses and the Barbers, are the subject matter of the discussion. I will investigate how the circle of the two families practiced the principles of the Picturesque, demonstrated an unusual topographic ambition, and reached beyond the built environment of the town to look for rural inspiration.

Firstly, I shall introduce the two families. When the town prospered through manufacturing, arts of all types were needed as the basic skills to produce metal products.²⁴⁰ This was the context in which the first-generation Barber and Lines artists began their business. Dublin-born Joseph Barber senior (1706-1781) immigrated to Newcastle-upon-Tyne and lived there for the rest of his life. He had three wives. The first wife probably died along with their first child. The second wife gave birth to three daughters between 1750 and 1754. The third wife gave birth to two sons, Joseph (1758-1811) and later Edward (?-1821). Both brothers developed their career in art and can be considered the first-generation artists of the family: Joseph Barber junior (abbreviated as Joseph Barber in the following) became an artist based in Birmingham and Edward a drawing master at Dudley Grammar School.²⁴¹

Joseph Barber moved to the manufacturing centre in the 1770s. He started his

²⁴⁰ Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery. *An Exhibition to Commemorate the Bicentenary of the Lunar Society of Birmingham* (Birmingham: Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, 1966)

²⁴¹ The information of this paragraph is based on a Barber family tree and two letters made by a Birmingham librarian around 1933, held in BCL.

career designing papier-mâché and japanned goods. Around the mid-1780s, he was commissioned to make portraits. He then became the first professional drawing master of the town and opened his own studios in Edmund Street and Newhall Street. He also had two artistic sons, Charles (1783-1854) and Joseph Vincent (1788-1838), and three floral-painter daughters.²⁴² Overall, Joseph, Charles, and Joseph Vincent Barbers are considered three important founders, producers, and educators of art in Birmingham while the town began to develop not only in economy but also in arts.²⁴³

About two decades after Joseph Barber settled in Birmingham, Coventry-born, sixteen-year-old Samuel Lines (1778-1863) moved to Birmingham to make a living, too. Like Joseph Barber, Samuel Lines began as a workshop apprentice, became successful, and finally opened his own drawing academies.²⁴⁴ Although Samuel Lines' first academy was opened some twenty years later than Joseph Barber's, the influence of the Lines family seemed more wide-spreading. For example, in addition to his own academies, Samuel Lines also co-founded the Birmingham Society of Arts, which is now the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists (RBSA).²⁴⁵ Besides, his five sons all learnt to draw and paint with him during their childhood and also became artists when they grew up. The eldest son Henry Harris (1801-1889) was the most productive one and had the longest artistic career among his brothers. The second son William Rostill (1802-1846) also exhibited in the Birmingham Society of Arts. The third son Samuel Rostill (1804-1833) produced numerous topographic views and had a clear, detailed way of drawing. The fourth son Edward Ashcroft (1807-1874) even moved to New Zealand in his late years with a goal to set up an art school there. The

²⁴² According to the family tree held in BCL, it was Joseph Barber senior who had three daughters, with the youngest daughter married to Mr Lightfoot, whereas one of the letters says it was actually Joseph Barber junior that had three daughters, with the youngest being Mrs Lightfoot. The latter statement seems more correct as BMAG website also says Joseph Barber junior had (two sons) and three daughters. See <http://www.bmagic.org.uk/people/Joseph+Barber> , last accessed 11/2010.

²⁴³ Wildman, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-8 and p. 41.

²⁴⁴ Wan, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.

²⁴⁵ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

youngest son Frederick Thomas (1808-1898) had a chance to study art in London while he was young.²⁴⁶ Considered how they produced, exhibited, founded, ran, and reformed art and art institutionalisation in Birmingham, the Lines family seem even more representative of and synonymous with than the Barbers the development of art in Birmingham.

Now that there were a considerable number of active artists in Birmingham between 1780 and 1850, it must be asked what art works they have produced and how the works respond to or represent the changing environment of the town. According to exhibition records, the Barbers made portraits, landscape and local topographic paintings²⁴⁷; according to survivals, BMAG holds dozens of the Barbers' drawings of local topography and BCL holds a few landscape watercolour sketches. As for the art works exhibited by the Lineses, they range from portrait to landscape, and from genre scene to still life.²⁴⁸ BMAG holds dozens of the Lineses' works, including both paintings and drawings, while RBSA holds another hundred drawings.²⁴⁹ Put together two centuries later, it is believed that the drawings, especially those by the Lineses, provide a comprehensive and exact visual record of how the town and its surroundings had looked like during their most rapid growth.²⁵⁰

However, this chapter argues that it is not just a visual record of what had been torn down and what had been built that these views reflect; behind the diligence and hard-work these hundreds of pictures stand for, and inside of the delicate and well-structured composition of each picture, there must have been an embodiment of the topographic fashion (or, tradition, as we approach it from a historical perspective) of the time, such as the Picturesque and *en-plein-air*, and even some personal

²⁴⁶ The information on these six members of the Lines family is based on Wan, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-9.

²⁴⁷ A Century of Birmingham, p.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ Wan, p. 1.

²⁵⁰ Wildman, p. 41.

ambition and vision.

In roughly chronological order, the following four sections bring together the two artistic families and investigate how their circle contributed to establishing a topographic-view tradition for Birmingham and how they, when practising to do so, had to confront, reconcile with, and make change in their art for the fast-growing town and its outward-pushing, rapidly-growing edges.

Section one explores how Joseph Barber followed Gilpin's idea of the Picturesque by making paintings of picturesque objects, as such cottages and ruins. As well as painting these objects, Joseph Barber also borrowed and mobilised the motifs from old masters' landscape painting to make his own landscape representation "look like a (proper) picture": the literal meaning of the word picturesque.²⁵¹ Another aspect of the fact that Joseph Barber was influenced by the fashion of the Picturesque was that he travelled to visit places of natural beauty. Where Gilpin had visited sites in South Wales and returned filled with inspiration, Barber also travelled to North Wales several times to make landscape paintings and became the first artist in Birmingham to do so.²⁵² Toward the end of section one I shall point out this and briefly discuss a possible changing relation between Wales and Birmingham. Overall, I regard Joseph Barber's pursuit, assimilation and application of the picturesque as an aesthetic prerequisite he set for his landscape art.

Section two will look at how this prerequisite might have been passed down from Joseph Barber to his pupils and therefore influenced the ways in which these next-generation artists represented the environment of Birmingham. I will review and further discuss Joseph Vincent Barber's consistent style of representing a rural environment around Birmingham, as appearing in *Graphic Illustrations of*

²⁵¹ Vaughan, p. 191.

²⁵² <http://www.bmagic.org.uk/objects/1926P605>, last accessed 11/20/2009.

Warwickshire mentioned in chapter two. His elder brother Charles's pictures which equally avoid signs of urbanisation and industrialisation will also be analysed.

Around the same time when these second-generation Barber artists became active, the first-generation Lines artist, Samuel Lines, entered onto stage, too. Section three will investigate a series of drawings of the views obtained exclusively from his house in the town centre. During my archival surveys, I have seen dozens of drawings and paintings of the environs of Birmingham made by the Lineses. However, I only selected a few pictures to discuss in my thesis because I think they are symbolic and representative of the family's ambition. As well as the town-centre views, a few drawings on the countryside nearby will also be discussed. I will find in them a possible attitude the family might hold toward the expansion of the town and the encroachment upon the countryside: they might want to symbolically 'protect' those natural features from urbanisation and suburbanisation through their pencils.

The Barbers and the Lineses seem to lay a foundation stone for the topographic-view tradition of Birmingham. What would be the next? The final section will focus on an oil painting, *Yardley* (Yardley is a village two miles to the east of Birmingham), which was likely to be made *en-plein-air*.²⁵³ It is by Joseph Vincent Barber's pupil, Frederick Henry Henshaw (1807-1891). In addition to showing a rural scene without signs of industrialisation, which may be interpreted as following the teacher's style, the painting, I will argue, reinforces the ideational gap between the natural and the urban by extracting the suburb-to-be out of its urbanisation context and by enshrining the place as a pure source of Nature.

Overall, I will conclude that faced with rapid industrial development and urban growth, the Birmingham artists' task of making local topographic views was

²⁵³ *En-plein-air* means 'in the open air'. It is a practice to make watercolour or oil paintings in the outdoor. This chapter does not focus on the art history of *en-plein-air* painting. I merely use the word as a general term to mean a painting produced in an outdoor environment.

challenging. The artists started with the ideal of the Picturesque. They also tried to symbolically protect the environment and to establish their own artistic reputation through making diligent travels to and sincere drawings of the surrounding areas. In addition, the immediate countryside of the town could also be painted *en-plein-air* to capture more a feeling of Nature; this not only forms part of the tradition of the making of Birmingham topographic views, but also leaves the developing edges of the town, its suburbs and suburbs-to-be, a permanent outsider of this tradition.

I. The Picturesque as a prerequisite.

This section analyses seven watercolour sketches attributed to Joseph Barber (Figs 3-1 through to 3-7).²⁵⁴ These practice pieces usually have unfinished or roughly-finished details. Such details could tell us what objects the artist had selected and given a visual form and what objects were tried but given up. Besides, the practise pieces could also tell us what scenes the artist wished to emphasise, such as cottages and ruins. These highlighted scenes therefore become evidence that the artist had tried to practise painting picturesque objects. In the following I will use ‘Picturesque’ (with capital P) to refer to the specific aesthetic promoted by Gilpin and ‘picturesque’ (without capital P) as a general adjective.

The first watercolour (Fig. 3-1) shows a shabby cottage and three cottagers. The roof is leaky and the gable end is roughly-finished with boards. A ladder and a branch, parallel to each other, are placed against the wall. Both of them may be used to mend the gable. The wall has a boarded-up window in its centre and a much smaller, barred window to its right. On the right hand side of the cottage is a bricked wall, which has

²⁵⁴ BCL attributes the art works to Joseph Barber. I think they might have been produced alone in his studio, or demonstrated in front of his pupils during class, or even the practice pieces painted directly by his pupils. Yet theses possibilities do not influence my analysis of the pictures and the argument of this chapter.

a barred window on it. The three windows suggest limited lighting inside the cottage, making a contrast with the direct sunlight on the white wall. In the strong light, a heavy woman in rough dress is sitting on a tree trunk. She is holding something undistinguishable in her hands, possibly a device to mend the cottage. Behind her to the left by a fence are two boys. One boy is holding a stick and climbing over the fence, which has a stile underneath. The other boy is standing behind his fellow by the fence. It is hard to tell what they are doing. They might be mending the fence, or they might be escaping using the small path lying in front of them. Overall, the ramshackle appearance of the cottage and the rough looks of the cottagers represent the rough and the rugged, and embody Gilpin's definition of the Picturesque.

The following four watercolours continue to focus on cottages and to present a picturesque view through them. The second watercolour (Fig. 3-2) introduces a larger and ruined cottage. A giant tree behind the cottage grows through its worn roof. The light shines from the right-hand side and lights up the front of the cottage, so that we can clearly see its doors, windows, and supports. The lower part of the painting is covered with stones and weeds, making it different from the bare foreground of the first painting. Compared with the cottage in the first watercolour (Fig. 3-1), the cottage here has no one to mend it and therefore looks abandoned and cheerless. The third watercolour (Fig. 3-3) has a small, thatched barn to the left and a row of mortar-walled houses to the right, separated by a clean and neat road in the centre of the picture. Both the mortar houses and the thatched barn have fences and look well maintained. Like the cottage in Fig. 3-3, the cottage in Fig. 3-4 also looks well-maintained. Although the wall to the left is a little shabby and the fence to right is dilapidated, the overall look of the cottage is still clean and nice. It has leaded casement windows, a protection above the front door, and a bird in a cage. It seems that the cottage belongs to some better-off people, such as a schoolmaster, and the

nicely dressed children are probably his pupils.

In the first, second and third watercolours, the artist started with a focused view of the cottage to stress roughness and ruggedness (Fig. 3-1), then he began to test how such qualities fit into the surroundings by gradually reducing the size of the cottage and introducing more part of the environment (Figs. 3-2 and 3-3). This process of adjusting one's vision thus demonstrates Gilpin's idea that one can gaze at different objects in a real landscape to compose a picturesque gaze. As well as presenting a picturesque scene, the four cottage views could stand for different states in country life: Fig. 3-1 poor but innocent; Fig. 3-2 ruined and dismal; Fig. 3-3 prosperous and well-organised; Fig. 3-4 neat and cultivated. It seems that Joseph Barber had carefully observed the various appearances of cottages and had at least thought about the different social and economical conditions of the countryside.

Watercolour five is more sophisticated (Fig. 3-5). At first glance, it seems to repeat what watercolours one to four have visualised: different cottages with various degree of wear and situated in various environments. Yet with its solid and rectangular structure, large and panelled window, and three arches, the main building must have had been a magnificent castle or mansion. Added with thatched roofs and a fence, this splendid yet dilapidated building is given some new life. As a result, this building not only signifies something becoming old and worn, but also how the old can be reused and given new meaning. The former part (the magnificent becoming old) embodies the Picturesque because old things have rough and rugged surfaces which look picturesque; the latter part (the old being given new life) can also embody the aesthetic because the theory itself is about viewing old objects in new light. Therefore, I think in this watercolour, the artist demonstrates his familiarity with the theory and his ability to interpret it. Such an expression of the Picturesque is more sophisticated and complicated than that seen in the previous watercolours, which literally show the

picturesque objects. Based on this observation, I think Joseph Barber had assimilated the idea of the Picturesque and combined it with his own practice of landscape representation.

Furthermore, unlike the cottages in watercolours one to four which are located on level ground, the building in watercolour five stands on a rock (seen from the bottom of the painting), possibly next to or part of a mountain or a cliff. Such a rock may be borrowed from famous landscape painting like Claude's or Poussin's, and professing to be a spectacular scenic spot. Using the rock that pretends to be a natural spectacle to accommodate the cottage that used to be a magnificent castle, the artist has manipulated the meaning of these elements and demonstrated his freedom and ambition in interpreting and representing what a picturesque landscape painting should be.

As well as the mountainous setting which reminds us of the old masters, Joseph Barber began to adopt classic architecture and their ruins in his art. In watercolour six (Fig. 3-6), we see a grand bridge with six arches and six pairs of piers, two classic-style columns to the right, and a splendid mansion to the left. How do these finer elements embody the Picturesque? I find the result intriguing:

The taller column without weeds and the shorter one with vegetation on its top do not appear matched. Their presence might suggest a once existing temple, but their location on a high and unstable bank reduces such a possibility; in particular, we do not see any other remains of such a temple. The two columns may also be independent and memorial columns, but they seem to stand too closely together. In addition to the columns, the white mansion is also curious. Though half finished, the building still looks magnificent with its multi-storey design and brand-new walls. The grand mansion has a smooth and neat surface, and these qualities were regarded by Gilpin as "beautiful", not "picturesque". Thus, the mansion does not seem to match

the columns, which are ruined, rough, and therefore picturesque. Probably the artist himself did not have an answer for such juxtaposition, either: the mansion seems finally to be abandoned and left blank. Perhaps Joseph Barber himself, while trying to use classic objects to achieve the picturesque, discovered the problematic combination of the ruined and the smooth, so he left it there and never came back to it. Nevertheless, although the picture turns out to be a strange and unfinished view, it still suggests how the artist tried to bring the Picturesque to a context different from cottages and peasantry.

The last watercolour (Fig. 3-7) in a mountainous setting shows a similar ambition. The painting depicts a hillside and waterfront cottage with stone walls. Along the wall to the left curves a steep road. On the top of the road is a passage located between two large rocks. The rock to the right stands like a tower, extends toward the lake, and joins the green lumps of trees and bushes that fill the background to the right. At the bottom of the road is a group of people in conversation under a large shadow. There are two older women, one in a blue shawl and the other in a red shawl, leaning toward a child and a young man, who are both in rags. The woman in the red shawl offers her basket to the young man while the woman in blue steps toward the child, as if expressing sympathy for the less-cared-for.

I would like to compare this group with that in the first and the fourth watercolours (Fig. 3-1 and 3-4). The three country fellows in the first watercolour look naïve, busy, and a little naughty. They do not seem to carry serious narration. They are more likely to be painted there to form part of the picturesque view because they are country labourers, which Gilpin regarded as Picturesque. The children who watch the peepshow in watercolour four are dressed nicely and therefore do not look as rough as the boys in watercolour one. The peepshow watchers may bear other meanings. If we consider country-and-town differences, the peepshow might stand for

a novelty coming from the town. Then the peepshow man becomes the introducer of such novelty, and the excited children could signify how the countryside is influenced by urban impact. If we consider the four figures (the peepshow man and the three children) in relation to the artist's efforts in composing a proper landscape representation using the elements borrowed from classic landscape paintings, as he did for watercolours five and six (Figs. 3-5 and 3-6), then the peepshow group might be imagined as a minstrel (the peepshow man), a muse (the elder girl), and two chubby angels (the two children)—the narrative figures typical to a classic landscape painting. Following this, the two women in shawls and the two juniors in rags in the last watercolour (Fig. 3-7) could also form a serious narration. They convey a moral message of giving, ethics, and compassion, hopefully making themselves as important as the biblical saints in a classical landscape painting.

Overall, we can formulate several points from the seven watercolours: First, Joseph Barber was indeed influenced by the trend of the Picturesque as he practiced to paint cottages, ruins, and country folks (seen in all the seven watercolours), whose rough and rugged visual qualities were argued by Gilpin as being Picturesque. Second, although Joseph Barber followed the doctrines, while he practiced them and arranged them in various settings, he actually gave new meaning to the objects and developed new ways of looking at them. In this way, those picturesque elements were used like a tool and a source, rather just a pictorial theme or an aesthetic goal. It is also because of this free usage (or ambition) that I think the idea of the Picturesque became less theoretical and more practical. Third, in addition to those picturesque objects, the Birmingham artist could also have consulted the old masters' landscape paintings and borrowed or imitated the motifs in them, such as classic architecture (Fig. 3-6), mountainous setting (Figs. 3-5, 3-6, and 3-7) and narrative figures (Figs. 3-4 and 3-7) to achieve some pictorial harmony by his own judgement. As a result, my fourth point,

the specified and picturesque objects (cottages, peasants, and ruins) and the motifs borrowed from old masters' landscape painting (magnificent architecture, mountainous sites, and narrations) can be seen as two categories of signs being blended to express a new aesthetic attitude. This attitude is what I call a 'prerequisite' that dominates the artist as he composed a landscape picture, and the next section will look at how his pupils might have inherited this aesthetic attitude and used it to represent the surroundings of Birmingham.

Before I explore the link between the picturesque aesthetic and the representation of the environs of Birmingham in the next section, I shall address one more issue regarding the geography of the Picturesque: Joseph Barber's artistic trips to North Wales. Perhaps inspired by Gilpin's remarks on South Wales as a source of the Picturesque, the Birmingham-based artist visited North Wales (nearer to Birmingham than South Wales) to sketch its landscape and became the first artist of the town to do so.²⁵⁵ This action not only shows that Joseph Barber was seriously influenced by the aesthetic, but also reveals how Birmingham as an expanding town was perceived by him in relation to his vision of the picturesque.

In his *Beddgelert Bridge, North Wales* (Fig. 3-8) made in 1799, he provided a lovely reflection of his trip. Under the bright moonlight or the misty sunlight, two country women are washing clothes by a river whose calm surface gently reflects the silver light. Following the river to the centre of the picture is a stone bridge linking together a human settlement to the left and an unpopulated hill to the right. A man is riding on the bridge, heading in the direction of the human settlement, where a cottage and the two laundry women are. On the other side of the riverbank unfolds a winding path with tall trees growing beside it. The tree trunks, the piles of stones near the tree roots, and the winding path are evenly lit. As a whole, these objects combine to

²⁵⁵ <http://www.bmagic.org.uk/objects/1926P605> last accessed 11/30/2010.

present a picturesque view, and the tree-framed composition and the layered fore- and middle-grounds (as with the river surface, the bridge, the walk, and the hill) are also in line with Gilpin's principles of the Picturesque.

What I find more interesting is the implication of the artist needing to leave Birmingham in search of the picturesque and returning to the town with something satisfying. In other words, the artist might have a prejudice, a prerequisite in his mind that in order to see picturesque landscape, he must not stay in or expect to find it in Birmingham and must leave the town for somewhere famous. In other words, Birmingham was not on Joseph Barber's list of picturesque sites. As a result, the artist confirmed his town as a developed and urban environment and he could only pursue the natural and the picturesque from a distant site.

Indeed, in the following decades, numerous Birmingham artists, including both Joseph Barber's pupils (Charles and Joseph Vincent Barbers and David Cox) and his 'rivals' (the Lineses), continued to go to North Wales to paint and draw, making this ritual a vivid and local example of the country's fascination with the picturesque landscape²⁵⁶ and domestic tourism.²⁵⁷ Among them, for instance, Cox was commissioned to draw for more than half of the total of 99 illustrations in both *Wandering and Excursion in North Wales* of 1836 and *Wandering and Excursions in South Wales* of 1837.²⁵⁸ It can thus be said that from Joseph Barber, Birmingham artists started to bring the remote and natural site into the orbit of the town, in pursuit of the picturesque.

II. Birmingham suburbs represented as picturesque

²⁵⁶ Trevor Fawcett, *The Rise of English Provincial Art: Artists, Patrons, and Institutions outside London, 1800-1830* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974)

²⁵⁷ Moir, *op. cit.*.

²⁵⁸ Thomas Roscoe, *Wandering and Excursions in North Wales* (London: C. Tilt & Simpkin & Co; Birmingham: Wrightson & Webb, 1836) and his *Wandering and Excursions in South Wales* (London: C. Tilt & Simpkin & Co; Birmingham: Wrightson & Webb, 1837)

Now the drawing master had brought the issue of the Picturesque into the town of Birmingham. How would his pupils learn and respond to it? This section will discover that, unlike their teacher who associated the aesthetic theory only with cottages, ruins or Wales, the next-generation artists used the environs of Birmingham, which were far more accessible than Wales, as the exact place to embody the aesthetic. I will focus on Joseph Vincent Barber's works (some of which have already been discussed in chapter two) and also his elder brother Charles Barber's. I will find in them how natural motifs are used and how industrial and urban signs are excluded. Additionally, although the two artists constantly drew natural, rural things, their art works are not to be related to or interpreted as naturalism or Naturalism, a specific aesthetic of the nineteenth century.²⁵⁹ The Barber brothers' representations of natural objects, I will argue, were always made to be picturesque, i.e. to look like a proper picture.

I shall start with Joseph Vincent Barber. In chapter two, we have seen an over-beautified and fairy-tale-like view of *Aston Village* (Fig. 2-13), in which the river bends too many times and has too many headlands. The cows to the right are abnormally large compared with those on the side of the river. Human settlement is confined to the left bank while the right bank is completely reserved for meadows. In another picture on Aston (Fig. 2-10), we have seen how haymakers are placed right in front of the tree avenue of Aston Hall to compose a highly idealised rural scene. Besides, we have also seen deer arranged next to the hall and help create a natural, wild atmosphere (Figs. 2-4 and 2-5).

When interpreting those pictures, I already pointed out how Joseph Vincent Barber deliberately avoided visualising the industrialisation and urbanisation of Aston, and provided natural imagery as a visual compensation. Now, if we take Joseph

²⁵⁹ An explicit explanation on Naturalism can be found in Hemingway, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-9. He further argues how the Picturesque might restrain the development Naturalism during the nineteenth-century (pp. 19-26), but this is beyond the scope of this chapter and will not be discussed here.

Barber's picturesque approach discussed in the previous section into account, it can further be inferred that Joseph Vincent Barber's preference of the rural and the natural may well come from his father's teaching about the Picturesque. The only difference is while the father, as far as my archival findings can tell, only associated the aesthetic with unknown or imaginary places (Figs. 3-1 to 3-7), the son used the exact environment of his town, Birmingham, to accommodate that landscape ideal.

More evidence of how Joseph Vincent Barber brought the landscape aesthetic into the domain of local topographic views can be found in his another work: *Leamington Priors and Warwick from Newbold Hill*, which sees the two towns (today's Leamington Spa and Warwick) from the south (Fig. 3-9). In the following I will not only point out the natural objects appearing in the picture, but also discuss how the artist manipulates the location of these objects and complicates the topographic features of the venue to compose an extraordinary picturesque view.

First of all, there are several 'signs' that signify a rural environment: cows, sheep, trees, weeds, haymakers and a cowman. And then there are many different landscape elements: hills, slopes, winding paths, a river, a river valley, basins, plateaus, open areas, and woods. The natural signs and the landscape elements are plentiful and clearly-portrayed enough to signify the countryside and to look picturesque, but the artist seems not satisfied. The way he locates and arranges these objects onto these various landscape spots is more interesting.

For example, the gate in the centre of the foreground is perfectly placed between two heightened slopes, accommodating three cows which are just enough for the narrow pathway. While the three cows may appear too few to be picturesque, the artist put another two cows, one black and one white, on the slope to the right, avoiding piling five cows in the same place and subtly balancing the lengthened vision by the tall trees to the left of the picture. Holding the gate and waving his arm

(to direct the cows), the cowman actually leads our eyes into the world inside the gate, where dream-like topography comes true:

Right behind him is a green open area framed by trees which descend into the river valley. Following the river valley we see a serpentine river (probably the River Leam) and its glittering surface. The green open area connects to an unnaturally steep slope to the right, where some people (probably shepherds) and sheep rest comfortably. The steep slope dramatically falls and flattens toward the woods behind it, creating a fissure that reveals a view of a country house between trees. Below the steep slope is another pathway that is flatter and leads into the woods. Following the woods down to the left and crossing the river, a group of haymakers are at work in the water meadows, which are the centre of the picture. They make hay in this central location probably because the hay is ready there first and should be harvested before flooding, but after understanding Joseph Vincent Barber's particular preference for the motif of haymaking, the haymakers here in *Leamington Priors and Warwick from Newbold Hill* may again be a manipulation to decorate the empty landscape of the river bank. While the location of the haymaking remains puzzling, the topography to their left appears even more surprising by suddenly becoming lowered like a basin with herds of cattle inside. Higher than the basin is a plateau-like area with a row of farm houses on it. These farm houses are separated from the distant townscape by some more greenery. Thanks to these interesting combinations of different signs and different topographic features, the scene looks extraordinarily picturesque.

If we compare *Leamington Priors and Warwick from Newbold Hill* with another picture by a different artist in the same album which has a similar composition, we will find how boldly Joseph Vincent Barber demonstrates the Picturesque and marries this landscape ideal to the making of local topographic views, regardless of how close to the city the view is set. P. Derwait's *Birmingham from Sutton Coldfield* sees

Birmingham from Sutton Coldfield, three miles to the north of Birmingham (Fig. 4-10). Like *Leamington Priors and Warwick from Newbold Hill*, Derwait's picture also shows hills to the right, trees to the left, and townscape and church spires in the distance. Besides, both views have similar objects and topographic features, such as sheep, cows, countrymen, haymaking, and rivers close to the centre of the picture. Yet unlike Joseph Vincent Barber's picture in which he located the signs in various places and created many impressive topographic features in the fore- and middle- grounds, Derwait's depiction looks much more moderate with the objects being evenly arranged in the rolling foreground and the layered middle-ground. Thus, compared with Derwait's moderate way of representing the place, it is clear that Joseph Vincent Barber is bolder in visualising the Picturesque.

One could, of course, raise the point that because Leamington Spa and Warwick were not industrial towns at all, so the countryside surrounding them could look more rural than that surrounding the manufacturing centre, which was growing fast and losing rural or natural features. This is true, but since the aim of *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire* was to show off the natural and antiquarian beauty of the county²⁶⁰ and the commissioned artists were all contemporary to the trend of the Picturesque, I believe that both Derwait and Joseph Vincent Barber meant to present something picturesque rather than something true to reality. Thus, while Derwait merely used a moderate amount of natural objects and a general topographic setting to present Birmingham, Joseph Vincent Barber lavishly displayed a variety of natural motifs and made his picture extraordinarily picturesque. Overall, Joseph Vincent Barber not only learnt his father's picturesque aesthetic, but also brought the landscape ideal to the making of local topographic views, thus giving his town, the surrounding countryside,

²⁶⁰ William Radclyffe, *op. cit.*, *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire*, 1829 and 1862, in the preface of the 1862 version.

and even the place in between (the suburb as urban fringes), a perfect and picturesque face, regardless of any social and economical changes.

Like his younger brother, Charles Barber is also familiar with the landscape aesthetic and how it can be applied to the making of local topographic views. Earlier than the contributions Joseph Vincent Barber made to *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire* in 1829, Charles Barber in 1813 produced *S. E. View of Birmingham* (Fig. 3-11), engraved by William Radclyffe and published by Jonathan Knott. In the following I will examine how the elder brother followed his father's ways of learning directly from the old masters' paintings and mobilising their motifs to achieve a picturesque effect, and how he, like his younger brother, used the environs of Birmingham as the exact place to embody the Picturesque.

S. E. View of Birmingham (Fig. 3-11), like *Leamington Priors and Warwick from Newbold Hill*, has a complex design for its composition. For the convenience of our discussion, I will distinguish between the near foreground (with water to the left), the far foreground (with cows to the right), the near middle-ground (with haymaking to the left in front the line of poplars), and the far middle-ground (the area behind and blocked by the line of poplars to the right but before the distant townscape). These four parts, particularly the corner that holds water, compose a right-and-left reverse image of Rubens' famous *An Autumn Landscape with a View of Het Steen in the Early Morning* (Fig. 3-12), or of his *Landscape with a Rainbow* (Fig. 3-13) which are believed to be related to each other.²⁶¹ Charles Barber's far foreground has four cows arranged back to back and five birches whose roots grow closely and branches stretch out separately and compose a radiant pattern. The cows and the birches resemble another Dutch painter Cuyp's *View on a Plain* (Fig. 3-14), which also has cows back

²⁶¹ For a comparison between Ruben's two paintings, see Christopher Brown, *Ruben's Landscape* (London: National Gallery, 1997) pp. 59-76; Lisa Vergara, *Rubens and the Poetics of Landscape* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982) pp. 99-135.

to back against several trees.²⁶² This particular corner with birches and cows might have taken Charles Barber some time to draw; if we compare the finished version with an earlier sketch (Fig. 3-15), we can see the sketch has two more cows but fewer haymakers, whereas the finalised engraving removes the two cows and adds more haymakers to the left of the hay wagon. Carefully adjusting the numbers of the cows and making the picture look like a famous landscape painting, Charles Barber was ambitious with his *S. E. View of Birmingham*.

The near middle-ground shows a scene of haymaking. As we have learnt in chapter two, haymaking was a common practice in agricultural society and can therefore be taken as a sign (or iconography) of country life. Joseph Vincent Barber manipulated the sign in front of Aston Hall to represent the suburb as still part of the countryside (Fig. 2-10). Charles Barber seems equally aware of the meaning of the sign, but he uses it in a more radical way: he locates haymaking immediately next to the town. Aston Hall is still some distance from Birmingham and such a distance could allow the area to maintain its rural appearance. But in *S. E. View of Birmingham* (Fig. 3-11), the haymakers are doing their job just next to the expanding town. The presence of the haymakers therefore seems to be independent of the topographic and economic reality of the time. Neglecting what was there and visualising what should be there, Charles Barber endeavours to make the landscape a proper picture and, consequentially, picturesque.

Further evidence can be found in the far middle-ground: the area behind and blocked by the line of poplars to the right but before the distant townscape. This specific area was near a place called Highgate, and was frequently represented by artists in their prospects of the town. For example, Turner drew it and gave it

²⁶² Ian A. C. DeJardin, *The Dutch Italianates: Seventeenth-Century Masterpieces from Dulwich Picture Gallery, London* (London: Philip Wilson, 2008), pp. 52-3.

considerable volume by mixing within it urban, rural, and industrial objects (Fig. 1-21). Creswick, Davis, and Burn also represented the suburb as dynamic and under intense development (Figs. 1-23, 1-25 and 1-28). Turner's drawing was made in 1795; the other artists' works were made between the 1820s and the 1840s. Those pictures suggest, as argued in chapter one, the formation of a pictorial topos of Birmingham suburbs. Charles Barber's picture made in 1813, however, declined to be part of the series. He might have considered that it was better for the suburb to remain looking rural. If we take a close look through the poplars, to their right, we find the artist so reluctant to show human development that he uses individual poplars like bars to limit the sight of the buildings behind. We can infer that he might prefer regulated trees to irregular signs of human development; or, he might prefer irregular, rougher forms from Nature (the poplars) to the regulated and finer surfaces of artificial buildings.

In the meantime, he renders the poplars in a dark colour while giving the buildings a much lighter tint: The first layer behind the hay field is made of poplars and has the darkest tint. The second layer is a populated hill with some houses and a windmill, but is made into a silhouette in light grey. The farthest layer is the distant townscape where the colour completely fades out. The colour scheme and the usage of poplars are fully intended, for we find no discrepancy between the aquatint (Fig. 3-15) and this final version.

The background also has a feature that indicates how the artist meant to use rural and natural motifs to compose this picture of Birmingham: the windmill to the furthest left. In fact, there were several windmills around Birmingham. In the south prospect of Birmingham made in 1731 (Fig. 1-6a), there is a windmill on the hill in the middle-ground to the right. In Samuel Lines' view of the town centre (to be discussed in the next section; Fig. 3-17), there is also a windmill clearly portrayed in the centre of the background. Here in Charles Barber's picture, the windmill to the

furthest left is very likely the same one that had existed on the south edge of the town since the eighteenth century, as seen in the lowest ground in a 1779 view (Fig. 3-16). Like haymaking, a windmill is a sign of agricultural life. Thus, the haymakers and the windmill in Charles Barber's picture tell a story: in due season, people around Birmingham could make hay in the field and process grains in the windmill and live a self-contained, undisturbed life.

Based on the above observation, I believe the Barber son, before undertaking this picture, already had in his mind a clear and picturesque vision of the south-eastern edge of the town. Developing a vision that pre-existed in his mind and letting that vision dominate the whole picture, Charles Barber had how to use the Picturesque as a prerequisite to represent a landscape. To sum up, like his father, Charles Barber borrowed some details from the old masters' paintings for the purpose of presenting a picturesque view. Like his younger brother, he followed the objective of *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire* and believed that their home town was a proper place for a picturesque representation, placing in his pictures numerous signs of Nature or rural life. In conclusion, taught by a father who believed in the Picturesque, the two sons not only mobilised the pictorial elements from the old masters' paintings, but also mobilised the aesthetic from Wales to the area around Birmingham.

III. The topographic ambition of the Lines family

The Barbers demonstrated a strong influence of the Picturesque on their making of Birmingham topographic views. Who else could contribute to the topographic-view tradition of the town and how? This section focuses on the Lines family and a selection of their topographic drawings in and around Birmingham. I will discuss five drawings and one oil painting, all made in the 1820s, which depict the views obtained

exclusively from Samuel Lines' drawing academy located in the town centre. Then I shall explore two drawings on the countryside nearby. Both types of drawings, I will argue, represent not only the appearance of inside and around Birmingham, but also the family's ambition to symbolically 'protect' local environment and 'own' a territory to be used for their topographic art.

After years of hard work in Birmingham, Samuel Lines became successful enough to open his own drawing academy in 1807 in Newhall Street.²⁶³ After this, the artist moved his family and academy to number 3, Temple Row West, to the immediate south of St Philips' Cathedral (as indicated by the red arrow in Fig. 3-18). The convenient location might help the Lines artists gain exclusive views of the town centre and beyond, and therefore shape their unique vision of local topography. In light of this, the house at number 3, Temple Row West might function like a 'home base' for the family.

The first example is *View from no.3 Temple Row West, Birmingham* (Fig. 3-17) made in 1821. From near to far, we can see a long ridge of a roof, with two sitters, spanning across the foreground. Then there is a walled backyard with trees to its right and a small building with a chimney to its left. Behind the wall are more town houses interlaced with trees. The largest building in the centre of the picture is the New Theatre, finished in 1782 and demolished in 1902.²⁶⁴ Behind this cluster of town houses we can see the immediate countryside of the town. Most of the land in this area is exploited or developed. To the right of the background, we can see a string of buildings and terraced houses spread between fields. In the approximate middle of the background stand a large windmill. To its left are more fields and farms. The fields and the windmill are identical with what the west end of the 1825 map shows (Fig.

²⁶³ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 75

²⁶⁴ Wildman, *op. cit.*, p 41.

1-6d). While the settlement to the far right stands for the expansion of the town, the windmill and the fields to its left stand for a rural life style: Samuel Lines has clearly portrayed a mix of the urban and the rural in the background. Therefore, this background can be read as a representation of suburb.

The artist was probably unaware that he represented the idea of suburb, but he must have been interested to make this exclusive view his own 'territory'. This can be told by the selection of the specific site and the presence of the two sitters. According to what has been visualised in the drawing, i.e. the theatre, the backyard, the long roof, etc, the scope of the drawing should be within the black triangle of Fig. 3-18. Therefore, the drawing depicts what the artist saw from the rear of his house. While in front of his house stands St Philip's Cathedral which could make a magnificent view, the artist still remembered to pay attention to the views obtained from other sides of his house. Therefore, I think Samuel Lines might be keen to explore the surroundings of his house and to look for proper subject matter for his art out of them. As a result, the view from the rear of his house was selected and *View from no.3 Temple Row West, Birmingham* (Fig. 3-17) was made.

Moreover, there are two hatted men enjoying the view unfolding in front of them. One of them even raises his arm to point out somewhere to his partner. They could be interpreted as the embodiment of the Lines family members, for such a view was obtained exclusively from the rear of their house. However, according to the oil painting (Fig. 3-18), it is not clear whether the long roof is part of the building of no.3 Temple Row West or not. In other words, the roof may be someone else's property. Nevertheless, the artist still put the sitters on it and shows how much they enjoy sitting there. Because of this, I think Samuel Lines expressed an ambition to obtain exclusive views of local topography and to represent them on paper to show how much artistic 'territory' he has secured.

This ambition has a fuller form as he painted *Birmingham from the Dome of St Philip's Church* (Fig. 3-18) in the same year. Baroque-style St Philip's Church (now St Philip's Cathedral) was completed in 1715 to provide the growing population of the town with another place to worship. The painting not only shows the artist's home (the red arrow), but also foresees his tomb in the graveyard of the church (the area indicated by the black arrow). Besides, it has been pointed out that the large green fields enclosed by the red townhouses in the centre of the painting were built on soon after the original leases terminated.²⁶⁵

Yet what role the artist's 'home base' played in the making of the painting has not been fully discussed.²⁶⁶ I think it is highly likely that the artist began with *View from no.3 Temple Row West, Birmingham* (Fig. 3-17), but then upgraded it into a more sophisticated view gained from the top of the church. Although it is unknown how exclusively the artist worked in the dome and how much time he actually spent painting there, the view obtained from the rear of his home must have been of great help. Thus, the oil painting is like a value-added version of the drawing as Samuel Lines turns the secular view obtained from his ordinary life into a holy and exclusive panorama. In the meantime, it is also obvious that he tries to connect himself with Birmingham by seeing the town through the eye of its Cathedral-to-be. The artist's ambition is revealed.

Indeed, in the 1820s the Lines artists, especially Samuel Lines, had systematically made drawings of the views around his home. To the west, he observed his neighbour, a wagon office, as indicated by the yellow arrow in the oil painting (Fig. 3-18) and made a drawing for it. *The Old Wagon Office Temple Row West* (Fig. 3-19) depicts the interior of the site, including the office building, a worker carrying

²⁶⁵ <http://www.bmagic.org.uk/objects/1893P72> last accessed 25/11/2010.

²⁶⁶ Wildman, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

goods on his back and walking into the office, his goods piled at the rear of a wagon, and the wagon from where the goods are unloaded. Such careful observation and depiction are to be used for a second time: some of the details in the drawing are shown in the oil painting (Fig. 3-18), such as the wagon(s), the building, and the labourer (see the blue arrow in Fig. 3-18).

To the south, Christ Church is also captured, as seen in *Christ Church from No 3 Temple Row Roof* (Fig. 3-20). Instead of standing in front of the church and visualising the complete view of its façade, the artist piles up irrelevant buildings, back yards, roofs, and chimneys before the presence of the church spire. It seems that viewers have to struggle through all these unsightly objects in order to see the church spire. At first glance, this drawing seems to select a bad view-point and does not fully show the building of the church. But this practice may be exactly what the artist desired, for he could test how the landmark looked like from that specific angle and how he could make use of this unique and exclusive view in his other works.

To the east, the drawing master had his youngest son involved in his exploration and ambition. The father and the son respectively made a drawing of the site to the west of their house which was to become a library. Frederick Thomas Lines made *Site of Athenaeum Upper East of Temple Street* when he was sixteen years old (Fig. 3-21). The young artist seems to concentrate on the architecture itself without giving much information about its location, especially its being within the scope of their 'home base'. Yet his father appears more consistent and sophisticated in telling viewers that the site of the athenaeum was also part of his 'territory'. His *Site of the Athenaeum from Temple Row* (Fig. 3-22) produced three years later not only shows a more complete view of the architecture, but also where it was by visualising the layout of the street, such as the short wall starting from the bottom-left of the drawing. Thus, viewers can clearly tell the location of the site of the athenaeum: it was located

outside the pillared gate of St Philip's Church and at the intersection of Temple Row and another road (see the white square in Fig. 3-18). Even though the drawings were made after the oil panorama was finished, they still reveal how the Lineses continued to draw the landmarks around their home as means of securing their artistic territory.

Through the series of the views around their 'home base' in Temple Row West, the Lines family, particularly Samuel Lines as its first-generation artist, declared their ambition to secure a 'territory' in the representation of local topography. These urban views could then serve as a stance from which they reached out of the town and into the surrounding countryside. This urban-countryside route not only reflects how the family perceived the environment, but could also facilitate the conception of the suburb as the developing edges of a town.

Samuel Lines' contribution to and ambition for the topographic-view tradition of Birmingham may have been carried on most thoroughly by his eldest son, Henry Harris Lines, who had also produced a large number of topographic views and was still working as an artist until he was very old.²⁶⁷ It may then be a little too brief to introduce in the following only two of his works. Yet the two selected pictures, as I will argue, are very consistent with and representative of the family's topographic vision.

The first one is *Birmingham from Camp Hill* (Fig. 3-23), made in October, 1835. Camp Hill is located in the south of Birmingham. In 1643 there was a battle between the King and local gentry, and it was from here, Camp Hill, that the town was entered and seized.²⁶⁸ Thus Camp Hill was described as the "entrance into Birmingham".²⁶⁹ Viewing Birmingham from this strategically important site, the artist obviously had some ambition. Indeed, the painting demonstrates a sense of possession and visual

²⁶⁷ Wan, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

²⁶⁸ Hutton, *op. cit.*, 1805, pp. 4-5.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

pleasure. On the lowest ground are the River Rea, its bank, some fields and poplars, and a sandbar. The River Rea is in fact a small river, but the artist gave it a large volume. To balance the wide surface of the river, tall poplars are painted on the sandbar and the bank. Behind this natural scene is the distant townscape. A very interesting fact of this townscape is that the artist not only represented it in image, but also annotated it with words. At the bottom of the paper, fifteen street and building names and their schematic drawings were given. They are: 1 Broad Street, 2 Town Hall, 3 Hurst St, 4 Christ Ch[urch], 5 Theatre, 6 St Paul's Chapel, 7 St Philip's [Church], 8 Free School, 9 Market Hall, 10 Hospital, 11 St Martin's Ch[urch], 12 [?] Depository, 13 Pugh's[?] Office, 14 [?] Lane, and 15 St Peter's Ch[urch]. These annotations were like the artist's roll-call of his visual possession, and in doing so both the artist and the viewers of the painting can obtain some visual pleasure.

Perhaps the Lineses' ambition is best symbolised in Henry Harris Lines' *A Friend who has Seen Better Days in Arden* made in 1825 (Fig. 3-24). The title of the drawing was given by the artist and written down at the bottom of the paper. The Forest of Arden is in Warwickshire, the county in which Birmingham was at the time. This portrait of an oak was highly acclaimed and it can be related to a contemporary fashion of revering trees.²⁷⁰ It is then a sentimental moment to witness the oak dying. To the right, the branches are dead. In the centre, the branches that stretch toward viewers look white and withered. Behind them remain some living branches, portrayed in darker tints and with leaves.

Calling the oak "a friend" and representing and even immortalising the way it perishes, the artist himself attends the ritual through the presence of the men under the tree. The two men, one sitting and the other standing holding a rifle pointing up, seem to be guarding the tree. Following the direction indicated by the rifle, we see another

²⁷⁰ Wildman, *op. cit.*, p. 42; see also Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

two figures walking in the distance. We (the viewers), the two men under the tree, and the distant figures are forming a narration: the two men under the oak are protecting it from interruption, symbolised by the distant figures that are getting closer. We (the viewers) are included in the camp by the tree to guard it from the rear. Thus, the artist not only draws a tree, but also declares his protection of the environment.

The seven drawings and one oil painting discussed above are like the family's manifestation of their indispensable place in Birmingham topographic-view tradition. Before I conclude their contribution I should mention a very interesting yet unstudied fact: unlike the drawings by the Barber brothers or Cox which were commissioned for prints, the majority of the Lineses' works remain one-off drawings and I seldom see them come in as commissioned book or newspaper illustrations. Although some posthumous publications do make the Lineses' drawings into prints and publish them as book illustrations, such as Samuel Lines' drawing *Wellington Road near Edgbaston* made in the early nineteenth century being used in Dent's *The Making of Birmingham*²⁷¹, I only found three pieces that were drawn by the Lineses, and printed and circulated while the drawers were alive. The first is the view of the back of the main (south) wing of Aston Hall (Aylesford Collection, Archive and Heritage Service, BCL) whose pencil drawing is held in BMAG (1977V103). The second and the third are drawn by Samuel Lines and printed by the Radclyffes. They are: a topographic view showing a wood where a young lady called Mary Ashford was murdered, and a portrait of the victim (both held in Aylesford Collection, Archive and Heritage Service, BCL). The murder was a sensation of the time and was reported in local newspapers for quite a while, and Samuel Lines might have been commissioned to produce illustrations for this. Overall, compared with the limited number of the prints, the Lines artists' dozens of sketches and drawings, especially taking into account the

²⁷¹ Dent, *op. cit.*, *The Making of Birmingham*, 1894, p. 338.

manual dexterity, grassroots passion, and artistic ambition they stand for, remain their major achievement in local topographic art.

To sum up, from the picturesque approach taken by the Barber artists to the ambitious vision demonstrated by the Lines artists, a Birmingham topographic-view tradition seemed more and more concrete. Within this tradition, the suburb as developing urban fringes might have been sensed: the Barbers could have noticed it but denied it and replaced it with rural scenes; the Lineses confronted it but appropriated it as part of the townscape. The next and final section will explore how a later artist might shift the focus by practicing something else.

IV. Painting *en-plein-air* in the urbanising countryside

This final section will concentrate on a painting called *Yardley* (Fig. 3-25) by Joseph Vincent Barber's pupil, Frederick Henry Henshaw (1807-1891).²⁷² I shall briefly introduce the artist and the place of Yardley. Little is known about Henshaw and his art. It is only known that he was born in Birmingham, studied with Joseph Vincent Barber, exhibited several times with the Birmingham Society of Artists,²⁷³ moved to London in 1826 to study more about landscape painting, but then returned and spent the majority of his life in Birmingham.²⁷⁴ Besides, according to the limited survivals, his landscape paintings depict the scenery of Windsor, Yorkshire, and his home region. The painting to be explored in this section depicts the scenery around Yardley, two miles to the east of central Birmingham. Yardley was in Worcestershire in the

²⁷² BMAG names it '*Five Barred Gate at Yardley*' whereas the title given by the artist is simply '*Yardley*', which is clearly seen next to his signature at the bottom of the painting.

²⁷³ Langford, *op. cit.*, p. 505.

²⁷⁴ The museum of Sandwell Council holds a painting by Henshaw. <http://www.laws.sandwell.gov.uk/ccm/content/education-and-childrens-services/museums-finder/oil-paintings/artists/henshaw-frederick-henry.en> When I wrote the thesis, this webpage was the most complete published information on the artist I could find.

nineteenth century, and became part of Greater Birmingham in 1911.²⁷⁵ For many centuries, like many other settlements in the area that relied on Birmingham as their market, Yardley also provided Birmingham with live stock and other agricultural produce.²⁷⁶

Interestingly, however, Henshaw's *Yardley* (Fig. 3-25) shows a leafy corner that might be anywhere. This pure greenery is significant in two ways. First, it is a strong expression of fine art, not topographic art that merely provides a survey of a place. This fine-art representation can help broaden the spectrum of Birmingham topographic art. Second, according to the pictorial details to be discussed later, this painting is likely to be made at least partially on stop and *en-plein-air*. The fact that the artist went outdoors and painted the immediate countryside suggests how challenging, diversified, and unprecedented it was for a local artist to formulate where exactly the edge of the expanding town should be and to give it a visual form.

I will now analyse the picture and discuss the significance of the pictorial details. The painting shows wild flowers and weeds in the foreground, a gate in the middle, and a field in the background. The gate is made of two poles, and three vertical and four lateral bars which divide the view of the field into sixteen boxes. Half of the boxes at the bottom are covered with the weeds growing in the foreground. The other upper eight boxes reveal the scenery inside the field. The top row with four boxes shows some tree tops which appear neat, possibly trimmed or blown by the wind. The lower row with the other four boxes shows golden grains. Compared with the diversity and liveliness of the weeds, what is seen through the gate looks singular and vague. This visual contrast between the cultivated and the wild plants is different from a general impression: people usually have an indifferent or negative attitude

²⁷⁵ *Chronology of Birmingham 1883-1950* (web page) *op. cit.*

²⁷⁶ Skipp, *op. cit.*, *A History of Greater Birmingham*, pp. 22-30

toward wild and useless weeds, but the painter turns them into a rich assortment; on the other hand, people may hold a welcoming attitude toward cultivation and the harvest it promises to yield, but here in the painting it appears silent, uniformed, unclear, distant and even irrelevant to the viewers.

Indeed, the painting seems to minimise signs of human activity. While the screws fixed to the right-hand side still hold the gate, the left-hand side where the gate opens is filled with weeds. These weeds would have been beaten back if the gate was used, but they look tall and undamaged, suggesting that the gate is out of use for some time. Moreover, these weeds look like nettles, with stings, which make it less likely for people to come through. This further implies that the gate has been abandoned for a period of time.

As a result, I think the focus of the painting is neither the man-cultivated field nor the man-made gate. The focus should be the weeds. To the left, we already noticed the nettles that grow over the gate. They have separate stalks, small leaves, and strings of yellow flowers on top. At the bottom of these scrambles some ivy. The ivy is shown in dark green and under shadow, but its veins and edges are still clearly painted. To the right of the nettles and the ivy, some grass with long, thin leaves reveals striking skills. There are three groups of this grass: the first group is in the extreme foreground, the second inside the gate but stretching out of its wooden bars, and the third group is dispersed all over the rest of the foreground.

I shall focus on the first and second groups: Within the first group, the upward-growing blades are in green while their bent tips are in yellow or white to indicate the reflection of light. The blades are arranged facing in different directions and weave a screen of green and yellow threads. We cannot find two bent surfaces that are the same: their sizes, lengths, angles, tints and directions are always different. The bent bits stand out because of their lighter colours, but the straight blades are

never commonplace because they form a smear of green, smooth and soft enough to absorb the acute angles of their bent parts.

The second group behind the bars looks like foxtail and is therefore a different species from the first group. The grass of the first group is shorter, lighter in colour and without flowers, but the grass of the second group has longer, darker leaves and small, white, and furry flowers that point high to the sky. As the second type of grass has longer leaves, the way they bend is different from the first type of grass. The longer leaves of the second group bend into arcs instead of acute angles, thus showing more parts of both the lightened side (in white) and the unlighted side underneath (in dark green). Besides, as the second group of grass is just under the gate, Henshaw carefully splits each clump: those whose roots grow inside the gate have their leaves stretch out of the bars and into the foreground; those whose roots grow right beneath the bars have their leaves either stick into the field or grow vertically beside the wooden bars. Drawn with such detail and verisimilitude, these grasses and weeds demand recognition that they are not secondary motifs to decorate a topographic view whose subject is a landmark; these grass and weeds are exactly the whole meaning of this representation.

When looking deeper into this non-topographic and self-referring representation more details are noticed. The plants to the right of the canvas are also painted with painstaking brushstrokes and in amazing detail. Next to the long, arched leaves, there are some heart-shaped leaves with zigzag edges, possibly eaten by insects. Next are cow parsleys with white flowers. One stem of cow parsley grows tall on the right of the heart-shaped leaves; others are shorter and grouped on the bottom-right side of the heart-shaped leaves. Both groups of cow parsleys twinkle with their crowns of white flowers; if observed closely, the crowns are made of numerous tiny buds. To the left of the lower cow parsleys is another plant whose T-shaped leaf sticks out like a sword.

To the right of the lower cow parsleys, we see still another mint-like plant with plenty of triangular leaves that are partially entangled with some brown vines near its top. The brown vines scramble all over the right upright of the gate and entangle with some thorns, and it goes without saying that their tips, bent parts, and edges are all carefully arranged and painted. Providing a feast of wild weeds and grass and naming them after where they are located (Yardley), Henshaw gives this specific corner in Yardley its own presence without having to be a topographic view that signposts an established landmark.

Indeed, it is a close contact with and a verisimilitude of the environment that this painting represents. This can be further understood from studying the two corners to the extreme left and right sides. The right corner where the signature is has many quick brushstrokes in green on a chestnut layer which stands for soil. The combination creates a surface that looks like fur. The bottom-left corner not only has this furry fusion as its foundation, but also has a string of dots in olive green, starting from under the cow parsley and spiralling up the wooden bar. Of course, the fusion of brushstrokes and the string of dots stand for plants, which add diversity and abundance to the overall greenery, but such non-figurative and expressive colouring is actually demonstrating oil-painting as fine art, not an art that serves for topographic recording. That is to say, being a landscape vision in its own right plus the two corners being painted in a non-figurative, experimental, and expressive way, *Yardley* means to be a piece of fine art that represents Nature.

In addition to being a self-referral, fine-art-like image that helps broadens the spectrum of Birmingham topographic art, what does the painting say about the conception and the representation of the suburb? According to the pictorial details discussed above, this painting was made at least partially *en-plein-air* in the outdoor environment. Therefore, the artist's visit to the surrounding countryside suggests that

he might have managed to understand what was beyond the edge of the expanding town, how it looked like, and how to formulate an image for it. As observed from the painting, the artist seemed to formulate a green, natural approach as he painted so many wild plants in such a great clarity. As a whole, these many green plants illustrate how challenging and unprecedented it was for the developing edges of the town to be perceived and represented, and how natural and rural things, perhaps because they had existed in that area before urban or industrial development and were therefore easier to be recognised, had to be called upon and relied on to construct that representation. In other words, while Henshaw went outdoors into the immediate countryside of the town and presented an image filled with natural things, he also presents the absence of the visual vocabulary of the idea of the suburb.

To conclude, learning from Joseph Vincent Barber who was keen to present a picturesque view of Birmingham by drawing natural and rural motifs, Henshaw might also be aware of the importance of natural objects in a landscape representation, and thus produced this interesting painting of Nature. Yet his *Yardley* means to the topographic-view tradition of Birmingham more than that. First, the picture is actually anti-topographic by refusing to signpost a landmark. The picture is self-referral and focuses on Nature. With the emphasis on Nature and the delicate and experimental skills the plants are painted with, the painting can be considered a piece of fine art and therefore broaden the spectrum of Birmingham topographic art. More importantly, with the abundant feeling of Nature it presents, the painting actually reiterates the difficult nature of representing the developing urban fringes: there was always a struggle in vision to see such a place, a battle of which system of sign should signify the place (the urban or rural signs), and, as a result, a spectacular emphasis on the system of signs that wins. Overall, the suburb as the developing edges of the fast-growing town is never an easy idea for local artists, and the works by the Lineses,

the Barbers and Henshaw have proved it.

This chapter explored the tradition and the making of Birmingham topographic views, and how the suburb might be represented within this tradition and category. We explored the topographic and landscape imageries produced by the circle of the two important local artistic families of the time, the Barbers and the Lineses. Although the views, especially those by the Lineses, are considered as excellent and exact visual records of how the environs had looked like²⁷⁷, this chapter found that, behind the hard work and the lovely scenes they show, the art works actually help form a topographic-view tradition of Birmingham, and demonstrate the artists' extraordinary ambition.

Section one explored how Joseph Barber (the first-generation artist of the family) followed Gilpin's idea of the Picturesque by making paintings of picturesque objects, as such cottages and ruins, and by borrowing old masters' pictorial motifs, such as a mountainous setting and narrative figures. We discovered how the artist practised the above in order to make his landscape representation 'look like a (proper) picture': the literal meaning of the word picturesque.²⁷⁸ Besides, he also visited South Wales to make landscape sketches. Being the first artist of the town to do so, Joseph Barber seemed to bring the remote and natural site into the orbit of the town, in pursuit of the Picturesque. Overall, section one found how the Picturesque became Joseph Barber's 'prerequisite' for making landscape and topographic pictures.

Section two was on Joseph Barber's two artistic sons: Charles and Joseph Vincent. We saw how the two brothers used the environment of Birmingham to

²⁷⁷ Wildman, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

²⁷⁸ Vaughan, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

accommodate the vision of the Picturesque. Charles manipulated the image of haymaking immediately outside the town to suggest how rural the surroundings of Birmingham remained in the face of its rapid growth (Fig. 3-11). Joseph Vincent was even more radical as he presented highly idealised scenes (Figs. 2-13 and 3-9).

While the Barbers contributed to the tradition of Birmingham topographic-view through producing picturesque imageries, the Lines artists demonstrated an unusual ambition. From the drawings that depict the views obtained exclusively from Samuel Lines' drawing academy in the town centre, we saw a strong intention to secure an artistic 'territory'. From the eldest son Henry Harris' drawings on the surrounding countryside, we not only saw a similar ambition, about also the desire to 'protect' the local environment with his pencils.

Toward the mid-nineteenth century another local artist Henshaw (Joseph Vincent Barber's pupil) contributed to the topographic-view tradition in a different way. His *Yardley*, probably painted *en-plein-air*, shows striking verisimilitude with Nature. These features make the painting a non-topographic, non-signposting image dedicated to the representation of Nature itself. Such a quality also makes the painting a work of fine art and a wonderful example of how the topography of Birmingham could be represented in a more diversified, sophisticated manner. Moreover, in *Yardley*, through nothing but natural signs, we actually saw an old problem: the lack of proper visual vocabulary to articulate for the countryside lying immediately outside this fast-growing town.

Overall, I conclude that Birmingham artists' task of making local topographic views between 1780 and 1850 was never easy. The artists started with the ideal of the Picturesque. They also tried to symbolically protect the environment and to establish their own artistic 'territory'. In addition, painting *en-plein-air* was practised to more fully capture the image of Nature. This not only forms part of the tradition of the

making of Birmingham topographic views, but also leaves the developing edges of the town, its suburbs and suburbs-to-be, a permanent outsider of this tradition.

Chapter Four Modern Life and the Suburb

Chapter three found a tradition. Chapter four looks for a breakthrough. In other words, this chapter will argue: as well as providing topographical outlooks or landscape settings, images of suburb also represent social dynamics and a modern way of life. Such social dynamics and modern life are particularly related to the rise of middle class. As English middle class rose in the second half of the eighteenth century, they began to seek new living space outside the overcrowded and unhygienic town.²⁷⁹ During this process the suburb as the developing edges of the town played an important role: they provided the middle class with a new place to settle, to avoid urban hustle and urban poor and to construct an ideal home.²⁸⁰ Toward the mid-nineteenth century, moreover, the suburb in the form of a planned, residential district became the ultimate representation of middle-class lifestyle, where workplace is separated from family life.²⁸¹ In light of this, section one will focus on how middle class moved out of central Birmingham into Edgbaston (about two miles to the south-west of the town) to start their modern life, and how this development was represented in pictures. I will argue that the pictures not only show the rise of local middle class and the suburbanisation of Edgbaston, but also again reflect the difficulty to conceptualise and represent the idea of suburb.

After exploring who lived a modern life in the suburb, I will investigate in section two what modern life was lived. Here by modern life I mean a general, non-specific circumstance of modernisation, in which technology advanced, industry developed, material life improved, population grew, city expanded, middle class rose, work pattern changed, and education, media and knowledge became more accessible

²⁷⁹ Davidoff and Hall *op. cit.*, pp. 39-42.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 39-42 and pp. 357-96.

²⁸¹ Fishman, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-17.

to the public. Section two is not limited to Edgbaston but includes all the periphery of Birmingham to see how the developing edges of the town connected to the above modern circumstance and became a scene of modern life.

I find it particularly helpful to compare the Birmingham pictures of a suburban, modern life with the French painting of modern life formulated by T. J. Clark.²⁸² In Introduction, I already pointed out, compared with town planners and urban historians, art historians pay less attention to the visual representation of the suburb (whether as developing industrial edges or developed residential districts), especially as the focus is dichotomised into and concentrated on townscape and natural landscape imageries. T. J. Clark's observation of how French Modernists and Impressionists painted the environs of Paris is one rare contribution to this neglected area of study. Reading his argument geographically, I find what he regards as the painting of modern life should not only show the life on the streets of Paris, capturing a "passing moment" and "the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent" as described by Baudelaire²⁸³, but also outside the city in its fringes and surrounding settlements, where urban identity is mixed with rural features, where petit bourgeois separate work-place from family-life, seek pleasure, and construct "a way of living and working which in time would come to dominate the late capitalist world, providing as it did the appropriate forms of sociability for the new age."²⁸⁴ Although T. J. Clark prefers to use "the environs of Paris" to "suburban" to denote the venue because he believes the latter could mean "subordinate" (to Paris), I think it is exactly the conception of a modern suburb, or, precisely, suburbia, that he is intended to incorporate.²⁸⁵ As I also see the suburb in relation to urbanisation and modernisation, the French painting of modern life is an

²⁸² Clark, *op. cit.*, particularly his chapter three, 'The Environs of Paris', pp. 147-204.

²⁸³ Charles Baudelaire, 'The Painter of Modern Life' in Jonathan Mayne (trans. & ed.), *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* (London: Phaidon, 1995), pp. 1-41. Quotations from p. 5 and p. 9.

²⁸⁴ Clark, *op. cit.* p. 147.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 147-8.

important source and an interesting paradigm.

Among the suburbs that consist of the environs of Paris, Argenteuil is particularly interesting. It was an old town and now a commune (an administration unit) eight miles to the north-west of the capital. It had produced wine and had had its own Town Hall and marketplace for centuries.²⁸⁶ The main transportation between Argenteuil and central Paris used to be ferries, but from the mid-nineteenth century, passenger railways became popular, so Parisians started to visit Argenteuil more frequently by train.²⁸⁷ The new visitors were largely so-called petit bourgeois, like clerks and shop-keepers who made a living in the capital. Their long working hours on weekdays and short breaks during the weekends resulted in their unique mode of recreation of taking pleasure immediately outside Paris, such as boating in Argenteuil.²⁸⁸

Yet what is more complicated than these economic, geographic and historical facts is how they are represented in art. According to another art historian Paul Tucker, Claude Monet's (1840-1926) one hundred and fifty oils made during his residence in Argenteuil between 1871 and 1877 not only concentrate on the particularity of local landscape, but also represent how local life changed as its relation to Paris changed.²⁸⁹ In other words, images of factories, railways, promenade, boating, and greenery are not just naive landscape, but also signs of industrialisation, urbanisation, suburbanisation, or all together modernisation taking place in Argenteuil.²⁹⁰

However, the French paintings were made after 1870, while the Birmingham pictures I select are between 1780 and c.1850. The different years mean different stages of modernisation and different understating of the idea of suburb: these could

²⁸⁶ Paul Hayes Tucker, *Monet at Argenteuil* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 12-15. Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

²⁸⁷ Tucker, *op. cit.*, p. 57

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4 and p. 17.

result in very different visual representation. Indeed, as I will discuss in more details in section two, the 1870s French painting clearly presents Argenteuil as an old town being newly defined, whereas the Birmingham pictures still see the suburb as the developing edges or the encroached-upon countryside outside the town. Besides, the French painting represents modern life as an integration of industrial development, topographic changes, rise of petit bourgeoisie, and recreation, whereas the Birmingham pictures, due to their earlier stages of modernisation, have difficulty to perceive modern life in the integrated way and could only portray these motifs separately one each picture.²⁹¹ This is particularly obvious as I will further relate to the topographic views around London of the same decades to see how they also itemise the motifs instead of integrating them into a more complicated scene. A few works by London topographic artists George Scharf (1788-1860), John Linnell (1792-1882), and John Cooke Bourne (1814-1896) will be introduced in this part of discussion.

Although iconographically the English representation of modern life is different from that of Paris, both of them, as the later part of section two will argue, provide an unusual suburban landscape vision and challenge the genres they were respectively and traditionally categorised as, i.e. topographic views and landscape painting. When I discuss suburban landscape vision, Ford Madox Brown's (1821-93) painting on the view around Hampstead Heath will be introduced. When I discuss genre, I will not compare pictures, but concentrate on the problem about categorising the unusual representation this chapter has explored.

Overall, this chapter will conclude, as well as being a topographic setting, through connecting to the rise of middle class and reflecting the modernisation surrounding them, the suburb is a cultural category (not just a location), and the

²⁹¹ In this chapter, 'integration' or 'represented in an integrated way' mean the pictorial motifs being painted in one scene. In chapter one, I also discussed 'integration', i.e. objects being painted closely together to form a 'prototype' of the image of the suburb. The two chapters use the word differently.

images of suburb are a representation of modern life.

I. Middle class into suburb²⁹²

An area of about fifteen hundred acres located two miles to the south-west of Birmingham had been gradually developed by its landlords into a residential district for new-moneyed middle-class professionals since the 1780s, and has now become the “classic” suburb of the city: Edgbaston.²⁹³ This section focuses on two pictures of Edgbaston: *Monument Lane, Edgbaston*, painted circa the late eighteenth century (Fig. 4-1) and the cover image of *Edgbastonia: a Monthly Local Magazine*, circulating between 1881 and 1893 (Fig. 4-2). I will argue: both pictures represent the suburb as a socially and culturally significant place through reflecting of the rise, need, and new life of the local middle-class residents. Additionally, I will argue how both pictures also embody the difficulty to perceive and represent the idea of suburb.

Monument Lane, Edgbaston (Fig. 4-1) is a title given long after its painter must have died, and very little is known about the painting. Firstly, the production year is not sure. BMAG thinks it should be between 1770 and 1820.²⁹⁴ Yet since the painter was active between 1758 and 1791, the painting is more likely to be made around 1780.²⁹⁵ Secondly, the identity of the painted figures is not confirmed. According BMAG,

This painting of a Birmingham home is thought to have belonged to a Mr W Withering. He is painted here in front of his house with his wife, children, servant, and dogs. To the right a woman can be seen milking a cow and a man walking

²⁹² The middle class here refers to upper middle class, not petit bourgeoisie as discussed by T. J. Clark.

²⁹³ David Cannadine, *Lords and Landlords: the Aristocracy and the Towns 1774-1967* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1980) and Terry Slater, *Edgbaston: a History* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2002).

²⁹⁴ According to the plaque below the painting, which was on display at BMAG, visited 04/07/2009.

²⁹⁵ According to the caption of the painting in Stephen Daniels, ‘Suburban Prospect’ in Nicholas Alfrey et al. (eds.) *Art of the Garden: the Garden in British Art, 1800 to the Present Day* (London: Tate, 2004), pp. 22-30; p. 22.

a horse. Monument Lane was on the outskirts of Birmingham in a very rural area.²⁹⁶

There was a Dr William Withering (1741-99) who was a physician, a botanist and a member of the Lunar Society (more information about the society is given in chapter five). He was married in Stafford in 1772. In 1775 he moved from Stafford to Birmingham to open a practice. At first he lodged with a coach maker at No.10, The Square in the town centre, leaving his family behind in Stafford. Then he moved to No. 9, Temple Row, where his family joined him. From 1786 they moved into Edgbaston Hall, where he lived until his death. I could not find information whether he ever lived in the house in Monument Lane before he moved to Edgbaston Hall in 1786. Besides, Dr William had a daughter Helena, then a son William, and then another daughter Charlotte, whereas the painting portrays only two daughters. So I do not think the Mr W Withering mentioned by BMAG is this Dr Withering. Yet Dr Withering's second child is also called William, so the Mr W Withering mentioned by BMAG might be Dr Withering's son.²⁹⁷

Although who they are is not clear, their social status is still very obvious from the painting. Davidoff and Hall remind viewers of the painting to

Note the visual representation of the domestic ideal: the rural aspect despite proximity to the town and other buildings, the circular drive, gate and the fence, the presence of servants going about their tasks and the informal intimacy of the family group.²⁹⁸

I doubt "proximity to the town." The red tower in the background to the left is called the Perrotts' Folly. It is on the border between Birmingham and Edgbaston, one in the north and the other in the south. So in this painting the town of Birmingham should be located further behind the Perrott's Folly and is actually invisible. Whereas the house

²⁹⁶ According to the plaque below the painting, *op. cit.*

²⁹⁷ This entire paragraph on Dr Withering is from *ODNB, op. cit.*, consulted 16/05/2011.

²⁹⁸ Davidoff and Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

painted here is further to the south and therefore further away from the town which is in the north. Nevertheless, I agree how clearly the painting portrays a polite, prosperous life of a middle-class family.

Firstly, the two-storey and pink-walled house, walled by coniferous trees and shrubs and revealing a corner of a conservatory to our left, is too small for a powerful aristocratic family and too expensive for the poor. Besides, it is unsure if the fields behind and around the house also belong to the family. Although the cow and the horse to our right, and the area they rest, should belong to the family, the entire size of this estate is too small to be considered a magnificent country house. Therefore, it can be attributed that the house belongs to a middle-class family.

The ways the figures are portrayed also tell their status. Surrounding the lawn, the four figures plus a dog and a servant compose a decent middle-class family portrait. A well-dressed father leans against a crutch on his right hand and stands with his right leg crossed and right foot tiptoed next to his left foot, composing a comfortable yet proud pose to welcome viewers to his lovely house earned by himself (or possibly through marrying a daughter of a prestigious background). The wife, while receiving her husband's gaze that is full of self-confidence, stretches her left arm and passes something to him, as if playing a loyal and supportive role for her man. She attends their toddler daughter with another hand, who is dressed in the miniature of her mother's elegant attire, again showing off the taste and the financial capability of the family. The elder daughter stands on the other side of her father, holding a play thing in her right hand that catches the attention of her mother, younger sister, and the healthy dog, which is shown running happily like another well cared-for member of this prosperous family. Coming half way out of the house on the path circulating the lawn is a servant maid. She is wearing her hat and apron, meaning she is at work. I am not sure how adequate it was for a servant to use the front door during the late

eighteenth century, but her inclusion here is probably another sign of the family's fortune and status.

As a whole, by detailing where the property is located (outside the town in this particular site), what these people possess, and how they show off and value those things, this painting clearly reflects the rise, need, and new ways of living of the late-eighteenth-century middle class and therefore makes the venue a socially and culturally important site.

Now the social significance of this suburban site is clearly represented, I need to further point out that this painting makes a representation of suburb in an intriguing way. As this thesis always regards the suburb as the developing edges of the town, this painting on Monument Lane, a peripheral site, certainly makes a visual representation of suburb. Yet since what is painted—the detached house and the polite looks of these people—strongly reminds us of a modern, middle-class suburb, plus the site of Monument Lane itself was indeed developed into a proper residential suburb later, can this painting be therefore taken as a pioneer representation of a modern suburb? Iconography-wise, it is possible. In his article on the garden of English suburban homes, Stephen Daniels uses the painting as his starting point.²⁹⁹ Although I do not find much discussion of the painting in his following text, I presume he might take the mown and neat lawn in the centre of the painting as a form of a private garden, and therefore, together with other pictorial details (the detached house, its middle-class residents, and the shrub wall), regard the painting as an image of a decent suburban home with a garden.

Yet from a historical perspective, BMAG is reluctant to relate the painted site to its later development into a residential suburb: “Monument Lane was on the outskirts

²⁹⁹ Daniels, *op. cit.*, ‘Suburban Prospect’, pp. 22-30. In the article he also refers to Davidoff and Hall’s discussion on garden.

of Birmingham in a very rural area.”³⁰⁰ That is to say, simultaneous to or even earlier than the residential development of Edgbaston, this painting on Monument Lane is not representing so much a fully-developed, well-perceived idea of suburb, but a tentative, occasional form of how the edge of the town was like, thus becoming at best as this thesis always regards a representation of suburb as developing urban edges. No matter it is an iconographical or historical perspective we take, these interpretations of *Monument Lane, Edgbaston* show how intriguing the idea of suburb can be, and how difficult it is to represent it, whether as a developing edge or a developed district, whether in contemporary or posthumous society.

Then, how about the images of Edgbaston made simultaneous to or after its residential development? Would these later images recognise the presence of wide streets and fashionable villas and therefore celebrate the ‘modern’ looks of the suburb? In the following I will provide details of the development of Edgbaston and explore how the development was understood and represented by contemporary society.

While many of the places in the periphery of Birmingham developed anarchically with industry between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth century, Edgbaston at the time was developed in a more organised way and was planned for residential, never industrial, purposes.³⁰¹ Such an achievement was impossible without the landlords, the Calthorpe family. Starting as a minor noble family in the seventeenth century, they had constantly acquired more and more land and properties through inheritance and purchase.³⁰² By the end of the eighteenth century, the family had owned most of the land in Edgbaston; this extensive owning of the land of a certain area was unusual among the landed gentry of the time, and enabled the family

³⁰⁰ According to the plaque below the painting, *op. cit.*

³⁰¹ No industrial building, canal or railway was allowed to be built in the area. The only railway crossing Edgbaston was built after 1870 for commuting purposes. See Cannadine, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-108.

³⁰² *Ibid.*

to dominate the planning of the place:³⁰³

In 1786, they gave their first lease to build houses in Five Ways, the north corner of Edgbaston. A condition was made that the houses to be built there must be worth £400 or more.³⁰⁴ Thus the landlords ruled out the poor and made sure only those with certain amount of income, i.e. the upper-middle class, could live in the area. In the following years, the landlords gradually increased Edgbaston's housing stock. In 1810, 15 leases were granted; in 1830, almost 30 leases were made; twenty years later, almost 40 leases were granted; until the late 1860s and the 1870s, the numbers reached 50 and 60.³⁰⁵ The steady growth of housing suggests that Edgbaston was built up little by little into a new place to settle. This has indeed attracted more and more well-off professionals to move in, especially those who made a fortune in Birmingham in industry or manufactory. In 1811 the population of Edgbaston was 1,180; in 1831 it became 3954; in 1841, 6,609 people lived there; in 1851, the population was 9,269; in 1861 it grew into 12,907; in 1881 the number was 22,760.³⁰⁶ Thus, with the rising social class moving into the new, expensive houses in the new district between the town and the countryside, Edgbaston became a fashionable area to live in.

Contemporary society also sensed the development in the neighbourhood and tried to categorise what type of settlement it became. In 1825, the place was described as an "appendage to Birmingham" and the construction of housing was not welcomed because it ruined the pleasant rural atmosphere:

This was till lately, a rural situation, and its ancient Church and simply-railed Church-yard, maintained the sequestered and tranquil character of rusticity. It was a valuable relic of aboriginal simplicity, in the near neighbourhood of bustle and business. Improvement has, however, discovered and

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁴ Slater, p. 25.

³⁰⁵ Cannadine, pp. 94-5 (see the graphic)

³⁰⁶ Slater, p. 48, table 2.

disturbed this retreat; it is become a smart and fashionable appendage to Birmingham. The old, wild, and picturesque lanes are trimmed and spruced; gay villas and mercilessly straight streets stalk up to the very precincts of the sanctuary; the Church is modernized, and the Church-yard itself, that quiet and soothing spot, has been as tastelessly and needlessly violated, by edging it with red brick walls, topped by vile, aristocratic iron railing, the gates locked up in useless care, to prevent the approach of imaginary depredators.³⁰⁷

In 1881, as the population of Edgbaston reached twenty thousands, forming a stronger voice and identity, local residents began to organise their own magazine, *Edgbastonia*, saying “Edgbaston is unquestionably the most important suburb of Birmingham”.³⁰⁸ Therefore, Edgbaston began to be called a ‘suburb’ since at least 1881. In the following years the name ‘suburb’ continued to be used, as seen in Dent’s *The Making of Birmingham* in 1894.³⁰⁹

Behind the formulation of the word ‘suburb’ is a change in the attitude toward the residential development of the place. According to the 1825 quotation given above, Edgbaston was precious because it was away from urban hustle and bustle and maintains a “tranquil character of rusticity”. Newly-built houses, straight streets, and all the additional buildings over the original architecture are considered undermining the rural and picturesque beauty, and are gay, gaudy and tasteless.³¹⁰ In other words, in 1825 Edgbaston was taken as part of the countryside that suffered from urban encroachment. Yet in 1881, *Edgbastonia* proudly pointed out the urban origin of local residents, who are “the professional men, merchants, and traders of the busy town”

³⁰⁷ Drake, *op. cit.*, *Picture of Birmingham*, 1837, p. 125. The book was first published in 1825 and reprinted for a few times in the following years. I consulted the 1825 version at the British Library first and found its binding fragile and layout unclear. So I turned to the 1837 edition. The text quoted here is almost exactly the same as that appearing in the 1825 edition.

³⁰⁸ *Edgbastonia: a Monthly Local Magazine* (Birmingham: E. Edwards, 1881-1893) vol. 1, no. 1, May 1881, p. 1.

³⁰⁹ Dent, *op. cit.*, *The Making of Birmingham*, 1894, p. 338-40.

³¹⁰ Drake, *op. cit.*, *Picture of Birmingham*, 1837, p. 125.

and who are “more numerous and wealthy than those of other suburbs.”³¹¹ Moreover, the construction of housing, however gay or merciless they had seemed in 1825, were in 1881 taken as a protection from industrial ravage and therefore a kind of bliss: “The fortunate circumstance that the greater part of its [Edgbaston’s] soil belongs to one proprietor [the Calthorpe family], who permits only private dwellings to be erected, keeps it free from objectionable feature...”³¹² Therefore, in 1825 Edgbaston was still viewed as part of the countryside, the victimised side of the country-vs.-city battle, but in 1881 it seemed to get rid of this country-city dichotomy by becoming a new, independent and third space that belonged to neither the town nor the countryside. Overall, from the above we not only see the physical formation of the suburb of Edgbaston, but also how contemporary society tried to understand and conceptualise it as a proper suburb and assimilate it into a third sign.

Intriguingly, the visual representations produced parallel to this history do not come in the image of newly-built streets or fashionable villas, let alone view of an entire residential block. According to my archival surveys, the picture on Edgbaston made between 1780 and the 1850s are mostly common topographic views on natural features or local landmarks, like trees, chapels, churches, Edgbaston Hall and Edgbaston Park. Even in *Edgbastonia* published since 1881, the cover image remained showing old buildings rather than new houses, and the in-page illustrations were mostly portraits of late and famous local residents. Why did the editor(s) of the magazine rely on old landmarks to represent their newly-formed neighbourhood? What can we ‘see’ from the absence of the image of the newly built?

I would like to begin with the old landmarks, which are shown in four separate images (Fig. 4-2). Edgbaston Old Church (Edgbaston Parish Church of St

³¹¹ *Edgbastonia, op. cit.*, vol. 1, no. 1, May 1881, p. 1.

³¹² *Ibid.* The words in square brackets are my annotation.

Bartholomew) is on the top left. King Edward Grammar School is on the top right. The two pictures on the top-right and top-left are not new commissions made especially for the magazine; they were copied from earlier prints made by other artists which I saw during my archival surveys. On the bottom right is a picture of an old house amid trees, presenting a leafy corner as well as a picturesque view. On the bottom left is the image of Joseph Sturge's (1793-1859) statue near Five Ways. The statue was dedicated in 1862 and was relatively the newest building among the four. Sturge was a Quaker and an important figure in fighting for the abolition of slavery.³¹³ The inclusion of the picture of his statue here suggests the editor's intention to provide a civilised, humanitarian impression of Edgbaston.

While each of the four pictures has their individual meaning, they combine to provide more interesting messages. Firstly, while the Parish Church stands for the Church of England, Joseph Sturge stands for non-conformists. In 1791, some terrible riots broke out in Birmingham. The rioters were mostly supporters of King and Church, and they burnt many non-conformists' houses all around the town (Fig. 5-1; more details of the riots are in chapter five). If we read the juxtaposition of the pictures of Edgbaston Old Church and the statue of Joseph Sturge in relation to the historical conflict, we see that Edgbaston was expected to be a peaceful, tolerant place, especially as the editor(s) of magazine also hoped the periodical to be "unsectarian".³¹⁴ Secondly, while the church on the top-left stands for religion, the school on the top-right stands for education; together they mean tradition. Thirdly, on the bottom-right, although it is unknown which house it was, it is still surrounded by trees and makes a picturesque view. Thus the old house could represent the residential condition of Edgbaston: green, spacious, and comfortable. Moreover, in the centre of

³¹³ *ODNB, op. cit.*, consulted 22/04/2011.

³¹⁴ *Edgbastonia, op. cit.*, vol. 1, no. 1, May 1881, p. 1.

the cover image, the letters spelling the title of the magazine are designed in the imagery of tree (probably oaks), especially as the last 'A' which shows a new leave on a twig. This again reinforces a natural, rural impression of the place. Overall, combining a tolerant attitude toward religions, some respectful tradition, and a green and pleasant living environment, *Edgbastonia* means to represent the suburb as a new and nice choice of residence. Therefore, without the image of new villas or wide streets, the old motifs could still represent the suburb in their own way.

Besides, this cover image was constantly in use between 1881 and 1893 while the magazine had been published. Considering the volumes produced in these thirteen years, the cover image must have been seen for many times by many different people. In 1881 the population of Edgbaston was 22,760, and the first issue of *Edgbastonia* of May 1881 had 2,500 copies.³¹⁵ If all these 2,500 copies were distributed inside the suburb, it means every ten people in Edgbaston had one copy. Ten were a moderate size for a Victorian household,³¹⁶ so it can be inferred that roughly every household in Edgbaston had a copy of this local magazine. Although in the following years the amount of copies did not grow with the local population, it still maintained an average of 2,200 copies per month.³¹⁷ If the magazine got published every single month between May 1881 and 1893, then there should be at least 140 issues. 2,200 multiplied by 140 equal 308,000. In other words, the cover image could in total have more than three hundred thousand reproductions circulating locally and even nationwide around the time, offering its own version of how a residential suburb, a new concept that had just formed during those decades, should look like.

Overall, presenting old landmarks instead of the newly built, the cover image

³¹⁵ The population is according to Slater, p. 48, table 2. The number of copies was given at end of the issue on the advertisement column, see *Edgbastonia, op. cit.*, vol. 1, no. 1, May 1881.

³¹⁶ Sally Mitchell, *Daily Life in Victorian England* (2nd ed.) (London: Greenwood, 2009), p. 147.

³¹⁷ *Edgbastonia, op. cit.*, the numbers of copies produced every month are listed in the last few pages (the advertisement column) of each issue.

implies how new and unprecedented the development of the residential suburb was and how old and existing objects needed to be borrowed to help visualise the appearance of that new place. In other words, this cover image exposes the difficulty for contemporary society to give an immediate and clear visual form to what had just developed. In this way, this cover image, just like the oil painting *Monument Lane, Edgbaston* (Fig. 4-1), makes an intriguing representation of the suburb, too. Indeed, although throughout the nineteenth century people in Edgbaston could see in their everyday life numerous villas, private gardens and wide streets, which should have been more visually pleasing than the anarchic manufactories and their smoking chimneys found in chapter one, this residential spectacle was no less difficult to be understood, captured, and represented than the industrial one, for both of them were unprecedented sights which required new systems of signs to signify them.

Last but not least, while the cover image helps us imagine the new living environment, the content of the magazine embodied the new life lived in the suburb. For example, there were cultural and informative columns like “Edgbaston past and present”, “Words and Phrases”, “Review” and “Correspondence”.³¹⁸ There were also local and practical information like “Births, Marriages, and Deaths”, “Edgbaston Notes”, “Edgbaston Guide” and “Railway Memoranda”.³¹⁹ With a meaningful cover image and useful content, *Edgbastonia* provides a full representation of the modern lived in the suburb.

To conclude, the two pictures discussed in this section represent the social and cultural significance of Edgbaston through association with middle class and their modern life in it. Both pictures also exposes how difficult and intriguing it was and is to perceive and represent the idea of suburb. The oil painting shows a middle-class

³¹⁸ These columns constantly appeared in each issue; see for example vol. 1, no. 1, May 1881, p. 1 and vol.1 no. 9, Jan 1882, p. 202.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

family's attire, attitude, possession and property (Fig. 4-1). This signifies a new social circumstance. The painted site of Monument Lane, Edgbaston also exemplifies how the rising class moved out of town and settled in a suburban area. Besides, the detached house and the lawn in the painting could intriguingly remind modern viewers of a modern suburban home with a private garden. In the second half of this section, the emergence of the local magazine *Edgbastonia* demonstrated the rising importance of the particular suburb and its residents. The cover image of *Edgbastonia* shows old landmarks instead of newly-built streets and villas. The images of the old landmarks, together with the title designed in the imagery of trees, showed local people's expectation of the suburb: it must have tradition, amenity, and a green and rural atmosphere. Through the images of the old things and the absence of the depiction of the newly built, the cover image shows how difficult it was for contemporary society to immediately formulate a visual representation of what had just been developed.

II. The representation of a suburban and modern life

Edgbaston attracted the rising social class, became a fashionable area to live outside the town, and therefore embodied a new, modern life. Except for Edgbaston, how did the rest of the periphery of Birmingham relate to a modern life? This section argues that the images of Birmingham suburbs (meaning the developing edges) provide not only a topographic, descriptive record, but a prescriptive, spontaneous representation comparable to what T. J. Clark regards as the painting of modern life. I will investigate the hypothesis in three aspects: iconography, suburban landscape vision, and genre.

On iconography (pictorial motifs)

To begin with, Monet's Argenteuil paintings include motifs like streetscape, factory, smoking chimney, railway, railway station, train, pedestrian, spectator, pleasure-seeker,

promenade, boating, riverscape of the river Seine, snowscape, greenery, bridge, townhouse, detached villa, garden, flower, woods, hill, and barren open land.³²⁰ If we categorise them, there are industrial motifs, urban motifs, rural and natural motifs, motifs of recreation, and some visual pleasure offered by different types of landscape. More importantly, each single Argenteuil painting shows at least two of the above motifs, and this complicates the meaning of the modern life it tries to capture. For example, *View of Argenteuil, Snow* (1875) (Fig. 4-3) not only shows an industrial scene, but also places it in a snow-covered landscape. *The Railway Bridge, Argenteuil* (1873) (Fig. 4-6) not only shows a railway bridge, but also a scene of boating. *Sunday at Argenteuil* (1872) (Fig. 4-13) not only depicts pleasure seekers of the weekend, but represents their appropriation of the natural environment.

However, the Birmingham pictures, as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, perhaps due to the earlier stages of modernisation they were in (1780-1850), could only concentrate on one of the above motifs each time and represent the idea of the suburb as merely developing urban fringes rather than a newly-defined old settlement like Argenteuil. In the following I will compare the three Argenteuil canvases with relevant Birmingham pictures. I will find: while the motifs of modern life (an industrial scene, the railway imagery, and pleasure-seeking) are integrated in the French painting, they were itemised and individually depicted in the Birmingham pictures. In the meantime, a few works by London topographic artists will be introduced to support my argument.

View of Argenteuil, Snow (Fig. 4-3) combines snowscape, streetscape, a distant hill, trees, factories, townhouses, and pedestrians. In this way, the implication of industrialisation is mixed with traces of Nature which is strangely located in a

³²⁰ I formulate these motifs from Tucker's and T. J. Clark's discussion. See Tucker, *op. cit.* pp. 1-187 and Clark, *op. cit.* pp. 167-95.

man-made environment. In the centre of this man-made place, a dozen or so people walk in a string along the road (Saint-Denis Boulevard). They seem to head toward the multi-storey and pink-walled house in the middle-ground. The house has a square in front of it and is surrounded by many snow-covered and branchless trees. Under the trees gather another dozen people. The figures on the road and under the trees are all in black. With their black umbrellas, they make a visual contrast with the white setting and give the winter some liveliness.

It is very interesting why these people go out in such weather. The pink house does not look like a church, and the church in Argenteuil was actually located on the west side of town, not in here along Saint-Denis Boulevard on the east.³²¹ So the walkers should not be on their way to church. They do not look like spontaneous pleasure-seekers, either. Perhaps these people are not encouraged, but regulated to go outside; the hint lies in the factories in the background to the right. (This area was near a site called 'Croix Blanche', which Monet painted in 1875 as full of works and factories. Just a block away to the west of Croix Blanche was an iron work.³²²) Although the factories are located in the distance, they do not look small. Their smoking chimneys are higher than the hill to the left and are the highest verticals in the skyline. There are two ways to interpret the industrial verticals in relation to the walkers. One, the walkers could be factory workers who, in the face of bad weather, rush to these factories to produce things to be consumed in their modernising world. Two, the walkers and the factories are corresponding to each other. The factories massively produce unified and standardised commodities, while the walkers are in similar, black clothes, use similar products (the black umbrellas), lose their individual identity, and are regulated to walk on one road like commodities being supplied on an

³²¹ See Tucker, *op. cit.* pp. 188-9 (a map).

³²² *Ibid.*, and p. 48

assembly line. Perhaps the conversation between the factories and the walkers turns out to be such a strong message that Monet left an outsider, a snow-sweeper to the left of the chimney on the slanted roof of the red-walled hut inside the enclosed yard to the right of the foreground, sketchily painted and nearly transparent, to maintain the focus on the traffic on the road.

Although a message about industrialisation is presented, Argenteuil still has natural scenery, such as the hill on the top-left. The hill, walkers, factories, and townhouses therefore mix and compose a very peculiar landscape. The industrial conversation between the walkers and the factories is interrupted by the presence of the hill, and the whiteness and the pureness of the snow, as preserved in the yard and on the hill, is cut by the traffic of the walkers and by the chimneys of the factories. Thus, the two lines of communication overlap and interfere with each other, making the landscape vision hard to define and exposing an unprecedented, strange side of modern life.

Birmingham artist Samuel Rostill Lines was no less keen to tell an industrial allegory of the suburb, even though he could only concentrate on one motif each time. In chapter two, in order to contract the visual shock brought by the Grand Junction Railway, I said Samuel Rostill Lines's *Aston Furnace* (Fig. 4-4b) portrays the furnace as harmless to the local environment. Here I shall concentrate on the industrial aspect of the drawing. In front of the giant chimney to the right is an open area, which might serve as a temporary store, a supplier of soil, or a landfill. To the left, more workshops and forges, identified by their chimneys, can be seen along the main road. Although the scene is filled with factories, there is no sight of men at work, smoke, hustle or bustle. The scene is completely figureless and therefore tranquil and even silent. With white roofs, white sky, and the white pit, the scene could be imagined as a snow-covered world comparable to *View of Argenteuil, Snow*.

Like the French painting, the Birmingham drawing made some forty years earlier also presents the logic of manufacturing. At the bottom, the trees, bushes, and the soil in the pit represent natural resources and raw materials, which were essential for manufacturing of any kinds. Behind the pit in the middle ground are the furnace and many other smaller factories. They symbolise the processing of natural resources and raw materials. The wide road to the left of the furnace goes straight into the background, which could be facing the direction of Birmingham. In this way, the wide road is like an artery. It transports the ready products or semi-products made in the furnace and the factories to Birmingham, to be sold directly or to be further processed into ready commodities. Thus, although at first glance the drawing depicts an industrial neighbourhood which is not at work, it actually shows the logic of manufacturing and implies the industrialisation and modernisation of the place.

While the French painting complicates its industrial scene by placing motifs of different nature in it, the Birmingham drawing depicts only one theme. This might be explained by the earlier year it was produced in, in which the idea of suburb could only mean developing urban fringes. If we compare *Aston Furnace* with other topographic views around London produced also before 1850, we will see a similar situation. John Linnell produced three sketches of a brick kiln in Kensington, at the time a rural village on the outskirts of London (Figs. 4-5 a, b and c). The tall and lonely chimney of the kiln resembles that of the Aston furnace, especially as both chimneys are arranged to the side, creating similarly asymmetrical compositions. Linnell worked hard on this object as he studied it from different directions to achieve a best result.³²³ However, this hard work cannot hide the barren landscape. It simply reinforces the emptiness on this developing urban fringe, presenting again nothing but a single motif like *Aston Furnace* does.

³²³ Katharine Crouan, *John Linnell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) p. 8.

View of Argenteuil, Snow was painted through the north-looking windows of Monet's apartment, situated just next to the Argenteuil Railway Station.³²⁴ The proximity to the railway station could bring Monet much convenience. For example, he could easily travel to other places while living in the small town. Besides, it took his artist friends less than half an hour to come from Paris to visit him, to stay and to paint outdoors. It was also convenient for his Paris-based art dealer, too.³²⁵ As the railway shortened the distance between the capital and its suburb-to-be, Monet was very likely to feel positive about it.

In his *The Railway Bridge, Argenteuil* (Fig. 4-6), he stresses architectural magnificence and implies a positive future created through the traffic. In terms of architectural details, the intervals of the fence on the side of the bridge are clearly portrayed. The sections right above the pillars have two narrower intervals. Those which are not above the pillars have wider intervals. The pillars are also carefully observed. In each pair, the further one is in shadow and painted in grey; the one standing closer to viewers is lit and painted in white. Between each pair is fixed an iron net that supports the structure. From the left to the right, the four pairs of pillars gradually reduce in size as a result of Monet's isometric painting. Besides, all the pillars have on their tops a cap that reinforces their connection to the bridge. These clear details show Monet's careful observation of the bridge, and implied his acceptance of it into the everyday life of Argenteuil. Moreover, the bridge looks brightly white against the sunlit blue sky and the black train is partially hidden inside the tunnel on the bridge, as if maintaining the cleanness and the brightness of the tone. Even the smoke coming from the locomotive is white (clean like a cloud), not black (polluting).³²⁶ Overall, this modern construction is portrayed new and promising.

³²⁴ Clark, *op. cit.* p. 194.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

More importantly, as always, signs of recreation are mixed with the industrial motif. On the river bank stand two hatted men. One is wearing a grey waistcoat and the other is in a black coat; their clothes suggest they are bourgeois. They appear comfortable standing there rather than overwhelmed or shocked by the approaching train. They seem to look at the boat in front of them, instead of the bridge or the train. In addition to this nearer boat, there is another boat in the distance to the right under the bridge. The distant boat seems to have someone at the helm. Painting the boats and the bourgeois spectators under the railway bridge, Monet could suggest that local people's pastime not be disturbed by the industrial construction. Instead, railway and boating should blend well in the daily life in Argenteuil.

However, Birmingham artists did not seem to welcome the railway in the beginning, let alone draw or paint it as part of people's everyday life. In Cox's representation of the Grand Junction Railway (Fig. 2-14), as we already found, the spectators in the foreground look tiny, amazed, and conquered by the abrupt and outlandish railway viaduct, which was built in a heightened position and cut through a beautiful pasture in Aston. It was not until close to the mid-nineteenth century can we see a change in attitude— Samuel Lines's *Old Birmingham Taken down for New Street Station* (Fig. 4-7) not only records the event, but also reveals his consent to it:

The Grand Junction Railway had connected Birmingham with the industrial North, via Aston, since 1837; its actual stop in Birmingham was in Curzon Street Station on the eastern edge of the town (Fig. 4-8). The Curzon Street Station also served another line at the time: the London and Birmingham Railway. The two lines were run by two different companies and were not a through service. In 1846, the two companies merged and became London and the North Western Railway. In the same year, a new railway station to replace Curzon Street Station began to be built. The location of this new station is very central: just a few hundred meters to the northwest

of St Martin's Church on New Street; hence the naming of 'New Street Station'. This site was originally very crowded and full of houses, so a massive clearing was needed. As New Street Station was completed in 1854, Curzon Street Station was no longer used until today.³²⁷

As suggested by the title of the drawing, Samuel Lines was aware of what was happening and he played with the words "old" and "new" when naming his sketch. Like the title, the picture itself also visualises an overlap between the construction of new things and the destruction of old things. For the old things, in the upper half of the drawing, old houses are closely packed together. They do not look unified. Doors open in different directions. Water pipes fixed to the roofs stick into the air in a disorderly way. Walls are in different colours that suggest various degree of wear; some walls were once the party wall between two houses, but as one of the houses was torn down it left an exposed side which looks patchy, such as the double-colour wall to the extreme left of the drawing. As for what was new, in the lower half of the drawing is a large pit to be laid with the railway. In this area, workers and their carts are done in quick strokes. Long, curvy lines denote the tracks of the workers' movements at the bottom-right corner. There are also wood-framed entrances of the tunnels below the platform, where more workers stand. Together, the upper and the lower halves of the drawing present a contradictory scene. The upper half is disorderly, time-worn, and static; the lower half looks busy and dynamic with workers and promises to be neat and new. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Lines family usually made drawings for completed, existing landmarks, instead of something under construction. So this drawing showing the process of the construction is rare. This allows us to infer that Samuel Lines not only tried to make records for those old

³²⁷ The information in this paragraph is based on Richard Foster, *Birmingham New Street: Background and Beginnings, the Years up to 1860* (volume 1 of a series of three on the history of Birmingham New Street until 1947) (Oxford: Wild Swan, 1990).

buildings, but also welcomed the new thing and depicted it as a sign of a modern life that was coming forth to Birmingham.

Cox depicted the finished railway viaduct after 1837 and focused on its visual shock; Samuel Lines portrayed the railway station under construction in the late 1840s and revealed a promising future. It seems that the later the time being, the more accepted the railway became among the Birmingham artists. When the first railway line was built (the Grand Junction Railway), it was unprecedented. People could only approach it from the outside and understand it through its external shapes. This could cause a hostile or outlandish impression of the railway as seen in Cox's picture. Yet as the second line was also built (the London and Birmingham Railway) and that both lines needed some upgrade, the idea of the railway no longer remained strange. People could take a closer look at it, explore it from the inside, see its interior structure, and form a fuller understating and even a positive attitude toward it as exemplified in Samuel Lines's drawing. Therefore, we can formulate that the railway was gradually accepted as a sign of modern life in Birmingham between the 1830s and the 1840s.

But why should the representation of railway be polarised as either good or bad? Why should the good and the bad be represented in different decades? Why can't the positive and negative sides of a railway be acknowledged in the same time and merged into a new, compromising attitude like what Monet expressed? In the case of Birmingham the railway is represented either as an intruder or as something to be embraced. Yet Monet not only shows the visual impact (through the stretch of the bridge) and the optimism (through the detailed depiction of architecture), but also how this material newness blends into people's life (as in the case of the bourgeois spectators and boating) and becomes social newness. In other words, although the Birmingham artists in the 1830s and 1840s sensed something through railway, they

were just at the beginning and had limited vocabulary to describe it; whereas in the 1870s the railway had already merged with people's life for several years, probably providing Monet with a more complete idea to represent it.

Before I move on to the next pictorial motif of modern life, I shall discuss more about showing the interior of a railway construction site. Samuel Lines' *Old Birmingham Taken down for New Street Station* (Fig. 4-7) uses quick strokes to show the interior of the site: tunnels, a platform, carts, and men at work. As New Street Station was built to serve not only the Grand Junction Railway, but also the London and Birmingham Railway, I would like to introduce the other terminus of this railway, London Euston, and explore how other contemporary English artists also approached this sign of modern life through examining its interior and the way it was constructed.

Originally, the London terminus of this railway was planned at Chalk Farm, Camden, one and a quarter mile north of Euston.³²⁸ Chalk Farm was much higher than Euston. To make sure trains and railways can connect smoothly between the two elevations, considerable engineering work was required³²⁹ For example, some powerful engines were needed to pull up trains. John Cooke Bourne showed in 1837 how the depot for these useful engines was built at the Camden station (Fig. 4-9). In this picture, more than a hundred people are working. Some are surveyors or architects, using a tripod in front of the depot. Most of the people are workers dispersing evenly inside and around the large pit in the middle ground, contrasting the heightened and figureless foreground at the bottom-left corner. Although the engine house with vaulted roofs remains the focus of the picture, a mounted crane carrying a giant piece of stone is particularly eye-catching as it sticks into the sky and becomes the top of the pyramid composition of this engine house. As a whole, the picture not

³²⁸ Peter Jackson, *George Scharf's London: Sketches and Watercolours of a Changing City, 1820-1850* (London: John Murray, 1987) p. 135.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

only provides details of how this important part of the railway was built, but also, through its emphasis on the interior and men at work, represents how people in the 1830s might want to understand the railway: they hoped to examine it in order to fully understand it, but not yet to assimilate it as a common ingredient of their everyday life like what Monet showed.

More importantly, this construction site is located neither deep in the countryside nor right in the city centre. It was on the exact edge of London, and we can see Hampstead Heath in the background to the left. Before the Heath stand a row of houses. They do not look like farm houses, but town houses with two or more floors. The fact that the houses are town houses means the area had been developing and urbanising by the time the railway construction began. Indeed, in Cruickshank's *London Going out of Town* made in 1829 (Fig. 1-1), the area around Hampstead Heath was still trying to resist urbanisation (that is why we see a battle between the countryside and the city), but in this 1837 view, the area is not only urbanised with town houses, but also industrialised with the railway construction. Therefore, through the railway imagery, Bourne not only depicts an important aspect of modern life, but also represents how such a modern life took place in the suburb.

Another artist George Scharf also paid attention to both the interior of a railway site and its location at the urban fringe. He depicted the situation at Euston in 1836 (Fig. 4-10). To the right of the drawing is a row of linked wood huts, possibly the site office or the workers' lodges. To the left of these houses, more than sixty workers are allocated in smaller groups at various places to do different jobs. Some are breaking stone to the right. In the centre, some are erecting pillars under the supervision of the site manager/architect, who is hatted and dressed differently from the workers. In the distance and to the left, more workers are delivering materials with or without horse power. To make room to accommodate such a large site and this

much work, the size of the foreground is reduced. It is literally just a narrow pavement outside the wood screen to the right, where a man and a boy walk by and possibly talk about the railway construction.

As for how the artist emphasises the location at the urban fringe, he deliberately kept the hint of the urban environment, i.e. those verticals in the background, in a low profile. Except for the church to the extreme left, all the urban buildings are drawn lower than the pillars erected at the construction site. Even the smoke coming from the chimney of one of the wood huts blows higher than many of the town houses. Although in the background we can clearly tell, from the right to the left, the dome of University College London, today's Church of Christ the King at Byng Place, St Pancras Paris Church, etc, the urban architecture is drawn here to frame the central motif, not to overwhelm it.

To summarise, in this series of comparison, I pointed out that Monet turned the material newness (the railway bridge) into social newness by blending it with motifs of different nature, like those of recreation, and by making it an integral part of the everyday life of Argenteuil. Yet in the earlier decades, I continued, Birmingham artists' experience with the railway was limited. Different aspects of the railway, like its visual impact or interior structure, were observed but separately depicted. The emphasis on the interior, in particular, characterises the English artists' way of understanding and representing the railway. It shows that they might hope to approach the new thing in a slower and more careful way before they accepted it to enter and modernise their life. More importantly, most of the artists depicted the suburban location of the railway. In this way, their art works represent a relation between modern life and the suburb.

The last motif of modern life I am going to compare is pleasure seeking. In section three, chapter two, I already discussed the middle-class visitors of Aston Hall

and Park after 1858 and how the venue was enjoyed like as a safe and pleasant site of Nature (Figs 2-26 through 2-28, and 2-30 through 2-33). There I also mentioned that the 1850s was a decade of pleasure ground for the people in Birmingham, for there were Vauxhall Pleasure Garden opening at Duddeston (less than a mile to the north-east of the town centre), and Birmingham Botanic Gardens opening at Edgbaston.³³⁰

In addition to these built pleasure grounds at the urban fringes, the rest of the periphery of the town could also be made into a place for pleasure, too. For example, Perry Barr, a village of Staffordshire three miles to the north of Birmingham was imagined as a place for pleasure. In *Perry Barr* (Fig. 4-12) made in November, 1830, we see a floodgate surrounded by trees. The floodgate looks high and visually imposing. This is very likely to be a result of manipulation. Half a year ago in the spring, the artist visited the same site and made a drawing, named *Floodgate, Perry Mill*, without figures in it (Fig. 4-11).³³¹ But half a year later, as seen in *Perry Barr* (Fig. 4-12), he somehow lifted the elevation of the floodgate, vertically stretched the slopes at both sides, and enlarged the ponds above and beneath the floodgate. As a result, the site becomes steeper and could be unsafe. Moreover, the path on the right slope, which used to be flat and winding in the spring version, becomes abruptly steep to the extreme right, where handrails had to be enlarged accordingly. In addition, a large tree needs to be introduced to fill the bank at the bottom-right corner. In this way, the pleasure of wandering in this countryside might be wilder and offer more fun.

Five people are attracted to visit the place (Fig. 4-12). Two are taking a walk to the right. This couple are the only people who stay in man-regulated territory as they

³³⁰ Ballard, *op. cit.*

³³¹ In Wan's catalogue, *op. cit.*, *Floodgate, Perry Mill* is attributed to Henry Harris Lines to be his study work for a later painting, *Floodgate, Perry Barr*, commissioned by his patron, Mr W. Roberts (see Wan, *op. cit.* p. 28). Since *Floodgate, Perry Mill* is attributed to Henry Harris Lines, *Perry Barr*, which has a similar composition and drawing style, is very likely to be his work, too.

walk on a built path with handrails at both sides. The other three figures go inside Nature in a bolder way. Two fishers sit very close to water on the left bank, which descends straight down into the lower pond. The fishers look still and concentrated on their activity without worrying that nothing is installed on the bank they sit on to hold on to. One small figure in the centre of the background stands next to a big tree on a pointed bank, where there is no railing, either. He stands still and has a tiny basket to his right. Whether he is fishing or picnicking, he could risk falling into the water. Overall, this particular site at Perry Barr is represented like well-preserved Nature, and the five pleasure seekers could only respect it and therefore look tiny in it, in contrast with how the middle-class visitors enjoyed themselves in Aston Hall and Park (Figs 2-26 through 2-28, and 2-30 through 2-33).

In Monet's *Sunday at Argenteuil* (Fig. 4-13), moreover, pleasure seeking became a social necessity and Nature is more fully appropriated to this end. As illustrated in the painting, several boats are standing-by in the boat rental area on the right-hand side. The boat rental house represents organisation and management of this particular type of recreation, while the five wanderers in Perry Barr could only explore the area totally by themselves. Behind the boat rental house, more boats sail on the river in the distance. These boats and boaters hardly remind us of a dangerous river, as might be experienced by the five people in *Perry Barr*. Besides, for those who do not go boating (mostly ladies), they can stay on the bank to promenade, sit or stand watching boating. With so many boaters and lady visitors, this waterfront place is not wild Nature, but a half natural site serving the need of middle class. Moreover, since the title of the paintings says "Sunday", it is obvious that Monet wishes to show how the suburb is totally occupied and enjoyed by petit bourgeois during their precious breaks at weekends. Overall, the suburb of Argenteuil is represented as thoroughly appropriated by petit bourgeois for the purpose to live a modern life where recreation

is indispensable. Compared with this, the Staffordshire village three miles from Birmingham is represented like unspoiled Nature, and seeking pleasure in it an individual and whimsical choice, rather than a collective and social activity.

In this section on the pictorial motifs of modern life, we found: while the Argenteuil canvases (Figs. 4-3, 4-6, and 4-13) present a clear iconography of combined motifs and a more complicated modern life, the Birmingham drawings (Fig. 4-4, 4-7, and 4-12), due to their earlier years of production where modernisation had just begun, could only show individual signs — factories, railways, and pleasure-seekers— coming one after another. Besides, while the Birmingham pictures represent the idea of suburb merely as developing and anarchic urban fringes, the Argenteuil paintings more clearly represent the suburb as a satellite settlement of the metropolis.

On suburban landscape vision

In addition to the various pictorial motifs, the representation of a suburban and modern life also demonstrates an unusual suburban landscape vision. Such a suburban landscape looks neither like a purely pastoral landscape, nor an ordinary prospect of a town. In fact, it combines both and turns out to be a strange combination. In this section I will continue to compare one Birmingham drawing with an Argenteuil painting, and then introduce a painting on Hampstead Heath by Madox Brown and compare it with another Birmingham picture. I will argue that such unusual suburban landscape vision has cultural and social significance because it reflects the rise of the middle class and their modern life on suburb.

I begin with Henry Harris Lines' *Birmingham and the Old Asylum from the Lozells* (Fig. 4-14). The background to the left shows Birmingham in the distance. The town is viewed from the north in an area called Lozells, which is within two miles to

the north-west of St Martin's Church. Lozells has always been part of the city of Birmingham on its north-west, not a village or a town of other counties. Along the edge of the distant townscape is a row of buildings, among which the old asylum was.

It was so recorded:

...there is convenient and well-managed Asylum, at the edge of the town, in Summer-lane, for the reception of the children of the poor... [It] was established in 1797...the young and helpless...are fed, clothed, educated...and by good management, the produce of their labour, in the manufacture of pins, straw-plat, &c. has been made considerable.³³²

The asylum was regarded as "at the edge of the town".³³³ Indeed, if we look up the 1825 map (Fig. 1-6d), we will see it marked to the extreme right. Since the asylum already meant the border of the town, what did the artist mean by seeing it from an even further place, Lozells? How did he regard Lozells in relation to the town?

In an exaggerated way, the artist introduces a huge piece of rock to stand for where Lozells should be. By the time the drawing was made, this particular rock might exist in the area³³⁴, but obviously the artist enlarged it and made it a spectacle, as if having something to say through the rock. The rock occupies more than half of the picture and looks like a cliff. It can be imagined that the bottom of the rock is the artist's sitting place. A white, upward and wiggling track starts at the bottom of the paper. Following the track, viewers can reach the top of the rock, where there is a lateral shaft of sunlight, and enjoy an exclusive view of the distant town.

The weighty rock denotes the place of Lozells, directs viewers to appreciate the townscape behind it, and dominates the composition of the whole picture. Because of these functions and importance, I think the rock is comparable to the flower bank in

³³² Drake, *op. cit.*, 1837, p. 68. The word in the square bracket is my annotation.

³³³ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

³³⁴ This is according to the plate accompanying the drawing displayed in *Birmingham Seen* exhibition (08/12/2009). I also visited the area in October, 2008 and have talked to local scholars and residents about the rock but none said they knew of it.

Monet's *The Flower Bank, Argenteuil* (Fig. 4-15). The flowery cluster comes in many colours: white, red, lilac, orange, yellow and blue. These flowers look vigorous and their green leaves are also lush and verdant. Through and above the leaves Monet introduces a view of the River Seine. The bank to the right is covered with trees and accommodates a few walkers. On the beach there are two sailors on their boat. In the distance is a greyish silhouette of the town of Argenteuil with smoking chimneys and a church spire, bathed in a honey tint. This tender and warm-coloured painting presents Argenteuil as a romantic place: there are beautiful flowers, a honey-tinted sky, an amber-like river-surface, some dazzling mist made of the smoke from the factory chimneys, and two lovers on their boat. All these are structured based on the flowery bank at the bottom. In this way, the flowery bank offers a vantage view-point and seems to have a charm to freshen and romanticise the townscape of Argenteuil.

But why can Monet confidently say what he painted: "the flower bank", while Henry Harris Lines avoided naming the drawing after the rock? Why is "the flower bank" verbally articulated and visually representative of Argenteuil while the rock standing for Lozells is visually demanding but verbally abandoned? This exposes the difficulty and unusualness of portraying a suburban landscape. In the suburb of Argenteuil (an old town suburbanised as a result of the expansion of its neighbouring metropolis), Monet confronted a countryside landscape that was filled with reference to an urban environment. *The Flower Bank, Argenteuil* shows how he managed to provide a seemingly usual landscape painting using an unusual view-point and combination of landscape elements. In the suburb of Lozells (the edge of the town), Henry Harris Lines saw the town and the countryside stand side by side, with the border of the town pushing into the countryside time after time. This developing edge and forward-pushing border is difficult to be expressed in picture. This is probably why the rock, though strangely left unspoken, is introduced and elaborated on to give

the ambiguous space some landscape texture.

In addition to the rock, there is another piece of evidence that explains the difficulty and unusualness of the suburban landscape. If closely examined, five figures can be found in front of a bushy line in the open area to the left of the drawing. These people are rendered in almost invisible strokes. From the left to the right stand a child, a man, a woman, a younger child, and another adult holding a stick. The party of five face the same direction and stand next to a blank belt. The belt might be a canal and the figure holding a stick might be putting the stick into the water (to fish?), but with such vagueness and limited depiction, the area and the figures remain unsettled. According to my examination of the drawing when I was in the archive, I think they are figures deliberately left unclear, rather than figures being erased. The unfinished figures in a strangely empty land show the artist's perception of this curious area lying next to the town and his attempt to handle and decorate the vacancy. Although the artist finally left this part blank, he still shadowed half of the area (next to the bottom of the rock) with lines and strokes to improve the monotonous void. This illustrates how the edge of the town was perceived but not given form.

Additionally, the artist uses "*the Lozells*" instead of merely 'Lozells' to name his drawing, which can be seen clearly at the bottom-left corner. The place had been called Lozells, meaning wretches, since long time ago. No further information tells us if "*the Lozells*" was also in use. It is therefore unclear whether the artist called it "*the*" Lozells idiosyncratically or mistakenly. Nevertheless, the use of the definite article could indicate his attention to the place and his uncertainty to categorise such a settlement, thus it is possible that he hid his uncertainty under the rock.

Both Monet's *the Flower Bank, Argenteuil* and Henry Harris Lines' *Birmingham and the Old Asylum from the Lozells* expose the unusualness of a suburban landscape. But Henry Harris Lines' drawing shows one thing the painting made half a century

later does not show: the countryside and the city can be seen in the same time, which we already saw in the artist's father's drawing, *View from no.3 Temple Row West, Birmingham* (Fig. 3-17). In the previous chapter on the Barber and the Lines families, I said the Lines family had an ambition to symbolically protect and occupy the local environs as the territory for their art through making drawings of them. There I began with Samuel Lines' *View from no.3 Temple Row West, Birmingham* (Fig. 3-17) to uncover this ambition. I argued: although the roof where the two men sat was not necessarily part of the Lines' property at no. 3, Temple Row West, the artist still boldly appropriated it through seating the two men on it, who are very likely his own sons or even himself. Mentioning the drawing again, this time I focus on its suburban landscape vision. I will compare it with Ford Madox Brown's *An English Autumn Afternoon* (Fig. 4-16) to find out more.

In the oil painting, a young couple sit casually on grass. To the right of the young man (or boy) lies a T-shaped footpath, where grass does not grow and yellow soil is exposed. This footpath is connected to stairs to the right, suggested by the black handrail. The handrail descends so abruptly that the staircases cannot be seen from the level of this sitting place. Perhaps exhausted by climbing up the steep stairs, the couple cannot wait to sit down: her parasol is dropped open and toppled, and her blanket (or shawl) is quickly flattened (or taken off), piling up in her back with tangled tassels. Compared with the couple's spontaneous rest, the two men's sitting on the roof portrayed by Samuel Lines looks staged and strenuous. The two men have to either use ladders or climb out of windows to reach the roof. While the man to the right pretends to raise his right arm effortlessly to point to the distant scenery to his partner, his left arm actually clings on to the ridge of the roof very tightly and his legs are folded nervously and unnaturally alongside the slanting roof. His partner to the left, though looks still and stable, must also be sitting hard on the other side of the slanting

roof.

Is the view worth the couple's climb and the two men's labour? To Ruskin, the view is "such a very ugly subject"³³⁵ possibly because he saw in it an urban encroachment of the countryside and the resultant strange landscape.³³⁶ Indeed, in the distant, the townscape of London, though wonderfully painted in autumn afternoon sunlight in pink, lacks a single vanishing point.³³⁷ Instead, tree crowns of numerous species divide the horizon.³³⁸ In the middle ground, moreover, people pick apples (in the orchard in the centre), make fire (to burn falling leaves? see the smoke to the left under a poplar), and raise roosters (at the bottom-left in a backyard), as if maintaining a rural way of life despite the coming of the adjacent city. To the right of the roosters stands a building with a red roof, whose southern end is sunlit and northern end shadowed. Following the northern end stretches another long, red ridge. It leads our eyes to a pigeon cage and then connects to still another red-roofed house at the bottom-right of the painting, forming a long line of red bricks and thus signifying man-made residence amid this leafy, semi-natural suburb of Hampstead. Although Madox Brown replied to Ruskin that he painted the scene simply "because it lay out of a back window (of my landlady's bedroom)"³³⁹, the unusual landscape vision he presented has reached beyond what a bedroom window could offer. Therefore, instead of looking picturesque by hiding unsuitable objects and highlighting, say, rural scenery, the painting chose to be "ugly" by seeing everything this suburb offered. This is also probably why the painting is shaped in an oval, like an eye.³⁴⁰

Madox Brown saw the city from the suburban house he lodged; Samuel Lines

³³⁵ Brown's diary, 13 July 1855. Ford Madox Brown, *The Diary of Ford Madox Brown*, ed. Virginia Surtees (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 144.

³³⁶ Prettejohn, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

³³⁷ Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 188

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

³³⁹ Brown's diary of 13 July 1855. See Madox Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

³⁴⁰ Prettejohn, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

saw the countryside from his own town house. Despite the contradictory view-points, the two artists saw something similar. Immediately facing the hatted men is the New Theatre (1782-1902). The theatre, like many other constrictions of the town— the Town Hall, the Court House, etc— represents local residents' need for amenity and civic service as the town grew bigger and bigger. Standing for the new, the theatre is strangely situated on a street of old houses, whose worn and disorderly appearance remain unready for the coming of this sign of modern life. This mix illustrates the rapid development inside the town. Such a development could surely expand its size and push outward and encroach upon the immediate countryside. In the centre of the background is a windmill, a sign of agriculture and rural life. Around the windmill is a rural scene containing farms, fields, and hills. But the settlement to the right of the windmill indicates this immediate countryside being already developed and urbanised. Thus, while the sitter to the right gestures toward the windmill and might speak of the countryside over there, it is probably the encroachment upon, not the intact beauty of the countryside that he is talking about.

The unusual suburban landscape is not just a spectacle, but a window through which we see some social changes, such as the rise of middle class and their modern life in the suburb. In the drawing, the man to the right faces where he points to, while in the painting the young man points to the distance but looks at his companion. Yet this gaze is not a lover's gaze. The artist regarded the couple to be “more boy and girl, neighbours and friends.”³⁴¹ This informal relation between the two sexes, the artist believed, was “peculiarly English”, hence the title of the painting.³⁴² Not lovers which could be a typical motif in Victorian narrative painting, the couple therefore carries a

³⁴¹ Ford Madox Brown, *The Exhibition of Work and other Paintings* (London: the Gallery, Piccadilly, 1865): 13. This exhibition catalogue is included in Kenneth Bendiner, *The Art of Ford Madox Brown* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 1998), pp. 131-56; p. 136.

³⁴² *Ibid.*

modern and social message, rather than a sentimental or literary one.³⁴³ Indeed, they could embody the middle class who look for natural inspiration or take pleasure around Hampstead Heath. They could also embody the middle class who moved out of the bustling city and settled in this relatively more tranquil and less crowded place. Whether they are pleasure seekers or residents, their presence in this particular place declares the formation of the suburb as a result of middle class living their modern life.

In Samuel Lines' drawing, similarly, the sitters embody the rise of middle class and their need for a modern life and suburban space. As argued earlier, the two sitters might be the artist himself and/or his sons, who were also artists. As skilled professionals who made a living by themselves, the artists are a member of the middle class. As a matter of fact, it was this particular group of skilled people, who immigrated from all over the country, that made Birmingham prosper and grow. They worked so hard that they became successful, for example opening their own drawing academy here at no. 3, Temple Row West. Based on the success of their business, the middle class could certainly reach out for more to satisfy their needs. That is probably why in the drawing we see not only the improvement of the old town centre (as in the case of building the New Theatre), but also the development of more outer space (as in the case of the developing edge and the encroached-upon countryside).

Moreover, both pictures take a heightened view-point, which makes it possible to see farther landscape. In addition to this practical reason, there is again an implication of social changes. To the left of the slope in the background of the oil painting is Kenwood House. The country house can be read as a sign of aristocratic society. The fact that Kenwood House is located on Hampstead Heath means that the owners once enjoyed a private green park and an exclusive view of London. Yet when

³⁴³ Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

the area began to develop, as seen in Cruickshank's satiric caricature (Fig. 1-1) and J. C. Bourne's minute depiction (Fig. 4-9), the greenery and the view were no longer the gentry's property. Here in Madox Brown's painting, the panoramic view unfolded in front of the young couple illustrates how the middle class started to share the greenery and the view. Since both the residents of the country house and the suburb could enjoy the view, the artist might imply that the suburb of Hampstead became an address as prestigious as Kenwood House. In Samuel Lines' drawing, similarly, although the distant windmill is a steadfast symbol of country life, it is drawn here not so much to compose a pastoral landscape painting or a land survey, which used to serve the upper class only, but to compose a new, suburban landscape vision that belongs exclusively to the middle class.

Last but not least, in 1852 when Madox Brown moved to Hampstead and took on painting *An English Autumn Afternoon*, he also started another two paintings: *The Last of England* (1852-5) and *Work* (1852-65). *The Last of England* centralises the theme of emigration. *Work* depicts workers changing water pipes in a road in Hampstead and portrays more than thirty figures of different social classes.³⁴⁴ It is believed that the three paintings combine to show Madox Brown's shift of focus from historical subjects to modern life since the early 1850s.³⁴⁵ While *The Last of England* sets the scene on the sea, the other two paintings set the scene in the suburb of Hampstead. *An English Autumn Afternoon* focuses on the unusual landscape of the suburb. *Work* focuses on the improvement of the infrastructure of the suburb, again implying the making of a suburban and modern life. Therefore, I summarise: an artist could more fully represent modern life if he/she pays attention not only to the city centre, but also to its developing edges and immediate countryside and take into

³⁴⁴ Prettejohn, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-6.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

account the difficult yet unavoidable issue about the suburb.

On genre

This final and short section concludes the above discussion and will not contain pictorial comparison. So far we have discussed the iconography of a suburban and modern life and its unique suburban landscape vision. Finally, can these enable the 1780-c.1850 Birmingham pictures to be read as a new genre? According to T. J. Clark, the French painting forms a new genre because of its avant-garde subject matter, mix of signs, bold landscape vision, and anti-academic painting skills.³⁴⁶ On the avant-garde subject matter and the mix of signs, he argues:

The signs of industry can be included, in a picture like *Le Voilier au Petit Gennevilliers* [1874, a floating boat on the river Seine centralises the scene, with numerous factories and smoking chimneys on the shore to the left], but in such a way that they hardly register as different from the signs of nature or recreation. A chimney is not so different from a tree or a mast; the shape and consistency of a trail of smoke can be taken up in other, stronger traces— the edge of a reflection or the body of a cloud...the smoke serves to provoke various analogies— between smoke and paint, smoke and cloud, cloud and water— all of them guaranteeing the scene's coherence. The chimneys, in other words, are made as part of landscape as Monet imagines it.³⁴⁷

Thus, the art historian believes the mix of the signs has pictorial significance and composes a new, harmonious landscape.

On the strangeness that such a view represents neither the city nor the normal countryside, the art historian comments:

This landscape [as in *Gelée blanche au Petit Gennevilliers*, 1873, where a bleak sky and a empty field divide the horizon,

³⁴⁶ Painting skills is beyond the focus of this chapter and will not be discussed.

³⁴⁷ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 182. The words in the square bracket are my annotation.

which is dotted with a small houses and trees] cannot be fairly described as suburban, for there is too much space still remaining between the weekend retreats; but it can hardly be called countryside...It is too empty to deserve the name; too ragged and indiscriminate, lacking in incident and demarcation apart from that provided by the houses (which does not amount to much); too formless, too perfunctory and bleak. These negatives add up...to a specific kind of composition...they are Monet's way of giving form to the elusiveness of Argenteuil's surroundings, their slow dissolution into something else.³⁴⁸

Although the art historian avoids specifying the place to be suburb or suburban, he already points out the unique, barren, mixed sight of this non-country, non-city place; and by reluctantly saying Argenteuil was dissolving into the metropolis of Paris (that "something else" quoted above), he implies the formation of the suburb, or suburbia.

Following the two features quoted above, a new genre is possible:

Was there a way now for landscape to admit the new signs of man in the countryside— the chimneys, the villas, the apparatus of pleasure? ...Was the city with determinate edge to be joined, in painting, by the city without one? How much of inconsistency and waste could the genre include and still keep its categories intact? So landscape was to be *modern*; but if it was— if the signs of modernity were agreed on and itemised— would the landscape not be robbed of what painters valued most in it? ... For Monet and his colleagues, landscape was the guarantee of *painting* above all; ...Perhaps that guarantee would not hold, least of all in places like Argenteuil...³⁴⁹

Overall, T. J. Clark thinks Monet's over 150 Argenteuil canvases "point to the ways they diverge from the genre's normal range of motifs...he [Monet] seems to be testing ways to extend landscape painting's range of reference..."³⁵⁰ and, more

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 191-2. The words in the square bracket are my annotation.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 184-5.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

importantly, "...the genre of landscape would have to be rephrased and extended if it were to go on providing matter for major art..."³⁵¹

Like the French painting of modern life, the Birmingham pictures also show a mix of different signs and an unusual suburban landscape. While the French painting urges a new genre beyond landscape painting, I think the Birmingham pictures also challenge the old genre they are always categorised as: topographic views. Topographic views are about recording and transcribing the appearance of and the objects in a certain place onto a piece of paper. They are functional and essential, but too naive for the representation of the suburb we have explored. Besides, the representation of the suburb does not fit well into the genre of traditional landscape painting, either, which focuses on Nature or countryside with the built urban or suburban environment playing a minor role. Moreover, the representation of suburb, even if with industrial motifs on it, does not necessarily count as industrial landscape, for this type of images, like *Coalbrookdale by Night* (Fig. 1-2), focuses on industrial constrictions on any places rather than on the specific area that lies immediately outside a city. Therefore, I believe the Birmingham pictures and the representation of suburb found in them, though provide a topographic view of some place, should not be merely categorised as conventional topographic views.

This section has investigated how a modern life on suburb was represented. We started with the French painting of modern life as a paradigm. We found that while Monet in the 1870s represented Argenteuil through combining various motifs (pleasure-seeking, railway, and factory) and merged them into an integrated landscape scene, the Birmingham and London artists before the mid-nineteenth century could only concentrate on one motif each picture. After comparing the pictorial motifs, I went on comparing the suburban landscape vision. I found that Birmingham pictures

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

show something Argenteuil canvases do not have: the city and the countryside are seen in the same time. This special feature, as seen in the drawings by the Lines and the oil painting by Madox Brown, convey many important messages of a suburban and modern life. Finally, since the Birmingham pictures have both a peculiar iconography and unusual suburban landscape vision, they challenge the existing genre of topographic views and provide much more than just a topographic setting.

In conclusion, this chapter has shown how, because of middle class' need for dwelling, the suburb as the developing edges of the town began to involve a modern way of life. Section one explored how Edgbaston was developed in this context, and how this process was represented in pictures. We found that new-moneyed middle class and their hard-earned properties began to have their presence in picture (Fig. 4-1). Besides, the middle class' expectation of Edgbaston as an ideal living environment, including a sense of culture and tradition, education, and greenery, is also represented in picture (Fig. 4-2). We also found that while new villas and wild streets became a new sight of the suburb of Edgbaston, they still lack proper visual representation. This again exposes how difficult the idea of suburb was even if it came in a more modern, familiar form.

In section two, we further explored how the modern life on the suburb had looked like. Monet's Argenteuil canvases were taken as a paradigm. They showed an integrated scene combining signs of industrialisation, urbanisation, and recreation, and an overall unique landscape vision obtained from a suburban view-point. Compared with them, the Birmingham pictures also show signs of modern life, like factories (Fig. 4-4), railways (Fig. 4-7), and pleasure seekers (Figs. 4-11 and 4-12), but in a separate, not combined way. It was probably because they were made in much

earlier decades where those signs of modern life came one after another. Indeed, as we compared the Birmingham pictures with the topographic views of London made also between 1780 and 1850 (Figs. 4-5, 4-9, and 4-10), we saw a similar way of representation.

Although the iconographies are different, the Birmingham pictures still presented a suburban landscape vision no less complicated than that in the French painting (Figs. 4-14 and 4-15). Moreover, in the English side, the fact that both the city and the countryside can be seen in the same time provides the pictures with more room to accommodate more messages about modern life (Fig. 3-17 and 4-16). Hence, because of the particular mix of modern motifs and the unusual suburban landscape vision, the Birmingham pictures challenge the genre of topographic views, just like the way the French Impressionist painting challenges the genre of landscape painting. Overall, this chapter concludes: the suburb is not just a topographical location or a landscape setting, but a cultural category; the images of the suburb are more than just topographic views— they are significant representation of modern life.

Chapter Five

Country House Views as Representation of the Suburb: the New Moneyed Class and the Old Landed Class

The previous chapter viewed the suburb as a place to live and explored how a suburban and modern life might be represented in pictures. This chapter continues to view the periphery of the town a residential area and investigates how country house views could represent this.

Toward the twentieth century the image of a residential suburb is not difficult to grasp: a district with detached houses and neat streets in gridded blocks, with their own gardens and public greenery.³⁵² But before this residential pattern became prevailing and dominates what people regard the suburb and suburbia as, what did the suburb with a residential function look like and how was it represented in pictures between 1780 and 1850? This chapter argues that although these decades did not ‘see’ the modern pattern, they still saw an initial stage: the representation of the desire to live in one’s own house located outside the bustling town. The desire, or the initial stage, can be found from the depictions of the individual residences on the periphery of Birmingham. At first glance, they are just portraits of country houses, but because of urban expansion and industrial development, the houses actually had a changing relation with the town and their location also became more and more ‘suburban’, and this chapter shall investigate how these country house views represent the idea of the (residential) suburb.

Section one explores how new moneyed class, such as industrialists, lived in detached houses on the periphery of Birmingham. I will first provide a geographic network of the houses of the members of the Lunar Society. The distribution of these houses, I will point out, encourages us to imagine the periphery of the town as a place

³⁵² Fishman, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-17

of residence. Then I will analyse the pictures of the houses of not only the members of the Lunar Society, but also of their 'Dissenter' friends. This part of discussion is based on a pictorial album made in 1792 commemorating a turbulence taking place in 1791, in which many beautiful country houses of those cultural elites were destroyed. I will argue that these country house views represent the desire of living in one's own house away from the bustling town.

While section one discusses how the new social class moved out of the town and into the country houses that once belonged to the gentry, section two explores how the landed class viewed their own country houses in relation to the urbanisation of the countryside where they lived. I focus on the Calthorpe family, the landlord of Edgbaston. I will discuss the visual representations of the family's first and second homes, Perry Barr Hall and Edgbaston Hall. I will argue: the pictures of both halls show a resistance against industrialisation and urbanisation and provide a rural scene as compensation. Like section one relying on an album made in contemporary society, this section also makes use of an album produced in 1838 containing the views around Perry Barr Hall dedicated to its landlord. Overall, this chapter will conclude, the views of the houses on the periphery of the town represent the idea of the suburb not only because they show an ideal way of living, but also because they embody the clashes and problems about residence and housing on the suburb between different social classes.

I. The new moneyed class moved out of the town

The residences of the Lunar Society

The Lunar Society refers to a loose circle of natural scientists, social scientists, industrialists, and scholars active in the West Midlands around the mid-eighteenth century. The members met once a month on the evening of a full moon, so that they

could use the moonlight to travel back home after each meeting; hence the society's name.³⁵³ Although no minutes were kept, it is believed that the 'Lunar' ideas which were later put into practice instigated radical changes and laid a foundation stone for the modern world.³⁵⁴

The society had fourteen regular members: Dr Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), a scientist and a political extremist; Dr William Withering (1741-99), a botanist; Matthew Boulton (1728-1809), the founder of Soho manufactory; James Watt (1736–1819), the business partner of Matthew Boulton and the improver of the steam engine, which is often considered to be the power behind the Industrial Revolution³⁵⁵; Samuel Galton Junior (1753-1831) (little is known about him); Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), a physician and the grandfather of Charles Darwin (1809-82); Thomas Day (1748-89), an educator; Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1744-1817), a telecommunication scientist; Josiah Wedgwood (1730-95), a pottery industrialist; Robert Augustus Johnson (1745-99) (little is known about him); James Keir (1735-1820), a chemist and industrialist; William Small (1734-75), a physician and natural philosopher; Jonathan Stokes (1755-1831), a physician; and John Whitehurst (1713-88), a scientific-instrument maker.³⁵⁶

Much research has been done on the professional achievement of each member, and the geographic network among the members has also been noticed.³⁵⁷ However, little has been considered or organised about where exactly the members lived, how the residences were distributed, and why the members chose the specific residences.

³⁵³ BMAG, *An Exhibition to Commemorate the Bicentenary of the Lunar Society of Birmingham*, *op. cit.*

³⁵⁴ Jenny Uglow, *The Lunar Men: The Friends Who Made the Future 1730-1810* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002)

³⁵⁵ *ODNB*, *op. cit.*, consulted 10/04/2010.

³⁵⁶ For a full introduction of these members, see BMAG, *An Exhibition to Commemorate the Bicentenary of the Lunar Society of Birmingham*, *op. cit.*

³⁵⁷ Robert E. Schofield, *The Lunar Society of Birmingham: a Social History of Provincial Science and Industry in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), see the map called "Lunar Geography" attached next to the title sheet of the book.

Besides, what routes did the Lunar men take to travel to one another's homes to hold their meetings? What landscape or townscape could be seen along the routes? Did the members really gather and meet over just one evening and return home that night using the light of the full moon? If such a communication did exist, it is then possible for us to imagine an eighteenth-century suburban network around Birmingham—based on individual residences and powered by regular visiting— which the cultural elites adopted to exchange their ideas and maintain their social life.

So far, six homes of eight members are known and I mark them on a map (Fig. 5-1). Four members lived near Birmingham in four different residences: Dr Priestley's house and laboratory were on Fairhill, Sparkbrook, about one mile to the southeast of Birmingham; the place no longer exists. Dr Withering lived in Edgbaston Hall, about one mile and a half to the southwest of the town and still in existence. He lived in the hall as its first tenant from 1786 until his death.³⁵⁸ Boulton built his magnificent Soho Manufactory and Soho Mint in a heightened site in Handsworth, a village then in Staffordshire, about a mile to the northwest of Birmingham. Just next to the industrial complex, Boulton built a beautiful house, Soho House, to live in (Fig. 5-2a). It is believed that the Soho House was landscaped (Fig. 5-2b), and that the combination of the magnificent industrial complex and the beautiful country house could help promote the image of Boulton's enterprise.³⁵⁹ Boulton's business partner, James Watt, also settled in Handsworth. His residence was called Heathfield Hall (or House), which was an equally landscaped and beautiful residence like the Soho House. Having visited or at least known the four residences, the members of the society were likely to form a geographic network within their mind that could help them shape the

³⁵⁸ Slater, *op. cit.* pp. 20-1.

³⁵⁹ Shena Mason et al. *A Lost Landscape: Matthew Boulton's Gardens at Soho* (Chichester : Phillimore, 2009).

It is interesting that while a modern suburb is built to separate work from family life, Boulton actually combined his work-place and personal residence in one suburban location, as if corresponding to a modern science park where plants and dormitories are built in the same site.

idea of the suburbs of Birmingham.

Another four members lived in two different residences in two cities: Samuel Galton Junior lived in Great Barr Hall, Walsall, about eight miles to the north-west of Birmingham. Erasmus Darwin, Thomas Day, and Richard Lovell Edgeworth shared Stowe House (still in existence today, not to be confused with the stately house in Buckinghamshire) in Lichfield, about fourteen miles to the north-east of Birmingham. If the Lunar members did travel to these residences for their meetings, it was then possible for the members to expand their mental geographic network and to understand Birmingham in relation to not only its edges within a few miles, but also farther settlements in a longer distance. Therefore, although the mid-eighteenth century Birmingham had a boundary, it can still be challenged because the idea of suburb might have been proposed through the network of the Lunar members' residences.

The pictures of the ruins of 'Dissenter's' houses

Besides the residences of the Lunar members, there were other private houses located on the periphery of the town. Interestingly, the fact that they became distributed around the town was not recognised until they were nearly destroyed. On 14th July 1791, the second anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, a commemorative banquet was held at Thomas Dadley's Hotel on Temple Row next to St Philip's Church. The attendants included the Lunar members and their friends, many of whom were considered 'Dissenters' (nowadays referred to as nonconformists) as they held radically different views on politics and religion from the King and the Church. Disagreement between the Dissenters and the King's advocates had already been in existence, but the banquet triggered further discontent with the Dissenters. Although the guests retired early from their dinner, a hostile crowd still gathered outside the

hotel and started to break windows. After damaging the hotel, the mob proceeded to the places that had direct relation to the Dissenters, and ruined them.

For example, their fury fell on Dr Priestley's property (Figs. 5-2c and 5-3). He was not only a member of the Lunar Society and the Royal Society, but also a sympathiser of the French Revolution and American War of Independence. He was considered the most notorious Dissenter, who "tended to unsettle every thing, and yet settle nothing."³⁶⁰ He was dissuaded from attending the banquet so as to not infuriate his haters, but they still targeted him and burnt his home. On the following day, the riots continued and the size of the mob increased. The local authorities tried to fight back, but it was not until the military arrived on 17th July that the rebellion finished. During the four days of riots, more than thirty of the Dissenters' and their associates' chapels, houses, homes, and offices were destroyed.³⁶¹

The aftermath of the riots was more complicated than the incident itself. For individuals, Dr Priestley went into exile in Pennsylvania, the United States and never returned to England; for the country, the outbreak was a trauma and the split between the two groups was worsened.³⁶² While agitation went on, there was still a relatively positive side: public attention was drawn to the environment of Birmingham and curiosity could be satisfied through visual representation. For example, in 1792, an album on the ravaged residences, *Views of the Ruins of the Principal Houses Destroyed during the Riots at Birmingham 1791*, was published (Fig. 5-2a).³⁶³ It is a unique dedication because, through concentrating on those "principal houses" distributed on the outskirts of Birmingham, the publication informed readers that the

³⁶⁰ The information in this paragraph is based on R.E.W and Francis R Maddison, 'Joseph Priestley and the Birmingham Riots' in *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* Vol. 12 No. 1 (1956 Aug), pp. 98-113; p. 98.

³⁶¹ These four sentences are based on Schofield, *op. cit.* pp. 359-63.

³⁶² *Ibid.* pp. 359-63.

³⁶³ Phillip Henry Witton Junior and John Edwards, *Views of the Ruins of the Principal Houses Destroyed during the Riots at Birmingham 1791* (London: J. Johnson, 1792) The French translation of the text was also by the authors.

suburban space of the town was lived by people and developing. In this section, I will locate the residences on the map (Fig. 5-1), analyse the text and the images in the album, and discuss how they contributed to that sense of spatiality. Besides, as the publication includes the French translation of its text, I will also discuss, towards the end of this section, what the inclusion of the French text might mean.

Views of the Ruins contains eight plates, each showing one ruined place; to the right of each plate is another page of text, with English in one column and its French translation in another (Fig. 5-2b). Arranged following the ringleaders' route, the first plate is the New Meeting House (The album only calls it "New Meeting"). The picture shows the chapel after the attack. The façade looks like a crying face as the two round windows on the top look like a pair of eyes and the two symmetrical cracks underneath look like two lines of tears. The two doors under the cracks are completely destroyed; through them is a desolate interior. The doorway is also a mess, with broken stones. Only the side façade with four rectangular windows looks slightly better. By contrast, the neighbouring buildings do not appear damaged. The road is clear and the small house to the left, possibly belonging to non-Dissenters and protected by a wall, is intact. The road and the small house communicate with the ruin through a contradictory intactness. In this way, the picture is like a house portrait and the New Meeting is highlighted like a monument.

Such an effect may be exactly what the author meant to convey. As both the writer of the text and drawer of the pictures, Witton could certainly use the images to illustrate his words and vice versa. That is, what is stated as text should be illustrated with pictorial details and what is drawn should also be explained in words. So, the pictorial emphasis of plate one on the body of the building should be met with corresponding text. Indeed, in the passage comprising six sentences, three sentences describe the magnificence of the building, calling it an "edifice" and "a considerable

pile” and noting its “more remarkable” “plainness and simplicity.”³⁶⁴ Even in the fifth sentence concerning how the mob damaged the building, architectural value is still emphasised: “This structure, after having existed upwards of sixty years...”³⁶⁵ Showing readers a ruin but telling them its past glory, Witton monumentalises the New Meeting.

Next, a party of the mob proceeded to Dr Priestley’s house and laboratory at Stratford Road, Fairhill, Sparkbrook, about one mile to the southeast of the town (Fig. 5-1).³⁶⁶ Plate two (Fig. 5-2c) depicts the site using the same tone of portraiture and monumentality, but begins to change the landscape setting. I shall first discuss the consistency. Since Dr Priestley was the most hated Dissenter, his property was “attacked with the most savage and determined fury.”³⁶⁷ It was even said the mob wanted to take him, too.³⁶⁸ This time Witton’s text concentrates on the violence:

They began by breaking down the doors and windows; and having entered the cellars, many of them drank...wine and ale...many battles were fought; among themselves...after the effects of the liquor had subsided, they broke into, and, in the true spirit of Goths and Vandals, they destroyed an apparatus of philosophical instruments, and a collection of scientific preparations...of such number and value...the whole building was set on fire...One man was killed...by the falling of a cornice stone.³⁶⁹

The words depict the chaos, but the picture does not. Although some black smoke above the windows on the left wall indicates the fire, and a huge crack on the right wall exposes the ravaged interior, this is only the outcome, not the moment, of the attack.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, plate one.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁶ While Witton’s text only says Dr Priestley’s property was located at Fairhill (which does not exist in today), Hutton’s brief history of Birmingham 1805 is the only source I found saying the property was located on Stratford Road, see Hutton, *op. cit.* p.55.

³⁶⁷ Witton, *op. cit.* plate 2.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

To further understand how plate two focuses on an overall view of the ruin rather than the attack, I will compare the print with a painting (Fig. 5-3). The painting depicts the moment of attack. Schofield's *The Lunar Society of Birmingham*, published in 1963 and consulted earlier, attributes the painting to an artist called Exted, Hogarth's student, and says the image was later lithographed by Charles Joseph Hulmandel.³⁷⁰ But an exhibition catalogue of the late 1980s says the painting was by Johann Eckstein, later lithographed by Joseph Hullmandel, and is a private collection in Portugal.³⁷¹ I adopt the information provided by the latter source because it is an art-historical publication and is more up-to-date.

However, not much is unknown about Johann Eckstein. He may be Johannes I Eckstein: painter, sculptor, and lithographer; born in Germany, moved to and became active in England, and died in 1798 or 1802 in London.³⁷² This Johannes I Eckstein produced a group portrait of Birmingham merchants, *John Freeth and his Circle* held in BMAG. Therefore, he might be familiar with local cultural elites and make this painting. He may also be Johann II Eckstein (?1736-?1817): modeller, painter, and engraver; born in Germany, moved to and became active in the USA.³⁷³ Since Johann II Eckstein spent the rest of his life in Pennsylvania and so was Dr Priestley until 1804, this Eckstein might know the English exile, learn his story, and become interested to produce a picture for it.

No matter which Johann Eckstein the maker of the painting was, the work seemed to make a history painting out of the event, possibly influenced by the fashion of history painting promoted by Sir Joshua Reynolds at the time (Fig. 5-3). For example, every figure in the picture provides narration through the destructive

³⁷⁰ Schofield, *op. cit.*, plate 12, between pp. 358-9.

³⁷¹ David Bindman, *The Shadow of the Guillotine: Britain and the French Revolution* (London: British Museum, 1989) p. 115.

³⁷² Emmanuel Bénézit, *Bénézit Dictionary of Artists* vol. 5 (Paris, Gründ, 2006) p. 59.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

behaviours they are engaged in, such as throwing things out of the windows, getting drunk, stealing, causing damage, and leaning against their guns while discussing their next step. In addition, on the platform in the background, several vague figures are bathed in smoke. The light coming from behind them and the dark smog towering to their left compose a chiaroscuro and dramatises their fighting. Overall, Eckstein's painting uses poignant narration to create a historic scene and has, interestingly, visualised the scenarios in Witton's text.

What then does Witton's own picture visualise? The following argues that it is topographic and architectural details that Witton's picture emphasises. Eckstein's backdrop is merely a three-floor façade with a pillared portal, windows of equal size, and a conifer to its right (whose branches grow downward). Such a setting hardly shows it is Dr Priestley's place unless Witton's version can verify it (Fig. 5-2c). Eckstein's wall may be Witton's left wall, for the latter also has windows of equal size (although the conifer in front of Witton's left wall has branches growing upward). Eckstein's wall may also be Witton's right wall, for both of them have to their right corners a conifer whose branches grow downward (although Eckstein's wall has three floors and there are five windows on both the first and the second floors; Witton's right wall has only two floors and the number of windows cannot be told due to the huge crack on the wall). Whichever wall it is, it is the details in Witton's picture that present a more complete view that provides verification. It is also through Witton's careful rendering of the mangled wall that a monument is presented. In Witton's version, apart from the ruin in the centre, there are three more buildings to the left. One is smaller and can only be seen partially. The other two to the further left are bigger but simplified into pure shapes, such as roofs into a triangle and a trapezium, and walls into rectangles. It is unknown which of them exactly was the laboratory, but their presence endorses the title, "Dr Priestley's House and Laboratory," by giving

sight of more than one building. Thus, without showing a serious narration that underpins a history painting, Witton's plate two concentrates on the architecture, monumentalises it, and makes a house portrait; without acting human figures, Witton's plate two elaborates on topographic and architectural details.

While the monumental effect of plate two completes the image in tandem with plate one, the depiction of topographic details makes plate two different from plate one. Indeed, since Fairhill was outside Birmingham and from then on the mob mainly operated outside the town centre in order to attack the Dissenters and their associates' residences, it is necessary to distinguish townscape, as in plate one, from suburban and countryside landscape, as in plates two to eight. The townscape in plate one is merely blank and juxtaposition, for it shows an empty street and a seemingly irrelevant house in the immediate vicinity of the New Meeting (Fig. 5-2b). But the landscape in the following seven plates is different: the setting becomes more spacious, the fore, middle, and backgrounds are outlined, trees arranged, gardens shaped, private space enclosed, and the residences thus neatly placed. Through these changes in landscape, the artist tells readers that the riots did spread out of the town. In other words, while the townscape in plate one is present by implication, the countryside and suburban landscape in plates two to seven are present through depictions of real objects and landscaping.

Again in plate two (Fig. 5-2c), besides the two conifers, more trees are growing on both sides of the buildings. The luxury of having so many trees could give an illusion that the property is some country house surrounded by a green park. Even though the tree-covered area is not large enough to form a real park, it at least shows that Dr Priestley had his own garden. While a proper country house is always seated in a 'park', a 'garden' is equally significant to a (modern) suburban house, for it

means green space to be enjoyed by the owner of the house.³⁷⁴ Of course, Dr Priestley's residence was not a (modern) suburban house, but it was not a proper country house, either. This ambiguity well illustrates the suburban situation of the residence located on the periphery of the town.

Moreover, the buildings are enclosed as a private space inside a 'screen'. The screen comprises one big gate, one small gate, a short wall between them, a taller wall to the left of the bigger gate, and two rows of shrubs on both sides. Furthermore, outside the bigger gate lie a path and fences which are supported by numerous verticals. This 'screen' of defensive function ironically highlights the fall of the house. Nevertheless, it still divides the space into public and private domains: in the public domain gather spectators; in the private domain stands a large residential complex. Overall, through the depiction of 'garden' and private space, Witton seems to suggest a country house image out of Dr Priestley's property, even if the distance between Fairhill and Birmingham is just about a mile.

On the second day of the riots, misfortune fell on John Ryland, a regular member of Dr Priestley's circle.³⁷⁵ Plate three depicts his damaged home, known as Baskerville House (Fig. 5-2d). Ryland's Baskerville House is on the same site as today's Baskerville House, about just one kilometre to the north-west of St Martin's Church (Fig. 5-1). Its current magnificence is due to extensive rebuilding from the last century. Originally, it was John Baskerville (1706-75), an innovator of typefaces and print-making, who leased the estate and built houses and workshops on it in the 1740s.³⁷⁶ He also named the area 'Easy Hill', probably because the site was within easy access to the town. These advantages successfully attracted Ryland, who had

³⁷⁴ Slater, *op. cit.* pp. 25-46.

³⁷⁵ Little is known about this Mr John Ryland while there were many other contemporary John Rylands; see *ODNB, op. cit.*

³⁷⁶ See *ODNB op. cit.* on John Baskerville.

further refurbished the house to be “more spacious and more elegant” just before the mob came.³⁷⁷

With an ideal location, extensive greenery, and beautiful decoration, a pleasant residence is formed. Again, Witton represents such a treasure using two approaches: a monumental and portraiture effect (all his eight plates) and the mimicry of the landscaping of a country house (plates two to eight). The first feature is seen in the ruined part, including some damaged walls and absent roofs behind the principal mansion (Fig. 5-2d). Like plate two (Fig. 5-2c), there are also spectators gazing at the ruin, appreciating it like an antiquity. While the survival reminds them of the past, the landscaping that surrounds it speaks of a contemporary vision and underlines Witton’s second approach. To the right of the plate (Fig. 5-2d), an avenue of trees is paralleled by a curvy walk in the foreground and the two thoroughfares give different layers to the meadow. In the extreme foreground to the left, the meadow is further layered by a lower pond. A bank of the pond is densely wooded with coniferous and deciduous trees, mirroring the avenue whose trees are also densely grown and trimmed. As a result, the bank completes the whole setting by providing a green corner. This embracing view of the landscaped residence conveys the vision that, even if the town was encroaching upon Easy Hill, the estate should not reveal any signs of urbanisation and should, instead, maintain an undisturbed ‘country house’ look to exemplify the value of a detached residence and the preciousness of living outside the town.

However, this vision does not begin with John Baskerville or John Ryland, but with John Taylor (1711-75). After gaining huge profits from making buttons, Taylor started to accumulating properties; he eventually owned forty-three houses, land, and farms.³⁷⁸ Besides quantity, he cared about quality, too. For his home, he chose an

³⁷⁷ Witton, *op. cit.* plate 3

³⁷⁸ ODNB, *op. cit.* on John Taylor

Elizabethan mansion inside a park at Bordesley, within a mile of the town (Fig. 5-1), and spent a total of £10,000 to landscape the park and rebuild the house.³⁷⁹ As seen in Witton's plate four (Fig. 5-2e), a brook spans the lower foreground and its bank is covered with beautiful trees to the left of the drawing. The water is so calm that it reflects the figures of the ladies gazing at the mansion. In the middle ground, the mansion is located in a large and higher area. The steepness is neutralised to the right with a dense wood. As a whole, this carefully considered residence with its wonderful landscaping and location seemed to set up a model among Taylor's circle and he became the leader of moving out of the built-up town and into a landscaped residence.³⁸⁰ In other words, in terms of resisting urbanisation and maintaining residential independence, Taylor's manor at Bordesley was more indicative and representative than Baskerville House.

Additionally, while writing that Bordesley Hall was "totally destroyed" by fire³⁸¹, Witton still gives a very neat illustration. The expectation raised by the text is not met with what is visualised in the drawing. Witton seems to have intended to use the imagery of both 'neatness' and 'destruction' to highlight the theme. One reason may be that Witton also appreciated Taylors' foresight and taste and decided to provide a detailed portrait to commemorate the disappearance the entrepreneur's first grand residence. This can be further verified by the drawing of Taylor's another landscaped property on the periphery of the town, Moseley Hall, for the picture also visualises limited ruin (Figs. 5-1 and 5-2i).

As the last picture in Witton's album, the view of Moseley Hall (Fig. 5-2i) is surprisingly simple and accompanied by the shortest text. The text states that the building was set on fire on the last night of the riots (July 16th) and the tenant,

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁸¹ Witton, *op. cit.* plate 4

Dowager Lady Carhampton, had been advised to leave in advance.³⁸² Again, not many signs of burning or damage are shown except for the missing roofs of the side houses (possibly gate houses). As a whole, the view remains neat and comprises, from the centre to the two sides, a neat and beautiful three-story house, two symmetric walls with doors, two side or gate houses, and a long decorated wall to the left. The focus on the landscaping and the architecture, like that in Bordesley Manor (Fig. 5-2e), suggests a belief that Taylor's choice house is too fine to pose for a ruin.

Nevertheless, Witton's say is not final. Since Moseley Hall was destroyed during the riots, to restore its beauty, rebuilding was necessary. John Stanbridge was commissioned to rebuild the hall and Humphrey Repton to re-landscape the garden.³⁸³ To re-landscape meant to re-plan and re-assess, and this time residential independence and geographic isolation became harder to achieve. In the autumn of 1791 when Repton first arrived at the estate, he wrote about the environment of the hall:

in so populous a neighbourhood, scarce a branch can be lopped off that will not let into view some red house or scarlet tiled roof. The Town of Birmingham tho' in some parts of view may be a beautiful object, must be introduced only in part, and instead of removing that ridge of hill, and the trees to North-west, I should rather advise that a few more be placed upon the lawn, so as to hide more of the gaudy red houses.³⁸⁴

Finally, Repton found a angle through which the town

'looks so picturesque...so low down the hill, as to not see much of that flaming red part of the town, but merely St Philip's Church, and the neighbouring houses dimly thro' the intermediate smoke, which gives that misty tone of colour, so much the object of Landscape-painters.'³⁸⁵

³⁸² Witton, *op. cit.* plate 8.

³⁸³ John Innes and Derick Behrens, *The History of Moseley Hall* (Birmingham: Moseley Hall Hospital and Moseley Local History Society, 1991) p. 17

³⁸⁴ Humphrey Repton, *Moseley Hall of Birmingham, a Seat of John Taylor Esq.* (1792). The sole copy is held at Frances Loeb Library, Harvard University. I did not have access to it and could only rely on Daniels's formulation; see Daniels, *Humphrey Repton, op. cit.* p. 208.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

He also made a sketch to illustrate this carefully-selected viewpoint (Fig. 5-4). While Witton's drawing faces the front of the hall (Fig. 5-2i), Repton's painting made in the same year reveals what the front of the hall is facing: the prospect of Birmingham. The farthest layer is greyish and has the silhouette of St Martin's Church. The next layer is red, standing for the red-roofed town houses. And then there are two green layers of hills, in such elegant gradients and sizes that they are very likely to hide the chimneys of the manufactories along the periphery of the town. Over the hill is a lake with a boat house. In front of the lake spreads a lawn. Higher than the lawn in the foreground is a wide slope. It has cattle in one corner and giant trees on both sides. The giant trees are also the reverse of the trees in Witton's drawing. The lake, the lawn, and the slope cradle Moseley Hall in an Arcadian homeland just on the edge of the monstrously growing town. As a whole, Repton used his expertise and re-landscaped the grounds. Reborn through his ingenious arrangement, Moseley Park in the next century attracted artists to sketch it, including the Lineses and A. E. Everitt. Overall, from Witton's neat representation to Repton's 'not-in-my-front-yard' design, we see how Moseley Hall became closer to the town.

After Moseley Hall, I now go back to the sequence of the riots and explore Witton's plate five (Fig. 5-2f). This time the victim was William Hutton (1723-1815), Birmingham's first historian. He had a town house in High Street whose furniture was stolen on the night of July 15th; on the following morning, the mob moved to assault his "county house", so described by Witton.³⁸⁶ Located in Washwood Heath, about three miles to the north-east of the town (Fig. 5-1), the residence is encircled by a large field. This can be seen from the hedged pasture to the right of the picture. A farmhouse and an animal standing behind one of the hedges also give a rural atmosphere. To the left of the picture behind the bridge is another simple and

³⁸⁶ Witton, *op. cit.* plate 5.

functional building. It is likely to be a barn or warehouse which adds a naive feeling. In contrast to the rusticity, the area in front of the house is exquisitely landscaped. The central lawn is a circle and has a marble in its centre. To the left of the lawn in the extreme foreground is another lawn in a square shape. The two lawns seem to make a geometrical pattern. At the back of the central lawn are gentle steps between two grassed slopes. The steps lead to the principal house whose gable is decorated with an urn.

The neatness discovered above appears so dominant that it overwrites the signs of destruction. The signs of destruction include the smoking windows; the only intact window still with its window panes is on the top-left corner of the façade. Another sign of damage is on the two wings of the house. The trapezoid walls and the absent roof (whose connection to the principal house can still be seen from a white trace on the left wall of the principal house) suggest the ruin of the side wings. These signs of damage occupy limited space and the principal house and its landscaping remain the visual focus. Hence, although Witton writes: “this [the principal house], together with its offices, they [the mob] reduced to ashes, excepting what appears in the View here given”³⁸⁷, it is the remaining parts and their magnificence that he stresses.

Around noon of that day, the mob proceeded to the house of George Humphrys, a tradesman in the Dissenters’ circle. The mansion is in Spark Brook, one mile to the east of Birmingham, where Dr Priestley’s house is also located (Fig. 5-1). Drunk and infuriated as always, the rioters did not listen to any beseeching words and started by smashing windows.³⁸⁸ Yet the walls of brick and stone were too strong to be penetrated, which limited the harm on the exterior.³⁸⁹ The fact that the exterior was not badly ruined partially justifies why plate six visualises such an intact extravaganza

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁸ Witton, *op. cit.* plate 6

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

of architecture and landscaping (Fig. 5-2g): if seen without the knowledge of the turbulence, the view is a perfect celebration of a country house because it shows everything a country house portrait should show: a gable with an urn, a circular lawn, a simple but elegant garden house to the right, a nervously symmetric mansion complex, and the pleasure-ground with a ha-ha and pleasure-seekers on it. In other words, plate six continues to represent the suburban residence as a country house and celebrate the merits of living outside the town.

Witton's take of the historical event ends in an unusual way. Although the last plate, plate eight, is of Moseley Hall, it looks too simple and elegant to make a strong ending. The real conclusion lies in plate seven (Fig. 5-2h). After feeding readers' eyes on fine houses and landscaping, a seriously damaged ruin turns up. It was the house of William Russell (1740-1818), a rich iron merchant who sponsored the vital dinner.³⁹⁰ The house was located at Showell Green, with Spark Brook to its north and Moseley to its west, and is about two miles to the southeast of the town (Fig. 5-1). Russell was brave enough to stay by himself to fight, but then still had to escape.³⁹¹ The text focuses on his bravery, but the picture, as we have seen elsewhere in the album, shows something else. It shows a site of dilapidation on an unprecedented scale, mysterious as a time-worn relic hidden in an old forest. In the dilapidation, almost all the façades are gone, exposing the interiors whose floors are also missing. The large collapse in the centre is a zigzag and unmask the trees behind. These trees, together with all the other surrounding trees, replace artificial landscaping and present a wild look that is so different from the tamed and planned suburban vision proposed previously. These trees not only belie the order and the neatness Witton always emphasises, but also overthrow it as they vigorously grow over the dying man-made house. While the

³⁹⁰ *ODNB op. cit.* on William Russell.

³⁹¹ Witton, *op. cit.* plate 7

massive dilapidation still echoes Witton's way to monumentalise his subjects, the wild 'landscaping' created by Nature unusually replaces his signature setting. Possibly not daring enough to put the shocking scene as the coda, he appends the safer picture of Moseley Hall instead (Fig. 5-2i). Nevertheless, drawing Nature's power, the artist allows the sight to become a lesson told by time as an emblem that concludes the traumatising riots.

In the mean time, the long fence erected in front of the ruin (Fig. 5-2h) reminds us of that in front of Dr Priestley's house (Fig. 5-2c). Appearing in the beginning and the end of the album, the image of fence has a specific meaning. In the representation of Dr Priestley's house, I read the fence as forming a screen and dividing the private domain from public space; what is enclosed as the private domain contains a garden, whose significance to the suburban house was like that of a park to a country house. Here in the representation of the ruin of Russell's house, the fence plays a similar role and the implication of a garden is reiterated. In the foreground, spectators sit or stand in a field. Behind the field is the long fence. Inside the fence is a road. Behind the road are the dilapidated wall in the centre, a short tree to the right, and a tall wall against which several trees are growing to the left. Russell's garden could have been inside these walls. Since the walls are ruined and the trees overgrow them and the surrounding area, the imagery of a private garden belonging to a suburban house is undermined. Yet the erection of the long fence might replace the walls and form an alternative garden: green and exuberant, but wild and 'landscaped' by Nature, not human. Besides, as the spectators are kept off the fence, what is inside it also becomes a domain with only authorised access. As a result, the fence here separates different types of space and reminds viewers, though signalling the garden, of a quasi-country living that once existed there.

To sum up, there are six points to be made about the pictures. First, they

represent the seven residences like country houses, regardless of the fact that their location was becoming more and more ‘suburban’. Second, although the signs of ruin are shown and through them the buildings can be monumentalised, Witton tends to focus on the neatness and magnificence, rather than the dilapidation, of the architecture. Third, these ‘monuments’ are usually appreciated like antiquity by the spectators in the foreground. Fourth, except for plate one which is a townscape, all the other plates show landscaped residences and indicate that the scene is shifted to the suburb/countryside. Fifth, the landscaping of the residences include a more spacious setting, levelled grounds, greenery (trees or plants), and gardens (large and landscaped or small and enclosed). Sixth, the landscaped residences are made possible by the capital of those cultural elites. Many of them made money from manufacturing, such as John Taylor (button-maker), George Humphrys (businessman), and William Russell (iron merchant). While benefitting from the industry, they chose to live away from the disturbance produced by their manufactories. So, the landscaping presented in the album can be seen as made possible by the power of manufacturing.

There are three points drawn from the text. First, its primary task was to point out the location of the residences, which was on the periphery of the town. Second, the closest houses to the town are Dr Priestley’s house, Ryland’s Baskerville House and Taylors’ residence, ranging from half to within a mile. And then the distance increases to one mile (Humphrys’ house) and two miles (William Russell’s house); the longest distance recorded is three miles (Hutton’s country house and Taylor’s Moseley Hall). The radius of about three miles was not necessarily the administrative border of Birmingham during the 1790s, but it still illustrates a residential suburb around Birmingham. Third, although the architectural details he wrote imply a country house, Witton never says the residences are exactly country houses. The only exception is in Hutton’s case, in which the victim’s “town house” had been mentioned first so that his

next property (three miles from the town at Washwood Heath) has to be described differently, i.e. “country house.”³⁹² Moreover, when illustrating Humphry’s house at Spark Brook (one mile from Birmingham), Witton notes that the place was “in the vicinity of Birmingham.”³⁹³ Although he does not call the seven residences ‘suburban houses’, he might know there was something existing between the country and the town.

As a complete album, the words and the pictures together convey seven points. First, though a calamity, the event has a relatively positive side: the environment of Birmingham was noticed and had a chance to be imagined and represented. Second, seemingly arranged according to the sequence of time, the editing actually provides a journey through space: from the New Meeting in the town centre to all around the urban fringes (Fig. 5-1). Third, the album gives an impression that Birmingham by that time was a proper town that had both a centre and a periphery. Fourth, while the town centre is more easily positioned, the periphery, as the album proposes, can be fixed upon and signified through the image of those suburban residences. Sixth, using the image of the residences as a sign to signify the suburb could help reduce the ambiguous and mingled impression of the place and propose a more agreeable and unified form for it. Seventh, although a residential suburb for the upper middle class was not available until the development in Edgbaston since the 1780s and massive suburban housing for the lower middle class was not begun until the 1870s³⁹⁴, Witton’s album already represents the suburb as a residential area.

Finally, our understanding of the album is not complete without exploring its social and class connotations. Witton’s album presents elegant residences, but behind it, the housing fact of the time was that about 8,000 out of a total of about 13,000

³⁹² Witton, *op. cit.* plate 5

³⁹³ Witton, *op. cit.* plate 6

³⁹⁴ Cheery, *op. cit.* pp. 66-73.

inhabited houses in and around Birmingham were occupied by those who were too poor to pay parochial tax: there was a great difference in class.³⁹⁵ While the cultural elites and the new moneyed class in Birmingham celebrated with the dinner what was triggered by the clash of class on the other side of the English Channel, the class issue at home was a blind spot. In France, it was the theories of liberalism and a combination of peasants and professionals that powered the Revolution; it was the Royal regime and the Church who imposed excessive power and taxation over the former that was toppled.³⁹⁶ In Birmingham, however, it was the King and Church advocates, mostly working-class, that targeted the rich professionals who embraced the liberal or even revolutionary ideas.

There are some pieces of evidence that show how the Birmingham elites rejoiced at the French Revolution. Not long after the French Revolution, Wedgwood wrote to Darwin:

I know you will rejoice with me in the glorious revolution...The Politicians tell me that as a manufacturer I shall be ruined if France has her liberty...I [do not] see that the happiness of one nation included in the misery of its next neighbour.³⁹⁷

Darwin also wrote to Watt in the winter after the revolution: “Do you not congratulate your grandchildren on the dawn of universal liberty? I feel myself becoming all French both in chemistry & politics.”³⁹⁸ Keir (another member of the Lunar Society), moreover, on being invited as the chairman of that fatal dinner, wrote

I accepted the compliments,...never conceiving that a peaceable meeting for the purpose of rejoicing that twenty-six millions of our fellow-creatures were rescued from despotism, and made as free and happy as we Britons

³⁹⁵ Hutton, *op. cit.* 1805, pp. 6-7.

³⁹⁶ François Furet and Mona Ozouf, *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution* (trans. Arthur Goldhammer) (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989)

³⁹⁷ This quotation is from Schofield, *op. cit.* p. 358.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

are, could be misinterpreted as being offensive to a government, whose greatest boast is liberty, or to any who profess the Christian religion, which orders us to love our neighbours as ourselves.³⁹⁹

While the Birmingham elites celebrated the ground-breaking deeds achieved partially by the French lower class, the English mob of the same class who destroyed their beautiful houses was not regarded as advanced or civilised. Witton uses “pitiable”, “in the true spirit of Goths and Vandals”, “deluded”, “callous to each feeling of humanity”, and “unprovoked and wanton fury” to describe the rioters and their doings.⁴⁰⁰ One of the victims, the town’s first historian, William Hutton, regarded the riots as “a disgrace to humanity, and a lasting stigma upon the place.”⁴⁰¹ Although the French Revolution and the Birmingham Riots had different backgrounds and conditions, both events reflected and were indeed sparked by class difference. The Birmingham elites seemed blind to this similar social complexity and read the French Revolution as a sign of Enlightenment but regarded the riots they experienced at home as a sign of folly. Just as the celebratory diners were in sympathy with the Revolution, the French translation on each page of Witton’s album is meant to reciprocally raise sympathy among French readers, too, but before sympathy is felt, the social and class complexity behind such sympathy should not be neglected.

II. The views of the country houses of the Calthorpe family

Pictures of Perry Barr Hall

The geographic network among the Lunar Society and the geographic sense drawn from the pictures of those ruined houses suggest how residential the periphery of the

³⁹⁹ This quotation is from Schofield, *op. cit.* p. 359. But I do not follow his interpretation of this passage. For more discussion on how the French Revolution was regarded in Britain (especially through visual representation) see Bindman, *op. cit.*, *The Shadow of the Guillotine*.

⁴⁰⁰ Witton, *op. cit.* plates 1, 2, and 6.

⁴⁰¹ Hutton, *op. cit.* p. 55.

town was (Fig. 5-1). Yet a more systematic planning of a residential suburb was started in Edgbaston by the Calthorpe family. Before planning and developing Edgbaston, the family already had a vision of an ideal dwelling. It was first fulfilled through their moving into Perry Barr Hall. This section will introduce the family and explore how the visual representations of their residences continue to represent the suburb as residential. I use John Harris' and Nicolas Grindle's theories on country house portraiture (cited in my Introduction) to interpret the views of Perry Barr Hall.⁴⁰² However, due to very little information on Perry Barr Hall and the fact that it was demolished in 1931, our knowledge of it is limited.⁴⁰³ Thus, in order to support the argument, the following discussion will involve attempts to reconstruct the historical looks of the hall; the photographs I took on an excursion to the site in the summer of 2008 will also be used (Fig. 5-7).

In the seventeenth century, John Gough (1608-65), a member of the minor gentry, earned enough money from trading wool to purchase a mansion at Perry, Staffordshire, about three miles to the north of St Martin's Church.⁴⁰⁴ The area of Perry was merged with the area of Great Barr, so the place is now called Perry Barr. While Perry was part of Staffordshire when John Gough purchased the hall, today's Perry Barr is part of Birmingham. John Gough's grandson (?), Richard (1659-1727), was more successful: he became the director of the East India Company and was knighted. Sir Richard Gough then purchased more lands, such as the area near Gray's Inn Road, London, and Edgbaston, including Edgbaston Hall. In 1788, a son of the family married Barbara Calthorpe whose family had a higher social status than the

⁴⁰² Harris, *op. cit.* and Grindle, *The Wise Surveyor, op. cit.*

⁴⁰³ Due to limited funding, the Corporation of Birmingham had to choose between saving Perry Barr Hall and Aston Hall. They finally chose to save Aston Hall and tore down Perry Barr Hall. While there is not much published information on Perry Barr Hall and the area, the local church, St John's, has a comprehensive webpage on local history <http://www.st-johns-perry-barr.org.uk/>, consulted between 15/03 and 30/05/2010.

⁴⁰⁴ An offspring of the family immigrated to Maryland, USA in the eighteenth century and built another Perry Barr Hall there.

Goughs, so the last name of the Goughs became 'Gough-Calthorpe'. Afterwards, they were more often called as the Calthorpes.⁴⁰⁵

Before becoming so eminent and owning so many lands, the family had to begin with the mansion at Perry. Parry Barr Hall thus becomes their first sign (and site) of possession. An oil painting by Thomas Bardwell (1704-67) illustrates this sense of possession (Fig. 5-5). The country house view was probably commissioned by Sir Richard Gough or his successor Sir Henry Gough (1709-74) in the late 1720s. It may be the earliest among the survivals of the visual representations of the hall. According to Grindle, a heightened viewpoint adopted for a house and garden view of the seventeenth or eighteenth century could satisfy the land owners' sense of possession.⁴⁰⁶ Therefore, the bird's-eye viewpoint of Bardwell's painting can be read as providing a panorama for the landlord to examine what he has and how it appears. Moreover, since this view is aerial, panoramic, and possibly the earliest, I will also use it find out how the buildings had been altered and how the environment has changed in the following centuries.

Yet, to another art historian, Harris, what is made visible through the aerial viewpoint, especially the background landscape, is not sophisticated.⁴⁰⁷ He rather thinks that the architectural details and the horses, which do not require a heightened viewpoint to see, are nicely painted.⁴⁰⁸ It would be fair to consider the trees in the background as naively painted, for they lack vitality and verisimilitude, especially the conifers which have only thick branches and the round-top trees which are merely suggested in cloud-like brushstrokes to the right of the picture, but if his criticism is based on the furthest background, there can well be some disagreement.

⁴⁰⁵ These four sentences are based on Cannadine, *op. cit.* pp. 81-91.

⁴⁰⁶ Grindle, *The Wise Surveyor*, *op. cit.* p. 43-5.

⁴⁰⁷ Harris, *op. cit.* plate 361.

⁴⁰⁸ Harris, *op. cit.* pp. 307-8.

Located three miles away from the town centre, the viewpoint still clearly shows the tower of St Philip's Church to the furthest right. To its left is the spire of St Martin's Church (very vague), then a white and square building, then a windmill in dark colour, then Aston Hall known by its red bricks and tiny but exquisite gables, and then the spire of Aston Church to the furthest left. These elements composing the furthest background and the skyline are remarkable. Firstly, they show how the distant town is still noticed in this country-house view. Secondly, the straightforward representation of the religious and agricultural landmarks indicates how naively and simply Birmingham was perceived at that time as a pre-industrial settlement. Thirdly, what lies immediately outside the town is solid greenery; this means the boundary between the town and the countryside was clear and the ambiguous space of suburb might not have been developed in a large scale or sensed.

However, after more than a century, the solid greenery around Perry may be achieved in pictures only when the bird's-eye viewpoint, which reveals everything about the environment, is given up. This is the case in Charles Radclyffe's (1817-1903) eight *Views of Perry Barr Hall, the Seat of John Gough, Esq.* (Fig. 5-6).⁴⁰⁹ His drawings were printed in 1838 into an album dedicated to the then landlord, John Gough (c.1831-c.1912). The album is large and thin and has only ten pages: eight pages for the eight pictures and two pages for the front and back covers, all without captions or explanatory words. Unlike the commissioned painting which serves the owner with a sense of possession, Charles Radclyffe's representations of more than a century later adopt an eye-level viewpoint to bring viewers closer to and more inside of the scene. Yet this could be a manipulation, too.

I will start with the first plate (Fig. 5-6a). Instead of showing the hall immediately,

⁴⁰⁹ Charles Radclyffe, *Views of Perry Barr Hall, the Seat of John Gough ESQ, from drawings by Charles Radclyffe* (Birmingham: Wrightson and Webb, 1838)

plate one shows the lodge of the hall and an avenue of trees. At the entrance of the avenue stands a rider in a black coat on a white horse. He is heading toward the hall so he turns his back and his face is invisible. Intriguingly, although he looks as if on his way to the hall, in the following plates he is gone. He appears only again in the seventh plate (Fig. 5-6g), where he remains faceless and turning his back to viewers. Besides, what is next to him in plate one is a white dog with black ears, but in plate seven it is a beagle that follows him. Moreover, here in plate one he is in conversation with a crippled man (possibly the porter or a beggar), but in plate seven he is riding with a different person. The rider seems to form part of a narration, but there is simply no further information. Therefore, the rider appears mysterious and I will discuss him again towards the end of this section. At any rate, plate one is like an overture and the avenue is inviting readers to Perry Barr Hall.

Plate two (Fig. 5-6b) starts to show the hall, which appears extensively rebuilt compared with Bardwell's painting (Fig. 5-5). For instance, the two simple gates on the pink wall in Bardwell's painting are replaced by a busy façade comprising one short portal in the centre and two taller elevations at both sides. The three walls are decorated with gables and the taller two also have bay windows at ground level. The front yard and stable in the 1720s view are now completely overlaid by the extension of the main building. Had there not been a carriage waiting outside the portal, we would hardly recognise that it is the entrance of the hall that the print is presenting. Besides, instead of overlooking the man-made moat, the print shows River Tame which flows through the western land of the estate (see bottom-left corner of Fig. 5-7a). Using the natural river and the lush wood as the foreground, the view shows how Nature is enjoyed in different ways by both animal and human, including deer, dog, fishers, and walkers. The leafy environment determines the basic tone for this and the following representations.

Plate three crosses the river and steps closer to the hall by concentrating on the slope where the deer rest (Fig. 5-6c). This time the northern face of the hall looks clearer with an Italianate arcade to the west and a bridge to the east. The arcade was new because it does not appear in the eighteenth century painting. Charles Radclyffe seems to regard it as an important feature of the hall and draws it in total in five of his eight plates. The east bridge was also new and cannot be found in Bardwell's painting, where he only painted two bridges of north-south direction in front of the hall. The new bridge might be the bridge we can still see today (Fig. 5-7d), although today's bridges are a pair: one in the east and one in the west (Fig. 5-7c and 5-7d), while the 1838 print does not show a west bridge.

After two front views, plate four is a back view (Fig. 5-6d). A unique feature on the back of the hall is Italianate divided-entrance steps in the garden. The back garden overlooks a water course with swans on it. The water course cannot be the River Tame; it must be the canal located at the back of the hall to the east, as seen in Bardwell's painting. The canal is gone today, although the trees alongside it still exist (see bottom-left corner of Fig. 5-7a). While the carriage in plate one stands for traffic on a road, the canal could imply traffic on water. Whatever is implied, the hall is again embraced by water and greenery.

Plate five turns from the south to the west going clockwise (Fig. 5-6e). It shows people practicing archery on the lawn between the outer ring of the moat and River Tame. The location is wonderful because it encompasses the Italianate steps to the south, the Italianate arcade to the north, and a semi-hexagonal building in the middle of the west façade. The ladies and gentlemen socialise under giant trees to the left, in the middle of the lawn, and by the target (as two ladies are approaching the target to check the arrow). The scene of archery suggests three things. First, through visualising the upper-class's recreation on this beautiful corner, Charles Radclyffe is again

emphasising the residential, not economical or industrial, qualities of the environment. Second, by 1838 the family had become the eminent Calthorpes and owned many parts in Edgbaston, how Perry Barr was used will be an interesting question that requires more research. Yet at least it can be inferred that the hall was still lived and could be used as a pleasure ground away from urban hustle and bustle. Third, according to the scene of upper-class guests playing archery, we can confirm that the album was dedicated to the landlord, who would open his door only for those whose social status matches his and would be pleased to see a picture in which his country house is filled with such guests.⁴¹⁰

Keeping on turning clockwise, plate six (Fig. 5-6f) goes to the north-west corner and presents the closest view of the hall through a vertical setting. The right half depicts the Italianate arcade in detail; the left half reveals the front of the hall with a bridge. The bridge is of north-south direction and may be the rebuilding of one of the old bridges seen in Bardwell's painting. Plate six is the last picture on the hall; plates seven and eight no longer focus on the grand mansion: they correspond to plate one by depicting other parts of the estate.

Plate seven (Fig. 5-6g) possibly depicts the dower house for the mother of John Gough's wife, Elisabeth Jane. Next to the house is the distant tower of St John's Church sandwiched between two trees. The church was built as a Chapel of Ease, which means as the population in the area grew, a new place of worship became needed.⁴¹¹ The construction of such a church is usually sponsored by the landlord, so it was John Gough who sponsored this St John's Church.⁴¹² It was built in 1831 and finished in 1833, not long before the production of the album.⁴¹³ To the right of the trees the rider

⁴¹⁰ Moir, *op. cit.* pp. 58-9.

⁴¹¹ <http://www.st-johns-perry-barr.org.uk/page5.html> *op. cit.* accessed 16/04/2010

⁴¹² *Ibid.*

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*

again appears. In plate one, he guides readers into the avenue; then while readers enjoy the south, west and north views of the hall, he is gone. After the tour, he comes back; this time he is followed by a beagle and a walker in a shawl. The road they use may be today's Perry Avenue or Church Road which links the hall and the church (see the white circle in Fig. 5-7a and the top-right corner of Fig. 5-7b). Heading to the church, the rider has to show his back again. Never revealing his face and appearing only in the beginning and the end, the rider is mysterious and his track seems ghostly.

His ghostly track could suggest the manipulation of the scenes. For instance, instead of a bird's eye view, the plates take an eye-level viewpoint. This means the objects and buildings on the ground can overlap, block, frame, or highlight each other and compose a more sophisticated landscape of multiple layers. In plates one and seven, there are trees shading over the road that lies ahead. In plates two, four, and six, the hall in the background is neatly seated above and highlighted by the water surface in the foreground. In plates three and five, lush greenery of ferns, lawn, and trees invites viewers to enjoy and to peer through it. However, none of the plates shows the interior of the hall. Viewers' attention is concentrated on the natural environment and they are reminded of the inaccessibility of the grand residence. Viewers thus become outsiders who could never enter but only tour around and peep at the hall like a ghost. As a result, the ghostly vision guided by the ghostly rider creates a phantasmagoria out of the scenes. The phantasmagoria is not Walter Benjamin's modernising Paris, but a village that tries to stay rural and avoid its own growth and its neighbour's expansion, and thus it is no surprise that the last plate ends with a shabby cottage, stressing a completely rural feeling (Fig. 5-6h).

To summarise, the views of Perry Barr Hall have the following features. First, Bardwell's oil painting provides a panoramic view and satisfied a sense of possession. Second, the painting can also be read as the initial stage by which the Goughs started to

enlarge and develop their suburban vision around Birmingham. Third, after more than a hundred years, Birmingham grew closer to Perry Barr and Perry Barr itself faced population growth (seen by the need to build St John's Church). This could mean the loss of green surroundings. If an artist still insisted on representing Parry Barr Hall as embraced by greenery, a bird's-eye view that reveals the changes of the environment had to be given up. An eye-level viewpoint which makes it easier to hide unwanted objects and to highlight desired scenery should be adopted. This approach is taken by Charles Radyclyffe as he concentrated on showing a leafy, picturesque environment around the hall. Fourth, always looking at the hall, his plates do not look toward Birmingham and refuse to recognise the reality of industrialisation and urbanisation.

Pictures of Edgbaston Hall

Preserving greenery in pictures seems to become the feature of the visual representation of the halls owned by the Goughs (Calthorpes). This last and short section focuses on their second home, Edgbaston Hall. Four of its occupiers (two landlords and two tenants, consecutively) and three pictures will be discussed.

The first occupier is Sir Richard Gough mentioned earlier, who bought the property in 1717 for his retirement and lived there for ten years until his death.⁴¹⁴ He added a new building, created a deer park, and planted trees extensively around the hall.⁴¹⁵ A 1730 view shows how many trees are grown as orchards, avenues, and hedges (Fig. 5-8). The second and third occupiers to mention are his successor, Sir Henry Gough II (1749-98) and Dr William Withering, a member of the Lunar Society. The former moved out of the hall in 1786 and found the latter as its first ever tenant. The two occupiers had an interesting story.

⁴¹⁴ Cannadine, *op. cit.* p. 83-5.

⁴¹⁵ Slater, *op. cit.* p. 20.

In 1776, the landlord commissioned Capability Brown to construct the garden.⁴¹⁶ Although no record regarding this commission is available, a later drawing is believed to visualise the famous gardener's design (Fig. 5-10).⁴¹⁷ Radley's drawing of 1829 shows the hall in a landscaped environment. In the foreground, boaters and swans are shown enjoying the lake. On the bank stand horses and cows drinking water. Up and along the bank is a grassed and tree planted slope. On top of the slope stands Edgbaston Hall amid more trees. These elements represent the view around the hall like a pastoral.

After enjoying this tranquillity for ten years, Sir Henry Gough II had another plan and decided to retire to Hampshire. Withering then moved into the hall. In case the landlord might want to move back, the contract said he could do so after seven years' occupancy by Withering.⁴¹⁸ Besides, also in 1786, the landlord leased the land in Five Ways, the north corner of Edgbaston, to build houses. As mentioned in the previous chapter, there was a condition that the houses to be built there must be worth £400 or more.⁴¹⁹ The landlord therefore ruled out the poor and made sure only those with certain amount of income, i.e. the upper-middle class, could live in the area. Now that Sir Henry Gough II has found a doctor as his tenant and made sure only rich people could live in the neighbourhood, he could move to Hampshire without worrying about the area and the hall should he wish to move back seven years later.

Yet he never returned. The exact reason is unknown, but one factor may be that there were too many changes in the neighbourhood. Indeed, as a member of the Lunar Society and a friend of Priestley, Withering could not escape the fury of the rioters in 1791. While *Views of the Ruins of the Principal Houses* ends with Moseley Hall, Edgbaston Hall was actually the last stop of the violence.⁴²⁰ Although Withering

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ Dent, *op. cit.*, *The Making of Birmingham*, 1894, p. 216.

⁴¹⁸ Slater, *op. cit.* pp. 20-1.

⁴¹⁹ Slater, *op. cit.* p. 25.

⁴²⁰ Slater, *op. cit.* pp. 22-4.

evacuated some of the furniture and hired private guards to protect the property, rioters still damaged the hall. The tenant then wrote to the landlord immediately to report the event. Although the riots may not have been the direct cause why Sir Henry Gough II never returned, both the town and the suburb of the time did show unprecedented growth and changes that could have dissuaded the landlord.

The last occupier to mention, i.e. the second tenant, is Dr Edward Johnstone (1757-1851). He moved in after his second marriage in 1805 and lived there for the rest of his life of more than forty years.⁴²¹ An 1810 picture shows how the hall during his occupancy is surrounded by pure greenery (Fig. 5-9). The embrace of Nature seems picturesque and familiar: two giant, symmetrical trees on both sides framing the house, a plain lawn in the centre, and cloud-like treetops behind the hall. What can be read from this visual formula is again the emphasis on a leafy living environment. Therefore, the three pictures of the family's second hall (Fig. 5-8, 5-9, and 5-10) carry on with the tone set up in the representation of the family's first hall (Perry Barr Hall).

While the previous chapters found the suburb pose difficulties for visual representation, this chapter found the suburb could be represented in a form that is less contested and more close to its modern image: residential. The first section began by introducing an imagined visiting network based on the residences of the Lunar members. Then the section explored a similar suburban distribution of the houses destroyed during the 1791 riots. Witton's eight pictures not only elaborate on the architecture and landscaping of the houses, but also give an impression that Birmingham by that time was a proper town that had both a centre and a periphery, and that the periphery can be positioned and signified through the country/suburban

⁴²¹ *ODNB op. cit.* on Edward Johnstone.

house views. Moreover, since it was the newly rich people, the industrialists, that managed to live in such an environment, their suburban houses could form a new landscape vision made possible by the capital of manufacturing.

The second section investigated how landed class viewed their country houses in relation to the encroachment of Birmingham and the development of the countryside. We began with the pictures of Perry Barr Hall. Although Bardwell's painting takes an aerial viewpoint and Charles Radclyffe's prints take an eye-level one, both artists recognised the suburb as a place to live through presenting country house imageries. Charles Radclyffe's works particularly resist the reality of urbanisation from Birmingham and the growth inside Perry Barr through the consistent representation of a green and picturesque living environment. Additionally, like Witton's fantasy of a wild forest (Fig. 5-2h), Charles Radclyffe also uses an imaginative and emblematic way to end his album. He employs a ghostly rider to create a phantasmagoria effect (Fig. 5-6h). This effect is like a constant reminder of how dream-like a desire for rusticity was during the rapid growth of the core town. After analysing the pictures of Perry Barr Hall, the section explored the visual representations of Edgbaston Hall and found a similar nostalgia for a pastoral life style and an equal love for greenery.

As a whole, this chapter not only found the initial representation of the residential suburb through the country house views, but also touched on the question of class through exploring who lived in the places, what such dwelling meant to society, and how they were represented. We discovered that the new moneyed class (like John Taylor and so on) benefitted from manufacturing but chose to live away from it, and the landed family like Calthorpes helped develop Edgbaston into a modern suburb for the upper middle classes while commissioning absolutely countryside-looking views for their own halls and finally moving away from Edgbaston.

Conclusion

This thesis began by approaching the suburb from various disciplines and aspects. Spatially, the suburb is neither the countryside nor the city. Conceptually, the word ‘suburb’ has existed since the Middle Age while its collective form, ‘suburbia’ was not available until 1895.⁴²² Geographically, the suburb is a type of human settlement. Topographically, the suburb is used for industrial, rural, and/or residential purposes. Visually, the suburb could look like a mix of urban, rural, industrial, and residential buildings. Culturally, the suburb should also be taken as a cultural category no less important than the city and the countryside. Historically, the suburb could fully represent the age of Industrialisation because it was one important site where industrialisation and urbanisation took place. Socially, the suburb as a residential district that separates work from family life is closely associated with the rise and the needs of the middle class.⁴²³ Internationally, the suburb as a human settlement continues, in the twenty-first century, to develop in highly diversified forms around the major cities all over the world.⁴²⁴ Locally, Birmingham suburbs between 1780 and c.1850 were particularly difficult to approach because the town and its environs were under rapid industrialisation and urbanisation at the time. Art historically, the representation of the suburb has not been much studied, thus I have argued that it must be understood as an overlap and a struggle between natural landscape painting and (urban) topographic views.

Based on these formulations, the thesis viewed the suburb as under the impact of industrialisation in the form of and on the scale of the city; it hypothesised the suburb as the developing edge not only of a built environment but also of a linked set of social

⁴²² *Oxford English Dictionary, op. cit.*

⁴²³ Fishman, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-17.

⁴²⁴ Chang Shenglin; Clapson; Fishman; Silverstone, all *op. cit.*

and economic changes, and proved the contested and difficult nature of representing the suburb through the case study of Birmingham.

Chapter one found how difficult it was to visualise and conceptualise a suburb. In the early nineteenth century, the image of this town had just been proposed: either as a polite and rich town with infrastructure (by Hollins) or as a classic market town (by Cox). These new and proud images exclude suburban space by closely juxtaposing the town centre and the countryside. Thus, it seemed that the suburb had to struggle for its presence in pictures. Besides, there was another issue whether the image of manufactories could be a proper visual signifier of the industrial suburb. In the first section of the chapter we found that even if manufactories are depicted, they look like a small 'niche' in the background, and I compared such a representation to a 'suffix' that completes the meaning of the word (the picture) by attaching to its rear.

In the prospects of Birmingham from its surrounding countryside, similarly, the representation of the suburb went through an evolution, a struggle, before they were recognised and signified through the imageries of manufactories. Firstly, individual objects were observed and painted in a separate way to signify a built-up settlement in between the countryside and the city. After this initial form, the 'items' became 'integrated', i.e. painted more closely together. This is what I regarded as a prototypical image of the (industrial) suburb. It is like a pictorial 'prefix' attaching to the picture in its front. Afterwards, as people in Birmingham started to recognise the town's unique development in manufacturing, suburbs with manufactories on them finally became widely accepted as a representative image of the town. Therefore, when we encounter any nineteenth-century townscape views of Birmingham in which the town appear surrounded by manufactories, we should never take such a representation for granted because this tells us how much struggle it took to recognise the idea of suburb and to represent it with the image of manufactories.

Chapter two explored the representation of suburb in relation to the imageries of Nature. We focused on the pictures of Aston village and Aston Hall, about one and a half mile to the north of Birmingham. The area went through two important developments: the Grand Junction Railway in 1837 and the opening of Aston Hall and Park to the public in 1858. We found the visual representations of the village and the Hall also reflect these changes. In the images made before 1837, Aston Hall appeared purely rural and as a perfect source of Nature. After the railway, the rural impression was damaged. Some artists started to recognise the impact of the railway and tried to visualise the industrialised landscape while some insisted on representing Aston as pastoral and undisturbed. In the meantime, the railway also inspired artists, like Cox, to adopt it as a new subject in their art. The application of this new subject in a landscape painting therefore created a pictorial metaphor of the suburb.

The utilisation of the hall and park in 1858 added another impact to the local environment: the visits by middle class. The post-1858 images of Aston Hall and Park represent the venue as a middle-class property through showing middleclass figures enjoying the site. Besides, the pictures also re-enact the natural motifs seen from the pre-1837 pictures, such as deer, to reconstruct a natural and countryside feeling that might have been undermined by the utilisation of the park and the resultant visitors. Chapter two thus found a connection between representing the suburb and representing Nature: in those representations of the suburb (Aston), Nature was first represented as adored, then damaged, but finally restored.

Chapter three explored the topographic view tradition and practice of Birmingham by focusing on local artists and their works between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth century. We found that the first generation artist of the Barber family, Joseph Barber, was deeply influenced by the fashion of the Picturesque. He not only painted picturesque objects, such as cottages and country labours, but also

travelled to North Wales in search of picturesque subject matter. His sons, Charles and Joseph Vincent Barber also believed in the power of natural and rural landscape. Yet unlike their father who painted imaginary or distant landscapes, the two brothers embodied their landscape vision through the environs of Birmingham. They produced numerous views of Birmingham in which the town was surrounded by a rural environment, instead of manufactories or industrial buildings that actually existed there. In doing so the two brothers not only showed their style as artists, but also illustrated how the developing urban fringes were excluded from visual representation under the aesthetic of the Picturesque.

Another important artistic family of Birmingham was the Lines family, whose members had provided hundreds of topographic drawings for the town and beyond. The first generation artist of the family, Samuel Lines, ran a drawing academy in the town centre in the early nineteenth century. We found how the site provided him with an excellent opportunity to obtain exclusive views of both the town centre and the immediate countryside. Through examining the drawings he and his sons made, we discovered an unusual ambition. The Lines artists might want to symbolically 'protect' local environment through their pencil and to secure a 'territory' for their topographic art.

After the Barber and the Lines families, the next-generation artists might use different ways to represent the local topography. Frederick Henry Henshaw, a pupil of Joseph Vincent Barber, took a close look at the immediate countryside of the town. His *Yardley* shows neither the influence of the Picturesque, nor a personal ambition. The painting provides detailed depiction of a leafy corner and demonstrates an amazing verisimilitude of Nature. In doing so Henshaw not only showed his way of representing the environs of Birmingham, but also exemplifies how the developing and anarchic urban fringes were left as a permanent outsider from the topographic

view tradition of the town.

Chapter four turned to the representation of modern life and its relation to the suburb. Section one introduced the connection between modern life, the suburb and middle class. We focused on Edgbaston, a classic residential suburb two miles to the south-west of Birmingham developed since the late 1780s as a fashionable area to live among the upper middle class of time. Two images of Edgbaston were examined. The first image was an oil painting centralising a middle-class family standing in front of their detached house near Edgbaston. The painting not only shows how the periphery of the town began to accommodate middle class, but also makes an intruding representation of a modern suburban home through its image of a detached house and a private lawn. The second image was the cover image of a local magazine. Instead of showing new villas and wide streets, which were recorded as a spectacle of the area of time, the cover image shows old landmarks. This illustrates how difficult it was for contemporary society to immediately formulate a visual sign of what had just formed: the residential suburb.

After exploring who began a modern life in the suburb, section two focused on what modern life was lived. T. J. Clark's formulation of French painting of modern life was used as a paradigm to show how different stages of modernisation (i.e. post-1860 vs. 1780-c.1850) inspired very different representations of modern life. While the French painting complicates the meaning of modern life by integrating at least two motifs in one scene (for example factories and boating,), the Birmingham pictures could only concentrate on one motif each time. This way of representing modern life can also be found in the works by London topographic artists before the mid-nineteenth century. However, although the English iconography of modern life is different from the French one, it stills shows an unusual suburban landscape vision, as seen in Henry Harris Lines's representation of Lozells and Madox Brown's paintings

on Hampstead. Therefore, chapter four concluded that while the French painting of modern life challenges the genre of traditional landscape painting and urges to be read as a new genre, the Birmingham pictures which represent modern life and the suburb should not be merely regarded as ordinary topographic views.

Chapter five followed the question raised in chapter four: how the suburb as a new place to settle was represented. This time we focused on country house views. We explored how the houses actually became 'suburban' houses because of the growth of Birmingham and the industrialisation and urbanisation of the adjacent countryside. The first section discussed the visual representation of the houses belonging to local cultural elites (Fig. 5-1). The second section was on the visual representations of Perry Barr Hall and Edgbaston Hall, the first and second homes to the Calthorpe family, the landlords of Edgbaston. We found that while the landlords helped develop the area into a residential suburb, they still commissioned absolutely rural-looking views for their two homes, as if trying to preserve a feeling of country life in the face of urban growth and social changes.

As well as the discoveries made from individual chapters, there are some overall findings drawn from across each chapter. In terms of iconography, the image of suburb has to combine the pictorial elements from or appears as part of a townscape view, a natural landscape image, and/or a (country) house portrait. In terms of genre, the representation of suburb denotes a shifting point between modern art and old ways of representation (the Picturesque or the topographic view tradition). In terms of meaning, the representation of suburb signifies urban encroachment upon the countryside, and industrial or residential development on the periphery of a town.

In addition, there are some issues repeatedly discussed in each chapter: the perception of the suburb and how to name it, the semiotics reading of the pictures, and the issue of class.

How did contemporary people perceive the idea of suburb and name it without having had a clear concept of it or being offered a clear visual sign that represents it? The first historian of Birmingham, William Hutton, might have been aware of the suburb, for he wrote in the late 1790s “the out-parts, including Deretend [sic], Bordesley, &c.”⁴²⁵ The critic of Hollins’ drawing, mentioned in chapter one, might only recognise the countryside and the town and ignore the space in between, as he remarked in the 1810s “the picturesque appearance of the adjacent country.”⁴²⁶ Other people might understand the developing edges of the town, especially those with manufactories, as part of the townscape, not as an independent sight or site (see section two of chapter one). Some authors might have a clearer idea about the edge of town. For example, Drake wrote in 1825 “at the edge of the town.”⁴²⁷ Another example is David Cox’s biographer Solly, who in the late nineteenth regarded the artist’s birth-place, Deritend, as a “poor suburb”.⁴²⁸ An unusual and puzzling way to describe the suburb is Henry Harris Lines’ naming of “the Lozells” in 1826. In 1894, the librarian of the city, Dent, already called places like Aston and Edgbaston “suburbs”.⁴²⁹ To sum up, the various ways to articulate the suburb had revealed a need to conceptualise and represent this new type of settlement.

This has to be further explained with the semiotics method used in the chapters. As I hypothesised that the contemporary artists struggled to recognise the place of suburb and try to give it a visual form, I followed Bryson’s notion that “it takes (at least) two to recognize a sign”, and I took a ‘sign’ as a social idea.⁴³⁰ In the meantime, all my chapters also adopted Saussure’s interpretation of the signified and the signifier in two levels. The image of an individual object, like a cow or a chimney,

⁴²⁵ Hutton, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁴²⁶ Langford, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

⁴²⁷ Drake, *op. cit.*, 1837, p. 68

⁴²⁸ Solly, *op. cit.*, p. i

⁴²⁹ Dent, *op. cit.*, *The Making of Birmingham*, 1894, p. 340.

⁴³⁰ Bryson, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

is a single visual sign that signifies, say, rurality or industry, by itself. Yet the gathering of numerous visual signs combine to mean something else, as I argued that the assortment of rural and industrial objects is exactly the representation of suburb. When individual signs are combined and form a bigger part in a picture, Barthes' three relations were needed.⁴³¹ The paradigmatic relation (the second relation) can be applied to the gathering of similar signs, like many manufactories being painted in the middle ground of a picture. The syntagmatic relation (the third relation) can be applied to the meaning of this gathering, like my arguing how the images of forests of manufactories could signify a suburb. Besides, I also proposed to read some representations of the suburb as either a 'niche' that 'suffixes' the picture in its background or a belt-shaped image that 'prefixes' the picture in its fore- and middle-grounds (chapter one). Moreover, as some visual signs were repeatedly adopted, they could bear some iconographic significance, like the ways in which the Barber brothers drew the scene of haymaking (chapter three).

When class is involved, the representation of suburb became an even more complicated and fascinating topic. First of all, this thesis set to challenge the general impression which solely regards the suburb as a modern, middle-class and residential district. Intriguingly, even if we focused on the industrial aspect and a much earlier period of time, the middle class was still an important issue to discuss. For example, being a new social class, middle-class figures are represented in pictures like a sign to signify a new and modernised environment, such as Hollins' middle-class couple taking a walk in the neat and pleasant town centre (Fig. 1-15), or the pleasure-seekers in Aston Hall and Park (section three of chapter two). We also considered the environs of Paris of post-1860 and found how the *petit bourgeoisie* played an important role in the formation of suburbia (chapter four). In the last chapter, we explored the

⁴³¹ Sontag, *op. cit.*, pp. 211-2

encounters (or actually conflicts) between different social classes when they developed their homes in the suburb. On one hand, the new-money class, the industrialists, successfully moved out of the bustling town into the semi-country houses on the periphery of the town or the news villas in Edgbaston. On the other hand, the lower middle class who actually worked for the industrialists in the manufactories continued to live in the over-crowded town until being provided with suburban housing much later.⁴³² Another interesting fact is that while the Calthorpe family developed Edgbaston into a residential suburb and welcomed only the upper middle class to move in, the family themselves moved out of the area to Hampshire around the same time and never returned.⁴³³

Finally, as we have examined nearly a hundred pictures to understand the representation of suburb, here I shall introduce two more pictures which I think visualise and combine many of my findings and could therefore conclude the thesis.

Percival Skelton produced a drawing and it was published in Samuel Smiles' book on Bolton and Watt in 1865 (Fig. 5-11).⁴³⁴ I shall analyse the image, discuss the context it was produced, and compare it with a 'picturesque' watercolour we have seen (Fig. 5-4).

The picture centralises a small and blackish house located to the south of the town. The blackish house is problematic but interesting. It is located on a rural area and fenced in the same site with a white-walled farmhouse to the right and a small hut to the left (probably a storage room). Thus, like the white-walled farmhouse, the blackish house might be a farmhouse, too. Besides, there is a waterwheel built to the right (our right) of the blackish house, which could suggest the blackish house be used

⁴³² Cheery, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-73.

⁴³³ Cannadine, *op. cit.*, p. 91

⁴³⁴ Samuel Smiles, *Lives of Boulton and Watt*. (London: Murray, 1865; republished Stroud: nonesuch, 2007)

as a mill. But the blackish house might also be a workshop or manufactory, for it has a blackish, smoked, and grimed appearance, and a long and thin chimney which might be used for emitting the smoke produced by making metal products. Combining the two possibilities, the blackish house is most probably a farmhouse turned into a workshop, and the waterwheel might therefore be replaced by other new power-generation sources.

No matter what type of building this blackish house is, it already helps represent the idea of suburb. If it is a farmhouse, then its presence signifies the artist's awareness of the development of this particular area outside the town. As we have seen, J. M. W. Turner represented the idea of suburb through a careful depiction of what he had observed from the developing edge of the town (Fig. 1-21). Similarly, through his detailed description of the objects on both sides of the river, Skelton also represented the idea of suburb as the immediate countryside of the town. If the blackish house is a workshop or a farmhouse turned into a workshop, it then symbolises the encroachment upon and industrialisation of the countryside, and corresponds to the endless chimneys behind it which 'prefix' the distant townscape. In this way, Skelton's picture also represents the idea of suburb as industrial urbanisation.

However, although Skelton's picture qualifies as a representation of suburb and reflects the development of the town, it was originally meant to visualise an 'older' Birmingham. It was published, without a title, as the first illustration, on the reverse page of the front cover of Samuel Smiles' *Lives of Boulton and Watt* in 1865.⁴³⁵ As mentioned in the beginning of the thesis, Boulton and Watt founded the Soho Manufactory and the Soho Mint, whose fine metal ware and quality coins turned over a leaf for the town's notoriety as 'Brummagen', meaning cheap and low-quality metal

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*

products.⁴³⁶ While the buildings of the Soho Manufactory were large and magnificent, those cheap metal products were actually made in a traditional, smaller, and less sophisticated workshop like this blackish house shown in Skelton's picture. Thus, as the first illustration of the book, Skelton's picture meant to show how the town's 'old' manufactories had looked like before Boulton and Watt's revolutionary construction was introduced to the town. In addition, when Birmingham librarian Dent wrote *the Making of Birmingham* in the late nineteenth century, he also used the picture in the section where he discussed the political development of the town and gave it a quite general title "*Old View of Birmingham*".⁴³⁷

As well as being a sign of an older Birmingham, the picture also foresees an industrial landscape. This can be understood if we compare Skelton's picture with Repton's *View towards Birmingham* (Fig. 5-4). In the landscape architect's painting, we saw how a picturesque setting is achieved through the boathouse in the centre that focuses our gaze, the pool in the lower ground that highlights the centre of the view, the slopes and the trees at both sides that frame the scene, and the hills between the town and the pool that hide the unpleasant, "flaming red part of the town".⁴³⁸ Skelton's view, even if it centralises a work-place in poor repair rather than an elegant country house, is no less picturesque. Firstly, unlike the grouped manufactories we have seen in chapter one which do not have their individual identity, Skelton's picture focuses on an individual workshop (or farmhouse) and carefully depicts its architectural details, however ordinary or rough they might appear. This makes the workshop stand in the picture like a decent scenic spot or monument. Second, like Repton who arranged different objects to form the picturesque setting, Skelton also used the rest of the pictorial elements to highlight the workshop, including the fence

⁴³⁶ Cheery, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

⁴³⁷ Dent, *op. cit.*, *The Making of Birmingham*, 1894, p. 308.

⁴³⁸ Daniels, *Humphrey Repton, op. cit.*, p. 208.

and trees that encircle the three buildings in the extreme foreground, the river that isolates the three buildings and connects to the scenery behind them, the woods to the right that fills the emptiness of the area, and the countless industrial, civic, and religious vertical that form a backdrop to stage the workshop. Judging by these efforts to compose a picturesque view, I think Skelton's picture is not only a revelation about the town's development in manufacturing (as used by Smiles in his book), but also an allegory that tells people how to accept, recognise, and represent a landscape remodelled by manufacturing.

An equally interesting painting to conclude with is *Birmingham by Moonlight* (Fig. 5-12). It shows the town bathed in the silver light of the full moon, with the Soho Manufactory on the platform to the right, and a canal, also built as part of the manufactory complex, between the fore- and middle- grounds. The pictures explored in the thesis are mostly under day light and the manufactories in them usually look vigorous and sometimes aggressive (Fig. 1-30, for instance), but here the moonlight provides a tranquil atmosphere and the buildings in the painting therefore look calmer and peaceful. Besides, like Creswick's painting with a light tint that softens the industrial townscape (Fig. 1-23), this painting, through its nightly atmosphere and bluish colours, seems to cool down the busy town and the numerous manufactories around it where iron was struck red and hot during the day time.

Under this cooling and bedazzling moonlight, several objects and creatures remain awake, including the smoking chimney to our extreme right, two men seated in the near foreground, the barge on the canal, the men on the barge, the cows on the other side of the canal, and the giant trees located close to the vertical axis of the composition. The trees direct the moonlight. The moonlight shines upon the right-hand side of the trees. The reflections of the moonlight can be seen from the white or lighter colours applied on the crowns of the trees, the area where the men are

seated, the wooden support and spine of the hut to the right, the glimmering surface of the canal, the façade of the Soho Manufactory, and the open land in front of it. To the left-hand side of the trees, the moonlight is blocked and the area looks darker under the shadow of the trees. The trees not only decide the effects of the moonlight, but also provide a narration. They stand there quietly like the night's strong yet gentle guards. Protected by them, the two men could enjoy watching the scene and fishing (? as with the sticks in their hands) in a care-free way, like the shepherds in Poussin's or Gainsborough's pastoral paintings. Overall, it seems that under the moonlight, the busy town, the Soho Manufactory, and many other anonymous manufactories could be transformed into a romantic, nocturnal landscape painting.

However, the scene is not really 'natural' landscape at all; the entire place is developed by man. The background, needless to say, is a man-made town. The middle ground is also built up for the manufactory complex, including the heightened platform to the right, the buildings on it, the levelled bank of the canal, the canal, and the rangeland. Even the foreground where the trees and the two sitters are looks like a demolished building site rather than a natural hill. When studying Joseph Vincent Barber's *Aston Village* (Fig. 2-13), we saw how the artist insist on representing Birmingham as surrounded by Nature through showing spacious meadows, oversized cows, an unrealistically twisted river, and a fairytale-like village. While *Aston Village* frankly refuses signs of industry and uses only natural motifs to represent the village, the oil painting here diplomatically confronts and responds to the sight of industry with the magic moonlight and therefore creates a quasi-landscape painting.

As Skelton's picture concludes the thesis by showing how a suburb may be represented as a landscape remodelled by manufacturing, this anonymous painting also concludes the thesis by showing how a representation of suburb is possible

through the representation of such a 'manufactured' landscape, or, more precisely, through a set of pictorial 'prefixes' that are transformed to signify a landscape.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources (produced before 1900 and the subject matter of the thesis)

Unpublished

Aylesford Collections, 5 volumes, Archive and Heritage Services, BCL

Two letters on the Barber family, with a family tree, by a Birmingham librarian, 1933,
Archive and Heritage Services, BCL

Repton, Humphrey. *Moseley Hall of Birmingham, a Seat of John Taylor Esq.* 1792,
Frances Loeb Library, Harvard University

Wilkinson Collection, 4 volumes, BMAG (access no. 1996V145, 1996V146,
1996V147 and 1996V148)

Published

Birmingham Faces and Places (magazines in volumes) (Birmingham: J.G. Hammond
and Co, 1888-94)

Birmingham News, June 15, 1858

Bisset, James. *A Poetic Survey round Birmingham; with a brief description of the
different curiosities and manufactories of the place ... Accompanied by a
magnificent directory; with the names, professions, &c., superbly engraved in
emblematic plates* (Birmingham: James Bisset, 1808)

Bunce, John Thackray. *History of Corporation of Birmingham* (2 volumes)
(Birmingham: Corporation, volume 1, 1878; volume 2, 1885)

Burke, Edmund. *An Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful* (London: Cassell, 1801)

Cornish's Stranger's Guide through Birmingham (magazines in volumes)
(Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1849)

Cox, David. *A Treatise on Landscape Painting and Effect in Water Colours: from the
First Rudiments to the Finished Picture: with Examples in Outline, Effect, and
Colouring* (London: S and J. Fuller, 1814)

----- *Progressive Lessons on Landscape for Young Beginners* (London: S&J
Fuller, 1816)

----- *The Young Artist's Companion* (London: S&J Fuller, 1820).

----- *A Series of Progressive Lessons Intended to Elucidate the Art of Painting
in Watercolour* (Birmingham: Ackermann & Co., 1841)

Davidson, Alfred of Aston. *A History of the Holtes of Aston, Baronets: with a
Description of the Family Mansion, Aston Hall, Warwickshire* (Birmingham:
E. Everitt, 1854)

Dent, Robert Kirkup. *Old and New Birmingham: a History of the Town and its People,
with Nearly 200 Illustrations from the Most Authentic Sources* (Birmingham:

- Houghton and Hammond, 1880; originally published in a weekly basis between 1878 and 1880; republished in 3 volumes by Wakefield: EP Publishing Limited, 1972, with an introduction by Dorothy H. McCulla)
- . *The Making of Birmingham being a History of the Rise and Growth of the Midland Metropolis* (Birmingham: J. L. Allday; London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co, 1894)
- Drake, James. *The Picture of Birmingham, being a Concise but Comprehensive Account of that Place; Intended for the Information both of Residents and Visitors* (Birmingham: James Drake, 1825; 1831; 1837)
- . *Drakes' Road Book of the Grand Junction Railway from Birmingham to Liverpool and Manchester* (Birmingham: James Drake, 1837)
- Gilpin, William. *Essay upon Prints, Containing Remarks upon the Principles of the Picturesque Beauty; the Different Kinds of Prints; and the Characters of the Most Noted Masters* (London: J. Robson, 1768)
- . *Observations of the River Wye, and Several Parts of South Wales, &c, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty; made in the Summer of the year 1770* (London: R. Blamire, 1782)
- . *Three Essays: on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and, on Sketching Landscape: to which is Added a Poem on Landscape Painting* (London, 1792; 1794)
- Hutton, William. *A Brief History of Birmingham: Intended as a Guide to Inhabitant and Stranger* (3rd edition) (Birmingham and London, 1805)
- Knight, Richard Payne. *The Landscape: a Didactic Poem. In Three Books. Addressed to Uvedale Price, Esq.* (London, 1794; 1795)
- Langford, John Alfred. *A Century of Birmingham Life* (2 volumes) (London and Birmingham: Marshall, 1868)
- Madox Brown, Ford. *The Exhibition of Work and other Paintings* (London: the Gallery, Piccadilly, 1865)
- Price, Uvedale. *An Essay on Picturesque, as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful; and, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape* (London: J. Robson, 1794)
- Radclyffe, Charles. *Views of Perry Barr Hall, the Seat of John Gough ESQ., from drawings by Charles Radclyffe* (Birmingham: Wrightson and Webb, 1838)
- Radclyffe, William. *Graphic Illustrations of Warwickshire* (London: Beilby, Knott and Beilby, 1829; Birmingham: Underwood, 1836, 1862)
- Roscoe, Thomas. *Wandering and Excursions in North Wales* (London: Charles Tilt & Simpkin & Co; Birmingham: Wrightson & Webb, 1836)
- . *Wandering and Excursions in South Wales* (London: Charles Tilt & Simpkin & Co; Birmingham: Wrightson & Webb, 1837)
- . *The London and Birmingham Railway; with the Home and Country*

- Scenes on Each Side of the Line* (London: Charles Tilt; Birmingham: Wrightson and Webb, 1838)
- Ruskin, John. *Notes by John Ruskin on his Drawing by J. M. W. Turner, R. A.* (London: 1887; London: the Fine Arts Society Gallery, 1900)
- Smiles, Samuel. *Lives of Matthew Boulton and James Watt* (London: Murray, 1865)
- Solly, Nathanael Neal. *Memoir of the Life of David Cox* (London: 1873)
- Underwood, Thomas. *The Buildings of Birmingham: Past and Present: Sketched and Described* (Birmingham: Walter J. Sackett, 1866)
- Walker, John. *The Copper Plate Magazine or Monthly Cabinets of Picturesque Prints Consisting of Sublime and Interesting Views in Great Britain and Ireland Beautifully Engraved by the Most Eminent Artists from the Paintings and Drawings of the First Masters* (London: John Walker, 1792)
- White, Francis &co. *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Warwickshire* (Sheffield: John Blurton, 1850)
- Witton, Phillip Henry Junior and John Edwards. *Views of the Ruins of the Principal Houses Destroyed during the Riots at Birmingham 1791* (London: J. Johnson, 1792)
- Yates, George. *A Historical and Descriptive Sketch of Birmingham* (Birmingham: Beilby, Knott and Beilby, 1830)

Secondary Source (published after 1900)

- Arnold, Dana. *Rural Urbanism: London Landscapes in the early Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).
- Arscott, Caroline, Griselda Pollock, and Janet Wolff, 'The Partial View: the visual representation of the Early Nineteenth-century Industrial City' in Janet Wolff and John Seed (eds.) *The Culture of Capital: Art, Power, and the Nineteenth-Century Middle Class* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) pp. 191-233
- Ballard, Phillada. *An Oasis of Delight: the History of the Birmingham Botanic Gardens* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1983; Studley: Brewin, 2003)
- Barrell, John. *The Dark Side of the Landscape* (1980; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)
- . *The Ideal of Landscape and the Sense of Place* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972)
- Barrett, Helena and John Phillips. *Suburban Style: the British Home, 1840-1960* (London: Macdonald, 1987; 1988)
- Barringer, Timothy. *Opulence and Anxiety: Landscape Paintings from the Royal Academy of Arts* (Compton Verney: Compton Verney, 2007)

- Charles Baudelaire, 'The Painter of Modern Life' in Jonathan Mayne (trans. & ed.), *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* (London: Phaidon, 1995)
- Bendiner, Kenneth. *The Art of Ford Madox Brown* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 1998)
- Bénézit, Emmanuel. *Bénézit Dictionary of Artists* vol. 5 (English translation) (Paris, Gründ, 2006)
- Berg, Maxine. 'Representations of Early Industrial Towns: Turner and his Contemporaries' in Michael Rosenthal, Christiana Payne, and Scott Wilcox (eds.) *Prospects for the Nation, Recent Essays in British Landscape* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997) pp. 115-131.
- Bermingham, Ann. *Landscape and Ideology: the English Rustic Tradition 1740-1860* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1986)
- *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000)
- Bindman, David. *The Shadow of the Guillotine: Britain and the French Revolution* (London: British Museum, 1989)
- (ed.). *The History of British Art* in 3 volumes (New Haven and London: Yale Centre for British Art and Tate Britain, 2008)
- Birmingham City Council, *Matthew Boulton City Centre Walk & Guide to Matthew Boulton's Birmingham* (leaflet) (Birmingham: Birmingham City Council, 2009)
- Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery. *An Exhibition to Commemorate the Bicentenary of the Lunar Society of Birmingham* (Birmingham: Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, 1966)
- *Foreign Paintings in Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery: a Summary Catalogue* (Birmingham: Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 1983)
- Leaflets and graphic plates, *Birmingham Seen* exhibition (accessed 08/12/2009) (no exhibition catalogue published)
- Graphic plates in a display of the nineteenth-century oil painting on the scenery around the town (accessed 04/07/2009) (no exhibition catalogue published)
- Birmingham Pen Trade Heritage Association. *Brief History of Birmingham Pen Trade* (Birmingham: Birmingham Pen Trade Heritage Association, 2000)
- Bonehill, John and Stephen Daniels (eds.). *Paul Sandby: Picturing Britain* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2009)
- Bower, Peter. 'A Remarkable Understanding: David Cox's Use of Paper' in Scott Wilcox (ed.), *Sun, Wind, and Rain: the Art of David Cox* (New Haven and

- London: Yale University Press, 2008) pp. 97-111
- Brown, Christopher. *Ruben's Landscape* (London: National Gallery, 1997)
- Bryant, Christopher Rex and L. H. Russwurm and A. G. McLellan. *The City's Countryside: Land and its Management in the Rural-urban Fringe* (London and New York: Longman, 1982)
- Bryson, Norman. 'Semiology and Visual Interpretation' in Norman Bryson et al. (eds.), *Visual Theory: Painting and Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) pp. 61-73.
- Cannadine, David. *Lords and Landlords: the Aristocracy and the Towns 1774-1967* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1980)
- Chang, Shenglin. *The Global Silicon Valley Home: Lives and Landscapes within Taiwanese American trans-Pacific culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006)
- Cherry, Gordon. *Birmingham: A Study in Geography, History and Planning* (Chichester: John Wiley & sons, 1994)
- Chinn, Carl. *Poverty Amidst Prosperity: the Urban Poor in England, 1840-1918* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; 1995; new edition: Lancaster: Carnegie, 2006)
- , *Homes for People: Council Housing and Urban Renewal in Birmingham* (Studley : Brewin, 1999)
- , *Brum and Brummies* (several volumes) (Studley: Brewin, 2000)
- Clapson, Mark. *Suburban Century: Social Changes and Urban Growth in England and the USA* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003)
- Clark, T. J. *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984)
- Clayre, Alasdair (ed.). *Nature and Industrialization* (Oxford: Open University Press, 1977)
- Clayton, Timothy. *The English Print, 1688-1802* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997)
- Copley, Stephen and Peter Garside (eds). *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape, and Aesthetics since 1770* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994)
- Corbett, David Peters and Lara Perry (eds.), *English Art 1860-1814: Modern Artists and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000)
- , *Walter Sickert* (Princeton: Princeton University press; London: Tate, 2001)
- et al. (eds.) *The Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past in English Art 1880-1940* (New Haven and London: Yale

- University Press, 2002).
- Crouan, Katharine. *John Linnell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982)
- Daniels, Stephan. 'The Implication of Industry: Turner and Leeds' in *Turner Studies* vol. 6 no. 1 (London: Mallord Press and Tate Gallery, 1986) pp. 10-7.
- , *Fields of Vision: Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States* (Cambridge: Polity, 1993)
- , *Humphrey Repton: Landscape Gardening and the Geography of Georgian England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999)
- , 'Suburban Prospect' in Nicholas Alfrey et al. (eds.) *Art of the Garden: the Garden in British Art, 1800 to the Present Day* (London: Tate, 2004), pp. 22-30
- Davidoff, Leonore and Catherine Hall. *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987; Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991)
- DeJardin, Ian A. C. *The Dutch Italianates: Seventeenth-Century Masterpieces from Dulwich Picture Gallery, London* (London: Philip Wilson, 2008)
- Dickens, Charles. *Oliver Twist* (London: Penguin Books, 2002)
- Dobriner, William M. *Class in Suburbia* (Englewood Cliff: Prentice Hall, 1963)
- Dyos, Harold James. *Victorian Suburb: a Study of the Growth of Camberwell* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1973)
- and Michael Wolff (eds.). *The Victorian City: Image and Realities* (2 volumes) (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973)
- Egerton, Judy. *George Stubbs, Painter* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007)
- Ellis, Joyce M. *The Georgian Town 1680-1840* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, 2001)
- Fawcett, Trevor. *The Rise of English Provincial Art: Artists, Patrons, and Institutions outside London, 1800-1830* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974)
- Fishman, Robert. *Bourgeois Utopia: the Rise and the Fall of Suburbia* (New York: Basic Books, 1987)
- Foster, Andy. *Birmingham* (Pevsner Architectural Guides) (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005)
- Foster, Richard. *Birmingham New Street: Background and Beginnings, the Years up to 1860* (Oxford: Wild Swan, 1990)
- Furet, François and Mona Ozouf. *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution* (trans. Arthur Goldhammer) (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989)
- Gage, John. *Colour in Turner: Poetry and Truth* (London: Studio Vista, 1969)
- , *Turner: Rain, Steam, and Speed* (New York: The Viking Press, 1972)

- Gascoigne, Bamber. *How to Identify Prints* (1986; London: Thomas and Hudson, 2004)
- Gill, Conrad. *History of Birmingham* (2 volumes) (London: Oxford University Press 1952)
- Gilpin, William. *Observations of the River Wye* (Richmond Publishing Co., 1973)
- Green, Nicholas. *The Spectacle of Nature: Landscape and Bourgeois Culture in Nineteenth Century France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990)
- Greenberg, Clement. 'Modernist Painting' in Francis Frascina and Jonathan Harris (eds.), *Art in Modern Culture: an Anthology of Critical Texts* (London: Phaidon in association with the Open University) pp. 308-14
- Grindle, Nicolas M. "*The Wise Surveyor*": *Surveying and Representation in British House and Estate Portraiture c. 1675-1715* (thesis) (London: University College London, 2002)
- . 'New Ways of Seeing: Landscape Painting and Visual Culture c. 1620-c.1870' in David Bindman (ed.), *The History of British Art* (2nd volume) (New Haven and London: Yale Centre for British Art and Tate Britain, 2008), pp. 121-43
- Haddleton, Marie E. *The Jewellery Quarter History and Guide* (2nd edition) (Birmingham: YBA Publications, 1987)
- Hallett, Mark and Jane Rendall (eds.). *Eighteenth-Century York: Culture, Space and Society* (York: Borthwick Institute, 2003)
- Harris, John. *The Artist and the Country House: a History of Country House and Garden View Painting in Britain, 1540-1870* (London and New York: Sotheby's, 1985)
- Harrison, Charles. 'England's Climate' in Brian Allen (ed.) *Towards a Modern Art World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press) pp. 207-23
- Hawes, Louis. *Presences of Nature: British Landscape 1780-1830* (New Haven and London: Yale Centre for British Art, 1982)
- Hemingway, Andrew. *Landscape Imagery and Urban Culture in Early Nineteenth Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)
- . 'Cultural Philanthropy and the Invention of Norwich School' in *Oxford Art Journal* Vol. 11, No. 2 (1988), pp. 17-39.
- Hemsoll, David et al. *Building the Future: Birmingham's Architectural Story* (Birmingham: the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, 2009)
- Herbert, Robert 'City vs. Country: the Rural Image in French Painting from Millet to Gauguin' in *Artforum*, vol. 8, no. 6 (February 1970) pp. 44-55
- Herrmann, Luke. *British Landscape Painting of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973)

- . *Turner Prints: the Engraved Work of J.M.W. Turner* (New York: New York University Press, 1990)
- . *Nineteenth Century British Painting* (London: Giles de la Mare, 2000)
- Hill, Joseph. *The Book Makers of Old Birmingham: Authors, Printers, and Book Sellers* (Birmingham: Shakespeare Press for Cornish Brother Ltd., 1907)
- and William Midgley. *The History of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artist* (Birmingham: Royal Birmingham Society of Artists & the Cornish Brothers Ltd., 1928)
- Holt, Ysanne. *British Artists and the Modernist Landscape* (Hants: Ashgate, 2007).
- Hopkins, Eric. *The Rise of the Manufacturing Town: Birmingham and the Industrial Revolution* (1989; Stroud: Sutton, 1998)
- Hyde, Ralph. *Panoromania* (London: Trefoil, in association with Barbican Gallery, 1988)
- Innes, John and Derick Behrens. *The History of Moseley Hall* (Birmingham: Moseley Hall Hospital and Moseley Local History Society, 1991)
- Jackson, Peter. *George Scharf's London: Sketches and Watercolours of a Changing City, 1820-1850* (London: John Murray, 1987)
- Johnson, E. D. H. 'Victorian Artists and the Urban Milieu' in Harold James Dyos and Michael Wolff (eds.), *The Victorian City: Image and Realities* (in 2 volumes) (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973) pp. 449-74
- Jones, Peter. *Industrial Enlightenment* (Manchester University Press, 2009)
- Loudon, John Claudius. *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture* (Shaftesbury: Donhead, 2000)
- Line, Paul. *Birmingham: a New History in Maps* (Stroud: The History Press, 2009)
- Lyles, Anne (ed.). *Constable: the Great Landscapes* (London: Tate, 2006)
- MacCalman, Iain et al (eds.). *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture, 1776-1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)
- Maddison, Francis R and R.E.W. 'Joseph Priestley and the Birmingham Riots' in Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London vol. 12, vol. 1 (1956 August)
- Madox Brown, Ford. *The Diary of Ford Madox Brown* ed. Virginia Surtees (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981)
- Mason, Shena et al. *A Lost Landscape: Matthew Boulton's Gardens at Soho* (Chichester : Phillimore, 2009)
- (ed.). *Matthew Boulton: Selling What the World Desires* (Birmingham: Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, in association with Yale University Press, 2009)

- McConkey, Kenneth. *British Impressionism* (Oxford: Phaidon; New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989)
- Mitchell, Brian R. *European Historical Statistics 1750-1975* (2nd edition) (London: Macmillan, 1980)
- Mitchell, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England* (2nd edition) (London: Greenwood, 2009)
- Moir, Esther. *The Discovery of Britain: the English Tourists* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964)
- Olsen, Donald. *The Growth of Victorian London* (London: Batsford, 1976)
- Ordnance Survey Map, Birmingham and Surrounding Area* (Southampton: Ordnance Survey, 1996)
- Osborne, Victoria. 'Cox and Birmingham' in Scott Wilcox (ed.), *Sun, Wind, and Rain: the Art of David Cox* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 69-83
- Palmer, Marilyn. *Industry in the Landscape, 1700-1900* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994)
- Prettejohn, Elisabeth. *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Tate, 2000).
- Price, Steven. *Town and Country in the Victorian West Midlands: The Watercolours and Drawing of A. E. Everitt of Birmingham 1824-1882* (Birmingham: Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 1986)
- Rosenfeld, Jason and Alison Smith, *Millais* (London: Tate, 2007)
- Rosenthal, Michael. *British Landscape Painting* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1982).
- , Christiana Payne and Scott Wilcox (eds.) *Prospects for the Nation, Recent Essays in British Landscape* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997)
- Saussure, Ferdinand de. *Course in General Linguistics* (eds.) Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye, Albert Riedlinger; Roy Harris. (trans.) (London: G. Duckworth, 1983; 2008 printing)
- Schofield, Robert E. *The Lunar Society of Birmingham: a Social History of Provincial Science and Industry in Eighteen-Century England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963)
- Shelston, Dorothy and Alan. *The Industrial City 1820-1870* (London: Macmillan, 1990)
- Silverstone, Roger (ed.). *Visions of Suburbia* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997)
- Skipp, Victor. *A History of Greater Birmingham: Down to 1830* (Birmingham: Victor Skipp, 1980)
- , *Industrial Revolution 'Then' and 'Now' or Understanding Globalization (the Birmingham Experience)* (Diss: Greyhound Books, 2002)

- Slater, Terry. *Edgbaston: a History* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2002)
- Smiles, Samuel. *Lives of Matthew Boulton and James Watt* (republished; Stroud: Nonsuch, 2007).
- Solkin, David. *Richard Wilson: the Landscape of Reaction* (London: Tate, 1982)
- Sontag, Susan (ed.). *A Roland Barthes Reader* (London: Vintage, 1993)
- Staley, Allen et al. *Pre-Raphaelite Vision: Truth to Nature* (London: Tate, 2004).
- Summerson, John. *Georgian London* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1970)
- Sweet, Rosemary. *The English Town 1680-1840* (London: Longman, 1999)
- Swift, John. 'Birmingham and its Art School: Changing Views 1800-1921' in *Journal of Art and Design Education* vol. 7, no. 1 (Oxford: Blackwell Synergy, 1988) pp. 5-29
- Thomas, Keith. *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* (London: Penguin, 1983)
- Thomis, Malcolm I. *Responses to Industrialisation: the British Experience 1780-1850* (Devon: David & Charles, 1976)
- Thompson, F. M. L (ed.). *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982)
- Tucker, Paul Hayes. *Monet at Argenteuil* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982)
- Turner, Roger. *Capability Brown and the Eighteenth Century English Landscape* (New York: Rizzoli, 1985)
- Uglow, Jenny. *The Lunar Men: the Friends who Made the Future* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002)
- Vaughan, William. *British Painting: the Golden Age from Hogarth to Turner* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995)
- et al. *Samuel Palmer 1805-1881: Vision and Landscape* (Burlington: Lund Humphries, 2005)
- Vergara, Lisa. *Rubens and the Poetics of Landscape* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982)
- Wan, Connie. *Rediscovering the Lines Family: Drawings of Birmingham and beyond in the Nineteenth Century* (Birmingham: Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, 2009)
- Webster, Norman W. *Britain's First Trunk Line: the Grand Junction Railway* (Bath: Adams and Dark, 1972)
- Whitfield, Peter. *London: a life in Maps* (London: British Library, 2006)
- Wilcox, Scott (ed.). *Sun, Wind, and Rain: the Art of David Cox* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008)
- Wildman, Stephen. *The Birmingham School* (Birmingham: Birmingham City Museum

- and Art Gallery, 1990)
- Williams, Raymond. *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973)
- Wolff, Janet and John Seed (eds.) *The Culture of Capital: Art, Power, and the Nineteenth-Century Middle Class* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).
- Wood, Robert C. *Suburbia: its People and their Politics* (Boston: The Riverside Press Cambridge, 1958)
- Wright, Alastair I. 'Suburban Prospects: Vision and Possession in Ford Madox Brown's *An English Autumn Afternoon*' in Margaretta F. Watson (ed.) *Collecting the Pre-Raphaelites: an Anglo-American Enchantment* (Aldershot, Hants, and Brookfield, Vermont: Ashgate, 1997) pp. 185-97.
- Wylie, John. *Landscape* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007)
- Yang, Yung-Yuan. *The Ideology of Prosperity: Industrial and Urban Landscape in the Art of J.M.W. Turner* (London: University of London thesis, 1998)
- Yorke, Stan. *The Industrial Revolution Explained* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 2005)

Internet

Art collections at Sandwell Council

<http://www.laws.sandwell.gov.uk/ccm/content/education-and-childrens-services/museums-folder/oil-paintings/artists/henshaw-frederick-henry.en>

Astonbrook through Astonmanor

<http://astonhistory.net/id77.html>

Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery collection online

<http://www.bmagic.org.uk/>

Chronology of Birmingham 1883-1950, Birmingham City

Council <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/cs/Satellite?c=Page&childpagename=Lib-Central-Archives-and-Heritage%2FPageLayout&cid=1223092760254&page name=BCC%2FCommon%2FWrapper%2FWrapper>

Oxford English Dictionary

<http://dictionary.oed.com.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/>

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

<http://www.oxforddnb.com.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/>

St John's Church, Perry Barr

<http://www.st-johns-perry-barr.org.uk/page5.html>

Wikipedia (for the access to Johann Eckstein's painting used in chapter five)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File: Priestley_Riots_painting.jpg