Exposed to the Elements: representations of atmospheric phenomena and the construction of a cultural psyche

An exegesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the exegesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; and, any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged.

Lesley Duxbury

March 2004
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1. Title

Exposed to the Elements: representations of atmospheric phenomena and the construction of a cultural psyche

2. Summary

By referencing images and texts of selected nineteenth century artists and writers, I will elucidate the ways in which experiences and representations of atmospheric phenomena have permeated the English cultural psyche and become a significant element in the definition of Englishness.

The inherent properties of printmaking, such as sameness and difference and repetition and reproduction will be investigated, properties that underpin our readings of atmospheric phenomena. The main emphases of this research are the elemental forces of the weather, the transitory effects of light and atmosphere and their influence on the psyche.

I will employ a diversity of media to investigate the potential for Printmaking to enhance representations of atmospheric phenomena. This will include traditional printmaking techniques such as relief printing alongside more contemporary means of reproduction and replication such as digital imaging and photography. I will encompass a wide range of formal vocabularies from minimalism to text-based conceptualism in the production of the work.

The key questions of this research project are:

- What significant changes occurred in the culture of early nineteenth century England that inspired artists and writers to place such particular significance on the representation of atmospheric phenomena?
- In what ways have atmospheric phenomena and daily experiences of the weather entered the English cultural psyche?
- In what ways can print media be utilised to interpret nineteenth century images and texts and give them significance in contemporary art practice?

The project will culminate in a body of print media based work and an exegesis that will contextualise the visual research.

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1 The term cultural psyche is used to express the human soul, spirit or mind as it pertains to a particular culture. Throughout this project I have used 'mood' to also express frame of mind, feeling or spirit.
3. Introduction

For a number of years now I have been fascinated by the weather. Until my arrival in Australia in 1983 it was a subject I took very much for granted - in England where I lived for the first thirty three years of my life, everyone I knew complained about it - and I didn't pay much attention to it. Living in Australia, I became aware of the blueness of the sky, as I never had before. Most visitors and migrants are conscious of this. However, it was when I went to live in Western Australia that a number of elements began to fit into place and became the catalyst for this research project.

In Western Australia few landforms interrupt the endless horizon, a distinct line that divides the sky from sea and the sky from the land. There is little to disturb the interminable blue of the sky for that matter and 3 months after my arrival when the first clouds appeared I realised how much I had missed them. The land too was very different; there were no green hills and verdant valleys that are so plentiful in England and also the Eastern States of Australia. Instead I looked upon great tracts of red land, flat and limitless. Where was the place here for all I had learned and internalised regarding, as the nineteenth century English artist John Constable titled it, 'English Landscape Scenery'? I became aware of my exotic status and I began to question my cultural origins through my association with the landscape and especially the atmospheric conditions under which it is seen.

I referred to the English artists, John Constable and J.M.W. Turner for clues about the nature of Englishness in relation to the landscape and the sky. I found that they had both been interested in many of the scientific discoveries at the beginning of the nineteenth century, such as meteorology, which had influenced their work so much. Science and art came together at this time like no other before. Scientists were interested in art and artists in science. Of course the weather had always been there and there had always been someone who had an interest in it even so far as to make associations between it and the way we feel or the moods we have. But it wasn't until the first few decades of the nineteenth century that atmospheric phenomena became the focus of attention for scientists, artists and writers.

Although the impetus for this research was an increasing fascination with my own responses to aspects of being in a 'foreign' land and a growing interest in what it meant to be English, afforded by distance from my country of origin, I also wanted to acknowledge and explore further my interests as a participator in the landscape and my enduring occupation with its
representation. My initial research concentrated on John Constable and Joseph Mallord William Turner, their representations of atmospheric phenomena and the cultural changes of the day that inspired them to make the work they did. The research later extended to a selected group of poets, writers, artists and explorers, all of them active in the early decades of the nineteenth century. It also included aspects of my own experiences that I had not anticipated from the outset.

Over the six years of this research I have made several walking excursions in the temperate parts of the world\(^1\), which I considered to be an essential part of information gathering for my research. These included countries and states such as Canada (Newfoundland), Chile (Tierra del Fuego), the South Island of New Zealand and Tasmania, countries on a similar latitude to England in both hemispheres of the globe. During the walks I have taken photographs to be used in subsequent image-making. Towards the latter part of this project I realised how important the walks were, not only for the photographic possibilities they afforded me for my project but also in the ways in which the diverse destinations/locations were related to the research. All these places had been English colonies or had been important to the English in some way, during the early nineteenth century; St John’s in Newfoundland was the first English colony for example and Newfoundland remained British until 1949. Not only that, on further reflection I realised that the majority of the artists/poets/explorers that I have referenced in this project had also walked extensively, either through necessity or for reasons of their particular art-making. In many ways the weather and walking do not easily fit together. As an activity, walking can be the most pleasurable or the most miserable experience, depending on the weather. Both subjects have an 'ordinariness'; they are themes with which everyone is familiar. Walking, as an extension into an outer world, the landscape and its atmosphere, unites the body to the world around it. Both walking and our experiences of the weather are bound to understandings of time, memory, self and nature. The physical act of walking is something most of us take for granted. However it brings natural proportions to the ways in which we perceive and connect with the world and enables us to reconnect with a personal or national past, a taste of human life, before mechanisation.

In England at the beginning of the nineteenth century, burgeoning discoveries relating to transportation, industry and natural phenomena, including meteorology fired the imagination

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\(^1\) The parts of the earth’s surface between each of the Tropics and the Polar Circle nearest to it. Most of my walks have been on or close to the same latitude as England in both Northern and Southern hemispheres.
of such people as writers and artists. Their responses to such progress appeared to reflect something of the national consciousness, and this became my starting point. Associations between the weather and cultural distinctions had been around for a long time. However, the weather and artistic endeavours coincided in the first half of the nineteenth century for a number of reasons and I have attempted to illuminate some of them. My aim has been to examine some of the ways that atmospheric phenomena have permeated the psyche and been represented in the art and literature of nineteenth century England becoming a significant element in the definition of Englishness. I set out to elucidate some of the connections between atmospheric phenomena and the English psyche by researching the changes that occurred in the culture of early nineteenth century England that inspired many artists and writers to place particular significance on representations of the weather.

I am aware that some of the elements or qualities of Englishness that I have outlined are not uniquely so and may also occur in other cultures. It has not been the intention of this research to make a comparative study, nor even to make comparisons within British or English culture, as this was too broad for this project. I have concentrated on selected artists, mainly from the nineteenth century and have widened this to include selected twentieth century ones when appropriate, along with relevant poets, writers, thinkers, travellers and explorers.

Early nineteenth century England was a period when changes took place, politically, economically and demographically and these brought about congruent developments in art, science and literature. Something as simple as the invention of a lead pencil at the end of the eighteenth century, for example, made a huge difference to the ways in which artists were able to record what they saw. Developments in transport systems allowed people to travel further and move faster through their environment therefore experiencing it in a different way. I have attempted to link these subjects and connect them to each other, not isolate them, as they depended upon and referred to each other.

While much has been written about this period - about John Constable and J.M.W. Turner; William Wordsworth and nature; nineteenth century scientific discoveries and exploration - I could not find a single source that connected them in terms of their link to national identity and a perception of the world from a peculiarly English perspective. It seemed that English culture was a little bit like the weather, something that everyone was aware of but actually knew little about.
John Constable and J.M.W. Turner have been the primary focus of the research because of their special interest in atmospheric phenomena and its representations. Being painters of the landscape their occupation depended on the weather and they both made representations of the sky in a majority of their works. Turner's special interest was in the changes in the sky at sunrise and sunset while Constable's focus was the clouds. They, and poets, writers and others wrote about the sky especially in response to certain cloud classification systems that were put forward at the time by, for example, Luke Howard and Thomas Forster.

At the beginning of this new millennium there is an ever-increasing emphasis on the definition and construction of personal and cultural identities. Nationalism, or the 'spirit of a nation', has been thoroughly investigated in innumerable studies, however I could find no particular investigation of English nationalism. Recently many smaller nationalisms have been examined as they have come into being following the breaking up of larger federations. Within the British Isles there are more studies of Ireland, Scotland and Wales and their versions of nationalism than there are of England. In G Newman's, The Rise of English Nationalism: a cultural history 1740-1830, he describes the situation thus, 'It is strange how greatly English nationalism has eluded our scholarly attention. Its nature has not been debated, and its power, though often sensed, has escaped analysis.'

I have attempted to redress this in a small way by linking atmospheric phenomena and its representations to a characteristic of Englishness. This research essentially is about a quotidian experience over which we have no control but that in many ways controls us by affecting our moods and the way we see the world, both as a physical exterior and an internalised mental process. In so many ways the weather continues to fascinate, frustrate and puzzle although we now have the technology that allows reasonably accurate forecasting. Although we are a part of the atmosphere that surrounds us, by simply breathing in and out for example, we are helpless to do anything about it, in spite of technological advances that could not be conceived of two centuries ago.

I have organised my research findings into ten essays, each one of which explores a theme or an idea relating to the history or science that altered perception of the world and impacted on the experience of being-in-the-world. Many of the essays have one of my personal

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experiences as their starting point. I have used this discursive approach as a way of connecting the breadth of the material to the present and eliciting parallel experiences. The weaving of past and present, history and personal anecdote, emphasises the repetitious nature of these daily experiences of and encounters with the world and the atmosphere that surrounds it.

Following the essays I have included *Weather Diary*, which is a composite of collected comments from a number of nineteenth century diaries and letters of writers, poets, explorers, travellers and so forth. The entries are reproduced verbatim and together they form a document that indicates the effects of the weather on the moods and feelings of the writers at the time, all of whom are English and have lived in various locations throughout the world. Although the writers are English many of their entries are from journals written while their author was in another country, for example, William Light in Australia and John Ruskin on his trips to Europe. In the main it is ‘bad’ weather\(^3\) that prompts the mood or feeling in the diary entry, few are inspired by ‘good’ weather\(^4\). William Light is an exception. During his time in South Australia in the 1830s it is the oppressive heat that causes him to feel ill or unhappy. It appears that no matter where in the world the English travel their thoughts are of the weather. I have attempted to include an entry for every day of the year including entries from each of the seasons, although it is interesting to note that the responses of the writers are mainly those to rain or dreary weather. It has been one of the interesting aspects of this research that I have found so few references to or acknowledgment of blue sky.

My particular interest in printmaking and photography led me to explore notions of recording, reproduction and replication especially in relation to such repeated phenomena as daily weather, sunrises and sunsets. I have used traditional printmaking especially to explore colour and the use of text, and photography as a recording device. These two media have in the main been used together, to inform and complement each other. The scale and format of the work has varied considerably. My intention was always to make my viewer an active participant in the work. I have attempted to do this through large-scale installations that require the viewer to physically move to experience the work. I have used materials that reflect and refract light, again leading viewers to shift their position in order to enable them to literally read the work.

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\(^3\) I have used ‘bad’ in relation to weather, a term used by the English to describe wet or miserable days.

\(^4\) ‘Good’ weather for the English is hot and sunny, although it would never get as hot in England as it did in South Australia.
[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]
I have also made pieces that require the viewer to shift their focus, compare two or more panels and follow instructions.

I have made references to contemporary artists who continue to engage with atmospheric phenomena as subjects for their work. These artists include Hamish Fulton, Roni Horn, Tacita Dean and Olafur Eliasson. I am interested in them for their similar concerns and ways of working. Their art practices incorporate a number of mediums and vocabularies – Hamish Fulton and Roni Horn employ photography and text-based conceptualism; Tacita Dean, predominantly film and video and Olafur Eliasson’s work is mainly installation based, certainly experiential. Throughout this project I have referred to them as *artists* although my particular ways of working are print-media based. One of the concerns of this project is to consider the position of printmaking in contemporary art practice, however I have not singled out printmaking as a medium-specific artform. This research is not about a history of printmaking, nor the changes it has undergone and therefore I have made reference to the wider field of printmaking in the section, Development of the Project. Specific works by the above-mentioned artists have been described in relation to matters raised within the essays and therefore have been included where appropriate. My interest in them and the relationship that each of these artists has with my project is outlined below.

**Hamish Fulton**

Hamish Fulton is of particular importance to this project for both his conceptual concerns and his ways of working. His work is primarily about his experience of the world, and in his case it is of walking through natural landscape – the walk itself is his art - and unlike other ‘walking’ artists such as Richard Long who manipulates and alters the landscape, he leaves no trace. During his walks his takes photographs to convey the essence of the walk. He doesn’t take hundreds of photographs from which he later selects the most representative of his experiences; rather, he carefully chooses the images he requires at the time. He says that his work is not about photography, it is about the walk; photography is simply the means by which he can convey something of the experience of it. ‘Fulton does not consider himself a photographer. He uses a very simple camera, and only one filter (orange, to help bring out the contrasts more effectively). He does not develop the photographs himself, but entrusts them to a printer in London with whom he has worked for many years.’\(^5\) While walking he keeps a

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5 [www.albrightknox.org/ArtStart/Fulton.html](http://www.albrightknox.org/ArtStart/Fulton.html)
Top: Roni Horn, personalised map of Iceland, 1994
Bottom: Roni Horn, Dead Owl, 1997
journal in which he records notes that are used later for the text and objects he creates. The resulting works are photographs with text either over the photograph or along its bottom edge and large-scale wall works. In his photographic works with text, the text provides basic information such as the location of the walk and its duration and also other information that cannot be expressed in the photograph such as sound or temperature, while the images create a sense of place. 'The given information is very minimal. My hope is that the viewer will create a feeling, an impression in his or her own mind, based on whatever my art can provide.' The photographic works are not editioned and he often uses the same image scaled differently with the same text, either similarly placed on the photograph or separate from it. Therefore all his works are unique and are usually framed. Fulton also uses contradictory texts with his photographs, for example a large-scale photographic work *Warm Dead Bird, Ribadesella to Malaga Winter 1990*. He took the photograph on a walk through Spain that meandered through towns as well as countryside. The photograph is of a long road in a barren landscape but somehow through the text Fulton evokes presence. In this work a line of text reads, 'Walking against the oncoming traffic,' which is a huge contradiction when viewing the endless deserted road in the photograph. The three words in the title refer to an encounter with a recently killed bird, again quite out of context and scale with the initial understanding of the work. *The Pentland Road, Scotland 1976*, represents what is perhaps a quintessentially British experience – one of cold, wind and rain.' This primacy of the physical experience is at the heart of Fulton’s work. More recently he has dispensed with images and has used text alone. These works usually take the form of large-scale, wall-sized pieces. For Fulton, both text and photograph are equally important as he distils a long journey or experience into a few words and a single image.

**Roni Horn**

Roni Horn spends a good deal of her time in Iceland and most of her works are initiated there. For her, this intense engagement with a particular place that is elemental and atmospheric has become a state of mind. In one piece of work especially she clearly demonstrates her feelings for Iceland and the associations of place to state-of-mind. On a map of Iceland she has drawn her own titles and descriptions over the place names, thereby connecting place psychologically with feelings and thoughts. Like Hamish Fulton she too uses text and photographic images in the realization of her work and occasionally she will make sculptural

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6 [www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/hamishfulton/roomguide.htm](http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/hamishfulton/roomguide.htm)

7 *ibid.*
[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]

Top: Olafur Eliasson, from his survey at the Tate Modern, 2003
Bottom: Tacita Dean, film stills from A Bag of Air, 1995
objects and place them in architectural spaces. Again, like Fulton, her concerns are of the primacy of experience and human perception and she places her works on gallery walls or in architectural spaces to make the viewer a part of the experience, so that they too participate in the work. She does this by using the space of the gallery to literally move the viewer – by installing her photographs at such a height to make viewers look up, for example. She is also interested in exploring notions of sameness and difference. These investigations result in images taken seconds apart or in pairs of identical images or sculptures. She too uses text to evoke an image and she does this with deceptive simplicity. As she also has an active engagement with the environment, the weather is something that concerns her and influences the majority of her works. In some instances she has taken words that describe both weather and moods and brought them into the built environment by embedding them into rubber and placing them in and making them a part of a building.

**Olafur Eliasson**

Olafur Eliasson uses installations and sculptural works to explore our perception of the world, especially the natural world. Although his large-scale complex installations differ considerably from my works on paper, the intentions are similar. Through his installations he immerses the viewers in a physiological as well as psychological experience with the intention that they become aware of themselves sensing. In many of his works he engages with the basic elements of the weather such as water, light and temperature and appropriates elements from nature such as steam and fog. He views the weather as one of the few fundamental encounters with nature that can still be experienced in the city. His aim is to encourage his viewers to reflect upon their understanding and perception of the physical world around them. His works capture fleeting aspects of the natural world evoking the spiritual and emotional.

**Tacita Dean**

Like Olafur Eliasson, Tacita Dean’s video installations are a totally different medium to the ones I use, however her engagement with the psychological and the physical aspects of the natural environment and the ways in which she uses personal narrative to connect present to past have an empathy with my own. Her work is dominated by the weather and the time of day. In the chapter ‘A Bag of Air’ in the catalogue, *Tacita Dean: selected works from 1994 – 2000* for example, she includes narratives of clouds, rain, air and dew that relate to direct experience and connect the past to the present.
4. Essays

My first research question for this project led me to examine some of the significant changes that occurred in the culture of early nineteenth century England and that inspired artists and writers to place such particular significance on the representation of atmospheric phenomena. I have organised my findings into ten essays, each of which explores a topic that not only relates to an aspect of nineteenth century culture but also links it to an experience or theme in the present therefore connecting a number of ideas. I have assigned each one a title and theme according to its primary emphasis. Within each essay there are overlaps of ideas as they could not be isolated and are in so many ways interrelated; they weave in and out of each other.

The essays have been written from a personal perspective in response to the literature and many are linked to my personal experiences. Where I have included personal anecdotes the body of text is in italics. The ideas and discoveries contained in the essays are reflected in the artwork I have made for this project and although the individual works are not specifically identified in the essays, the information contained in them relates directly to the visual project. Due to the scope of this project, these essays are intended to form an overview only of the early years of the nineteenth century.

In some instances I took part in an activity for the purpose of comparing my experience in the present with a similar one in the past and I have used this as the subject of an essay. For example, I made a visit to Hampstead Heath in 2002 with the intention of reflecting on the experiences of John Constable in the same location, at the same time of the year, 180 years earlier. My incidental walk up Mount Howitt, in the same year inspired me to write about the weather conditions I encountered there and link them historically to their representations in the nineteenth century.

Realising the importance of scientific discoveries at the turn of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century I wrote, *In such an age as this*. In this essay, in which I look briefly at the relationship between art and science, I especially investigate the influence of scientific discoveries on some of the artists of this very special era, especially that of meteorology. I have placed a particular emphasis on Luke Howard, 'the man who named the clouds', as it was this seemingly simple act that changed the ways in which artists and poets experienced the sky.
The Climates of Constable and Turner compares and contrasts these two men who had such an influence on art in England during the period of their lives and indeed to the present. This overview considers them from the perspective of their childhoods and lives that shaped the ways in which they saw the world about them. Although they both concentrated on the sky as a subject - more so than any other artists of the time - their approaches to it were quite different.

In Clouds 1822 - 2002, I have linked the period when John Constable lived in Hampstead to a journey I made to London in 2002. I walked in Constable's footsteps across Hampstead Heath and reflected on the period of his activities there when he painted his extraordinary cloud studies, with my experience at that same time of the year 180 years later. From this perspective I was able to construct a link across the years and look for similarities and differences in Constable's recorded experiences and my own.

Reading the Weather took as its starting point an unnerving experience I had of staying in a hotel room without a window. This prompted me to link the importance of being able to look out on the day and the disorientation felt on waking up and not knowing what ‘kind of day’ it was. This subsequently led me to investigate the origins and frustrations of weather forecasting.

Colouring the Sky looks at the ways in which artists have recorded the sky and its changes; how they have coped with trying to depict a subject that is in a constant state of flux. I have investigated the various means that artists have employed to record this most transient of subjects. Until the camera was invented in the middle of the nineteenth century artists not only drew and painted the sky and its phenomena, they also documented it using notations in various formats.

In Traveling (in Body and Mind), I have reflected on the developments in transport systems that had their origins in the early nineteenth century. I have also looked at the impact of travel on our mental processes and the ways in which it alters consciousness. At the other extreme there is the activity of simply walking, moving through the world at a natural pace as did William and Dorothy Wordsworth in the nineteenth century and artists like Hamish Fulton today. By combining these two forms of transport, the quick (airplanes and cars) and the slow (walking), very extreme variations in landscapes and climates can be experienced.
Word Painting suggests that the language of the weather can be read as a form of poetry. The essay is based on John Ruskin's habit of describing the sky and its changes through which we are able to imagine or call to mind an image through the evocative use of text. Many artists in the nineteenth century wrote about what they saw in highly descriptive language, John Constable was among them. Scientists too used poetically expressive texts to describe their discoveries. Luke Howard, who gave the clouds their names, did more than purely state facts in his weather predictions; he turned them into poems. I also investigate the contemporary use of text especially in combination with photographs as manifested in the work of the artists Hamish Fulton and Roni Horn.

Beyond the Clouds looks at a number of different atmospheric conditions, other than clouds, that artists and writers have represented. They include, mist and fog, rainbows, wind and rain and I have written about them from personal experience and also from the encounters of these phenomena by other artists. The essay allows me to include historical and scientific references, from rainbow science to the Beaufort Scale, which, like the naming of clouds, has remained almost unchanged and in use since the nineteenth century when it was devised.

An English Accent examines the very peculiar relationship that the English have with the weather. It especially looks at the ways in which the weather has entered the English psyche through poetry and art. It investigates the ways in which the elements, as represented in paintings, have formed our views of England and the English.

Sunshine and Showers is an investigation of the ways in which the weather influences our outlook on the world. I have included a short history of the connections between the weather and our moods, from the writings of Aristotle, and investigated its effects on John Constable and John Ruskin who appear to have been especially affected by it. A weather forecast I read in 1996 led me to examine the dual meanings of certain words, the ones that can be used to describe moods as well as conditions of the sky and I also briefly touch on the ways in which the sky can alter our perception of the world around us.

In many ways I have only touched on the themes I have explored and there is a significant amount of material I have not been able to include. I have ordered the essays in a particular way, however there is no real chronology and I would like them to be read simply as an exploration into a special era in the history of England and the English.
4.1 In such an age as this

The early nineteenth century was an exceptional time when public interest in science and the natural world burgeoned and artists and scientists had considerable influence on each other. Many artists and writers became more aware of the world around them and made more direct contact with nature and the environment. Landscape painting in Britain reflected this in its more analytical representations of the environment. Conversely, artists' curiosity about the sciences was matched by scientists' interest and participation in the arts. Mary Somerville (1780 - 1872) for example, a mathematician whose research interests included magnetism, astronomy and geology, also painted and wrote prose. She demonstrates not only her scientific expertise but also her knowledge of art and artists in this descriptive passage written during a trip to Italy, 'In this wide expanse [at Lake Albano] we could see the thunderclouds forming and rising grandly over the sky before the storm began. In the early morning I have frequently watched the vapour condensed into a cloud as it rose into the cool air; in the evening the sunsets were glorious. Fascinated by the brilliant colouring I attempted to paint what Turner alone could have represented.'

Both the artists John Constable (1776 – 1837) and J.M.W. Turner (1775 – 1851) embraced the new interest in science as they sought new ways to represent nature and the environment around them, in particular the sky and its phenomena. Constable was one of a number of artists who kept abreast of scientific discoveries and in the mid 1830s he gave a series of public lectures at the Royal Institution, an apt location given his growing interest. In 1836 he presented a lecture titled, Aesthetics, Representation and Creativity in Science, in which he proclaimed that, 'In such an age as this, painting should be understood, not looked on with blind wonder, not considered only as poetic inspiration, but as a pursuit, legitimate, scientific and mechanical [...] Painting is a science and should be pursued as an inquiry into the laws of nature. Why then may not landscape painting be considered as a branch of natural philosophy, of which pictures are but the experiments?'

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2 The Royal Institution came into being in 1799 as an institution 'for diffusing the Knowledge, and facilitating the General Introduction of Useful Mechanical Inventions and Improvements; and for teaching, by courses of Philosophical Lectures and Experiments, the application of Science to the Common Purposes of Life.' (From the Royal Institution managers' Minutes, vol. 1, March 1799-March 1800, p. 1, 9 March 1799. Published by the Royal Institution and Scolar Press [1972] cited in James Hamilton 1998, Turner and the Scientists, Tate Gallery Publishing: London, p. 13).
Turner also engaged with discoveries in science in his depictions of light, cloud, mist, water, fog, snow and steam that represented the transience of the natural world. Eventually his subject matter became light itself as he depicted the power of nature and its incessant change.

Seemingly out of nowhere, his paintings of the late 1830s and 1840s signal the irrevocable loss of a fixed source of light, the dissolution of a cone of light rays, and the collapse of the distance separating an observer from the sight of optical experience. Instead of the immediate and unitary apprehension of an image, our experience of a Turner painting is lodged amidst an inescapable temporality.\(^4\)

Flux and change are the keywords of this period and were the focus of many works of these two artists. For Turner the transitory effects of light and atmosphere became a special interest whereas for Constable, time and change as they were revealed through minute observations of nature were central to his practice. Both artists brought to the fore their interests in the atmospheric elements; clouds and weather, more than any other natural phenomena represented the world in a constant state of flux. Constable wrote in an undated letter to his friend C.R. Leslie, 'the world is wide; no two days are alike, nor even two hours.'\(^5\) indicating his awareness that nothing remains static. Turner painted such phenomena as the fleeting effects of sunrises and sunsets and light breaking through the clouds. These shifting qualities were difficult to express in static painting and in many ways were more easily expressed in words. Turner like Constable, who made notations on the backs of his paintings, often resorted to words. His were more commonly in the form of extended titles for his paintings in order to expand their temporal limitations. One such as, *The Rising Squall - Hot Wells from St Vincent's Rock, Bristol,* is typical.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century many strange and wonderful things had been classified and given their place in the order of the world, but clouds were not among them. This was despite Linnaeus (Carl von Linné) and his eighteenth century system of classification by which all things could be categorized by their genus and species. Through his system it became possible to give everything a name thereby creating a sense of order and structure out of the vast diversity of the natural world. It took in both the organic and inorganic world and through it he revealed a stable and interconnected system of nature. However the new scientific study of meteorology that was even then being taken more seriously had not been included in the process of ordering.

Observing nature in order to fit organisms into their proper 'types' many romantic writers [artists] realise, aids our abstract sense of how the natural world looks and works, but substantially mediates and prejudices specific observation. [...] It (classification) imposes structure onto nature, and yet also reveals structure we might not otherwise see. Without naming kinds of trees, birds or insects, for instance, we cannot be truly aware of the extraordinary variety of these and other kinds of life in nature. We need to keep a tally of what we see in order to know it.  

Until the early nineteenth century clouds had been represented as formless and protean; knowledge and understanding of them was haphazard. In 1802 this changed when Luke Howard (1772 - 1864), gave a lecture to a group of like-minded individuals titled 'The Modifications of Clouds.' In this lecture he outlined the ways that he had scientifically applied the Linnaean system to clouds in order to categorise them. This system of cloud classification has remained almost unchanged since then and forms the basis of today's accepted system. In his book The Invention of Clouds, Richard Hamblyn writes,

> It is an hour to be remembered by historians and daydreamers alike, for by the end of his lecture Luke Howard, by giving language to nature's most ineffable and prodigal forms, had squared an ancient and axiogenic circle. For by the end of his lecture Luke Howard had named the clouds.  
> Everyone in the room was struck by the realisation of their presence at a moment of clarity, a moment when the world seemed suddenly to have been pulled more sharply, more richly, into focus.

The naming of clouds was 'the naming not of a solid, stable thing but of a series of self-cancelling evanescences. Here was the naming of a fugitive presence that hastened to its onward dissolution. Here was the naming of clouds.' Howard claimed that there were only three basic types into which all the forms would fit and not the thousands that might have been expected. To his three basic types he added four more as modifications and said that the 'clouds continually unite, pass into one another, and disperse, but always in recognisable stages.'  

He used Latin terms that described their appearance.

*Cumulus* (lumpy or heap), *stratus* (layer), *cirrus* (a lock of hair) and *nimbus* (rain bearing). This means of classification allowed for words to be combined in order to identify more specific cloud

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8 ibid. pp. 51 – 52.  
9 ibid. p. 171.
Luke Howard’s drawings of cloud types from his * Modifications of Clouds*, 1803
shapes such as, *humilis* (humble), *mediocris* (average or medium-sized), *congestus* (swollen),
*undulatus* (undulating or forming in waves), *castellanus* (castle-like), *lenticularis* (lens-shaped),
*uncinus* (hooked), *fibratus* (fibrous), *nebulosis* (nebulous or fine), *pileus* (felt cap), *incus* (anvil) and
*mammatus* (breast).

However his Latin names proved to be slightly problematic, as they did not relate to the
spoken English of the nineteenth century. What Howard considered to be easy names were
actually quite hard to remember. In an attempt to rectify this other amateur meteorologists
invented alternative names to be used in place of Howard’s. For example, his contemporary
John Bostock devised,

*Arc:* a body of clouds, stretching in nearly parallel lines over a considerable part of the heavens, and
converging in a point in the horizon.
*Linear arc:* long parallel lines or threads.
*Mottled arc:* small rounded clouds, lying side by side or in rows.
*A wreathed arc:* resembling a volume of smoke, as it rises from a chimney top.
*A feathered arc:* resembling feathers, having a linear centre and lateral branches.
*Shaded clouds:* when the clouds are formed into rounded masses of greater or lesser extent, one side of
which is very much darker than the other side.
*Piled clouds and rolling clouds:* large rounded clouds, which appear as if they were heaped and rolled
one upon the other.
*Tufts:* clouds, which resemble bunches of hair, the fibres of which are sometimes disposed in a
perfectly irregular manner.
*Flocks:* when clouds form larger and compact masses than those which I have called *tufts.*

Bostock’s terms however, were not only inaccurate but they lacked the precision of Luke
Howard’s. Another attempt to come up with more memorable names was made by Thomas
Forster following a request that he made to a group of artists. He asked them, as they were
about to embark on a painting trip through the mountains of Wales, to make notes and sketch
the changes in the clouds so that they could be compared to clouds that formed over flat lands.
On return, the artists said that they could not remember Howard’s Latin terms, leading Forster
to invent his own. This was his attempt.

*Curl-Cloud.* The old name in Latin by Mr. Howard, is Cirrus, a curl; Cirrulus and curl being the
diminutive.
*Stacken-Cloud,* or Cumulus, from the verb to stack, to heap up.
*Fall-Cloud* or Stratus, being the falling, or subsidence of watery particles in the evening.
*Sonder-Cloud,* or Cirrocumulus, is a sundered cloud, made up of separated orbs. The characteristik of
this cloud being the gathering together in a bed, of little clouds, yet so far asunder as not to touch.
*Wane-Cloud,* or Cirrostratus; form the waning or subsiding state of this cloud in all its forms.
*Twain-Cloud,* or Cumulonimbus, made often by the twining or uniting of two clouds together.
*Rain-Cloud,* or Nimbostratus, speaks for itself. So we can have *Storm-cloud, Thunder-cloud,* &C.

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10 ibid. p. 52.
Journal of Natural Philosophy, 26, pp. 310-311.
Forster's terms too could not be memorised by the artists and they found that some of the clouds could not be accounted for by his nomenclature. The debates about naming went on for quite a number of years and are too involved to be included here, however in 1891 at the International Meteorological Conference in Munich it was recommended that Luke Howard's classification system should be accepted.

In 1820, Luke Howard's nomenclature inspired the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792 – 1822) to write *The Cloud*. He describes each cloud type in the stanzas, verbally moving through them, linking them and dispersing them spatially. His poem acknowledges the sameness of 'cloud' but also recognises the differences, of the change and flux within it.

I bring the fresh flowers for the thirsting flowers,  
From the seas and streams;  
(Cirrus)
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid  
In their noon-day dreams  
(Cumulus)
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken  
The sweet buds every one,  
(Stratus)
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,  
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,  
And whiten the green plains under,  
(Nimbus)
And then again I dissolve it in rain,  
And laugh as I pass in thunder.
I am the daughter of Earth and Water,  
And the nursling of the Sky;  
I am the daughter of Earth and Water,  
And the nursling of the Sky;  
I pass through the pores of the oceans and shores;  
I change but I cannot die.

Howard continued his pursuit of knowledge about clouds and weather and in London he kept a journal in which he recorded the weather conditions in the capital on a daily basis from 1801 - 1841. He also gave public lectures on the subject. In 1837 James Lucas published Howard’s book, *Seven Lectures on Meteorology*, in which he systematically listed the phenomena of the atmosphere, described them and where he could he made detailed analyses.\(^{13}\)

\(^{12}\) ibid, p 209 from Thomas Forster 1816, 'Specimen of a New Nomenclature for Meteorological Science' in *Gentleman's Magazine* 86, part 1, pp. 131-2.

\(^{13}\) The descriptions of the seven lectures are from Edward Morris (ed) 2000, *Constable’s Clouds: paintings and cloud studies by John Constable*, National Galleries of Scotland and National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, p. 152.
LECTURE FIRST  
Constitution and Properties of the Atmosphere.

SECOND  
Constant and variable winds, climates and seasons.

THIRD  
Cycles of temperature; increase and decrease of the heat through the seasons; mean and extreme temperatures of the years, months and climate.

FOURTH  
The Barometer, its principal, construction and variations: relation of these to the weather and seasons; Evaporation and the Hygrometer; Rain and its proportions in different seasons.

FIFTH  
The Clouds: their varieties or modifications of forms and structure; the manner of their production, suspension and resolution into invisible vapour, or descent in rain, snow or hail; Thunderstorms and their effects; Whirlwinds, Water-Spouts.

In this essay Howard quotes from James Thomson's poem *The Castle of Indolence* of 1748,\(^{14}\)

> Oft, as he traversed the cerulean field,  
> And mark'd the Clouds that drove before the wind;  
> Ten thousand glorious systems would he build,  
> Ten thousand great ideas fill'd his mind;  
> But with the clouds they fled, and left no trace behind.

Howard concluded that clouds were 'the subjects of grave theory and practical research. They are now shewn to be governed, in their production, suspension and destruction, by the same fixed Laws which pervade every other department of nature.'\(^{15}\) He also said of them that,

> They shade us from the heat - they distribute, and as it were, economise the light, sending it by multiplied reflections into our dwellings - and with it the cheering influence it conveys. They warn us of the changes of the seasons - they announce the shower and bring it, letting fall the kindly blessing upon our labours. They serve (there is no reason to doubt it) even as blankets to keep us warm by night - checking the radiation from the soil [...]. I might add, and it might come not unsuitably last, (though not the lowest consideration), that they are at times, lovely and glorious objects to behold; inspiring cheerful sensations, and inviting the youthful imagination to revel in the changeable variety of their forms. [...] view of the sky and its many changes - to a state of mind in which we may read as well as behold; and lay up stores for future use in refection within ourselves, and in communication to others.'\(^{16}\)

SIXTH  

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SEVENTH
Colour of the sky, Cyanometer: Night, twilight, daylight: shooting stars and fiery meteors; Meteorites or stars falling through the air: Refraction by the air, its curious effects: Ignis fatuus, so called; Aurora borealis: conclusion of the course.

However despite Howard's classifications and his attempts to account for cloud formations, meteorological predictions continue to be unreliable, even today with computer technology to replace observation alone. 'Yet meteorology is not an exact science. It is, rather, a search for narrative order among events governed not by laws alone but by the shapeless caprices of the atmosphere.' Rational science is the basis of contemporary meteorology, although L.C.W. Bonacina suggests that scientists should pay more attention to its artistic side. In 1939 he wrote,

The artistic side of meteorology comprises those scenic influences of sky, atmosphere, weather and climate which form part of our natural human environment. [...] meteorologists have not paid much attention to this aspect of weather study. The reason, however, is not because they lack a sense of the beautiful in nature but because they have conceived meteorology to be a science - only concerned with scientific methods of investigation. This attitude is, of course, within limits correct, but it should be modified to the extent of realising that the scientific and artistic methods are only different modes of approach to the phenomena of the self-same world, and that each, if cautiously but resolutely coordinated with the other, is bound to open up wider vistas of truth.

The early nineteenth century saw the beginning of an ordered and rationalised world. However in the twentieth century some doubt has been introduced into our seemingly stable world. Not only has Chaos theory been introduced, but man too appears to be capable of upsetting the climate simply through living. Disputes continue about this topic; some scientists are adamant that we are altering the world we inhabit through overuse of fossil fuels and certain chemicals, while others dispute this. What is certain is that what once appeared as weather 'patterns' are becoming more and more unpredictable. As politicians argue and human beings seem unprepared to give up any aspect of their consumer lifestyle, it may be time for artists to become interested in science once more. It could be that artists, who, like their nineteenth century counterparts, are able to articulate an imaginative inner world in relation to the experienced outer one, will be the ones to instigate change and present an alternative way of representing the world.

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Youthful John Constable and J.M.W. Turner
4.2 The Climates of Constable and Turner

The experience of an exquisite sunrise or sunset may bring to mind J.M.W. Turner, just as the distraction of a billowing cumulus at midday may evoke John Constable. The names of Constable and Turner are synonymous with representations of the sky and atmospheric effects. They lived and worked around the same period of the nineteenth century, met each other on a couple of occasions but in many ways were worlds apart.

Constable and Turner were the main advocates of an increased prominence in the sky as subject matter in art between 1800 and 1820. They both used it to express certain conditions and moods in their work using various atmospheric phenomena as their source. Neither of them actually set out to be inventive with the skies in their work; this happened later following their encounters with certain publications, when they combined what they read with what they observed. Both spent long periods of their lives engaged with what was happening above their heads and they recorded it both visually and textually although their respective interests were quite different.

_It is no accident that, in tranquil reverie, we follow the slope which returns us to our childhood solitude._

Growing up in Suffolk with its sense of vast space, due to the flatness of the land and low horizons, John Constable had no choice but to be very aware of the sky. His father was a landowner and farmer and one of Constable's tasks as a boy was to make sure the windmill faced the right direction to catch the wind. This meant that he had to know when strong winds were forecast in order to turn the blades, and he did this by observing the sky, especially the clouds, their shapes and speed. His country childhood was a very special time and all his adult life, he continued to refer to his childhood experiences in his letters and in his paintings. Suffolk was always 'home', even though he never lived there after his marriage, and it epitomised for him all that represented England.

J.M.W. Turner on the other hand grew up in Covent Garden and had to leave central London to even glimpse the sky, surrounded as he was by the architecture of the city and its smoke and smog. As a young boy, he used to go to Hampstead Heath and lie on his back for long periods of time watching the clouds and sky and later, back home he made paintings of what

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he had seen. This formed a pattern for his adult life; he would make sketches of the world around him through direct observation and participation in it, which he later translated into major paintings. As he grew up Turner compensated for his enclosed childhood by travelling and seeing the world to the extent that it was possible at that time. He was always on the move, travelling the length and breadth of the British Isles and across the English Channel to France and as far as Italy, as well as other countries that he had to pass through to reach his various destinations. During his travels he filled copious sketchbooks and notebooks that he later referred to when composing his paintings back in his studio.

There were differences also, between the two artists, in their personal lives. John Constable had an enduring and stable married life with his childhood sweetheart, Maria with whom he had seven children. Turner never married although he had several mistresses and illegitimate children. In his paintings Turner epitomised the flux and change, and the volatility and shifting light of his experiences of life.

John Constable never went abroad, not even to Wales or Scotland; in fact he hardly left South East England. He divided his time between London and Brighton with frequent visits to towns such as Salisbury where he had friends. He hated London with its dirty walls and streets and hankered after Suffolk. Like Turner he studied at the Royal Academy Schools, but during this period in London he was particularly unhappy because of his inability to see the sky clearly. He referred to the haze of smoke that blanketed the city in a letter he wrote to a friend in which he said that the sky appeared as a pearl might look through a burnt glass. This analogy of the sky with a pearl could be an early indication of how precious he held it to be. Later, when he too discovered Hampstead Heath, he moved his family there where they made their home each summer for a number of years, where he painted and his wife convalesced from her chronic illnesses. From his elevated location on Hampstead Heath, 500 feet above London, Constable was in the unusual position of being able to see certain clouds from above. 

'...and for the first time Constable could, nay, had to, look down on mist and fog [...] this must have had a profound effect on a painter whose earlier visual experiences in East Anglia had been confined to flat land well below the sky.'\(^2\) This was as close to the clouds that Constable ever got except for one time when he went to paint in the mountains. Unlike other artists of this period who were also engaged in similar activities, he did not become over-

awed by the mountains. Those artists made them the focal point of their paintings whereas Constable sketched the clouds and the atmospheric phenomena that surrounded them. However, mountains gave Turner the material for many of his paintings, as did unusual experiences, heroic tales and certain historical events that had occurred in mountainous regions. For example, his painting of Hannibal crossing the Alps had its origins in a thunderstorm that he experienced on a painting trip to Yorkshire. During the storm, Turner made notes of its form and colour on the back of an envelope. He was offered better materials, a proper sketchbook, but he persisted with the envelope not wanting to break his concentration. After the storm subsided it is recorded that he turned to his host, Walter Fawkes, and explained to him that within two years the brief sketches would result in a painting that he would title, *Snowstorm: Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps.*

Constable’s work is restricted to the seasons of spring, summer and early autumn. In his paintings there are few, if any references to ice, snow or frost, which is strange considering the climate of England. Although he was never as fragile as his wife, he too was not strong physically. As most of his paintings had their beginnings in studies or sketches that he made in the open air, this could be the reason for his concentration on the warmer times of the year. Turner, on the other hand, depicted all seasons, including winter and he had a thirst for first-hand knowledge and subjected himself to extreme situations in his quest for experiences. This diary entry of his from his first sketching trip to Wales in 1792 when he was just seventeen indicates that he had always subjected himself to discomfort in order to experience natural effects.

> Had a very rough and tedious passage – up the Menai the wind blowing hard against the tide – did not reach Caernarvon till dusk. But tho weather was hazy on the water, the view of the Caernarvon hills beautiful – seem to be from the rays of the setting sun impregnated with gold and silver. [Next day] Friday – Went on the water made 2 views...³

Turner is most known for his effects of grandeur and exaggerated skies and also through experiences like the one above, for the more unusual or paroxysmal moods of the atmosphere that few other artists cared about.

Rather than paint the numerous and various forms of atmospheric phenomena, as did Turner, Constable chose a selective range, predominantly cloud formations. Instead of looking for difference he tended to repeat his subjects under the varying weather conditions in which they

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were seen. For Constable clouds provided variety because of their complexity of shapes, the
time of day in which they appeared and the ways that landscape was seen because of them.
According to Karl Kroeber, Constable believed that,

One understands the earth by looking at the sky, but he also recognized that the
processes of nature are predominantly manifested in fluid, impalpable, 'unfixed'
phenomena [...] And the sky contains clouds, clouds carefully studied and
meteorologically appropriate to the season, time of day, and the oncoming nature of
the weather. Clouds are important to Constable because they embody changes of
weather. Clouds are shapes of natural transitions, and as such their variousness is not
random, but the expression of complicated, dynamic principals. [...] Constable's
clouds are real even though imagined because his imagined shapes accord with the
principals of meteorology and cloud-formation.⁴

Although Constable's work could be considered in this way to be more abstract, 'seen in
terms of essences, wind and light,'⁵ it was Turner who mastered the art of capturing the
inchoate and nebulous. He was able to paint elements that were considered to be unpaintable
such as the wind and lightning. Turner used colours that were swirling, diffused and dissolved
to evoke form. Colour enabled Turner to dispense with many earthly references and
concentrate on the effects and feelings or moods of the atmosphere. He was however, also
criticized for his way of painting. William Hazlitt (1778 – 1830) in the Weekly Examiner of
1816 said,

...Turner, the ablest landscape painter now living, whose pictures are however too
much abstractions of aerial perspective, and representations not properly the objects of
nature as of the mediums through which they are seen [...] They are pictures of the
elements of air, earth and water. The artist delights to go back to the first chaos of the
world [...] All is without form and void. Someone said of his landscapes that they
were pictures of nothing and very like. ⁶

John Ruskin (1819 – 1900) differed in his opinion.

[Turner] is glorious in conception – unfathomable in knowledge – solitary in power –
with the elements waiting upon his will, and the night and the morning obedient to his
call, sent as a prophet of God to reveal to men the mysteries of His universe, standing
like the great angel of the Apocalypse, clothed with a cloud, and with a rainbow upon
his head, and with the sun and stars given into his hand. ⁷

According to Ruskin, Turner's were always the paintings with the most feeling for the
landscape and the most beautiful. However the words and phrases with which Ruskin

Warburg and Courtauld Institute, vol. 34, p. 380.
⁷ Paul L. Sawyer 1985, Ruskin's Poetic Argument: the design of the major works, Cornell University Press:
described Turner’s paintings were almost as inchoate and obscure as Turner’s work. For example in comparing Turner with Canaletto, Ruskin said,

Thank heaven we are in sunshine again, - liquid, measureless, unfathomable, panting and melting through the chasms in the long fields of snow-white, flaked, slow-moving vapour, that guide the eye along their multitudinous waves down to the islanded rest of the Euganean hills. [...] Detail after detail, thought beyond thought, you find and feel them through the radiant mystery, inexhaustible as indistinct, beautiful, but never all revealed; secret in fullness, confused in symmetry, as nature herself is to the bewildered and foiled glance, giving out of that indistinctness, and through that confusion, the perpetual newness of the infinite, and the beautiful.8

Turner’s extraordinary atmospheric effects were described more recently in a review of his Great Watercolours at the Royal Academy in London as, ‘…the world transfigured. His light is not just a depiction of nature, but nature with the volume cranked up very loud.’9 His paintings were and continue to be almost universally admired although sometimes the titles he gave his paintings were lengthy and complex and not considered so seriously. Punch magazine once lampooned him by giving this imaginary title for what they called a ‘New Turner Painting,’ A Typhoon bursting in a Siwmoen over the Whirlpool of Maelstrom, Norway; with a ship on fire, an eclipse and the effect of a lunar rainbow.10

Like Constable, Turner also produced innumerable sketches of the sky. These included about 500 pencil drawings and watercolours in total. He produced about thirty studies before the year 1800, which preceded any influence from Luke Howard’s meteorological proclamations. In his ‘Three’ sketchbook he drew studies from observing the same patch of sky over three consecutive days and produced sixty five views that included progressions of time from morning to afternoon or sunset. However, unlike Constable, he appears not to have made any serious meteorological studies or read on the subject quite so much as Constable.11

Contrast’s work ultimately was more humble than Turner’s. His cloud studies related to particular times and places without mythological references. His inspiration came from his enquiries, through reading, about the evolving world around him; unlike Turner he was well read and articulate.

8 ibid. p. 41.
11 See my essay Clouds 1822 – 2002, that details Contrast’s engagement with the science of the day in particular Luke Howard’s naming of the clouds and Thomas Forster’s discoveries.
[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]

John Constable and J.M.W. Turner in old age
If Constable's special relationship was with clouds, then Turner's was with the sun. Like the clouds, more and more was being discovered about the sun along with the ways in which the eyes see and the brain perceives what is seen. Retinal afterimages were fascinating and even scientists damaged their eyesight by staring directly at the sun in order to subsequently look away and experience afterimages and strange effects of light. Through afterimages they discovered abstract optical experiences unrelated to any actual objects in the world. These also interested Turner who began to investigate colour in a more scientific way. The sun and the pupil and retina of the eye apparently become one in his circular structures of paintings such as Light and Colour (Goethe's Theory) – The Morning after the Deluge.

John Constable and J.M.W. Turner existed together in a particular period in time but as opposites in so many aspects of their lives and art; one whose work exemplified reason and the other emotion, one who used control and the other spontaneity and one whose work centred on observation and the other on imagination.
Lesley Duxbury, one of the houses that John Constable lived in when he painted his cloud studies, 1821 - 1822
4.3 Clouds 1822 - 2002

Augt 1. 1822/ 11 o clock A.M. / very hot with large climbing Clouds/ under the Sun/ wind westerly -

180 years later, on 1 August 2002, I squeezed into one of the ancient lifts that carry Tube passengers from the depths of the London Transport Underground system into the streets of Hampstead. It had taken me over an hour from the twentieth century squalor of Hackney and Liverpool Street Station, where I had descended, to my emergence in the village-like atmosphere of this North London suburb. I walked down Hampstead High Street just a little way before turning into Flask Walk where I found myself, seemingly, on the edge of the nineteenth century. Flask Walk led into Well Walk at the end of which was an entrance to Hampstead Heath, my destination for that day. It was quiet and clean in this part of town and I was refreshed by the ambience of such a gentle place. Across the road a blue plaque on the house opposite indicated that John Constable had lived there.

This was one of the houses that John Constable had rented for his wife and growing family between 1819 and 1824 for the sake of their health. The air was clear here on the edge of the Heath that then was still wild and very much part of the countryside with its 'green lanes, brown dells and breezy skies' as Leigh Hunt wrote in a sonnet in 1812. Many artists moved here around this time for the same reason, to get above the air pollution. It should be remembered that in this early part of the nineteenth century industrialisation was well under way; coal mines were being developed in the north of England and coal was being burned in open fireplaces over the whole country. The acrid, poisonous smoke pervaded the air and lay like a blanket over the cities and low-lying places.

It was this location that played such a vital role in the development of Constable's seminal works, the Cloud Studies that he began in 1818 and continued until 1823. Through them he developed his interest in the changing states of the weather and different effects of light, which continued for the rest of his life. The concepts of sameness and difference came to be as important as the subject itself, the sameness of the subject - the clouds - and the differing conditions under which they were seen. This conferred on the work stability and a sense of permanence that were absent in the transitory states of the sky and absent in his peripatetic life at that time. Although he never moved very far, he and his family were always looking for
[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]

John Constable, cloud studies from the years 1821 - 1822
somewhere to live with conditions beneficial to their health, especially that of his wife, Maria, but of his family in general. They returned to Hampstead, usually in late summer and stayed until winter, every year from 1819 to 1826.

Constable started painting skies in earnest when he and his family went to Hampstead to live in 1820. He painted in the open air using oil paints on heavy brown paper. These early cloud/sky studies occasionally included the tops of trees and parts of buildings but later he dispensed with all earthly references and painted purely the sky itself. During the years 1821 - 1822 he made a very special study of clouds, each one done in less than an hour. He annotated the studies on the reverse with the date - day, month and year - and the time of day, and he also made notations that referred to the weather just past or about to happen, how weather patterns and succeeding conditions were affected by earlier ones. For example, he wrote how sunshine looked after rain and how wind coming from a certain direction would affect the weather yet to come. They represent a kind of weather diary and although the studies are not dated absolutely correctly in every case they can be compared to actual records kept at the time.

On August 1 2002, the weather forecast in the Independent newspaper had stated that this day in SE England would be 'Quite warm with sunny spells. A risk of the odd shower this afternoon. Light winds. Max temp 20 -23C (68 - 73F). Tonight, mainly dry. Min temp 12C (54F)'

I continued on my way up Well Walk. Crossing a very busy road I entered Hampstead Heath along one of the many paths that criss-cross this still relatively wild part of London. I headed uphill towards the top where I hoped to view the city and obtain a vista of the sky that had inspired John Constable 180 years previously. The Heath had probably changed little since Constable's day. I was aware, however, of limited views of the sky, possibly because the trees had grown somewhat since he walked up this same hill to paint.

Here on the edge of this great metropolis it was hot and very humid. Huge billowing white clouds filled the sky. Sunlight caught their tops and blue sky appeared between them as they scuttled overhead. There was no indication of showers, simply streets of beautiful airy beings afloat in a bed of blue. There was one distraction to this, however, one that Constable certainly would not have encountered - vapour trails from the airplanes that endlessly crossed the sky from every direction and their accompanying drone. As much as I wanted to
[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]
believe that I was in the countryside, the noise and the ephemeral lines of white vapour reminded me very clearly that I was firmly situated in a city. In place of oil paint and paper, I took my camera but was unable to take a single photograph without the offending trails. Constable had none of this but occasionally he had to contend with the dark clouds of pollution that crept up the hill in the evening.

It was obvious that through the study of the clouds he was painting and the weather conditions that informed his landscapes Constable had developed an active interest in meteorology. There had been many theories about clouds’ formation but even by 1800 there was no clear explanation for their being. It wasn’t until Luke Howard’s publication in 1803 The Modifications of Clouds, that clouds were defined and classified and one of the possible reasons that Constable annotated his studies the way he did is that he was stimulated by this publication. It is also known that he owned a copy of Thomas Forster’s book Researches on Atmospheric Phenomena (1815) in which clouds were classified according to their shapes. Although it seems he wasn’t so much interested in their classification as in their shifting forms and colours as they moved across the sky, this research was his way of attempting to understand the clouds especially in order to bring greater verisimilitude to his paintings. In October 1822 Constable wrote to his friend and patron, Archdeacon Fisher, that he had painted 'about 50 careful studies of skies tolerably large'. Referring to the cloud studies he wrote:

I have not been Idle and have made more particular and general study than I have ever done in one summer...I have done a good deal of skying - I am determined to conquer all difficulties and that most arduous one among the rest...That landscape painter who does not make his skies a very material part of his composition - neglects to avail himself of one of his greatest aids. Sir Joshua Reynolds speaking of the “Landscape” of Titian & Salvator and Claude - says “Even their skies seem to sympathise with the Subject “ I have often been advised to consider my sky - as a “White Sheet drawn behind the Objects” Certainly if the Sky is obtrusive - (as mine are) it is bad, but if they are evaded (as mine are not) it is worse, they must and always shall with me make an effectual part of the composition. It will be difficult to name a class of Landscape, in which the sky is not the “key note”, the standard of “Scale”, and the chief “Organ of sentiment”. You may conceive then what a “white sheet” woud (sic) do for me, impressed as I am with these notions, and they cannot be Erroneous. The sky is the “source of light ” in nature - and governs every thing. Even our common observations on the weather of every day, are suggested by them but it does not occur to us. Their difficulty in painting both as to composition and execution is very great, because with all their brilliancy and consequence, they ought not to come forward or be hardly thought about in a picture - any more than extreme distances are’ large\(^1\)

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John Constable, cloud studies from the years 1821 - 1822
There is no evidence however, that Constable ever used or incorporated the sky studies in larger, finished works. His ‘skying’ seems to have been too specific to be used in more direct ways, though he probably referred to them for the skies in his larger paintings. They became a great reference and primary resource. His notations too indicated his understanding of the weather as a continuing process. His biographer, Charles Robert Leslie, commented on the cloud studies,

Twenty of Constable’s studies of skies made during this season, are in my possession, and there is but one among them in which a vestige of landscape is introduced. They are painted in oil, on large sheets of thick paper, and all dated, with the time of day, the direction of the wind, and other memoranda on their backs; on one, for instance, is written, ‘5th of September, 1822, 10 o’clock, morning, looking south-east, brisk wind at west. Very bright and fresh grey clouds running fast over a yellow bed, about half way in the sky. Very appropriate to the ‘coast at Osmington.’

Below are some of the notations from the backs of the cloud studies, which clearly show Constable's obsession with recording a moment in a state of flux and the consequences of that particular moment in time. I have deliberately included most of the ones I could locate as they show the very real and lasting interest that John Constable had in the sky. ‘…Constable's studies concentrated on shifting and dislocated effects of light and shade, themselves governed by wind and cloud movement. It is interesting that, as the sky studies achieve the status of independent works of art, they appear to have had little part in dictating the skies of exhibited pictures.'

1820
Hampd. 17th October 1820 Stormy sunset. Wind W

28th Octr. Fine Evening wind Gentle at S.W.

1821
Hampstead July 14 1821 6 to 7 p.m. N.W. breeze strong

5 Oclock afternoon: August (14) 1821 very fine bright and rain slightly in the morning

[3 September] Noon. Very sultry with large drops of rain falling on my palette. Light air from south-west

Sepr. 10.1821, Noon. gentle Wind at West. Very sultry after a heavey [sic] shower with thunder. Accumulated

thunder clouds passing slowly away to the south East. Very bright and hot. All the foliage sparkling ['with the' deleted] and wet

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2 ibid. p. 80.
Hampstead, Sepr 11, 1821. 10 to 11. Morning under the sun - Clouds silvery grey, on warm ground Sultry. Light wind to the S.W. fine all day - but rain in the night following

(Miday 11 September) Wind fresh at West [deletion] Sun very Hot. Looking southward exceedingly bright and vivid & Glowing. Very heavy showers in the Afternoon but a fine evening. High wind in the night.

Sepr. 12.1821. Sun setting over Harrow. This appearance of the Evening was [deletion] just after a very heavy rain […] more rain in the night which continued all the day following (the 13th) while making this sketch I observed the Moon rising very beautifully [in the deleted] due East over the heavy clouds from which the late showers had fallen. Wind Gentle rather [deletion] increasing from the North West. Rather [?North]

Sepr 13th. One o'clock. Slight wind at North West, which became tempestuous in the afternoon, With rain all the night following

Sept. 24th …10 o'clock morning wind S.W. warm & fine till afternoon, when it rained & wind got more to the north.

25 September 1821, Strong wind at west, bright light coming through Clouds which were lying one on another

Sepr 27th 1821 - 10 morning./ fine morning after Rainey /night.

Sep. 28 1821/ Noon - looking North West /windy from the S.W./ large bright clouds flying rather fast/ very stormy night followed.

Ocr. 2d. 1821. 8 to 9. Very fine still morning. Turned out a may day. Rode with Revd. Dr. White round by Highgate. Muswell Hill. Coney Hatch. Finchley. Hendon Home

9th Ocr 1821 Sun hot Wind southern with mist.

Very fine evening after a brilliant day, gentle wind South, 12th October, 1821.

Octr - 13th. 1821. - 4 to 5 afternoon - very fine with Gentle Wind at N.E.

Hampstead 31st Oct. 1821. Very fine afternoon of a beautiful day, it began with rain. Wind fresh from the West

1822
Hampstead. Monday 2 July 1822 looking NW 3PM painted in a thunder squall wind N West

Hampstead. Monday 2 [2 or 9] July 1822 looking NE 3PM [?previous to] a thunder squall wind N West

Hampstead. July 4th 1822 very fine and hot Wind, W clouds very high and climbing

29-July 1822. looking East 10 in the morning - Silvery Clouds

Evning. 31st July 1822 Shower approaching

July 31. 1822 Stormy sunset

Aught 1. 1822/ 11 o clock A.M. / very hot with large climbing Clouds/ under the Sun/ wind westerly -
Lesley Duxbury, photographs of skies over Hampstead Heath, August 2002
5 - 6 oclock Eveng Augt 31st 1822. Large clouds to the Eastward - light wind [West]

5th of September, 1822, 10 o clock, morning, looking south-east, brisk wind at west. Very bright and fresh grey clouds running fast over a yellow bed, about half way in the sky. Very appropriate to the coast at Osmington

Sepr 6. 1822 Noon. Gentle wind at west. hot and fine

Sepr. 21. 1822. 1/2pst one o clock/ looking south/ Wind very fresh at East, but warm

Sepr. 21 1822. looking South brisk Wind at East Warm & fresh. 3 oclo afternoon, 5

31st Sepr 10-11 o’clock morning looking Eastward a gentle wind to East

1823
Sunset over Harrow. From Hampstead Heath. Saturday August 9. 1823. Stormy evening after a fine day. It rained all the next day

No one is absolutely sure why Constable painted these studies. It has been assumed that by the time he had made a couple of dozen of them he would have been able to use them to forecast the weather by referring to particular configurations. It is also possible that they are not accurate recordings - they took about an hour to paint, which may not have been enough time to include all that he did in a single work; it is clear that he went back to each one later in the day or the following day to textually record what eventuated. What remains of that time is a collection of exquisitely beautiful paintings. It could have been that he simply revelled in the atmosphere that surrounded him at this high location where he would be as close as he had ever been to the clouds that so dominated his work.

My day on Hampstead Heath was also one of wonder and I took away my recordings and experiences in the form of photographic film. Later, on the other side of the world when the film was processed I was able to recall that time through the studies I had made. They were not records of the weather conditions necessarily, but images that connected me in a contradictory way to the land and a to very peculiar national sensibility.
4.4 Reading the Weather

I selected the hotel in Sydney from a website that offered accommodation with generous discounts. This particular hotel was described as 'hip, ambient and intimate.' No expense had been spared on the design of the guestroom interiors that offered 'uncomplicated sophistication, sedate and sumptuous in a contemporary atmosphere.' However the description did not include what turned out to be its most unusual feature.

We caught an evening flight from Melbourne arriving somewhat tired and headed straight to bed. Before retiring we were aware that we were occupying an extraordinarily minimal room, a white-walled cube with white bed linen and towels, the only furniture being a bed and one bedside table; no free-standing cupboards, drawers or tables. Notwithstanding the somewhat clinical atmosphere, the bed was comfortable and we quickly fell asleep. However, on waking next morning it was obvious that something was not quite right. It was light enough but an odd diffusion pervaded the room. In place of a window there was a solid sheet of translucent glass, which, although allowing light to permeate into the room did not permit the occupant to view beyond. This didn't appear to be too much of a problem until it came to getting dressed. What sort of a day was it out there? Was it raining? What would we wear? It was impossible to tell in our air-conditioned interior, what sort of day it would be.

Over the years we have become more and more dependent on knowing what to expect, weather-wise, of the day ahead in order to equip ourselves for all it might bring, including beyond simply the temperature or precipitation; the weather may actually impact on our mood and well being. It is an element of nature that, even in the most built-up and sophisticated of locations - climate-controlled buildings and air-conditioned transport systems - we are unable to avoid. Daily, we are obliged to prepare ourselves for an encounter with nature within the comforts of our culture. Jonathan Bate, a literary critic and essayist, says that 'the weather is the primary sign of the inextricability of culture and nature [...] that sailors and peasants know the power of the weather in ways that politicians and scientists do not. We have no choice but to live with the weather.\(^1\) People like sailors and farmers have to live with the weather and conduct their lives and occupations in all conditions. They also have ways of predicting the weather that could be considered unorthodox in relation to synoptic charts and

computer calculations; their past methods of recording and forecasting, continue to be recalled at some time or another by all of us.

Red sky in the morning
Is a sailor’s sure warning,
Sky red at night
Is the sailor’s delight.

In her catalogue essay ‘Meteorologica,’ for the 2004 exhibition at the Tate Modern, *The Weather Project*, the curator Susan May says, ‘For island nations such as Britain, where the study of the signs and patterns of changing atmospherics was imperative for the survival of sailors and farmers, the weather has consequently played a significant part in the collective consciousness.’

Attempts have been made throughout history to comprehend the weather and through understanding, to control it. From earliest civilisations to the present, there are texts that relate to forecasts, descriptions and explanations of all manner of atmospheric phenomena from rainbows to thunder and lightning, the colours of the sky at sunrise and sunset and to those most inexplicable of all forms, the clouds. "When a dark halo surrounds the moon, the month will bring rain or gather clouds" declares a four-thousand-year-old Chaldean prophesy. "When a cloud grows dark in heaven, a wind will blow" forewarns another.

In the 1660s, Robert Hooke the first curator of experiments at the Royal Institute, became preoccupied by the weather for a while. He kept a weather journal in which 'he devised a language with which to describe the "faces of the sky [...] so many, that many of them want proper Names." In proposing that the problem of weather lay more in naming it than in the task of mutually recording it, Hooke knew he was on to something interesting'. Although his interest in the atmosphere around him was fairly short-lived Hooke did spend time attempting to come to terms with the unaccountable variety of the clouds and that their variety was associated with change in the weather. Richard Hamblyn quotes one of Hooke's forecasts in Thomas Sprat's publication of 1667, *The History of the Royal-Society of London, For the Improving of Natural Knowledge*,

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Weather maps from English daily newspapers

[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]
Here should be observed, whether the Sky be clear or clouded; and if clouded, after what manner; whether with high Exhalations or great white Clouds, or dark thick ones. Whether those Clouds afford Fogs or Mists, or Sleet, or Rain, or Snow, &c. Whether the underside of those Clouds be flat or waved and irregular, as I have often seen before thunder. Which way they drive, whether all one way, or some one way, some another; and whether any of these be the same with the Wind that blows below.  

Hooke then went on to describe a wide variety of cloud formations that are considered to be the first weather forecast.

Let **Cleer** signify a very cleer Sky without any Clouds or Exhalations: *Checker'd* a cleer Sky, with many great white round Clouds, such as are very usual in Summer. *Hazy*, a Sky that looks whitish, by reason of the thickness of higher parts of the Air, by some Exhalation not formed into Clouds. *Thick*, a Sky more whitened by a greater company of Vapours. Let **Hairy** signify a Sky that hath many small, thin and high Exhalations, which resemble locks of hair, or flakes of Hemp or Flax: whose Varieties may be exprest by *straight or curv'd*, &c. according to the resemblance they bear. Let *Water'd* signify a Sky that has many thin high and small Clouds, looking almost like a water'd Tabby, and in some places a Mackerel Sky. Let a Sky be called *Waved*, when those Clouds appear much bigger and lower, but much after the same manner. *Cloudy*, when the Sky has many thick dark Clouds. *Lowring*, when the Sky is not much overcast, but hath also underneath many thick dark Clouds, which threaten rain. The signification of *gloomy, foggy, misty, sleet ing, driving, rainy, snowy*, reaches or racks *variable*, &c. are well known, they being very commonly used.

Today we rely mainly on text and diagrams, moving or still, in newspapers and on television to find out what the day ahead might hold. We constantly try to improve descriptions both verbal and visual to make sense of phenomena, which are of so much importance in many ways to millions of people worldwide. Satellite images supplement simple words and computer generated animations of clouds, rain and sunshine sweeping across the globe give us an astronaut's view of what we should expect in the ensuing three to four days. We long to know what lies ahead in order to plan our lives.

I have a small paperback book titled *Instant Weather Forecasting*. It is 'a 24-colour photograph guide to weather forecasting from the clouds, for use by walkers, farmers, fishermen, yachtsmen, golfers, holiday-makers; in fact anyone to whom the weather in the near future is of vital importance.'  

It has been in continuous print since it was first published in 1968. In the Preface, the author Alan Watts noted that, 'The reviewers seemed to respond to a book about the difficult subject of meteorology which they could immediately relate to, even if they didn't fully understand how I'd arrived at the inferences quoted in the

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5 ibid. p. 174.
6 ibid. p. 177.
Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.
book.' Even though this book contains twenty four full-page pictures it is the written
descriptions that 'properly illustrate the aspects of weather being discussed'. Watts hopes that
the more than half a million people who have purchased his book 'will continue to be able to
assuage their desire to become weather forecasters'.

This book is a small example of a contemporary text on weather forecasting and it illustrates
one of the ways in which words about the weather are privileged over images in spite of
advanced technologies. It says something about our experience and knowledge of the sky and
how we contemplate it in our imagination; how weather words evoke images and allow us to
relate to the atmospheric world around us in individual ways.

In the early to mid eighteen hundreds, Rear Admiral Robert Fitzroy, the captain of the Beagle
with Charles Darwin on board when he first had inklings of the Origins of Species, was a keen
meteorologist. He published several books of meteorology and after his voyaging career
became the first chief of the meteorological department of the Board of Trade in London.
During his voyages of exploration he daily wrote long poetic descriptions of the sky, possibly
as a way of making sense of the world above him as he attempted to understand the strange
new lands he encountered. His descriptions in many ways could have been written anywhere;
they give no indication as to his location except when written as a diary entry, where they
appear alongside his descriptions of more solid material. This other aspect of the phenomena
of the sky is that they happen everywhere and are similar from place to place. In The Weather
Book: a manual of practical meteorology, Fitzroy wrote entries such as,

After fine clear weather, the first signs in the sky, of a coming change, are usually
light streaks, curls, wisps or mottled patches of white distant clouds, which increase,
and are followed by an overcasting of murky vapour that grows into cloudiness. This
appearance, more or less oily or watery, as wind or rain will prevail, is an infallible
sign.
Light, delicate, quiet tints or colours, with soft undefined forms of clouds, indicate
and accompany fine weather; but unusual or gaudy hues, with hard, definitely outlined
clouds, foretell rain and probably strong winds. Misty clouds forming, or hanging on
heights, show wind and rain coming, if they remain, increase or descend. If they rise
or disperse, the weather will improve or become fine.
More than usual twinkling of the stars, indistinctness or apparent multiplication of the
moon's horns, haloes, 'wind-dogs' and the rainbow, are more or less significant of
increasing wind, if not approaching rain, to be expected.

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8 ibid. p. 3.
9 Rear Admiral Fitzroy 1863, The Weather Book: a manual of practical meteorology, Longman, Green,
At an earlier date he had written, in a publication for Her Majesty's Stationery Office, a description of the sky at sunrise and sunset and how the colours of the sky can forecast the weather to come, reminiscent of the little sailor's poem referenced above.

Whether clear or cloudy, a rosy sky at sunset presages fine weather; a red sky in the morning bad weather, or much wind (if not rain); - a grey sky in the morning fine weather; a high dawn, wind; a low dawn, fair weather. Soft-looking or delicate clouds foretell fine weather, with moderate or light breezes; - hard-edged oily-looking clouds, wind. A dark, gloomy, blue sky is windy; - but a light bright blue sky indicates fine weather. Also a bright yellow sky at sunset presages wind, a pale yellow, wet; - and thus by the prevalence of red, yellow or grey tints the forthcoming weather may be foretold very nearly: indeed, if aided by instruments, exactly.  

In these texts, Fitzroy appears to invite his readers to use imagination to conjure up shades of red and grey, blue and yellow in the mind in order to tell what might be in store, both physically and mentally, for 'gloomy' and 'bright' are also moods as well as conditions of the sky. For John Constable, the changes in the weather and its effects on the landscape, 'so as to note the day, the hour, the sunshine and the shade' occupied him for most of his life. In his paintings clouds constantly form, dissipate and become blue sky, are blown away by the wind or dissolve into rain.

Constable wanted to perfect his skyes, to capture a moment that also encapsulated the weather of that particular day. His skyes are so realistic that they both summarise the weather of the previous few hours and provide a forecast of the weather to come.  

We now have more reliable means to forecast the weather and few people can 'read' the clouds to predict what lies ahead. The weather is an integral part of every daily news bulletin, on radio or television. Weather maps in newspapers began to appear in England in 1848 when, 'the London Daily News published what British meteorologist William Marriott called the "first telegraphic daily weather report"'. These early weather 'forecasts' were more like recapitulations, as by the time information was received and translated into print it was already well beyond the event. The British Broadcasting Company showed the first televised weather map in 1936. It showed a simple weather chart with temperatures, sky conditions and rainfall over parts of the British Isles. Later, after World War II, news programmes that included weather forecasts became standard and have continued since.

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[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]

Top: BBC weather presenters
Bottom: Satellite image of cloud cover over the British Isles
When satellite imaging became possible in the early 1960s, what everyone had suspected was patently clear - England, and the British Isles, *could* be completely blanketed in cloud. Under these conditions the outline of the country had to be superimposed *over* the cloud cover on the weather maps in order to define it and to indicate its location; no amount of technical wizardry could actually take the cloud away. The view from above was exactly the same as the one from underneath. Despite smiling weather forecasters presiding over their stylised charts, all the population needed to do was to look upwards through the screen of their window for a glimpse of blue, that elusive break in the cloud cover, that would hint at the possibility of better things to come.
4.5 Colouring the sky

A number of years ago I used to travel once a week by train to the Western District of Victoria to teach for a few hours. I left around lunchtime for the almost 4 hour trip, and returned the following evening. I always prepared well for my journey with lunch, a good book to read and a small sketchbook and a pencil. As we rattled out of Colac, about halfway, the landscape became lower and flatter and the sky higher and wider. I had few fellow travellers at this time of the day and I was almost always lucky enough to get a window seat facing the engine. I invariably sat on the left side of the carriage, anticipating the first glimpse of the sea as the train approached my destination. The view out of the window was to the south and usually in the latter half of the trip I would get out my sketchbook and pencil and draw the landscape that I saw out of the window of the train. It was pretty unremarkable - stunted, wind-bowed cypress trees, black and white cows, and the odd faraway remains of a volcano. In a disciplined way I would look and draw without taking my eyes off my subject or I would memorise what I could see and then quickly draw it in my book. Trees and cows although themselves, stationary, flew past my window at great speed, while the sky appeared frozen and immobile. Somehow, in spite of this, the cows and trees became easy to draw while the sky never ceased to be a problem. Even though they appeared quite still, the clouds were shifting and reforming almost imperceptibly and there was never an opportunity to focus on any particular point or form, as there was with the cows. I filled many sketchbooks with simple pencil drawings and notations that referred to what I saw and was unable to record.

I always take a sketchbook with me when I go away and over the years I have taken a range of drawing materials - watercolours in a metal case, a single pencil, felt-tipped pens and most recently a set of pencils of varying shades of grey, not at all good for drawing blue skies and white clouds but perfect for overcast days. Along with the sketchbook I always also take a camera, sometimes with a telephoto lens and yellow, red and orange filters to emphasise the clouds in black and white photographs. I now have a lightweight, automatic camera to take on longer walking expeditions. Often, I neither sketch nor take photographs, but I always have some means of recording an unusual view or formation of clouds.

Until photography was invented in the early nineteenth century and the camera became widely used there was no way of stopping the clouds in their tracks, freezing them in a
fraction of a second. Artists had to record them as they shifted and reformed, along with rising and setting suns and the changes in colour of the sky. For them, as for me, it wasn't possible to record all the information contained in the view with a single pencil and some artists included written notations on the drawings, down the side of the page or they used a numerical code.

The sky has always been an integral part of landscape paintings but it wasn't until the beginning of the nineteenth century in England that artists attempted to record it as faithfully as possible, to depict not only the landscape but also the meteorological conditions under which it was seen. This attempt at verisimilitude coincided with the changes taking place in scientific and artistic circles in relation to their understanding of and curiosity about the natural world. However, as I have hinted above, it was quite a complex thing to do. The medium mattered a great deal. Pencils were the favoured tools for speed of recording, watercolour allowed for speed and colour while oil paints were cumbersome and slow. John Ruskin advised that sitting still and using direct observation were of importance when depicting skies. This was obviously taken at face value especially for the first fifty years of the nineteenth century, as there are very many sketches from this period.

In Europe from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, painting manuals had mentioned the importance of the observation of nature especially in relation to the sky, and gave recipes for the mixing of colours that might be used to record its changing effects. The Illuminierbuch published in Basle in 1549 is the earliest known painting manual in print. A passage in this book was repeated and reproduced word for word in each of its republications until the nineteenth century:

The mixtures of clouds are taught by the heavens themselves. The colours of clouds should be painted according to the many different shades, which may be observed daily in the firmament. Every illuminator and painter I would therefore refer to the exalted Creator of the heavens, who colours them with so many wonderful tints, so that they appear ash-coloured, fire-coloured, red, reddish yellow and in all sorts of mixtures. An attentive pupil must therefore always see to it that he imitates such heavenly mixtures carefully in colours. Also the distribution of the clouds spread hither and thither over the blue sky. When painting the clouds, observe and attend well. For it often happens that in a clear sky a small cloud gathers like a great snowball. Then, it may be behind another little cloud, a beautiful red sunshine appears, as the Creator himself presents it and shows it. I know of no other master who could make a more faithful example of it. 1

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Top right: Thomas Girtin, *Cloud Study*, 1794
The remainder are from Alexander Cozens, ‘repertory of cloud shapes’, 1770
In the late eighteenth century, Alexander Cozens developed a system for representing the landscape. He invented his 'blot' method, by which he would randomly spill ink on to a piece of paper, often fold the paper to produce a Rorschach-type blot and use this as an imaginative devise to begin a landscape. The blots did not include the sky however. For this element of the landscape he 'developed a repertory of cloud shapes for the amateur and professional artist. He drew up a classification in about 1770 of the most common variations and illustrated them in twenty engraved cloud schema later incorporated into his manual of 1785/86' 2. From a landscape worked out from the 'blot' starting point a sky could then be selected from the collection of schema. Cozens gave instructions on how to paint the chosen sky using washes of drawing ink, gradually building up the darker parts with further washes until the sky was complete.

Adapt a sky proper to the landscape, from the collection of skies. Draw the disposition and forms of the clouds with black-lead very faintly, placing the greatest quantity of clouds on that side of the picture where the landscape part is lowest, in order to preserve the balance of the composition. Mix, in a cup, a very light degree of drawing ink and water, wash the whole sky, except those parts which are intended to receive a very bright light, and let it remain to dry. With the same colour pass over those parts again which require to be darker. Make the colour a little darker and retouch wherever it is thought proper. Thus proceed until the sky is finished. 3

He had intended to take these methods further and produce another publication. This would have demonstrated a number of styles of composition, the conditions under which they could be seen and a selection of objects or categories from which the student could mix and match to produce their finished landscapes. It was never published, however, but it would have included colours as they related to the changing atmosphere and the ways in which wind, fog, sunrise and sunset altered colour and tonal values.

The early nineteenth century brought new approaches to the depiction of the natural world that coincided with new technologies and scientific discoveries. One technological advance was the pencil, a thin strip of carbon and lead encased in wood, which occurred in the later years of the eighteenth century. This gave artists not only a more portable implement, but also a far more versatile drawing tool. The pencil could record quickly what was being observed. It could be used with more or less pressure to produce fine delicate lines or heavier, more definite ones and could also be used flat to record solid, tonal areas. A pencil could also be used as a writing implement to record notes. Many artists made notations either on the

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2 ibid. p. 136.
3 ibid. p. 136.
[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]

Drawings with colour notes across them, from the early 19th century
drawings themselves or close by, in the margins of sketchbooks or along the edges. Joseph Wright of Derby made memory notes along the bottom of his drawings recording phrases such as, 'the middle part is Blue' or that the edges of the clouds were 'very light and surrounded by Blueish Grey'. J.M.W. Turner made colour notes across the whole page on which he had drawn a skyscape in 1816. There were over twenty five of them indicating colours as general as 'red' or 'blue' to more descriptive notations such as 'dark shadowey [sic] clouds'. Some artists, such as Samuel Palmer, used a key in which numbers were added to the drawing or sketch and that corresponded to information located down the side of the image. His notes gave more information of shade and hue along with colour. "1 is 'Deep Blue', 2 is 'somewhat lighter', 3 is 'Brilliant light of a silver yet warm hue melted and broken into fine neutral grey.' 5

England's climate is not the most favourable for sitting out in to sketch the landscape. It is interesting to note that the sky studies that John Constable produced between 1821-22 were mostly made in the months of July, August, September and early October, late summer/early autumn in England. Some artists did however, experience the capricious climate first hand and endured it in order to capture the fleeting atmospheric effects. Thomas Girtin, for one, exposed himself 'to all weathers, sitting out for hours in the rain to observe the effects of storms and clouds upon the atmosphere.' 6 Girtin used watercolour, a medium that was not only portable and suited to speedy recording but also had a luminosity and transparency appropriate to recording skies. In general, British artists preferred watercolour for painting the sky - perhaps the unpredictable British climate played a part in this - while their continental counterparts made more use of oils.

Cornelius Varley, like Constable, made long notations about the weather conditions. His however were along the bottom of edge of the works and could be especially descriptive like this one that accompanied a panoramic drawing of a view of Welsh mountains. 'Fine weather wind S.E. Clouds coming towards me all the morning, but dissolved into transparent atmosphere as fast as they came so that I had constant blue sky overhead.' 7 In this case the drawing was a simple one in pencil while the annotation gave many more details. On a painting trip to Wales in the first decade of the nineteenth century, Varley lingered on top of

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5 Ibid. p. 137.
6 Ibid. p. 142.
Drawings with numbered keys, from the early 19th century
Cader Idris until it was dark and quite dangerous to descend so that he could observe the sunset and changing weather conditions.

We were much higher than the nabouring [sic] hills which were covered by an enormous sheet of clouds causing early dark nights below - where cottage lights were seen feblly [sic] glimmering while all above was glorious sunshine mid an upper stratum of bright clouds and the luminous surface of the lower ocean of clouds - Soon after golden vapour began to play upon our mountain. 8

Although it is known that J.M.W. Turner painted *en plein air* when young it seems he relied much more on his memory than did John Constable and many of the other artists at this time. Evidence that he did occasionally paint on the spot is contained in his 'Skies' sketchbook, which:

contains sixty-five watercolour studies devoted purely or primarily to the sky. There are skies in full daylight, painted chiefly in washes of blue, grey and mauve and others at sunrise or sunset, with vibrant streaks of red and yellow. There are also some turbulent and stormy skies, one for example showing a distant shower, another even a bold streak of lightning. 9

Like Constable it appears that Turner's studies and sketches were made as references, not necessarily for particular paintings but to be drawn upon as the occasion arose. He is said to have possessed 'gigantic powers of memory' and so a large proportion of his sky sketches were most likely not done on the spot. It has been noted that Turner's naturalism was 'a naturalism that sprang from long experience rather than from a single act of looking.' 10

Although the theory of photography was understood by 1800 the paper and fixatives had yet to be invented. Lenses and a shutter were made in the mid-1820s and eventually, very soon afterwards, Louis-Jacques Daguerre, a theatre designer and painter, developed 'visual displays employing a variety of advanced technologies'. 11 Constable went to the private viewing of Daguerre's new cinematic transparencies in 1823 and Turner too was aware of photography but neither of them considered it to be a serious medium. 'From the day of its invention in the 19th century, photography closely followed painting - a passive reflection without any inspiration, [...] and a representation of reality.' 12

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7 ibid. p. 143.
8 ibid. p. 143.
9 ibid. p. 145.
[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]

Roni Horn, *You are the Weather*, 1994 - 95
It is not my intention here to outline a history of photography as an artist's medium but to include it because of the role that it played in the natural progression of recording devices. Many artists, since its invention, have relied upon the camera to depict the world around them including the atmosphere and sky. The contemporary artist, Roni Horn, spends a great deal of time in Iceland especially to experience its special atmosphere and its effects on the inhabitants. Horn uses a variety of media in the making of her work, however photography predominates. In addition to staging exhibitions of her work, Horn has been making a series of books collectively entitled To Place. These take on varying aspects of Iceland as their subject matter, including imaginative re-presentations of Jules Verne's Journey to the Centre of the Earth. One book, however, in the same format as the others is called, You are the Weather.

This book accesses Iceland through a woman's face - page after page of one individual staring into the artist's camera. During a 6 week sojourn Horn photographed Icelandic native Margret Haraldsdottir standing in outdoor hot-water pools dispersed all over the island. Submerged up to her neck in these mineral baths, with tiny water droplets caressing her face, Margret looks calmly and implacably into the lens, meeting the gaze of the artist, herself. If the sun is in her eyes she squints; if the air is foggy, a slow mist settles round her head. The differences between pictures are this nuanced.  

While this series of photographs is certainly not in the same vein as the nineteenth century artists struggling to capture fleeting impressions they do engage with the same fascination for changing atmospheric conditions and how these can be 'captured' and represented. Roni Horn attempts, not only to make the viewer aware of the airy world around them, but also to give the sense that the viewer is a part of the process and this is translated in the mood and expression of Margret. The only text in this book is a short paragraph written by Horn. She says at the beginning of this series of 100 photographs.

These photographs were taken in July and August of 1994. For a six-week period I travelled with Margret throughout Iceland. Using the naturally heated waters that are commonplace there, we went from pool to pool. We worked daily, mostly outside and regardless of the changeable, often unpredictable, climate that frequents the island.

This is the only clue to the content of the images. They unfold in the same order as they would in an exhibition of the same photographs. Then on the back cover, as the book is closed, we come across a phrase that illuminates what we have already discovered.

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13 Nancy Spector 1999, Events of Relation, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris/Musée d'art contemporain: Bordeaux, p. 25.
14 Roni Horn 1997, You are the Weather, Scalo: Zurich, Berlin, New York, npn.
A luminous face rises again and again from the hot waters of Iceland. An unknown face becoming, pages by page and photo by photo, a multitude. Her face is a collection of expressions telling the weather. But here in this book with her - you become the weather.15

In his essay about this piece of work by Roni Horn, You are the Weather, Thierry de Duve writes,

There are the good and the bad days. If you spend some time with the book, you will soon learn to extract an overall mood from each daily photo session; and if you give it more time, the sudden shifts in mood within each series will start jumping off the page. Now Margret is resisting and defiant, now yielding and receptive, now responding and reciprocating, never miserable yet never 100 per cent happy either, rarely smiling and, if at all, faintly, with on occasion a twinkle of irony, or a tear, in the corner of her eye, often frowning and always, always, intensely interrogating. [...] 'What do you want from me?' is the one constant message which this versatile barometer is addressing the weather.16

Today, even photography has been superseded as a medium for documenting the world. Film and digital video are the most recent and most sophisticated recording devices. The British artist, Tacita Dean, uses film, photography, drawing and sound in the making of her artworks, but it is through film especially that she explores contemporary interpretations of history and natural phenomena.

All Dean's works are conditioned by weather. Sunset, wind, storm, clouds and rain give them their natural drama in large format or tiny detail. Banewl captures the full eclipse of light fading, sharply dipping then gradually returning to the atmosphere, using the instincts of birds and cattle as emotional barometers. Totality (2000) presents the same event, but at its most minimal and without sound. As much as the scene before the lens, it reflects perhaps the predicament of an artist exposed to the vagaries of the weather in so planned a medium as filmmaking. Totality uses footage of the minutes before, during and after the darkest phase of the eclipse when the moon completely covers the sun. Dean films with a camera tracking the movement of the cloud-obscured sun. [...] The silvery glow of daylight fades to a grainy texture just visible on the surface of the screen, the barest indication that a film is running. Just as endurance of this non-image becomes unbearable, fleeting clouds in the lightening sky give a hint of known shapes. Released from the pressure of spatial blankness and temporal absence, time renews its passing.17

In her film Foley Artists (1996), the weather is experienced through its soundtrack, which is of the noise of running footsteps and a dramatic storm. It seems for Dean that despite the latest technologies the shifting, changing nature of a storm is too transient for her to capture visually and the picturing of it is best left to the imagination and our individual memories of atmospheric phenomena. Sound too can be included in the list of recording devices.

15 ibid. npn.
4.6 Travelling (in body and mind)

One evening, a couple of months ago, I opened a website on my computer and within 15 minutes had booked a return flight to Sydney. I do this 3 or 4 times a year. Up until now I haven't booked an overseas trip this way but I can imagine a day when I will. Normally for more complicated travel I leave that to someone else. Last year, for instance, I went to London and from there to Newfoundland then Toronto before returning to Australia, a trip that took me right around the world. A travel agent in a small regional town organised this for me. A couple of years earlier the same agent had arranged my travel to Chile via Easter Island and within Chile to the most southerly settlement in the world, outside Antarctica. Nowadays this is not unusual. My destinations are sometimes unusual and difficult to get to, however, they have been made possible through a number of technologies - the Internet and the forms of transport themselves.

It hasn't always been this easy and people have moved and travelled for varying reasons. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, for instance, the population of Britain was growing at an extraordinary rate and a great many people moved from the countryside to the cities for the work brought about by the Industrial Revolution. These same industries were building the ships that would allow for mass travel in the form of migration. The industries that provided an income and livelihood for the people, also produced overcrowding and pollution and made life in the cities an unbearable experience. Many people took their chances and headed off to begin new lives in distant places - North America and Canada, and then further afield to Australia and New Zealand - predominantly the temperate regions of the world. In the early 1800s 'the British were the greatest urbanisers as well as the most numerous colonists...[...] In a sense, it was an astonishing moment of freedom in the world's history. An Englishman, without passport or papers, health certificate or any other documentation - without luggage for that matter - could plunk down £10 at a shipping counter in Liverpool and go aboard'

Much of the migration that occurred at this time was out of necessity; not only were the cities becoming unlivable but there were food shortages due to crops failing because of climatic anomalies. In 1816 there was torrential rain, sleet and even snow during the summer. It was said to be a year without a summer and this was due to the eruption of the Tamboro volcano
off the coast of Indonesia. It took 3 years following the eruption for the climate to return to normal in England, during which time farmers went bankrupt and were driven to migration.

It wasn't only migration that was providing the opportunity to experience foreign places. In the early 1800s lesser mortals were able to undertake the Grand Tour of Europe that had been available only to the most privileged for almost a century. It typically consisted of a journey to Venice, Florence, Rome and Naples via Paris and Switzerland. One of the outcomes of this tour was to enable those who took part to experience different lifestyles, governments and even climate. It was a period when the English became more aware of their own cultural identity through comparisons with other cultures.

Travelling, however, is not simply physical. The mind is also implicated in explorations of physical landscapes. The writer Barry Lopez suggests that even if, when on our travels, we think we are not aware of the physical landscape around us, its impact on us alters our consciousness. He says,

Relationships in the exterior landscape include those that are named and discernible, such as the nitrogen cycle, or a vertical sequence of Ordovician limestone, and others that are uncodified or ineffable, such as winter light falling on a particular kind of granite, or the effect of humidity on the frequency of a blackpoll warbler’s burst of song. That these relationships have purpose and order, however inscrutable they may seem to us, is a tenet of evolution. Similarly, the speculations, intuitions, and formal ideas we refer to as ‘mind’ are a set of relationships in the interior landscape with purpose and order; some of these are obvious, many impenetrably subtle. The shape and character of these relationships in a person's thinking, I believe, are deeply influenced by where on this earth one goes, what one touches, the patterns one observes in nature - the intricate history of one's life in the land, even a life in the city, where wind, the chirp of birds, the line of a falling leaf, are known. [...] The interior landscape responds to the character and subtlety of an exterior landscape; the shape of the individual mind is affected by land as it is by genes.²

Until the revolution in mechanical engineering, travel had been limited to horses and carriages and of course, walking, which no one would have done it for recreation. However from about 1800 onwards it became a popular pastime with the educated and more well-to-do; it became a mode of transport by choice. The poets William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats and Thomas de Quincey, took up walking, as a source of inspiration for their work. They were not only inspired by what they saw or experienced on

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their walks but it seems the very act of putting one foot in front of the other generated ideas that may otherwise have lain dormant. They all walked vast distances. William and Dorothy Wordsworth walked every day, in the mountains and along by the lakes, in the Lake District where they lived. Thomas de Quincey estimated that they must have walked 175 - 180,000 miles in their lifetimes. Guidebooks to walking were published at this time, such as William Hutton's Remarks upon North Wales of 1803. So then, as now, it was possible to plan and make long walks voluntarily as travel where getting to the destination quickly was not the goal. Artists too took to walking, mainly in the mountains as a source of inspiration, lugging easels and paints along with them. This contact with the natural environment was the impetus of much of the work produced by artists, writers and poets of the early nineteenth century.

...the natural, primitive quality of the physical act of walking restores the natural proportions of our perceptions, reconnecting us with both the physical world and the moral order inherent in it, and enabling us to recollect both our personal past and our national and/or racial past - that is, human life before mechanisation. As a result, the walker may expect an enhanced sense of self, clearer thinking, more acute moral apprehension, and higher powers of expression.3

The poems of William Wordsworth show an awareness of the effects of travel and movement on his perception of landscape and his most successful poems appear to come directly out of movement. This gave Wordsworth his understanding of the natural world, one that is in a constant state of movement and flux. When he wasn't walking long distances he paced up and down as if the movement of his legs actually generated thought processes. He wrote Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey after a four-day walk to Bristol. His sister too wrote copiously in journals after their daily walks, making observations of the physical world around her especially the atmosphere and its affects on their day-to-day lives. Neither of them appeared to be bothered by the incessant rain which, as Wordsworth put it, 'tended to fall in the Lake District with a vigour and a perseverance that may remind the disappointed traveller of those deluges of rain which fall among the Abyssinian mountains for the annual supply of the Nile.'4

Walking is a natural pace to move from one place to another in the natural world, and its speed allows for contemplation, reflection and knowledge of the ground covered. It became the unifying factor for the perception of the landscape and the imagination. In, Imagining the earth: poetry and the vision of nature, John Elder writes:

Just as the wasteland and the wilderness are reconciled through earth's circuit of soil-building decay, the landscape and the imagination may be united through the process of walking. The mind's flicker of attention from the earth to its own associations seems on one level to have an inescapably binary quality. But mental sunlight and clouds are also borne out under a larger sky in the meandering circuit of the poet's walk. Walking becomes an emblem of wholeness, comprehending both the person's conscious steps and pauses and the path beneath his rising and falling feet.  

In these early years of the nineteenth century, not only forms of transport were gaining speed, so too were methods of the production of goods such as fabrics and objects that could be reproduced on production lines. John Ruskin took great exception to industrialisation. He too was a 'walker', making long walks on his travels with his parents in Europe. He railed against speed in all its forms:

People will discover at last that royal roads to anything can no more be laid in iron than they can in dust; that there are, in fact, no royal roads to anywhere worth going to; that if there were, it would that instance cease to be worth going to. [...] No changing of place at one hundred miles an hour, nor making of stuffs a thousand yards a minute, will make us one whit stronger, happier, or wiser. There was always more in the world than men could see, walked they ever so slowly; they will see it no better for going fast. And they will at last, and soon too, find out that their grand inventions for conquering (as they think) space and time, do, in reality, conquer nothing; for space and time are, in their own essence, unconquerable, and besides did not want any kind of conquering; they wanted using. A fool always wants to shorten space and time: a wise man wants to lengthen both. A fool wants to kill space and kill time: a wise man, first to gain them, then to animate them. [...] We shall be obliged at last to confess, what we should long ago have known, that the really precious things are thought and sight, not pace. It does a bullet no good to go fast; and a man, if he be truly a man, no harm to go slow; for his glory is not at all in going, but in being.  

In the 1930's S.P.B. Mais, a commentator on rural affairs, said that it was only by 'striding the high hills' that we get a sense of ourselves, and our place in the world. Not only should we go slowly, preferably sauntering, but also to wind our way along avoiding straight lines at all costs.

You cannot see England from a main arterial road anymore than you can from the air...Nor is the landscape seen from a carriage window of a railway train calculated to inspire...Even a bicycle is too fast. To see England aright your speed should not average more than one and a half miles per hour...And even then you may go wrong...You must learn to saunter...and you must learn to saunter alone.  

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Hamish Fulton, untitled, 1986

[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]
Walking afforded an experience of time. 'Solitary, slow and wayward are the keywords [...] Speed [...] was, considered to be both unEnglish and also to deny entrance to the elusive mysteries of the essential English landscape.\(^8\)

The contemporary English artist, Hamish Fulton, considers walking to be his medium not simply material or inspiration to produce work. Fulton's form of expression is the walk and he calls himself a 'walking artist'\(^9\). On his walks he takes photographs and makes notations, often personal reflections that appear unrelated to the place he is in, using these later in photographic text-based works or text pieces in their own right. His walking experiences have 'shapes, moods, patterns and thus beginnings and ends to meaning.'\(^{10}\) Fulton deliberately uses sparse language and images with which to convey his experiences of being out-in-the-world, exposed to the elements. In many ways it is impossible to re-experience the walk through what is presented and it is not Fulton's intention to do so. His work has been described as sculptural activity and 'a uniquely English and historic romantic engagement with landscape.'\(^{11}\)

In the photographs and texts that Fulton exhibits after the walk, he does not attempt to evoke the walk for the viewer or even present a memory of it. It exists as something separate. The photographs are objects that viewers can respond to without ever knowing what they actually refer to. His sparse language and direct text, with or without an image, allows the viewer to construct a narrative or an image in relation to what is read. In many ways his texts are similar to the ones John Constable wrote on the backs of his cloud studies - pertaining to a direct experience, descriptive and poetic.

TOUCHING BOULDERS BY HAND FROZEN GROUND NO PATHS NO TALKING
SEVEN DAYS WALKING SEVEN NIGHTS CAMPING SIERRA DEL ESTRELA PORTUGAL JANUARY 1994

BIRD OF PREY VANISHES INTO A BRIGHT BLUE CLOUDLESS SKY

A SEVEN DAY WALK IN THE MOUNTAINS SWITZERLAND EARLY SUMMER 1984
VIOLETREDINDIGORANGEBLUEYELLOWGREENYELLOWBLUEORANGEINDIGOREDVIOLET

NO THOUGHTS COUNTING SEVEN PACES WALKING TOWARDS A DOUBLE RAINBOW
KENT ENGLAND 5 OCTOBER 1988

\(^8\) ibid. p. 151.
The texts come from the journals that he keeps whilst walking. Sometimes, as stated earlier, the resulting works are purely textual and sometimes he positions the text over a photograph or along the bottom of it. These texts are usually a series of associative words that allow the viewers to make some sense of the photographs for themselves. Fulton exploits relationships between words, by rendering them in colour and in particular typefaces for example, almost like advertising. Their scale too follows this through, as they are often billboard-like in size. The images created in the mind’s eye as a result of reading the texts are almost tangible yet remain distant and evanescent. He is able through his combinations of words to create a feeling or mood in lieu of an actual experience, and like the early nineteenth century artists, realising that everything was constantly in a state of flux, Fulton too realises that each of his experiences is different even when going over the same ground. ‘Nothing stays the same. Everything is changing. One thing leads to another. Here we go again.’ Not only is each experience different but his artworks vary also. Even when they contain the same combination of text and image they differ in the positioning of the text and the scale of the image. A photograph can contain text, large-scale and poster-like, almost obliterating the image or it can be discreetly organised title-like along the bottom edge. Each variation gives the image another reading in line with the experience of the walk.

WALKS ARE LIKE CLOUDS THEY COME AND GO

The artist Roni Horn travels to Iceland for the subject matter for her work, her photographs, and texts/notations and also for an imaginative, reflective space. Horn says that for her ‘Iceland is the place where I have the clearest view of myself and my relationship to the world.’ She too takes photographs and uses text in her work. She says ‘her relationship with the world has been heavily mediated by language - words, fragments and images from literature’ and that these snippets of literature come to her wherever she is. The fragments exist not only as words and phrases but also fragments of the landscape. For Roni Horn travelling is experience and knowledge and it emphasises her direct contact with the environment. Iceland has short summers and long winters. The climate in most places is unpredictable. When she sets off into the landscape to take photographs she has to keep a keen eye on the weather as it can severely limit her intentions.

14 Ibid. p. 113.
Visibility often varies from minute to minute. I wait for the moment when the cloud cover drops lower or moves higher to allow for a more characteristic image of the scene. Many of the photographs are taken when it is raining or snowing. The wind is frequently so strong that even with a tripod it is impossible to hold the camera still. I like the fact that the images are entirely subject to circumstance.\textsuperscript{15}

Later in his life J.M.W. Turner travelled extensively in Europe and the British Isles. He spent summers on walking tours, sometimes getting as far as Scotland. In 1802 Turner made his first trip to Europe, beginning in Switzerland and finishing in Paris where he stayed for an extended period of time. During his travels he took with him a number of sketchbooks in which he recorded not only scenes that interested him but also accounts of his journeys, anecdotes and stories. His sketchbook became a travel diary and contrary to the practices of Hamish Fulton and Roni Horn who both record words and images on their travels, Turner used to draw where others would write. He drew fragments, dozens of views close together and in a film-like way, the fragments led one into the next through the continuation of scenes - what was not included in one appeared in the next. He also used watercolour that allowed him to work extremely quickly. In his sketches he appeared to capture the speed of moving clouds and rising mists as well as the slowness of the setting sun.

Turner visited Venice 3 times. On each visit he concentrated more on the study of light and its depiction. His later paintings became not only images inspired by his travels but could also be interpreted as some kind of mental landscape. John Constable said of Turner’s paintings of Venice, ‘He seems to paint with tinted steam, so evanescent, and so airy’. There he found the perfect location to paint decaying magnificence and dissolving forms, but English rain and swirling, misty English light were indispensable to his genius.\textsuperscript{16}

However not all artists travelled in order to experience the world around them. John Constable, who was born in Suffolk, never went overseas nor moved much from S.E. England. He once declared that he ‘had been born to paint his own England’.\textsuperscript{17} At an early stage he made notations on the backs of the oil sketches in much the same way that he would do later in his career in the series of cloud studies executed on Hampstead Heath. His main interest was to capture the fleeting effects of the clouds and the way in which the atmosphere brought to life everyday rural scenes, as they were viewed at different times of the day and in different weather conditions. He had a copy of Thomas Forster’s book \textit{Researeches about Atmospheric Phenomena}, and had marked this paragraph:

\textsuperscript{15} ibid. p. 110.
Meteorology considered as a subject of amusement seems to have some advantages over many other pursuits; in as much as it may be studied and will afford interest in places unfavourable to the cultivation of other sciences. The botanist, who delights in the diversification of nature exhibited in the endless variety of the forms and colours of flowers; or the naturalist, who finds amusement in contemplating the habits of animals, and the adaptation of the structure of each to its mode of life, cannot indulge their inclination except in habitable countries, or where the vegetation and life abound. But on the rugged mountain’s rugged vortex, in the uniform gloom of the desert, or on the trackless surface of the ocean, we may view the interesting electrical operations which are going on above, manifested in the formation and changes of the clouds, which bear water in huge masses from place to place, or throw it down in torrents on the earth and waters; and occasionally creating whirlwinds and waterspouts; or producing the brilliant phenomena of meteors and of lightening; and constantly ornamenting the sky with the picturesque imagery of coloured clouds and golden haze. The atmosphere and its phaenomena are everywhere, and thunder rolls, and rainbows glitter in all conceivable situations, and we may view them whether it may be our lot to dwell in the frozen countries of polar ice, in the mild climates of the temperate zone, or in the parched regions which lay more immediately under the path of the sun.\(^{18}\)

Constable may have been reassured to read that by staying in the one spot all the wonders of the world in the form of atmospheric phenomena would eventually come to him.

4.7 Word Painting

'A risk of showery rain'. 'Largely dry and sunny but remaining very cold in raw east winds'. 'Dull with persistent rain'. 'A grey and misty start, with dense fog patches in places but some warm sunshine later on'. 'A risk of the odd sharp shower'. 'Any grey cloud and drizzle will disappear'. 'Spells of warm sunshine to come'. 'Feeling warm while the sunshine lasts'. 'A dry and bright morning with sunny intervals, but it will not be long before showers start to break out'.

The language of the weather has its own special poetry. Weather forecasts indicate in very few words what we can expect of the day, and sometimes the week ahead. We are all familiar with the terms: sunny, showers, dry and bright, gale-force winds and so on, that are used in daily newspapers and on television to supplement extraordinary satellite images, synoptic charts and weather maps. It may be that because of the prevalence of visual imagery, descriptive terms have become clipped and to the point, almost redundant. The full range of atmospheric phenomena has been reduced to a few familiar terms.

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, before published weather forecasts, John Ruskin the artist and writer used to describe the sky in his 'word-paintings'. Consider the descriptions of the weather in daily newspapers above with Ruskin's word-paintings from his diary entries of 1857.

November 1st: A vermilion morning, all waves of soft scarlet, sharp at the edge, and gradated to purple. Grey scud moving slowly beneath it from the south-west, heaps of grey cumuli - between the scud and cirrus - at horizon. It issued in an exquisite day... All purple and blue in distance, and misty sunshine near on the trees, and green fields... Note the exquisite effect of the golden leaves scattered on the blue sky, and the horse-chestnut, thin and small, dark against them in stars.

November 3rd: Dawn purple, flushed, delicate. Bank of grey cloud, heavy at six. Then the lighted purple cloud showing through it, open sky of dull yellow above - all grey, and darker scud going across it obliquely, from the south-west - moving fast, yet never stirring from its place, at last melting away. It expands into a sky of brassy flaked light on grey - passes away into grey morning.

How many people after reading this would not be able to picture a morning sky? In 1939 L.C.W. Bonacina wrote that when Ruskin wrote this sentence - 'most beautiful forms of cloud have threatenings in them of storm' - it conjured up a multitude of images...in the mind. And

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1 Taken from a number of English newspapers such as The Guardian, The Independent and The Observer from August to November 2002.
that for him it was 'a rich experience alighting on this passage, so instantly did it evoke diverse impressions stored in [his] memory."

Ruskin was an advocate all his life for drawing, not necessarily to make people into artists, but to encourage them to see the world around them in order to appreciate it. The other way to record the world, in this period, other than drawing, was to write about it. Ruskin, as can be seen above, had a marvellous facility for describing his reflections on his environment, both natural and built, and in particular, the surrounding atmosphere. He was fascinated all his life with the weather but noticed that although people talked a lot about it they knew very little in a practical or scientific way. In an essay 'Of the Truth of Skies' in Modern Painters he began in a straightforward, rather admonishing way to criticise the masses but could not help himself, it seems, to turn this into a piece of poetry as his text grew in momentum.

It is a strange thing how little people know about the sky. We never attend to it, we never make it a subject of thought, we look upon it only as a succession of meaningless and monotonous accidents, too common and too vain to be worthy of a moment of watchfulness or a glance of admiration. If in our moments of utter idleness and insipidity, we turn to the sky as a last resource, which of its phenomena do we speak of? One says it has been wet, and another, it has been windy, and another, it has been warm. Who, among the whole chattering crowd, can tell me of the forms and the precipices of the chain of tall, white mountains that girded the horizon at noon today? Who saw the narrow sunbeam that came out of the south, and smote upon their summits until they melted and mouldered away in a dust of blue rain? Who saw the dance of the dead clouds when the sunlight left them last night, and the west wind blew them before it like withered leaves?"

Around 1828 John Constable began a collaboration with the engraver David Lucas to produce a series of mezzotints to illustrate English Landscape Scenery. Constable's friend John Fisher had tried to dissuade him from the mezzotint project saying, 'There is, in your pictures, too much evanescent effect, and general tone, to be expressed in black and white. Your charm is colour, and the cool tint of English daylight. The Burr of mezzotint will never touch that.' It may be compensation for the lack of colour in the actual prints that Constable has added such detailed and poetic descriptions. I quote a number of them here and in full, as the evocative texts conjure up colour and hue that is not present in the monotone of mezzotint.

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5 Mezzotint is a form of engraving in which the copper or steel plate is 'rocked' methodically all over to produce a dense black on printing. Tones are introduced into this by burnishing and scraping away the burr produced by the rocker. Through this method many tones can be achieved.
In some of these subjects of landscape an attempt has been made to arrest the more abrupt and transient appearances of the CHIAR'OSCuro IN NATURE; to shew its effect in the most striking manner, to give 'to one brief moment caught from fleeting time', a lasting and sober existence, and to render permanent many of those splendid but evanescent Exhibitions, which are ever occurring in the changes of eternal Nature.  

This plate may perhaps give some idea of one of those bright and animated days of the early year, when all nature bears so exhilarating an aspect; when at noon large garish clouds, surcharged with hail or sleet, sweep with their cool, broad shadows the fields, woods and hills; and by the contrast of their depths and bloom enhance the value of the vivid greens and yellows, so peculiar to this season; heightening also their brightness, and by their motion causing that playful change so much desired by the painter of

“Light and shade alternate, warmth and cold,
And bright and dewy clouds, and vernal show'rs,
And all the fine variety of things,”

The natural history - if the expression may be used - of the skies above alluded to, which are so particularly marked in the hail-squalls at this time of year, is this; - the clouds accumulate in very large and dense masses, and from their loftiness seem to move but slowly; immediately upon these large clouds appear numerous opaque patches, which, however, are only small clouds passing rapidly before them, and consisting of isolated pieces, detached probably from the larger cloud.

These floating much nearer the earth, may perhaps fall in with a much stronger current of wind, which as well as their comparative lightness, causes them to move with greater rapidity; hence they are called by windmillers and sailors "messengers", being also the forerunners of bad weather. They float about midway in what may be termed the lanes of the clouds; and from being so situated, are almost uniformly in shadow, receiving only a reflected light from the clear blue sky immediately above, and which descends perpendicularly upon them into these lanes. In passing over the bright parts of the large clouds they appear as darks; but in passing the shadowed parts they assume a grey, a pale, or lurid hue.  

(Spring. A Mill on a Common. Hail Squalls; Spring. East Bergholt Common)

It may be well to mention the different appearances which characterise the Morning and Evening effects. The dews and moisture which the earth has imbibed during the night cause a greater depth and coolness in the shadows of the Morning; also, from the same cause, the lights are at that time more silvery and sparkling; the lights and shadows of Evening are of a more saffron or ruddy hue, vegetation being parched during the day from the drought and heat.  

(Summer Morning)

…and among the various appearances of the elements, we naturally look to the grander phenomena of Nature, as according best with the character of such a scene. Sudden and abrupt appearances of light, thunder clouds, wild autumnal evenings, solemn and shadowy twilights, 'flinging half an image on the straining sight,' with variously tinted clouds, dark, cold, and gray, or ruddy and bright, with transitory gleams of light; even conflicts of the elements, to heighten, if possible, the sentiment which belongs to a subject so awful and impressive.  

(Mound of the City of Old Sarum)

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8 ibid. p. 32.
10 ibid. p. 44.
[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]

Left: Hamish Fulton, wall painting, 1995
Right: Hamish Fulton, Coast to Coast, France, June 1992, 1992
Luke Howard, the meteorologist, drew detailed studies to explain his classifications. His descriptions, in his book, *The Climate of London*, were a little like Ruskin's in that they eschewed mere fact for a more emotional statement.

The period I am now reporting is so extraordinary in its character, that I must exchange the usual form of notes for a continued narration.

The wind has been inconstant, though the greatest quantity of air has flowed from the SW. The movements of the barometer have been, in like manner, desultory. [...] The new moon was very conspicuous on the 17th, the whole disc appearing, well defined. On this and the preceding day the snow exhibited its beautiful blue and pink shades at sunset, and there was a strong evaporation from its surface. [...] In the afternoon a freezing shower from the eastward glazed the windows, encrusted the walls, and encased the trees, the garments of the passengers, and the very plumage of the birds with ice.  

Constable and Howard wrote factual texts poetically. J.M.W. Turner wrote poetry, although it was never highly thought of, and he attached it alongside a number of his paintings, as did many artists at this time. Many artists of this period, on the other hand, were also inspired to paint by the texts, especially poetry, of certain writers. For Turner, Constable and Howard, the eighteenth century poet James Thomson provided inspiration through his long descriptive poems, especially 'The Seasons'. In 1831 John Constable exhibited his painting *Salisbury Cathedral*, the focus of which was a rainbow, with these lines from Thomson's poem 'Summer' at the Royal Academy in London.

As from the face of heaven the scatter'd clouds
Tumultuous rove, th'interminable sky
Sublimer swells, and o'er the world expands
A purer azure. Through the lightened air
A higher lustre and a clearer calm
Diffusive lustre; while, as if in sign
Of danger past, a glittering robe of joy,
Set off abundant by the yellow ray,
Invests the fields, and nature smiles reviv'd.

Contemporary artists such as Hamish Fulton and Roni Horn also use text in poetic but albeit quite different ways. Hamish Fulton documents his 'walking art' in photographs taken along the way and also in words that record his observations on the environments he passes through. These texts usually manifest themselves as single words in the artworks he exhibits on return. He has the skill to be able to distil a long and arduous walk that might last several days, into a wall text of three or four words. The texts are able to convey an experience of the passage of time, the landscape traversed and the weather conditions that have influenced it. He has used

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[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]

Left: Roni Horn, *Gurgles, Sucks, Echoes*, gouache on paper, 1993
Right: Roni Horn, a page from one of her journals
text in conjunction with photographs, laying it over the image, and also huge single words that might take up the whole wall space. For Fulton, words are equal to image, neither dominates the other. The text itself gives nothing away in terms of clues through the typeface that he uses, in the main, a sans serif font. In the journals he keeps of his walks he is more expansive and his language contains the poetic descriptions of a Ruskin or Constable. In 1985 he went on an eight-day walk in Canada to Lake Ajawaan in Saskatchewan. In his diary he recorded this change in the weather.

...This afternoon the air was warm and moist. When I arrived here I felt the air was 'heavy', not dry and clear...The very calm lake, calmer than two nights ago - the warm air...At half past ten in the black, there was lightning, thunder and heavy rain. So, without much deliberation, I packed up the tent and went up - back to the top cabin amid heavy rain thunder and massive flashes of lightning totally lighting up the darkened cabin...when I was in the tent I heard a fish jumping in the lake. I've noticed before that it can mean a change in the weather...[12]

As another artist who 'walks', Roni Horn is also acutely aware of weather conditions as they affect what she is able to do in her art practice. One sketchbook entry shows that she has written 'bad weather' at least eighteen times on one page. Words have ways of evoking images and sensations in ways that pictures cannot. When these artists use words they use them in 'pictorial' ways, as invitations to recall images in the mind.

Words whether single or in combination with others, make sense to individuals in different ways. Each person will respond according to their memory of the word or of the 'thing' it represents, and drawing all together will conjure up an image that is theirs alone. All the artist has to do is to provide the impetus.

...a poem is not only a making of the self and a making of the world, but also a response to the world and a respecting of the earth. As you read the poem hold in your mind’s eye a photograph of the earth taken from space: green and blue, smudged with the motion of a cloud (of weather)...[13]

Thus Jonathan Bate concludes his book, The Song of the Earth. In it he outlines the ways in which poetry continues to matter and especially about the capacity of words to restore us and enable us to think new thoughts about the world in which we live.

[12] The diary entry was reproduced in 'The Blue Mountains are constantly walking' by Andrew Wilson in the Tate Gallery catalogue Hamish Fulton: Walking Journey, published in 2002 to coincide with Fulton's exhibition at the Tate Britain.
[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]

Top: Pages from Sir Isaac Newton's *Opticks*, 1704
Bottom: Lesley Duxbury, photograph of a rainbow, 1999
4.8 Beyond the Clouds

Clouds, the volatile, fascinating and most represented indicators of weather, have been the predominant subjects of this project. They gather together and disperse; they take on many beautiful and evocative shapes and have caught the attention of artists and poets through the ages. At certain times they accumulate in the atmosphere and form rain and snow. They block the sun and cool the earth. However other atmospheric phenomena have also been considered for the importance they have had for artists and writers. These include rainbows and wind as well as variations of clouds such as mist and fog, rain and snow. The artists John Constable and J.M.W. Turner along with poets such as William Wordsworth drew inspiration from the clouds for the ways in which they transformed landscapes and also because of renewed scientific interest in them during this period. However, the above-mentioned artists also depicted rainbows and mists, and Dorothy Wordsworth was especially affected by rain.

I. Rainbows

Rainbows, the glorious phenomena that have inspired painters and poets, have fired the imagination throughout time. Until the late 1660s when Isaac Newton split light into its component colours through a prism, rainbows supposedly contained magical properties or were associated with the spiritual. Newton's theories changed all that and from the eighteenth century onwards artists and poets responded to them in varying ways according to their beliefs and interests. Their depiction reached a high point in the nineteenth century when more rainbows were painted than at any other time in history.

Through science, rainbows could be predicted under certain conditions. It became common knowledge that they are best seen early in the morning or in the evening when the sun is low and rain is falling so that it refracts and reflects the rays of the sun. If one turns one's back on the sun, the rainbow will appear at an angle of about 42 degrees from the direction of the sun. A rainbow, therefore, depends on the combination of three things - the position of the sun, the movement of the raindrops and the position of the viewer. What is amazing that even despite so many variables no two people will ever see a rainbow in the same way - the rainbow you see is unique.
Some of John Constable's drawings, diagrams and notations relating to rainbows

[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]
My heart leaps up when I behold
  A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began,
So is it now I am a man,
So be it when I shall grow old.
Or let me die!
The child is father of the man:
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.¹

In this very simply constructed poem by William Wordsworth (1770 – 1850), the rainbow becomes a symbolic link of past, present and future as a means to unify the whole and childhood becomes the basis of future experience and interaction with the world. Like many other poets and artists of the time, Wordsworth, began to view and use what had become the subjects of science as material for his poetry.

Like Wordsworth, neither John Constable nor J.M.W. Turner was so critical of Newton's revelations as some artists and poets of the early nineteenth century who were unhappy to have such enigmatic natural phenomena explained in a scientific way. Those who were aware of and encouraged the role of the imagination in the construction of their work were afraid that science's rationalism would destroy this. The poet John Keats was one of them. He is known to have said 'Confusion to the memory of Newton! Because he destroyed the poetry of the rainbow by reducing it to a prism.'² In his poem Lamia he writes

Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?
There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:
We know her woof, her texture; she is given
In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings.³

Constable especially was interested in and responded to scientific developments at the time. He believed an artist could never accurately paint a rainbow or any other natural phenomena without becoming familiar with the underlying scientific principles. He became aware that to paint something well one needed to understand it from all points of view, including the scientific. Later in life he showed that he studied the rainbow more scientifically by drawing prisms and calculating angles in diagrams along with the spectrum of colour of which it is

³ 'Lamia', part ii, written in 1819 and cited ibid. p. 191.
Some of John Constable’s paintings of rainbows
composed. However when he included them in his paintings as a component part he acknowledged the difficulty of their depiction. He said of his paintings of rainbows that, 'Their difficulty in painting both as to composition and execution is very great, because with all their brilliancy and consequence they ought not to come forward or be hardly thought about in a picture - any more than extreme distances are.'

Constable did not believe that 'the cold hand of science' destroyed the poetry of the rainbow and saw no contradictions in accepting the rainbow as both a religious symbol and as a natural phenomenon that could be explained in scientific terms. He saw a special significance in the rainbow as a personal emblem, not only of religious importance or as a symbol of natural renewal, which grew more important for him later in his life. The rainbow represented the problems he faced in his life especially when his wife was sick.

Accompanying a mezzotint as part of his Various Subjects of Landscape, Characteristic of English Scenery, From Pictures Painted by John Constable, R.A. was this explanatory text that demonstrates Constable's interest not only in the beauty and transience of the rainbow but also in its scientific basis. It could be that the print required such detailed text to make up for the absence of colour, after all colour is the most extraordinary element of a rainbow.

Of the Rainbow - the following observations can hardly fail to be useful to the Landscape Painter. When the Rainbow appears at Noon, the height of the sun at that time of the day causes but a small segment of the circle to be seen, and this gives the Bow its low or flat appearance: the Noonday-bow is therefore best seen 'Smiling in a Winter's day', as in the Summer, after the sun has passed a certain altitude, a Rainbow cannot appear: it must be observed that a Rainbow can never appear foreshortened, or be seen obliquely, as it must be parallel with the plane of the picture, though a part of it only may be introduced; nor can a Rainbow be seen though any intervening cloud, however small or thin, as the reflected rays are dispersed by it, and are thus prevented from reaching the eye; consequently the Bow is imperfect in that part. Nature, in all the varied aspects of her beauty, exhibits no feature more lovely nor any that awaken a more soothing reflection than the Rainbow, 'Mild arch of promise'; and when this phenomenon appears under unusual circumstances it excites a more lively interest. This is the case with the Noon-tide Bow', but more especially with that most beautiful and rare occurrence, the 'Lunar Bow'. The morning and evening Bows are more frequent than those at noon, and are far more imposing and attractive from their loftiness and span; the colours are also more brilliant, 'Flash ing brief splendour through the clouds awhile'. For the same reason the exterior or secondary Bow is at these times also brighter, but the colours of it are reversed. A third, and even fourth Bow, may sometimes be seen, with the colours alternating in each; these are always necessarily fainter, from the quantity of light last at each reflection within the drop, according to the received principle of the bow. Perhaps more remains yet to be

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Some of J.M.W. Turner’s paintings of rainbows
discovered as to the cause of this most beautiful Phenomenon of Light, recent experiments having proved that the primitive colours are further refrangible. Though not generally observed, the space within the Bow is always lighter than the outer portion of the cloud in which it is seen.\(^5\)

Both Constable and Turner made many paintings and sketches of rainbows and tackled them in quite different ways. Constable's rainbows were invariably seen against dark and gloomy skies, either as a bold arc of yellow watercolour as in *Sky Study with a Rainbow* or as a double rainbow in *London from Hampstead with a Double Rainbow*. Turner's rainbows, and moonbows, on the other hand were calm and delicate without strong colouration, such as *Rainbow over Loch Awe*.

Like Constable, Turner's knowledge of natural phenomena was not solely based on observation. In 1834 he went to Edinburgh to meet David Brewster (1781 – 1868), a natural philosopher who was well-known for his optical researches and was studying rainbows at the time. Although Turner was eager to know more about the colours of rainbows and their formation he also argued vehemently with Brewster and his friends about them. In an article, in Brewster's *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, the Revd. James Skene wrote of Turner that he was, 'aided by the discoveries daily making in the mysteries of light, [his] scrutinising genius seems to tremble on the verge of some new discovery in colour, which may prove of the first importance to art'.\(^6\) Turner also became a close friend of the scientist, Sir Humphrey Davy (1778 – 1829), with whom he had much in common. Davy combined his love of painting (predominantly as a viewer) with research on colour chemistry.

It could be that England's climate provided the perfect location for scientists such as Newton and artists and poets of the early nineteenth century to become especially aware of such phenomena as the rainbow. Wordsworth must have seen a great many of them in the damp climate of the Lake District and Constable must have had extraordinary views of almost perfectly semicircular bows spanning the fields of Suffolk. Both traced the ideas that they had for their work, such as rainbows, back to their respective childhoods and their identity that was rooted in the particular places where they grew up.

For the contemporary artist, Olafur Eliasson, the rainbow is a physical as well as a visual experience. When he combined a hosepipe, water and light to create *Beauty* (1993), a

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Right: Olafur Eliasson, *Beauty*, 1993, water and spotlight

[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]
‘shimmering rainbow’ in the gloom of an industrial warehouse, he realised for the first time the importance of the role of the viewer in completing his work. He said that, ‘if the light doesn’t go into your eyes, there’s no rainbow’ a similar realisation to that of Constable and Turner 200 years previously.

II. Mist and fog

When we left the small dairy town the day was perfect. Bright sunshine and clear atmosphere rendered the colours of the sky and irrigated pasture pure and brilliant. We could see for miles across the laser-leveled land. Arriving close to the top of the mountain almost 4 hours later the clouds were beginning to roll in, however it remained fine during the evening and we even saw a star or two before retiring extraordinarily early for a Saturday night. It was warm and snug inside the tent and I fell asleep almost immediately only to wake up after an hour or two to the sound of the wind howling through the treetops. And it was only the tops of the snow gums that bore the brunt of the onslaught as the flimsy tent barely shuddered. The gusts continued all night, a sure sign of a change in the weather. A few light drops of rain in the morning indicated that the day ahead would be somewhat different to the one before.

Reluctantly unzipping the sleeping bag and crawling out of the tent the day revealed itself - just. We could see barely 10 metres in any direction. We were enveloped in a damp grey mist that muffled sound and isolated us further from the world 1600 metres below. We could have left and headed home at that point but the object of our weekend was to climb to the top of Mt Howitt and we decided to do it in spite of the poor prognosis for the day. It seemed a little silly in many ways to attempt the walk to the top, after all our greatest pleasures in being in the mountains were the views and on this particular day there would be none of those. On top of everything the wind continued to howl, literally up the mountain pushing swirling grey whorls of cloud ahead of it. Occasionally an outcrop of rock or a more distant stand of trees was revealed but predominantly we existed in the damp envelope seeing not much further in front of us than a few metres. Contrary to our normal practice we stuck to the narrow, stony track.

Trees on the mountains are, in normal circumstances, rather dull in colour although snow gums contradict this with their slashes of coloured bare trunk. On this day their reds, pinks,
oranges and ochres glowed against the grey bark that in turn melded into the grey mist. All around us were flashes of brilliance that ordinarily would have been unremarkable. Crimson rosellas too appeared to be more plentiful than normal. Occasionally a gust of wind would almost disperse the cloud and we caught faint glimpses of the sky beyond, not quite blue, except in our imagination. As we ascended the air became cooler and water droplets condensed on our faces and hair, covering us in a silvery film. Descending to lower ground five hours later we left our misty bubble behind and entered a more normal world of light and shade, sunshine and shapely clouds.

A number of years earlier I had spent an autumn and winter in Paris, where for three months I could well have believed that the blue sky had disappeared forever. Fog or mist - brouillard - consisting of condensed water vapour in the air had caused a grey gloom to fall on the city casting a uniform, shadowless pall over everything. Dawn, noon and dusk were indistinguishable as the sheet of thick grey cloud hovered seemingly only metres above my head reminding me of my childhood in the north of England. It was cold and damp at the beginning of winter and that soon gave way to freezing rain and ice. With little to see in even the near distance it was up to my imagination to conjure up images and imaginary landscapes. I made a series of small paintings of imaginary/dreamlike landscapes from blots of grey watery ink and watercolour. In the absence of distinguishable forms and impetus I resorted to the internalised material garnered unconsciously and stored in memory.

In his book, Romantic Weather, Arden Reed describes what happens when mist and fog are used as subjects of expression.

Even though there seems to be no subject more amenable to expression than the weather, its indeterminacy poses a serious obstacle to writers [and artists]. How is one to create images out of material that composes no objects, properly speaking? The only "meteor" that might qualify as such is the sun, but while it is the source of illumination the sun itself cannot be seen. And the insubstantiality of mist suggests the very antithesis of an image, at the same time that it veils or unrealises other elements in the perceptual field.9

Mist and fog not only cause problems mentally with the bringing to mind of objects but can also be physically deceptive and unpredictable. Tacita Dean, a contemporary English artist, attempts to connect opposites such as the present to the past and fact to fiction. In the manner of an investigator she seeks out and gathers evidence from which she produces a kind of
incomplete narrative in the form of a film, usually 16mm, with or without sound. For Dean the 'sublimity of nature is full of surprises, and comedy and tragedy come into intermittent, random, and yet profound intersection with one another.' 10 Alongside her filmic representations of her experiences Dean also writes about them. In 1995 she completed a project she called A Bag of Air and wrote vividly about her attempts to 'capture' the clouds, being the most tangible of phenomena, but also her encounters with mist, dew and rain (excerpts of which appear further in this chapter). I quote a section from, Air that also indicates her recognition of her own 'Englishness'

I had made up my mind that I wanted to try and catch clouds after all, but from a hot air balloon. Discovering that no balloon will go up in the spring if there is any sign of cloud in the sky, I decided to simulate the experience with morning mist. Bourges being too flat to make mists likely, I had to seek out valleys, and hence the complicated juggling of windless, cloudless, misty weather conditions, and the last minute arranging of a dawn rendezvous. As we neared Grenoble, the air got crisper and the mountains loomed. There was snow everywhere. In my provincial English thinking, I had not made the equation that valleys equalled mountains. I had imagined soft green hills dipping into the distance. As the sun began to rise, it became obvious that it was going to be a beautiful, clear day. In fact the clearest day that anyone could remember. It was a phenomenon, they all said. We always have mist in the morning in Lans en Vercors, said the butcher and the baker and the candlestick maker. So we rose on a beautiful morning, up high above the mountains, and caught fresh, clear air. 11

III. Dew

Dew forms under fairly unpredictable conditions, very similar to the ones that cause mist and fog. Those favourable to the formation of dew are - a surface such as grass that is radiating as well as well insulated from the heat of the soil beneath, a clear, still night of low humidity everywhere but in the surface layers of the atmosphere, high humidity in the surface layers or close to a nearby body of water, such as a lake. The summer months when the day has been humid are just as likely to contribute to the formation of dew as cold weather in wintertime. If it is particularly cold then frost will form and be visible as fernlike patterns on windows. 12

Dew sparkles in morning sun like jewels but doesn't last long. As soon as the sun begins to warm the earth, the dew just melts away and this is sometimes witnessed in mists or steam rising into the atmosphere. This ephemeral phenomenon has been utilised by Englishman

[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]

Chris Parson’s *Dew Circle*, 1999
Chris Parsons as a medium to produce artwork. Parsons makes, what he calls, 'dew paintings'. Early, on certain mornings, when atmospheric conditions allow it, Parsons erases the dew from close cut lawns leaving a dark contrast with the sparkly whiteness of dew laden grass to create large-scale patterns and designs. Spectators at these events gather when word has got around through a telephone link, as the unpredictability of the phenomenon does not allow for advanced warning and the results disappear within a couple of hours of their making. Parsons documents the finished designs in photographs.

Of all the atmospheric phenomena that inspired John Constable the clouds were obviously the most important. Close behind them came dew as subject matter. He associated dew with freshness and, considering the way in which it forms, he was quite correct. He was attracted by the way it sparkled in the sunshine and in many of his paintings used spatterings of white paint to represent it, often attracting much criticism for doing so. Turner referred to Constable's 'dewy freshness' as 'whitewash' and a critic wrote that his painting The Leaping Horse 'would be excellent, but for that accursed bespattering with [...] whitewash.' Another was critical for the same reasons of his painting Salisbury Cathedral that the landscape lay under a snowstorm. However Constable was not deterred and he continued to apply small specks of white paint using his palette knife. He mentioned dew often in his letters and correspondence, such as in 1836 when referring to his painting Hampstead Heath with a Rainbow, 'I have lately turned out one of my best bits of Heath, so fresh, so bright, dewey and sunshiney.'

John Ruskin was especially critical of him calling his representation of this fleeting phenomenon 'splotting and splashing.'

The showery weather, in which the artist delights, misses alike the majesty of storm and the loveliness of calm weather; it is great-coat weather and nothing more. There is a strange want of depth in the mind which has no pleasure in sun-beams but when piercing painfully through clouds, nor in foliage but when shaken by wind, nor in light itself but when flickering, glistening, restless and feeble.

For Constable dew was fundamentally different from clouds, being associated with the earth rather than the upper levels where clouds belonged, yet it was still a part of the atmosphere. These opposites can be reinforced in dew's signification - 'as a slippage between being and

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nothingness, between transcendence and immanence; between literal and non-literal, between memory and forgetting.\textsuperscript{15}

IV. Wind

In 1805 Sir Francis Beaufort devised a scale with which to ascertain the speed or force of the wind by taking note of the ways in which the sea or objects on land were affected by it. The Beaufort Scale was originally based on the effects of wind on a fully rigged man-of-war. In 1838 all ships in the navy were required to refer to it in their logbooks and later it was adapted for international maritime use. Different descriptions of the terms were developed for use on land as well as sea and the poetic nature of these descriptions is inescapable. Originally no reference was made to the numerical speed of the wind but after it was added the scale has continued to be used as an observational way of measuring wind speed to the present. It is gradually becoming redundant as more sophisticated means of measuring the wind are being made available. It was unnecessary in the early 1800s to include descriptions of the winds’ speeds as they occurred in the air as, in this period, there was no equivalent of the ‘fully rigged man-of-war’ plying that space.

The wind must surely be one of the most difficult of phenomena to represent for, ‘it cannot be seen and has no shape unless it encounters dust.’\textsuperscript{16} John Constable made references to the wind in his notations on the backs of his cloud studies, more so than in his paintings. Turner painted squalls and storms that gave the impression that strong winds were blowing. The English artist Georgina Starr (b. 1968) has used strips of coloured paper to indicate an eddy of wind produced in the concourse of Euston Station in London. She tossed them into the air and recorded them in photographs that she later drew over to indicate the direction of the wind. Hamish Fulton, like Constable, uses text to indicate wind, superimposed over photographs or in large-scale wall text pieces - SEVEN WINDS SEVEN TWIGS SEVEN PATHS, SEVEN DAYS WALKING AND SEVEN NIGHTS CAMPING IN A WOOD SCOTLAND MARCH 1985.\textsuperscript{17} In Your Windless Arrangement (1997), Olafur Eliasson constructed a huge bank of industrial fans to blow a steady blast of air in order to enable his viewers to experience wind first hand. The wind blowing through the interior of the building defies logic and becomes both a physiological and psychological experience.


Beaufort Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At Sea or far from land</th>
<th>On land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 Sea like a mirror</td>
<td>Calm; smoke rises vertically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Ripples with the appearance of scales are formed but without foam crests</td>
<td>Wind direction shown by smoke-drift but not by wind-vanes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Small wavelets, still short but more pronounced; crests have a glassy appearance and do not break</td>
<td>Wind felt on face; leaves rustle; ordinary vanes moved by wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Large wavelets; crests begin to break; foam of glassy appearance; perhaps scattered white horses</td>
<td>Leaves, small twigs in constant motion; wind extends light flag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Small waves, becoming longer; fairly frequent white horses</td>
<td>Raises dust and loose paper; small branches are moved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Moderate waves, taking a more pronounced long form; many white horses are formed (chance of some spray)</td>
<td>Small trees in leaf begin to sway; crested wavelets form on inland waters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Large waves begin to form; the white foam crests are more extensive everywhere (probably some spray)</td>
<td>Large branches in motion; whistling heard in telegraph wires; umbrellas hard to use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Sea heaps up and white foam from breaking waves begins to be blown in streaks along the direction of the wind</td>
<td>Whole trees in motion; inconvenience felt when walking against the wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Moderately high waves of greater length; edges of crests begin to break into spindrift; foam is blown in well-marked streaks along the direction of the wind</td>
<td>Breaks twigs off trees; generally impedes progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 High waves; dense streaks of foam along the direction of the wind; crests of waves begin to topple, tumble and roll over; spray may affect visibility</td>
<td>Slight structural damage occurs (chimney-pots and slates removed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Very high waves with long overhanging crests; The resulting foam, in great patches, is blown in dense white streaks along the direction of the wind; the surface of the sea takes on a white appearance; rolling of the sea becomes heavy; visibility affected</td>
<td>Seldom experienced inland; trees uprooted; considerable structural damage occurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Exceptionally high waves (small and medium ships might be for a time lost to view behind the waves); the sea is completely covered with long white patches of foam lying along the direction of the wind; everywhere the edges of the wave crests are blown into froth; visibility affected</td>
<td>Very rarely experienced; accompanied by widespread damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 The air is filled with foam and spray; sea completely white with driving spray; visibility very seriously affected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]

Left: Olafur Eliasson, *Your strange certainty still kept*, 1996, water pump, strobe light, foil and wood
Right: Lesley Duxbury, rain on window pane, looking out
It has been raining continuously today. I walked the wet streets to the Cathedral, and stood beneath the gargoyles as they spewed water onto the cobbles. They looked so human, salivating and dribbling like characters from a cartoon strip. I thought I might film them, and record that sound of water hitting the stone. I went and stood beneath the grand entrance, and watched the rain fall softly on the steps and seemingly turn to vapour. I thought about alchemy: the turning of substances with invisible meaning into something physical and tangible, rather like the faith that built this cathedral, with the cipher to its construction encoded in its sculptures. So it is with alchemy, concealing itself deep within its process.18

Rain, like wind, is difficult to represent and again, like the wind occurs more in text form than in pictorial representations. Constable refers to showers and rain frequently on the backs of his cloud studies and Hamish Fulton also uses text to refer to rain that must have made some of his walks so uncomfortable. Dorothy Wordsworth (1771 – 1855) and her brother William were not hampered by the rain and made their daily walks no matter what the weather. Later, when more settled in the Lake District and sharing a house with her brother she kept a journal in which she recorded all the minutiae of their everyday lives. Almost every entry refers to the weather of that particular day. Inevitably, because this was the Lake District, the weather was generally wet and misty, and Dorothy clearly articulates the connections between the weather and her, and William’s, moods in relation to the atmospheric conditions. Many of the diary entries in Weather Diary (that follows 4.10), are from Dorothy Wordsworth’s Grasmere Journal that she wrote in the years 1800 – 1803. This was also a period of upheaval and change especially in William’s life that affected her so deeply and is perhaps articulated in her detailed descriptions. According to Rachel Trickett, Dorothy ‘quickly took on the colouring of her environment…it was at once her strength and her limitation.’19

Olafur Eliasson’s intention in Your strange uncertainty still kept, of 1996, is to make his viewer aware of rain by intensifying the very act of seeing. He does this by directing a stroboscopic light across artificial rain produced by a curtain of water droplets that fall noisily into a metal tray. The shining drops of water are frozen in moments of time as they fall, captured in the light while the incessant noise of their falling causes the viewer to recollect their experiences of this natural event.

Many artists during and since the nineteenth century have recognised the potential of the constituent elements of atmospheric phenomena, such as water, rainbows and light, to carry information relating to the emotions and the spiritual for instance. The examples above are only a fraction of the recorded experiences of artists that refer to the weather as not only a physiological but also a psychological experience.
4.9 An English Accent

As a race we have always been conscious of the soft atmosphere and the changeable climate of our sea-washed country, where the air is never quite free from mist, where the light of the sun is more often pale and pearly than it is fierce. This atmosphere has sunk into our souls.¹

'Who are we?' and 'What is our place in the world?' are perennial questions that appear to become more insistent at the turns of the centuries. For countries or nations with flexible borders it could be perceived to be more of a puzzle than those bounded by the sea, like the British Isles. Islands are special places, self-contained and impenetrable - until recently when developments in transport and communications have made such nations vulnerable to the influences and beliefs beyond their shores. In England, at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century ease of travel offered opportunities to experience other cultures, particularly those just across the English Channel, and open them up to scrutiny and comparison. At this time the English began to discover aspects of Europe, as they never had before which led them to question their own national identity by comparison.

At the turn of the twentyfirst century most countries in the world have been well and truly explored and settled. Most nations are made up of many cultures due to several hundred years of migration and this perceived loss of a singular culture has led to a resurgence in the quest for a sense of identity. So what does it mean to be English? And what defines Englishness? To many people being English and being British are one and the same thing, but the Welsh, Scottish and Irish who are currently redefining themselves would certainly argue with this. In many ways England itself is a collection of smaller 'countries' that differ greatly from North to South and East to West, and because of this, English identity, as it is generally perceived, may not be the cohesive entity that it is generally believed to be.

Nationalism is a pervasive ideology of our modern world. [...] Most researchers of nationalism seem to be stimulated by secessionary nationalisms, the radical political movements that have dismembered great empires in the twentieth century. [...] A classic case of this bias can be found in studies of nations in the British Isles. The secessionary nationalisms - Irish, Scottish and Welsh - each have their own large literature. But what of the English? Or is there a 'British' nationalism that subsumes the English? Either way it is this big nationalism that is relatively neglected by researchers.²

Possibly because of its island character, England has been under-researched and has eluded the attention that has been given to defining other cultures and nationalisms. In many ways the geography of England has determined some of the qualities that we consider English. For instance, England's power base is in London, which means that the south of England, including the Home Counties, has quite a different lifestyle and existence to that of the North of England. Class distinctions abound especially along the North/South divide, and one's accent is a quite a give-away. England could be considered to be at least two countries. The South of England is 'tranquil, rural and conservative'\(^3\) while the North, industrial and overcrowded; the South is relatively wealthy where the North is poorer; the South especially London, provides the pageants and Royal ceremonies, considered to be England by outsiders, that the North cannot. However, among all the differences between the various parts of England perhaps there is one subject that connects the nation as a whole, and this is the weather. The weather constantly teases our senses and, especially in the British Isles, provides a daily source of conversation, irritation or satisfaction.\(^4\) The weather of course is pervasive; it does not make distinctions between north and south, rural and urban, rich and poor; it affects everyone.

The remainder of this essay is peppered with many quotations from a range of sources, with the intention of eliciting connections between the English as a nation and the weather, especially as it is portrayed in art and literature. Aristotle is credited with being the first to consider national distinguishing characteristics in a population in relation to where they live - in cold, hot, arid or wet climates for example. His view related especially to, the ways in which intelligence and spirit were distributed throughout the world, as he knew it. Of course, according to Aristotle, the climate of Hellas, or modern day Greece, was the most favourable on earth to produce intelligent and good spirited people!

Those who live in a cold climate and in Europe are full of spirit, but wanting in intelligence and skill; and therefore they retain comparative freedom, but have no political organisation, and are incapable of ruling over others. Whereas the natives of Asia are intelligent and inventive, but they are wanting in spirit, and therefore they are always in a state of subjection and slavery. But the Hellenic race, which is situated between them, is likewise intermediate in character, being high-spirited but also intelligent.\(^5\)

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\(^3\) ibid. p. 147.


Since Aristotle's own nationalistic descriptions of those who live in various climatic zones of the world, many writers have used the same arguments for defining English characteristics and the ways that the climate of England has reflected on its inhabitants. In England, a temperate region of the world, the population is deemed also to be temperate or not displaying any extremes of character. George Manley, in the middle of last century stated that the ‘appreciation of the British [English] climate depends largely on temperament. That it has not been conducive to idleness has been reflected in the characteristics of the people.’ In the 17th century Thomas Baines thought that the English air was the cause of the mutability of English thought and therefore the source of national characteristics such as ‘newfangledness, rashness and love of rebellion’.

Meteors, weather and seasons were among the most powerful forces informing the moral, physical, financial and political landscapes of the eighteenth century. In an article in the *Lady's Magazine* of 1786 was to be found, ‘There are few, I believe, who do not, sometimes, wish that there was more regularity in our climate, [for] on the mind of an Englishman, the weather has so powerful an effect, that you find him in different humours in several parts of a variegated day. - In one point of view - (for in many points of view an Englishmen may be placed) - he may be called the weather-cock of the creation.’

In 1807 Alexander von Humboldt wrote *an Essay on the Geography of Plants* that included a map of various cultures according to their location in the world in the same way that he was mapping the distribution of plants. He stated that humans, like plants, were a product of their climate and that their imaginations and aesthetic understanding are shaped by the landscape they inhabit.

Up until the beginning of the nineteenth century little was known scientifically about the elusive subject of the weather even though at this time astronomy, electricity, natural history and chemistry were being analysed in a rational way. There was no indication that the weather had long term 'patterns' for instance. Many people such as explorers, artists and poets had kept weather diaries but none referred to them when trying to work out the regularities of the seasons. It was said that the atmosphere was a ‘lamentable mixture’ of airs and impossible to

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make sense of or to research. Perhaps this was the reason that it was talked about so much, as if words would eventually define it.

Weather writes, erases, and rewrites itself upon the sky with the endless fluidity of language; and it is with language that we have sought throughout history to apprehend it. Since the sky has always been more read than measured, it has always been the province of words. Nothing has changed since Samuel Johnson complained in the middle of the nineteenth century that 'when two Englishmen meet, their first talk is of the weather; they are in haste to tell each other, what they must already know, that it is hot or cold, bright or cloudy, windy or calm.' The weather, as Johnson so pertinently suggested, generates language more efficiently than it generates knowledge, for while it is always available and always with us, it is equally always unclear. That is why we need to talk it through.\textsuperscript{10}

In his book, *The Englishness of English Art*, Nikolaus Pevsner concurs with some of the sentiments above, and relates them to the art produced in England. 'It is a moderate climate, and it is a misty climate, and both these qualities are indeed immediately reflected - directly or indirectly - in nearly all the characteristics of English art we have found.'\textsuperscript{11} Moderation and mists were often cited in the same statement and the moistness of the climate was the reason that English landscape painting was superior according to the French novelist and critic, Charles Nodier. In 1939 the writer J.B. Priestley also wrote about England's moist climate in his book *Our Nation's Heritage*,

\begin{quote}
The sea is not far away and it is all around us, like a vast, misty window...This mistiness...is important...Britain is nearly always covered by at least a light haze...[It] gives our hills and valleys an exquisite softness, so instead of everything standing out sharply, one thing melts into another, almost like the strange places we see in dreams.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

Priestley considered the Cotswolds, in the South-West of England to be 'the most English of all our countrysides...It was a day typical of that country: damp and heavy, the sky a sagging grey roof, with shreds and tatters of mist among the copses and in the low meadows.'\textsuperscript{13}

Jonathan Bate, in his book, *The Song of the Earth*, also harks back to ideas of national characteristics being associated with the climate. His interpretation of Jane Austen's *Emma*, includes a reference to a liberal society being a product of a temperate climate, whereas despotism belongs to the East and its excessive heat. He quotes Emma gazing out at the view

\textsuperscript{10} Richard Hamblyn 2001, op. cit. p. 17.
\textsuperscript{13} ibid. p. 154.
from the grounds of Donwell Abbey 'It was a sweet view to the eye and mind, English verdure, English culture, English comfort, seen under a sun bright, without being oppressive.  

Bate goes on to say "English verdure, English culture, English comfort" are thus embedded in a particular landscape. What Austen regards as authentic national identity is derived not from a set of political institutions based in London - monarchy, parliament and so forth - but from the harmonious play, suggested by the verbal euphony, of 'verdure' and 'culture'. Verdure is natural greenness, the product of England's wet weather, [...]'.

Artists who travelled were amazed at the differences between the English climate and a foreign one especially a dry climate that rendered the air so much clearer. The landscape painter, James Dalloway who travelled to Constantinople in 1797 described an evening view of Brusa lit brilliantly by the setting sun.

The horizon was intirely (sic) of the most transparent azure and the skirting clouds were light and fleecy, suspended considerably below the bare cliffs. Nothing could exceed the clearness of tint, which pervaded every part of this lively landscape. From the extreme thinness of the air very distant objects are brought more forward than in England, that they appear with lustre; and the haziness with which even a confined view is frequently obstructed, is almost unknown here... 

Suffolk, where John Constable grew up, was, according to S.P.B. Mais, considered to be 'modest, moist, slow and tinged with melancholy'. These hardly seem to be terms to describe a place or a county, even one so redolent of English landscape as this one. They are words that locate Constable country in the psyche. Suffolk is one of the flattest places in England and therefore its enormous sky is much in evidence. It is sometimes described as 'the real England' as it was in the book, *The English Landscape in Picture Prose and Poetry*. It has a cover with a picture of a 'typical' English landscape - of Suffolk - in which the sky comprises two thirds of the image. This book includes cloud studies and a section on the English weather and the following, which begins to give a sense of the ways in which the English climate is somehow considered to be precious.

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15 ibid. p. 6.
16 ibid. p. 125.
Beyond the range of charabancs; and for English men and women away from England, who are homesick, not for ticketed ‘beauty spots’ but for little simple things; for churches and cottages and muddy lanes; for the pattern of English skies; for the best and the worst of English weather.

Again, referring to Suffolk, Mais reaffirmed the importance of the sky to England’s character when he visited the country of Constable and Gainsborough in 1937. Unfortunately, for him, during his visit the sky was unusually clear.

A deep, dark-green, high-banked lane led steeply down from the village to Flatford Mill, and here quite suddenly I found myself looking for the first time in actuality at the homely, lovely English scene that Constable had interpreted for all time on canvas. All was as Constable knew and loved it. All except the clouds.¹⁸

In English landscape painting the sky has as much significance as the land, sometimes even more so and the evidence for this can be found in the works of Constable especially but also Turner, and later artists such as David Cox and Philip Wilson Steer. Not only did these artists represent the sky and its phenomena in their paintings but they may also have had a part in shaping English cultural identity through their work. In his book *British Weather*, which was one of the books in the ‘Britain in Pictures’ series, (a series of books with articles on the arts, folk-lore and traditions that defined English identity), Stephen Bone said that Britain’s particular meteorology was worthy of celebration for ‘It is this country with its changing skies and flying cloud shadows that has produced Wordsworth, Constable and Turner.’¹⁹

Constable Country became embedded in English culture as representative of 'real' England and was invoked even when the countryside represented was elsewhere. In an episode from a 1980s British television series, based on Margery Allingham’s novels, the detective Albert Campion, arrives by car at a large, rambling country estate. “'This is the heart of England”, he says expansively, “Look at those Constable Clouds!’”²⁰ Constable's paintings too were remembered and quoted. Jacquetta Hawkes in 1953 reflected on Constable's painting of Stonehenge and held it up as an image of naturalness especially as seen through its weather. In her eyes, in the 1950s it was spoiled by too much tourism that brought with it unwanted elements such as cheap souvenirs that somehow just didn't represent England.

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Cafes and chewing gum, car parks and conducted excursions, a sense of the hackneyed introduced by postcards, calendars and cheap guide books has done more damage to Stonehenge than the plundering of some of its stones. It will never again be possible to see it as Constable did when he made his studies, a place of mystery against a background of storms and flying showers.\textsuperscript{21}

And in 1955, in his \textit{The Making of the English Landscape}, W. Hoskins also felt distressed at the changes that had occurred in the countryside of England because of, and since, the war, 'every single change in the English landscape...[since 1914] either uglyfied it or destroyed its meaning [...] day after day, the obscene shape of the atom-bomber, laying a trail like a filthy slug upon Constable's [...] sky.'\textsuperscript{22}

Heather Tanner in her book of 1939, \textit{Wiltshire Village}, rues advances and technological change. She said that with the coming of the radio 'the shepherd looks no longer to the sky but to the nightly forecast as his weather guide.'\textsuperscript{23} She expresses concern that the media is replacing a sensual relationship to the 'real' world. The weather and shepherds are invoked as being representative and symbolic of the definition of Englishness.

In \textit{Albion}, Peter Ackroyd's 2002 book of the cultural history of England he refers to the effects of the climate on the inhabitants, especially to England's rain as instilling certain cultural traits in the characters of particular nineteenth century novels. He says, 'English fiction is itself drenched in rain, from the first sentence of Charlotte Bronte's \textit{Jane Eyre} to the last chapter of George Eliot's \textit{The Mill on the Floss}. "There was no possibility of taking a walk that day" is the opening of \textit{Jane Eyre}, with "a rain so penetrating" on a dark November day. Here "with ceaseless rain sweeping away wildly before a long and lamentable blast", Jane dreams of desolate shores [...] In the last chapter of \textit{The Mill on the Floss} Maggie Tulliver sits in her old room as "the rain was beating heavily against the window, driven with fitful force by the rushing, loud-moaning wind."\textsuperscript{24} Ackroyd then goes on to mention the acute sensitivity of the English to the weather, 'As early as 1712 Addison suggested that a guest sensitive to climate should be used "as a weather glass."' And touches on the ideas of inner and outer weather, 'A Worcester gentleman, Thomas Appletree, kept a weather diary for the year 1703 in which he formulated a close connection between inner and outer weather. A clouded October day was a "temper of weather that exactly corresponds to my saturnine and

\textsuperscript{21} ibid. p. 180.
\textsuperscript{22} ibid. p. 179.
\textsuperscript{24} Peter Ackroyd 2002, \textit{Albion}, Chatto & Windus: London, pp. 73 – 74.
[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]

Olafur Eliasson, from *The Weather Project*, in the Turbine Hall of the Tate Modern, October 2003 – March 2004
quiet melancholy genius"; rain and mist "strikes unison to my constitution" and the rain-bearing clouds of a November day entrance him with the sensation of "returning to my womb." 25

In the more immediate present, the artist Olafur Eliasson has recently completed an installation in the Turbine Hall of the Tate Modern in London, the fourth project for this vast space, 16 Oct 2003 - 21 March 2004. On accepting the commission and before anyone knew what he would propose, Eliasson sent out a 'spurious' press release on official Tate Gallery headed notepaper which said that the 110-feet high hall had its own microclimate, with clouds forming below the ceiling. This prank was reported as serious by several UK newspapers. Who can doubt an official Tate press release after all? 26 In a recent review of his work in the Guardian Weekly it is reported thus, 'Eliasson's Weather Project is an 18,000-watt bank of sodium yellow streetlight bulbs. He wants us to consider why we talk about the weather so much, and how weather impinges on our culture and our sense of ourselves. It is a disturbing, powerful work.' 27 Perhaps it wasn't that the press wanted to believe the 'officialness' of the press release. Maybe it had more to do with them wanting to believe that clouds could exist inside as well as outside the building - that somehow the climate of England existed in the interior of a space and that correlated to the way that it occupied the interior of the psyche.

25 ibid. p. 74.
4.10 Sunshine and Showers

The weather has long been associated with the way we feel. In his *Meteorologica*, Aristotle made connections between the body and the atmosphere, or vapour, that surrounded it. He compared our breathing in and breathing out to atmospheric exhalations, which at that time, it was believed to be the way that clouds formed. His ideas persisted almost unchallenged until the eighteenth century when Isaac Newton's theories brought rationality to the natural world and science. Again, in the eighteenth century, the English writer, Samuel Johnson disputed Aristotle's theories of climatic influence and was scathing of those who 'purport to tell at what degree of latitude we are to expect courage or timidity, knowledge or ignorance'. But, in spite of attempts to rationalise the unpredictability of the weather, ideas about meteorology and its connections to the body and mind persisted. Even though he believed it to be absurd, Johnson continued to refer to the weather in relationship to his own condition throughout his life. Since that time, the prevalence of a tradition of writing and talking about the weather appears strong in England and to be connected with English concerns about nature and identification with a culture. The weather is predictably unpredictable and requires constant reinterpretation. Breathing in and breathing out are taken for granted and yet this same air is from the atmosphere that surrounds us containing all the extremes of the climate and inevitably becomes a part of us all.

*In November 1996, while on a three-month residency in Paris, I bought an imported English newspaper in order to have some contact with the world in my own language. As is usual in all daily newspapers, there was a weather forecast for this particular time in late autumn. I didn't keep the forecast but its text has stayed with me and taken on a significant resonance as time has passed. It stated that, because it would drizzle for most of the day then, it was going to be 'a miserable day'. It wasn't possible to tell from this if miserable was attributed to the weather or to the readers, as miserable describes a mood or a state of being as well as a condition of the day. Somehow the weather is connected to the way we feel and the ways in which we perceive the world because of it. Many words serve this dual function, to describe not only the weather but also a mood or a feeling. Words such as, sunny, dull and bright are examples of these.*

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In his book, *Romantic Weather*, Arden Reed expands on Aristotle's theories of the connections of the body to the atmosphere that surrounds it. Reed associates them with what was happening beyond Newton and the Enlightenment, in the early decades of the nineteenth century and he too acknowledges words with dual meanings.

Interiorisation is [another] general characteristic of Romanticism, and it is similarly implicated in the new dissemination of meteorological tropes. When writers turn inward and try to portray psychological conditions and events, they are in some measure obliged to borrow a vocabulary from the outer or public world, and the weather is a likely choice. From the early humor psychology there were already shared terms like "vapour" and "temper". Further, the weather was seen to fluctuate with the speed and seeming unpredictability of moods and was said to have a direct influence on states of mind. The rise of materialism contributed to this last point, because while materialism was part of the new science that aimed to control and rationalise the weather, it also argued that insofar as man is a material body he may be influenced by material forces like the weather in a more direct way than had been thought.²

In 1831 Constable painted Salisbury Cathedral from the grounds of his friend, Bishop Fisher, *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*. This was a second version of one he had painted in 1823 for the annual Royal Academy exhibition. He wasn’t well at the time of painting it, so much so that he was afraid he would not be able to finish it. He did complete it, however, but subsequently had problems with the frame maker; from beginning to end it was not a good experience. Although the commissioned subject of the painting was the cathedral, in actuality the real focus was an enormous rainbow that was not at all meteorologically accurate. As rainbows are only formed in rainy weather then Constable included a very dark cloud in both versions of his painting of which he was afraid the Royal Academy would disapprove. However, it was his friend the Bishop who was most concerned about it. 'If Constable would but leave out his black clouds! Clouds are only black when it is going to rain. In fine weather the sky is blue'³ In 1824 the painting was returned to Constable for him to alter so that it would be more 'acceptable'. The Bishop commissioned him to paint the second version of the Cathedral for his daughter, as a wedding present, and asked him to add more blue sky to make it 'a more suitable marriage gift than the cloudy skies usual in his Pictures.'⁴ In his book, *Romantic Horizons*, James Twitchell describes the same painting and the events surrounding it.

⁴ ibid. p. 132.
Constable formed in clouds the metaphor of his own disposition: they became the upper register of psychological states. In fact, by 1823, he put so much emphasis on the cloud cover in *Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop’s Grounds* that his good friend and patron Bishop Fisher asked him to please lighten it. The sky was brooding and edgy, as if it would funnel down to earth and draw up even the large cathedral. Constable repainted the scene, giving a light-skied version, full of sunshine, to the bishop’s daughter as a wedding present and giving a darker, but full-skied, version to the bishop. He kept the darkest one, the most dynamic, the most glorious, for himself.⁵

The Salisbury Cathedral painting with its spectacular rainbow and swirling clouds was, for Constable, the climax of a lifelong preoccupation with atmospheric phenomena. It also coincided with his on-going depression after his wife’s death and fears of his own declining health. This painting was executed towards the end of his life but Constable had expressed his feelings in paintings and correspondences from an early age. In a letter she wrote to her son after he had moved to London, Constable’s mother expressed her concerns about the family farm through a conjoining of the weather with feeling. 'Sad weather [my italics] for your Father’s & everyone’s clover & hay that is sever’d & spread on the ground.'⁶ In a letter to a friend in his home village when he was twenty-four and living in London, he wrote, ‘This fine weather almost makes me melancholy; it recalls so forcibly every scene we have visited and drawn together.’⁷

Nostalgia and melancholia accompanied Constable all his life, increasing and growing more complex as he grew older. According to Peter Bishop, nostalgia is ‘sadness mingled with yearning which has a boundaryless quality in depth and extent. The sadness and yearning are for what seem an indefinitely long past and lost state of being [...] Nostalgia was attributed to a mixture of climatic, geographic, bodily, mental, emotional and spiritual causes.’⁸ At this time, for example, differences in atmospheric pressure were blamed for the sadness and melancholia felt by Swiss mercenaries serving in foreign lands. ‘...after a lifetime of breathing the “light, subtle and rarified air” of the highest mountains of Europe, it was said that the Swiss were oppressed by the heavy atmospheric pressure and coarse, leaden air of lower countries.’⁹ This may or may not apply to Constable, however he grew up in some of the flattest country in England and he was always concerned about air quality. His wife,

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⁸ ibid. pp. 48-49.
Top: John Constable, *Weymouth Bay*, 1816
Bottom: John Constable, *The Sea near Brighton*, 1826
Maria, suffered from tuberculosis and so he worried constantly about the air and its affects on her health and that of their children. He was also concerned with the air in a scientific way as it related to atmospheric phenomena. His letters to his wife before they were married, and to his friends, express his feelings about changes in air along with diet and his relationship with nature. In a letter he wrote to his friend and biographer C.R. Leslie in August 1833 he says unhappily that, 'I can hardly write, for looking at the "silvery clouds" and skies. How I sigh for that peace [to paint them] which this world cannot give - at least to me.'

It may seem that Constable had little lightness in his life as so much emphasis is placed on the connections between his moods and states of mind with his depictions of the most dramatic of atmospheric phenomena, storms, rainbows and sudden shafts of light. Clouds for Constable, in whatever form, were not simply material phenomena but the 'chief organ of sentiment' in his paintings. They expressed something fundamental about being and mediated between place and feelings about it and through their passage across the sky altered perception of place. The sky gave Constable a means by which he could incorporate the way he was feeling, especially his more sombre moods, into his painting so that they became one and the same. Ann Bermingham goes so far as to relate Constable's painting mediums to mood and says about one of Constable's most favoured mediums, the one he used for his series of cloud sketches at Hampstead, '...for what the oil sketch embodies (or rather appears to embody) is feeling itself.'

Later in the 1820s Constable’s painted skies became darker and cloudier and windier until in the painting, *The Sea near Brighton*, the sky is completely overcast and full of showers. That they became stormier and stormier matched the emotion and heartbreak that he felt following the death of his wife Maria.

In the ways that he depicted atmospheric phenomena he was able to give vent to his feelings. But in many ways it is the series of mezzotints that he embarked on with the engraver David Lucas after the death of his wife that best exemplify the connections to his moods because of

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11 Bermingham, op. cit. p. 128.
the nature of mezzotint itself. The blackness of the mezzotint perfectly matched the blackness of his mood.

John Ruskin too, in his painting and writing, not only described what he saw at the time but also later analysed the effect in psychological language that embodies a mood or value. Alain de Botton quoted his description of cumulus clouds seen from the window thus,

The true cumulus, the most majestic of clouds... is for the most part windless; the movements of its masses being solemn, continuous, inexplicable, a steady advance or retiring, as if they were animated by an inner will, or compelled by an unseen power (de Botton's italics).12

However, Ruskin was aware that the period in which he lived was very different from those that had gone before and its changes were reflected in the landscape paintings being produced, especially those by J.M.W. Turner. He used meteorological metaphors to describe this period in time.

We find ourselves on a sudden brought under sombre skies, and into drifting wind; and, with fickle sunbeams flashing in our faces, or utterly drenched with sweep of rain, we are reduced to track the changes of the shadows on the grass, or watch the rents of twilight through angry cloud. And we find that whereas all the pleasure of the medieval was in stability, definiteness and luminousness, we are expected to rejoice in darkness, and triumph in mutability; to lay the foundation of happiness in things which momentarily change or fade; and to expect the utmost satisfaction and instruction from what is impossible to arrest, and difficult to comprehend.13

Like John Constable, Ruskin too suffered from depression more frequently as he grew older and his moods were reflected in his notes and diaries if not in his paintings as they were with Constable. He kept weather notes in his diaries that mapped his changeable psychological states. In the 1870s he wrote, 'The old story, wild wind and black sky, - scudding rain and roar - a climate of Patagonia instead of England, and I more disconsolate - not in actual depression, but in general hopelessness, wonder, and disgust than ever yet in my life, that I remember, as if it was no use fighting for a world any more in which there could be no sunrise.'14

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J.M.W. Turner also appeared to be very much affected by what was occurring in the atmosphere that surrounded him. The mood of his paintings changed considerably when he was home in England compared to those he painted on the continent. In France he painted radiant, glorious skies; in Italy he used intense light and colour, deep Mediterranean blues and light fleecy clouds. But back home in England the atmospheric tone of his paintings became very much subdued, influenced by mists and haze. Here he painted moody, changeful skies.\textsuperscript{15}

He also thought that moods could be evoked or changed by certain atmospheric effects such as observing the sunrise. He instructed that a student who watched the sun come up 'will find his thoughts during the rest of the day both calmed and purified, and his advance in all essential art-skill at once facilitated and chastised.'\textsuperscript{16}

The poet John Keats (1795 – 1821) was also a weather-watcher, again because of his health. He suffered from consumption and as such had no choice but to stare expectantly at the weather as it literally controlled his life. Sometimes cataclysmic events caused considerable changes to the seasons and what could be more predictable weather patterns. In 1816 a volcano erupted off Indonesia and upset the weather worldwide for more than two years causing the air quality to deteriorate enormously. It took almost three years for the sky to become clear of the ash that had hovered in the atmosphere. In a letter Keats wrote to his friend J. H. Reynolds, when the skies eventually cleared, he said,

\begin{quote}
How beautiful the season is now - How fine the air. A temperate sharpness about it. Really, without joking, chaste weather - Dian skies - I never lik'd stubble fields as much as now - Aye better than the chilly green of the spring. Somehow a stubble plain looks warm - this struck me so much in my Sunday's walk that I composed upon it. I hope you are better employed than in gaping after weather. I have been at different times so happy as not to know what weather it was.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

For Keats, as for so many of the artists and writers at this point in the nineteenth century, the weather was responsible even for their happiness - cold, wet weather with storms or flashing rays of sunshine represented a depressed mood, whereas sunshine and warmth changed their disposition altogether. Good weather along with human contact was all that were required for a good life according to Keats in another letter.

\textsuperscript{16} ibid. p. 267.
Roni Horn, You are the Weather – Munich, 1995-97, handrail inserts in cast plastic
I am not sure how I should endure loneliness and bad weather together. Life depends on sociability and warmth; in order to survive, our species needs both social and environmental networks, both human bonds and good weather.¹⁸

Not only are our moods affected by, in simple terms, whether the day is sunny or rainy but the weather influences the way things are seen and the ways in which we perceive them. Imagine a scene, rural or urban, under cloudy skies and again in full sunshine. Or again, think of the holiday snaps that are ruined because the sun wasn't shining. Landscape can appear benign or forbidding depending on the day and some landscapes are affected more than others.

In the twentyfirst century, Roni Horn uses text, single words and longer phrases and statements in her art practice that can relate to both the weather and moods. In You are the Weather - Munich (1995-97) she used words that referred to weather conditions but also to moods. Words such as - sultry, frigid and cool - were cast in bright yellow resin and rubber and embedded into black rubber mats, within and outside a building. Some words were cast in black resin and wrapped around handrails. A viewer moving through the building would encounter single words on their journey causing a reflection not only on the climate but also on the self.

The north of England, where I grew up, is known for its forbidding scenery and depressing industrial towns. This perception could be in part because this part of the country also experiences the highest rainfall and therefore probably has more than its fair share of cloudy, windy days. Its landscape of treeless moorlands, dark soil and looming rocky hills are not the more familiar ones of bucolic England. Here the atmosphere imparts to the landscape a double blow by not only altering the landscape but also by altering our perception of it. L.C.W. Bonacina describes this effect when he writes,

To take a rather suggestive case it seems reasonable to suspect that the toning of the sky can be influenced over those forbidding tracts of naked black peat which occur here and there on the lofty Pennine Moors in Northumberland, Durham, Yorkshire, Lancashire and Derbyshire. It may only be coincidence, but the writer cannot recall blacker clouds than he has several times seen drifting over such areas where little light is reflected from the ground. [...] In Great Britain, perhaps, no local reactions on the complexions of the sky are so palpable as those of industrial districts: to wit the appalling gloom oppressing the Lancashire landscape on a wet day, even at midsummer, as one traverses in an express train the section of the L.M.S. mainline between Warrington and Preston.¹⁹

He considers this phenomenon and the ways in which clouds especially black clouds can alter our perception of the landscape and bring about a sombre mood. He suggests that it is something that could be investigated scientifically, by meteorologists.

Let us turn now from the specific study of clouds to other aspects of our subject. A given landscape, of course, changes its expression not only with the time of day and season of the year but also with the varying quality of the light from one day to another. Visibility relationships are of particular interest in this connection, and might well receive the attention of meteorologists.  

At the other end of the country too, the weather, mood and perception of landscape are conjoined in a couple of articles from the Guardian Weekly. At the beginning of 2003 during a period of heavy rainfall in England, particularly in the South East, two articles appeared about the Norfolk region. In Muffled Melancholy of a New Year Paul Evans writes,

Low cloud hides the hilltops. The space between the land and this thick grey ceiling is wet and misty, creating an atmosphere where everything is an indistinct, muffled murk. It is a weird time after the winter solstice, between Christmas and New Year, when a kind of melancholy seeps from sodden soil and fills the land and sky. [...] This murky greyness feels like a sadness without tangible cause, a melancholy mood as pervasive as rain, plaintive in the sounds of birds and streams, ominous as the wind in the high trees. The mood holds, wrapped in by the thick grey cloud, which hides the brighter freedoms of the hilltops.

And from Richard Mabey in Norfolk turns into a waterscape in three dimensions,

The rain here has become relentless. It's seeping through the roof, garlanding the house with an almost impassable moat, and sending rising tide-lines up anything foolish enough to stand still. Norfolk is suddenly a waterscape in three dimensions. It is so over the top as to teeter on theatricality. So instead of moping in the gloom, I button up and go out to see if I can appreciate the show [...] and though the morning has been exhilarating, too much of this and I'd become a morose, failed amphibian myself.

When England beat Australia at cricket in the summer of 2001, it appeared as if even the sky was joining in the happy moods of the spectators, transforming a dreary old sports ground. Perhaps the rare occurrence of a win matched the rareness of seeing this part of he country in such a favourable light.

Rare win by England over Australia in Test cricket match and it appeared even the sky was smiling on them. In Leeds, Yorkshire's former industrial epicentre 'It was a fresh afternoon. For some reason Headingly has more expressive cloudscapes than any other cricket ground and, briefly, the old dump looked beautiful. And the spectators saw what they wanted but hardly dared to imagine.'

However later, in the same Test series when Australia obtained the upper hand and went on to regain the Ashes, this second review indicates that England's hopes of being successful were thrown to the vagaries of the weather.

Under the circumstances, with the gloom and rain of last Sunday giving way to glorious sunshine, England must have nursed hopes of scoring 169 more runs to make Australia bat again, and of getting a draw.  

From 'glorious sunshine' to 'gloom and rain' - the English national pastime of cricket is combined with a national obsession, weather watching to account for hope and optimism and then subsequently depression, summing up the ways in which the weather has infiltrated the very being of this nation. Continuing the connection between sport and weather; there is probably nowhere else in the world where a nineteenth century artist would be referenced in a sporting review and it would be understood by the readers as this one was.

A luminous early summer's day, the sky full of Constable cloud but all of it fair weather, was the perfect setting for this tremendous grass-court final.  

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23 From a review of a tennis match between Pete Sampras (USA) and Tim Henman (GB) at Queen's in June 1999, Stephen Brierley, 'Sampras holds off Henman' in *The Guardian Weekly*, week ending 20 June 1999, p.31.
<table>
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5. Weather Diary

JANUARY

1/1835
The new year is ushered in with the ceremonies proper to it in these regions. She lays out no false hopes: a heavy north-western gale, with steady rain, bespeaks the rising year. Thank God, we are not destined here to see the end of it, but hope then to be in the Pacific Ocean, where a blue sky tells one there is a heaven - a something beyond the clouds above our heads. (V of B, p. 270)

7/1874
Terrible cold upon me now for a full week; this morning worse than ever, and the day drenched literally, with chill fog, on the edge of frost. (D of JR, vol. 3, p. 772)

10/1803
I lay in bed to have a Drench of sleep till 1.o'clock. Worked all day...ominously cold (GJ, p. 136)

12/1839
Early part some very heavy showers with thunder and lightning. At 7.15 am our party started. I remained behind being too weak to accompany them. At 9.00am squalls of rain at times. At 11 fresh breezes and very fine weather. At noon very hot wind, veered around to SW at 2 pm. At 4 ditto weather. Several strong gusts of winds at times and very warm, the flies horribly troublesome. At 5:30 our party returned. Very fine all night (Fresh breezes NE, cold air) (BJ, p. 137)

17/1839
Very fine cold day remained at the camp We did not work this day. The men went - some shooting, others fishing - and our will was deepened and widened. At night very fine but very cold winds. (BJ, p. 138)

25/1802
We did not rise so soon as we had intended - I made bread and apple pies - we walked at dusk to Rydale - no letters! It rained all the way. (DW ill LJ, p. 101)

28/1802
A downright rain. A wet night. Wm. Slept better - better this morning...It cleared up after dinner. We were both in miserable spirits. (DW ill LJ, p. 105)

31/1802
We amused ourselves for a long time in watching the Breezes some as if they came from the bottom of the lake spread in a circle, brushing along the surface of the water, and growing more delicate, as it were thinner and of a paler colour till they died away. Others spread out like a peacock's tail, and some went right forward this way and that in all directions. The lake was still where those breezes were not, but they made it all alive. (Dorothy Wordsworth in LIB, p. 79)

FEBRUARY

2/1867
Up with the sun, it bright. I depressed after vague short dreams (D of JR, vol. 2, p. 610)

4/1802
I was very sick, bad headache and unwell - I lay in bed till 3.0 clock, that is I lay down as soon as breakfast was over. It was a terrible wet day. (GJ, p. 62)
12/1878
Oh that someone had but told me, in my youth, when all my heart seemed to be set on these colours and clouds, that appear for a little and then vanish away, how little my love of them would serve me. (R.T and PR, p. 268)

13/1831
and the deep purple shadows of the ravines formed fine contrasts with the bright parts rich with streams of yellow light from the declining sun. Such scenes never fail to have a powerful effect over my mind and heart (CV, p. 109)

15/1869
Yesterday dark and bleak all day. Nasty grey lifeless morning. (D of JR, vol. 2, p. 665)

16/1839
One of the most horrible, suffocating days I ever felt. Hot winds and dust till about 7 pm, when we had a shower of rain. At 8,30 pm it was, again very warm, but got cool during the night. (Northerly. Westerly) (C, p. 282)

17/1801
A miserable, nasty snowy morning. (J of DW, p. 93)

19/1802
Hard frost this morning, but it soon snowed, then thawed - a miserable afternoon. (DW ill LJ, p. 121)

25/1843
Raining all day. Staid in and wrote, but got little done, (D of JR, p. 245)

27/1839
Dark gloomy weather and very disagreeable. Very unwell all day. Took medicine in the middle of the day. Very squally, rainy and cold from 5 pm. Throughout the night. (Variable and light) (C, p. 215)

MARCH

1/1844
Lovely summer day. Dined in bright sunlight at fire - it did my heart good to see it dance on the crimson wall.
(D of JR, p. 268)

6/1802
I woke with a bad headache and partly on that account, partly for ease, I lay in bed till one o' clock. At one I pulled off my nightcap - 1/2 past one sate down to breakfast. A very cold sunshiney frost. (DW ill LJ, p. 129)

8/1839
Early part strong breezes and heavy rain. At 9 am cleard up with very cold air. Cold the whole day. Employed all day in accounts and writing. (C, p. 283)

12/1867
Bitter frost and snow in morning, mad, wild wind to-night. I sleepless last night. Terribly depressed all day. (D of JR, vol. 2, p. 613)

14/1867
Deep snow in morning, wild wind, black sky, searching cold of thaw. Ill with cold. (D of JR, vol. 2, p. 613)

15/1844
Learned something about clouds, but influenza upon me - languid and good for nothing. (D of JR, p. 269)
18/1802
A very fine morning. The sun shone, but it was far colder than yesterday. I felt myself weak...There was something in the air that compelled me to serious thought - the hills were large, closed in by the sky. (DW ill LJ, p. 136)

19/1798
Wm. And Basil and I walked to the hill-tops, a very cold, bleak day. We were met on our return by a severe hailstorm. William wrote some lines describing a stunted thorn. (J of DW, p. 14)

26/1839
Early part calm and fine - At 8.30 am as the day got warm, I felt myself very unwell again. PM at 2.00 Woodford and his wife came here. More ease this afternoon. This day has been extremely hot. At night cool and pleasant. (Calm. Unwell with dysentery) (C, p. 283)

27/1839
Early part calm and fine. At 8 am very warm. At noon very hot disagreeable weather...very unwell all day...(C, p. 283)

28/1839
Moderate and cloudy with cool air. At noon breeze increasing and weather looking like a change. At midnight blowing very strong and rainy. (C, p 283)

APRIL

5/1841
Yesterday kept in all day by unceasing rain. Thoroughly restless and uncomfortable; could not draw, or write; partly ill temper with perpetual bad weather. (D of JR, p. 161)

8/1825
It is a lovely subject, of the canal kind, lively - & soothing - calm and exhilarating, fresh and blowing. (CCC, pp. 197-8)

9/1839
Light airs and variable. Very unwell all day. Attempted to draw, but could not. At night fine and cool. (C, p. 284)

11/1802
very stormy & cold I did not walk (GJ, p. 84)

14/1802
William did not rise till dinnertime. I walked with Mrs. C. I was ill out of spirits - disheartened. Wm and I took a long walk in the Rain (GJ, p. 84)

15/1802
It was a threatening, misty morning, but mild (DW ill LJ, p. 145)

25/1867
Dark fog all day. I very languid - could not write. (D of JR, vol. 2, p.616)

29/1802
A beautiful morning - the sun shone and all was pleasant (DW ill LJ, p. 156)

MAY

1/1802
Rose not till half-past 8, a heavenly morning. As soon as breakfast was over we went into the garden, and sowed the scarlet beans about the house. It was a clear sky, a heavenly morning (DW ill LJ, p. 157)

2/1870
Heavy cold, and wet all day, and all rather sad. (D of JR, vol. 2, p. 695)
7/1874
Bitter, grey, malignant wind in morning, darkening to rain. Rain all the afternoon. (D of JR, vol. 3, p. 791)

11/1866
Up at 1/2 past 4. Sketched dawn. Out for morning walk (R,T and the PR, p 267)

13/1822
We were out this morning and for a short time on Sunday evening though the weather was very squally.
(SEA, p. 173, [P.B.Shelley, letter to Captain Daniel Roberts])

14/1802
A very cold morning - hail and snow showers all day...The hills were covered over with a slight covering of hail or snow, just so as to give them a hoary winter look with the black rocks. The woods looked miserable, the coppices green as grass, which looked quite unnatural and they seemed half shrivelled up, as if they shrank from the air. (DW ill LJ, p. 164)

15/1800
A coldish, dull morning - hoed the first row of peas, weeded etc, etc., sat hard to mending till evening. The rain, which had threatened all day, came on just when I was going to walk. (DW ill LJ, p. 19)

17/1802
Hail showers snow and cold attacked me. (GJ, p. 100)

18/1839
Very light airs and variable. Fine all day. Felt a little better this day. At night fine. (C, p. 285)

19/1802
A grey morning - not quite so cold...Coleridge's bowels bad, mine also. (DW ill LJ, p. 165)

20/1800
A fine mild rain...everything green and overflowing with life... (J of DW, p. 34)

22/1887
A glorious morning, all Australian sunshine and balmy airs - awoke wonderfully refreshed after a good night's rest, and feeling as young as I felt 37 years ago in this very same Sydney - can it be that I am actually an "old fogey" of 67? (CV, p. 189)

23/1800
Ironing till teatime. So heavy a rain that I could not go for letters - put by the linen mended stockings etc. (DW ill LJ, p. 24)

JUNE

1/1800
Rain in the night - a sweet, mild morning (DW ill LJ, p. 27)

2/1840
This morning, at 6 o clock, I got up feeling it rather cold, and drew back the white curtains anxiously. It was all grey and gloomy and I got sulkily back to bed. (D of JR, p. 196)

3/1867
Black fog and rain all day and I fearfully dismal. (D of JR, vol. 2, p. 619)

6/1840
Pouring rain all day and slow extempore sermon from a weak-voiced man in a white arched small chapel, with a braying organ and doggerel hymns - very unsatisfactory. (D of JR, p. 199)

7/1800
A very warm, cloudy morning, threatening to rain. (DW ill LJ, p. 29)

9/1802
Wm. Slept ill. A soaking rain all day (DW ill LJ, p. 175)
10/1839
Early part sharp frost and calm. Towards noon a disagreeable sirocco fell with light variable airs and strong appearance of change. At 5 very cold indeed. I felt very unwell the whole day. At night I turned in early with a high fever. Calm and cold all night. (C, pp. 285-6)

12/1802
A rainy morning…We sheltered under a wall. He [C] would be sadly wet, for a furious shower came on just when we parted (DW ill LJ, p. 175)

13/1800
A rainy morning. W. and J. went upon the Lake. Very warm, and pleasant gleams of sunshine. Went upon the water after tea, caught a pike 7½ (lbs). Mr. Simpson trolling (DW ill LJ, p. 34)

15/1802
A sweet, grey, mild morning (DW ill LJ, p. 177)

16/1867
Black fog and storm all day. One of the most wretched days I ever spent. (D of JR, vol. 2, p. 620)

25/
The ocean of air in which we live and move, in which the bolt of heaven is forged, and the fructifying rain condensed, can never be to the zealous naturalist a subject of tame and unfeeling contemplation. (Luke Howard, 1774-1864)

26/1818
The weather is capital for the views, but it is now rather misty, and we are in doubt whether to walk to Ambleside to tea - it is five miles along the borders of the Lake. (WNWK, p 152)

27/1844
Rather a failure of a day, this. Broken, ugly grey sky in the morning… (D of JR, p. 294)

28/1835
The scene on all sides showed desolation, brightened and made palpable by a clear, unclouded sky. For a time such scenery is sublime, but this feeling cannot last, and then it becomes uninteresting. (V of B, p. 342)

29/1818
"...& we had fagged & tugged to the top, when at half past six there came a mist upon us & shut out the view, we did not however lose anything by it." (WNWK, p 24)

JULY

1/1839
Moderate and fine. At 9 a.m. long arched cloud extended from south to north nearly over the whole arch, indication a change of weather. Pleasant air most part of the day. At 4 p.m. very cold. I felt rather better this day. (Light and variable) (C, p. 287)

2/1818
This Sonnet I have written in a strange mood, half asleep. I know not how it is, the Clouds, the sky, the Houses ...

(WNWK, p. 160 [Keats travel journal])

4/1802
Cold and rain and very dark. I was sick and ill had been made sleepless by letters. I lay in bed till 4.0 o clock (GJ, p. 117)

9/1835
This would have been a beautiful day in any climate, much more so among mountains. From dawn till night there was not a single atom of cloud to be found out by the most telescopic eye in the whole blue dome of the sky; not a mist nor a shadow (D of JR, p. 16)
sun. clouds. sprinkling. sun. distant showers. fine. Mr. Grimm, my artist, came from London
to take some of our finest views. Second swarm of bees on the same bough of Gilead fir.
Turned the hay-cocks which are in a bad state. Cherries delicate. (Gilbert White in LIB, p 78)

13/1818
The rain has stopped us today at the end of a dozen Miles… (WMWK, p. 176 [Keats travel
diary])

14/1821
Hampstead July 14 1821 6 to 7 pm N.W. breeze strong (CCC, p164)

15/1835
…and really a sunny afternoon up here is a very delightful thing, just cold enough to put you
in good spirits. (D of JR, p. 26)

16/1818
The north End of Loch Lomond grand in excess - the entrance at the lower end to the narrow
part from a little distance is precious good - the Evening was beautiful nothing could surpass
our fortune in the weather… (WNWK, p. 78 [Keats in letter to Tom Keats])

17/1818
…the Water was a fine Blue silverd and the Mountains a dark purple the Sun setting aslant
behind them - meantime the head of Ben Lomond was covered with a rich Pink Cloud…
(WNWK, p. 184 [Keats' travel journal])

19/1824
My dear Maria's Birthday Your Goddaughter - very lovely evening - looking eastward - cliffs
of a dark (grey?) effect - background - very white and golden light. (CCC, p. 96)

20/1828
I have been accompanied (with my easil (sic)) attending a very sick wife and afflicted child.
Brighton has done them very little good, but we have had most untoward weather, - and we
must leave next week. (CCC, p 139)

23/1834
What a difference does climate make in the enjoyment of life! How opposite are the sensations
when viewing black mountains half-enveloped in clouds and seeing another range through the
light blue haze of a fine day! The one for a time may be very sublime; the other is all gaiety
and happy life. (V of B, p. 242)

24/1834
We arrived here the day before yesterday; the views of the distant mountains are most
sublime and the climate delightful; after our long cruise (sic) in the damp gloomy climates of
the south, to breathe a clear, dry air, & feel honest warm sunshine, & eat good fresh roast
beef must be the summum bonum of human life. (CDLs, p. 35)

28/1818
For some time he had been annoyed by a slight inflammation in the throat, occasioned by
rainy days, fatigue, privation, and, I am afraid, in one instance, damp sheets. (WNWK, p. 126
[Brown about Keats])

29/1816
we have had lateley such stupid mists - fogs - rains - and perpetual density - that one would
think Castlereagh had the foreign affairs of the kingdom of Heaven also - upon his hands (S
of E, p. 96)

30/1847
As I was walking down the chief street, this afternoon, somewhat languid, partly owing to the
weather… (D of JR, p. 350)

31/1822
Eving, 31st July 1822 shower approaching (CCC, p 80)
AUGUST

1/1822
Augt. 1 1822 11 O clock AM. Very hot with large climbing Clouds under the sun. wind westerly (CCC, p 81)

2/1818
...we began upon the next ascent more formidable by far than the last and kept mounting with short intervals of rest ... There came on a Mist so that from that part to the very top we walked in a Mist (WNWK, p. 130)

3/1818
We have made but poor progress Lately, chiefly from bad weather for my throat is in a fair way of getting quite well... (WNWK, p. 203 [John Keats letter to Tom Keats])

4/1839
At noon cloudy with sharp air. Between 5 and 6 taken very ill with spasms near the heart (C, p. 287)

6/1880
All sky interwoven with muslin and netting of divinest cirri cloud, over infinite shoals and sands of mackerel cloud, - but all flying, failing, melting - reappearing - twisting and intertwisting - faster than eye could follow (RT and PR, p 269)

7/1818
Here's a soaking shower coming! Ecod! It rolls between the mountains as if it would drown us. (WNWK, p. 212)

8/1818
I have got wet through day after day, eaten oat cake, & drank whiskey, walked up to my knees in Bog, got a sore throat, gone to see Icolmkill & Staffa, met with wholesome food, just here & there as it happened; went up Ben Nevis, & N.B. came down again (WNWK, p. 145 [Keats])

9/1823
Sunset over Harrow. From Hampstead Heath. Saturday. August 9, 1823. Stormy evening after a fine day. It rained all the next day (CCC, p 90)

14/1821
5 O clock afternoon: August 1921 very fine bright and wind after rain slightly in the morning (CCC, p 63)

16/1835
Cloudy and wet, everything dull and stupid. Lake grey. Clouds grey. Hill grey, tops invisible, very disagreeable. (D of JR, p. 43)

17/1835
By Schwytz and Aart. Day dull, clouds low. I asleep. Nothing interesting. (D of JR, p. 43)

18/1873
Rain, or unhealthy angry ugly cloud always, and furious wind. (D of JR, p. 755)

19/1792
came a pleasant breeze from the SE with serene and cheerful weather (Captain Vancouver) (Passage to Juneau, p. 314)

20/1839
Light airs and fine all day. Very unwell indeed today. At night fine. Unwell at night, and no sleep. (C, p. 288)

23/1836
very bad weather, nothing done (BJ, p. 61)

24/1872
Black east wind. Black row of two-storied (sic) houses opposite me, and I very sad, discouraged, and wistfully wondering what to do. (D of JR, vol. 2, p. 730)
25/1836
Rain almost the whole day; employed on board. (BJ, p. 61)

26/1836
The same weather (BJ, p. 61)

27/1822
27 augt 11 o clock. Noon looking Eastward large silvery (?clouds) wind gentle at S West
(CCC, p 82)

28/1873
Fine for a quarter of an hour. Now the racking cloud again. I headachy yesterday and like
breaking down.
(D of JR, vol. 2, p. 756)

29/1835
The morning was cloudless. Oh, the comfort that there is in an hour or two of blue sky and
sunshine after a day or two of rain. (D of JR, p. 52)

31/1819
John Keats to Fanny Keats.
The delightful weather we have had for 2 months is the highest gratification I could receive -
no chill'd red noses - no shivering - but fair Atmosphere to think in [....] my greatest regret is
that I have not been well enough to bathe though I have been 2 months by the seaside and live
now close to delicious bathing - still I enjoy the weather. I adore fine weather as the finest
blessing I have. (R, p. 257)

SEPTEMBER

1/1836
Fresh breezes and squally I went on shore to take some angles, but owing to the weather
could effect nothing. (C, p. 231)

2/1839
Moderate and cloudy all day. Exceedingly ill. At night moderate and fine (Westerly) (C, p.
289)

3/1836
Bad weather all day, and nothing done. (C, p. 231)

4/1839
Moderate and fine. Extremely ill. At night fine (Westerly) (C, p. 289)

5/1839
Moderate and fine. Exceedingly unwell. Fine all day. At night moderate and fine (Westerly)
(C, p. 289)

6/1839
Moderate and cloudy. Very unwell all day. At night fine (Westerly) (C, p. 289)

7/1839
Moderate and cloudy. At noon showery. Very ill all day. Showery all the afternoon. At night
showery. Very ill, (Westerly) (C, p. 289)

8/1839
Moderate and cloudy with slight showers at times. At noon very fine. Fine all the rest. At
night moderate and fine. Very ill all day (Westerly) (C, p. 290)

9/1839
Moderate and fine (Westerly) (C, p 290)

10/1821
Sept.10 1821, Noon. Gentle wind at West. Very sultry after a heavey (sic) shower with
thunder, accumulated thunder clouds passing slowly away to the south East. Very bright and
hot. All the foliage sparkling and wet. (CCC, p63)
11/1821
Hampstead Sept 11 1821. 10 to 11 morning under the sun - Clouds silvery grey on warm ground sultry - Light wind to the S.W. fine all day, but rain in the night following. (CCC, p. 65)

12/1821
Sept. 12. 1821. Sun setting over Harrow. This appearance of the Evening was (deletion) just after a very heavy rain. More rain in the night and very high (?) wind which continued all the day following (the 13th) while making this sketch I observed the Moon.......... (CCC, p67)

13/1873
Things very wrong with me just now - weather chiefly: the dark, plague wind blowing always. To-day London fog; wet. Must be more orderly and resolute. (D of JR, vol. 2, p. 758)

14/1836
Light breezes and very cold. Employed in taking angles. (BJ, p 63)

15/1836
Fine weather, employed in surveying. (BJ, p 63)

18/1836
Sunday, calm and cloudy employed all the early part in sending necessary things on shore; at half past ten, went myself; being Sunday, we worked only as absolutely necessary; rain all night. (BJ, p. 64)

20 /1821
We have had noble clouds and effects of light and dark colour - as is always the case in such seasons at present. (CCC, p 10)

21/1819
Keats's letter to George and Georgiana Keats
I am not certain how I should endure loneliness and bad weather together. (R, p. 258)

26/1866
Wet again; another horrible letter from L (D of JR, vol. 2, p. 600)

27/1836
All the early part calm; at half past eleven. Having a light breeze from the westward, got under way. (BJ, p 67)

29/1800
John left us. Wm. And I parted with him in sight of Ulswater. It was a fine day, showery, but with sunshine and fine clouds. Poor fellow, my heart was right sad. (DW ill LJ, p. 53)

OCTOBER

1/1873
The grey fog ended in rain. All now dark, and winter practically come. I sulky all the evening. (D of JR, vol. 2, p. 761)

2/1800
A very rainy morning. We walked after dinner to observe the torrents. (DW ill LJ, p. 53)

31785
Joseph reported that the wind was still against us. Dr Johnson said, 'A wind, or not a wind? That is the question'; for he can amuse himself at times with a little play of words, or rather of sentences. (SEA, p. 136 [James Boswell])

4/1836
Fresh breezes and fine; went on shore at nine am to examine the plain. I cannot express my delight at seeing no bounds to a flat of fine rich-looking country... (BJ, p. 70)

8/1836
Very unsettled weather throughout the day; employed setting up topmast rigging and other jobs. (BJ, p. 71)
9/1800
I was ironing all the day till tea time. Very rainy. (DW ill LJ, p. 57)

10/1836
At three pm the wind setting in from the SW and the weather looking bad, we bore up, and at six came to an anchor about two miles to the southward of our last anchor. An extraordinary appearance took place in the sky in the NE about half past 5 pm. A column of beautiful crimson was seen right up and down with well-defined edges. (BJ, p. 72)

12/1836
We all felt in high spirits, the air had a freshness quite exhilarating (sic) (C, p 232)

13/1836
Strong gales and a high sea. All the forenoon the ship pitched very much, but she held on well; at one pm it began to moderate, and by four we had fine weather. I went on shore, and we landed a few more things the same evening. (BJ, p. 73)

14/1800
Wm. Lay down after dinner - I read Southey's Spain. The wind rose very high at evening. (DW ill LJ, p. 58)

17/1840
A most disagreeable day as far as the weather went, though clear, soft, and lovely in the sky; but burning sun, with cutting north wind... (D of JR, p. 90)

18/1836
very sultry and unpleasant weather, at night pleasant weather. (BJ, p 73)

19/1836
Light breezes and fine weather; employed in writing and drawing for the commissioners (BJ, p 73)

20/1840
A horrible day for weather: dust like the plague of Egypt, raised by a tremendous North wind which blew up the small stones like hail.... (D of JR, p. 92)

21/1836
Employed these two days in my surveys of the coast, drawings and reports. All this day changeable; at night hard rain. (BJ, p. 74)

22/1801
Breakfasted at Penny Bridge - dined at Coniston. A grand stormy day. Drank tea at home. (DW ill LJ, p. 72)

23/1821
John Constable to John Fisher
Skies must and always shall with me make an effectual part of the composition. It will be difficult to name a class of Landscape in which the sky is not the 'key note' the standard of 'scale' and the 'chief organ of Sentiment'... the sky is the source of light in nature - and governs everything. (CCC, p. 10)

24/1801
Attempted Fairfield, but misty, and we went no further than Green Head Gill to the sheepfold; mild, misty, beautiful, soft. (DW ill LJ, p. 72)

25/1800
A very rainy day. Wm. Again unsuccessful. We could not walk, it was so very rainy. (DW ill LJ, p. 62)

28/1836
Light breezes and rainy. Employed building a storehouse. The air very cold all day and night. (BJ, p 74)

30/1802
It is a breathless grey day, that leaves the golden woods of autumn quiet in their own tranquility, stately and beautiful in their decaying; (DW ill LJ, p. 212)
31/1821
Hampstead 31st Oct 1821. Very fine afternoon of a beautiful day, it began with rain. Wind fresh from the west.
(CCC, p 71)

NOVEMBER

1/1857
A vermillion morning, all waves of soft scarlet, sharp at the edge, and gradated to purple. Grey scud moving slowly beneath it from the south-west, heaps of grey cumuli - between the scud and the cirrus - at horizon. It issued in an exquisite day...All purple and blue in the distance, and misty sunshine on and near the trees, and green fields...Note the exquisite effect of he golden leaves scattered on the blue sky, and the horse-chestnut, thin and small, dark against them in stars. (A of T, p. 232)

2/1857
Grey, blackish, damp, wretched morning; miserable foggy day (D of JR, vol. 2, p. 528)

3/1840
A day of ponderous rain. Left Genoa early, the clouds stooping on the Apennines and the promenade which looked so gay last night dark and melancholy (D of JR, p. 102)

5/1800
Wm. Not well. A very fine clear beautiful winter's day. ...The moon was rising but the sky all over cloud. I made tea for William. (DW ill LJ, p. 65)

6/1800
A very rainy morning and night. I was baking bread, dinner and parkins. Wm. Somewhat better...the lake calm and very beautiful - a very rainy afternoon and night. (DW ill LJ, p. 65)

7/1805
On a damp and gloomy morning we set forward (J of DW, p. 405)

8/1834
My last letter was rather a gloomy one for I was not very well when I wrote it - Now everything is as bright as sunshine (CDLs, p. 40)

9/1805
It rained till near 10 o'clock; but a little after that time, it being likely for a tolerably fine day, we packed up...
(J of DW, p. 407)

10/1800
I baked bread a fine clear frosty morning. We walked after dinner to Rydale village. Jupiter over the Hilltops, the only star like the sun flashed out at intervals from behind a black cloud.
(GJ, p. 31)

12/1836
Still bad weather, and about noon one of the heaviest squalls we have had yet (BJ, p 77)

13/1801
Dullish, damp and cloudy - a day that promises not to dry our clothes - we spent a happy evening - went to bed late - & had a restless night, Wm. Better than I expected. (GJ, p. 38)

14/1800
I had a bad headach. Much wind, but a sweet, mild morning. (DW ill LJ, p. 67)

16/1801
A very darkish misty wettish morning. Mary and Molly ironed all day. (DW ill LJ, p. 77)

23/1840
Under a range of white, heavy, yet transparent cloud, resembling silver in a state of vapour, which appeared at dawn this morning all round the horizon, under a dark clear sky, there appeared a brighter, purer gleam of light, which affected me like the voice of an old friend. (D of JR, p. 112)
DECEMBER

1/1837
Light breezes and fine; at half past five got under way and worked up to Kingscote; the wind being still against us I resolved on getting some things we were in want of from the John Pirie. All the afternoon blowing fresh with very cold air. (BJ, p 83)

2/1800
A rainy morning...A pleasant moonlight evening, but not clear. Supped upon a hare. It came on a terrible evening. Hail, and wind, and cold, and rain. (DW ill LJ, p. 69)

3/1861
Sunday was wet and gloomy. Yesterday bright, but with disagreeable north wind. Today, foggy morning. Severe depression, as usual, after the excitement of the St Gothard. (D of JR, p. 557)

5/1869
A miserable day yesterday (Thaw, dark; I very cold and wretched after sleepless night); helpless, stupid, feverish...(D of JR, vol. 2, p. 689)

6/1841
I never saw a more straightforward day of rain out of Cumberland, Wales or Naples, and so dark withal I could scarcely see to read at midday, and got dreadfully low. I am ashamed to find myself so much at the mercy of a dark sky. (D of JR, p. 220)

7/1801
We rose by candlelight. A showery, unpleasant morning, after a downright rainy night. When we were upon the Rays, it snowed very much; and the whole prospect closed in around us, like a moorland valley, upon a moor very wild...Now and then a hail shower attacked us; but we kept up a good heart. The weather had been such as to preclude all intercourse between neighbours. (DW ill LJ, p. 87)

8/1801
A dullish, rainyish morning. (DW ill LJ, p. 88)

10/1784
A circumstance that I must not omit, because it was new to us, is, that on Friday, December the 10th being bright sun-shine, the air was full of icy spiculae, floating in all directions, like atoms in a sunbeam let into a dark room. We thought them at first particles of the rime falling from my tall hedges; but were soon convinced to the contrary, by making our observations in open places where no rime could reach us. Were they watery particles of the air frozen as they floated; or were they evaporations from the snow frozen as they mounted? I forgot to mention before, that, during the two severe days, two men, who were much better employed, had their fingers so affected by the frost, while they were thrashing in a barn, that mortification followed, from which they did not recover for many weeks. (Gilbert White in LIB, p. 78)

11/1801
Baked bread and pies. It was a stormy morning with Hail showers. The Luffs dined with us - Mrs L came with Mrs Olliff in the gig. We sate lazily round the fire after dinner. Mr and Mrs Olliff drank tea and supper with us - a hard frost when they came. (GJ, p. 48)

12/1837
Blowing very fresh; at half past four am the wind increasing and weather looking bad, I did not like running for Rapid Bay, therefore made sail for Nepean Bay. (BJ, p. 88)

13/1837
Blowing a gale of a wind all day (BJ. P 88)
17/1857
Dark clouds with vermillion openings. Nasty rough throat and feeling of cold on me these last two days.
(D of JR, vol. 2, p. 530)

18/1837
Extremely warm all day. Remained at home with gout. Very warm all day and night. (BJ, p. 133)

19/1837
One of the most disagreeable days I have ever felt. The heat was oppressive a great part of the time. At home very warm indeed. At 1 pm a heavy squall of rain which lasted about 10 minutes. At 2 thunder and heat. Towards evening warm again. Hard rain all night with little wind (Westerly) (BJ, p. 133)

20/1800
Coleridge came. Very ill, rheumatic, feverish. Rain incessantly. (DW ill LJ, p. 70)

22/1818
We set off an hour after sunrise one radiant morning in a little boat; there was not a cloud in the sky, nor a wave upon the sea, which was so translucent that you could see the hollow caverns clothed with the glaucous sea-moss, and the leaves and branches of those delicate weeds that pave the unequal bottom of the water.[ ... ] What colours there were in the sky, what radiance in the evening star, and how the moon was encompassed by a light unknown in our regions! (SEA, p 170 [P.B. Shelley, letter to Thomas Love Peacock])

23/1801
A downright thaw, but the snow not gone off the ground except on the steep hillsides - it was thick black heavy air. (DW ill LJ, p. 94)

25/1833
The climate is certainly wretched.... From the damp and boisterous state of the atmosphere, not cheered by a gleam of sunshine, one fancied the climate even worse than it really was. (V of B, p. 203)

27/1843
I have an infernal tonight. Did nothing all day; weather close and hot and all wrong. (D of JR, p. 255)

28/1843
What it should always be - a gloomy day. Worked and did nothing; drew a little, but unsatisfactorily; wrote news and idled.
(D of JR, p. 255)
6. Appendix

(Refereed paper presented at the Creative Media Conference, Text, Image and Sound, held at the Trades Hall, Melbourne, October 7 – 8, 2002)

The numbers in brackets in the text refer to the slides in the PowerPoint presentation on the CD in the Durable Visual Record

Is this real work? Is it a photograph? Is it art?

Text and image in the work of Lesley Duxbury.

In this paper (1) I will present an overview of my practice as a visual artist with a particular emphasis on the role of and use of text that links my interests in history to contemporary practice.

The title of this paper comes from 3 rapid questions asked by a viewer at my most recent exhibition, Seeing Double, in Perth in May this year. What the viewer was looking at was a diptych - two panels each 60 X 80 cms. The right hand panel carried a photographic image of clouds floating across an ordinary sky, an everyday, unremarkable sky. Tiny numerals from 1 to 7 had been, seemingly, randomly printed over the image in silver. The left hand panel, a sheet of aluminium, contained the legend to the numerals on the panel to the right, printed using aluminium dust. Phrases such as '3 A warm hue melted and broken into a fine neutral grey' and '6 I can feel the atmosphere but do not see it' obviously did not clarify the work to that particular viewer who was puzzled by the mediums, and the presentation. However, this piece of work, a combination of image and text, print and photograph, encapsulated many of the ideas I had been experimenting with for about 10 years. Text, or language, and print have inherent associations, from the earliest woodcuts to Pop Art to today's advertising industry. Text and image had always been present in my work but as for many artists, they existed as a picture and its title.

In 1991 I moved to Perth in Western Australia. Until then I had always been surrounded by, even in Melbourne, familiar landscapes - hills, rivers, coastlines etc, with backdrops of cloudy skies, that had been the source of my image-making.
Perth was quite different (2). It and the landscape around it were flat. There was a distinct horizontal line that separated land from sea or sky from sea; it was hot and I saw nothing but intense blue skies for the first 3 months - neither a cloud nor a drop of rain.

Although I felt intensely uncomfortable at first in this alien, isolated place, that horizontal line and the infinite space fascinated me. There was such a sense of time - time that had passed and that had worn down the land. In the absence of a Romantic landscape I was inspired at first, to make a body of work based on the earliest European exploratory voyages to discover the Great South Land and the tentative existence of those who set out in fragile boats for an unknown destination. The result was a series of tiny, pictorial mezzotints (3), contradictory in every way - miniature in spite of the vast space I inhabited and a dense velvet black in spite of the intense blues of sky and sea and the clarity of the air that surrounded me.

I should probably explain the technique of mezzotint at this point, as it is instrumental to the progress of the work that followed. Mezzotint is a printmaking technique in which a copper plate is roughened in a very painstaking and systematic way by a toothed rocker, so that when printed the plate produces the densest, most velvety black imaginable. The image is burnished out of the plate. It is literally brought to light, coaxed out of the blackness in an analogy of an image out of the imagination. By flattening the raised burr caused by the rocker to a greater or lesser degree many shades of grey can be achieved and this technique was developed and used from the eighteenth century onwards to more faithfully enable reproductions of paintings.

In 1992 I made a series of tiny oil paintings (4) of similar sky/seascapes and set them into wide, white frames. On the lower edge of the frame I inscribed the title of the painting in gold copperplate Letraset, thus making it a part of the image and, for the first time, I incorporated text within the image.

The titles were in Latin (5) in a deliberate attempt to hint at some of the roots of the English language and also to obscure meaning, to imply that perhaps the text and image was not the simple association that it appeared to be. I realized, at this point, how important the title of the work was. I noticed that it was often the title that provided the impetus for the image – that the title came first and once I had a word or group of words in my head then I could picture the image. I wondered if this would work for others, that if I provided the text, could the
viewers then create the image for themselves? Writing about narrative and the power of words Kathleen Desmond comments,

The information in the actual text, the sequence of words, phrases, and/or images can be sketchy or replete: the story imagined between and among these elements in the mental reception of the viewer fills in these gaps, creating continuity and dimensions resonant with emotion and vividness. There is often a disproportionate relation between what is given in the narrative and produced in the imagination: in some ways the minimal accounts of ancient mythologies or folk tales are capable of suggestions that exceed those wrought by the heavily detailed descriptions of high realism. ¹

Two nineteenth century artists who have been very influential on my work are John Constable and J.M.W. Turner and I share with them a preoccupation with natural phenomena – the landscape, the sky and the passage of time. During the period in which these 2 artists worked, which has been termed Romantic, nature was subjected to intense scrutiny as it was believed it held clues to universal truths and to the essence of existence. Landscape painting was a projection of the artist’s inner life. However in his reappraisal of Romantic art William Vaughn posited that,

It was no coincidence that the members of the generation that became concerned with the expressive potential of landscape were the successors to a philosophy that had completely revolutionized the understanding of perception. In his Critiques Immanuel Kant had drawn attention to the way in which our experience of the world comes only through our faculties of awareness and the organization which already exists in the mind. There is no way of coming to terms with the ultimate reality of the ‘thing-in-itself’; all we can know is our impression of it. And this, being conditioned by our own particular situation, is necessarily subjective. ²

In 1968 Roland Barthes wrote his seminal text The Death of the Author in which he proposed that readers create their own meanings, regardless of the intentions of the author whose texts are unstable, shifting and open to interpretation. However these ideas were actually being examined as early as 1808, during the Romantic period, when A.W. Schlegel metaphorically elevated the observer or reader on a parallel with the creator of art. The Romantics first transformed the relationship between artist, or reader, and viewer in that they had less a desire to express themselves than to arouse awareness in the viewer in an act of participative re-creativeness. It was this idea of participation and re-creation that I wanted to explore, to include the viewer in the active creation of the work rather than as a passive absorber of images.

I used the strategy of taking themes and sensibilities that had their roots in the Romantic period and subjected them to a contemporary treatment. I did this by stripping away anything extraneous or superficial to produce work that is visually minimal but rich in associations and levels of meaning through the application of text and image. I appropriated texts from sources such as nineteenth century notations, classifications and descriptions. I wanted to utilise the slippages that occur between words and images that prevent us from seeing both concurrently and explore the shifts in meaning that are generated when text and image are intertwined. A more recent explanation of appropriation was put forward in 1999 by Karl Erickson and Andrew Falkowski who wrote,

Appropriation, or taking an image, text, or action from another source and declaring it your own, is an act that seeks to reduce monolithic, general experiences to something that can be understood individually. The restructuring tendency of appropriation today seems to offer the idea that the point of origin is the initiation of continuous change. It decentralizes authority and makes the individual responsible for assuming control over their experience of media representation.³

I have rarely used a text in its entirety or if I have I have rendered it such a way that it cannot be taken in all at once or be read from a single position. Fragments sometimes trigger emotions or realisations in the viewer that the so-called whole cannot. A fragment of the whole is what attracts attention and the rest is made up or, at least, fantasized about. I quote, ‘By suggesting incompleteness, the fragment is a more complete embodiment of the unknowability of the universe and the impossibility of rendering it artistically than a work that aims at totality’.⁴ Light plays a large part in this fragmentation. Light reflected off certain parts of the text or a raking light that makes visible embossed text are approaches I use to fragment and activate the text to enable the viewer to inwardly complete the rest, verbally or pictorially.

Shadow (1994) (6) was produced by combining the technique of mezzotint with the idea of presenting a text that opened up the possibility for the viewer to participate in the construction of an image. In the manner of nineteenth century printmakers, I rocked a strip of copper 5 X 22 cms until it printed the unmistakable black of mezzotint and then, eschewing an image, I started to burnish it back from one end, very methodically so that it printed as a graduated grey, the first time, black to very dark grey. I continued this process, printing several of the

gradated strips as I went, as there was no going back, until the last burnishing and printing produced a print that graded from pale grey to white. I put these strips together end to end so that the strip went from black to white and back to black again, without an image, 5 cms high and 470 cms long. I appropriated one of the texts from John Constable’s notations about the weather that he had written on the back of his *Sky Studies* (1821-22) and I laid this text (7), *Morning. Looking south east very brisk wind at west, very bright fresh grey clouds running very fast over a yellow bed half way in the sky, very appropriate for the coast at…* over the strip of light and shade. Like the gradated strip the text too moved from dark through pale grey to white and back to black with the brightest point at *fresh grey clouds* emulating the passage of a cloud over the sun. The length of this piece meant that the viewer had to walk along it to read it therefore participated in the construction of the work itself.

*Slowly…silently* (1995) (8) followed in a similar way, this time running only from black through to white, the text (9) being about the moon rising I wanted the effect of the blackness before the moon appears above the horizon to the brilliance of its light as it reaches its zenith (10).

In *Transit* (11) I etched 20 small zinc plates, each with a single evocative word, nouns and adjectives, related to travel and memory and over this I painted the plates in variable greys to represent an overcast sky with shifting clouds, so that the word became subliminal (12).

The plates could be arranged in any combination along a split line so that the narrative changed according to whoever installed them. I intended the narrative overview to be provided by the viewer rather than the omniscient artist. Not only did the viewer complete the work as an interpreter of its internal narrative but also genealogically – across time, reuniting past with present. Nothing was fixed but open to interpretation (13). David Bromfield reinforces and builds upon earlier ideas about fragmentation when he writes,

> Duxbury had discovered the other side of the sublime, the infinite incompleteness of word and image, their ability to draw the viewer into a voyage through time, memory and the imagination, in an attempt to ‘complete’ the work. ⁵

Following a trip to the WA desert I made *Out of Bounds* (1996) (14), a group of small-scale black and white photographs with an overlay of screenprinted text from John Constable’s lectures *English Landscapes* on the glass of the frames. I viewed this alien landscape through

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eyes that had been taught to see in the mode of nineteenth century English landscape artists and I was fascinated by the contradictions. In his essay for the catalogue *Punctuation* John Barrett-Lennard writes about *Out of Bounds*.

For her too 'the text self-consciously models a set of relationships – between itself and the viewer, between itself and the picture and with itself as text' (Stephen 1996, p9) The exchange between the barren landscapes and Constable’s descriptions transforms both text and image ‘leaving a sense of incompleteness attached to each element...the text engages the picture in order to insist on incommensurabilities: it proposes a unity to inform us of discontinuities.  

In 1996 I spent three months in Paris at the Australia Council Studio at the Cité International des Arts. By the middle of October, winter was setting in, the days became very short and the sky was permanently grey, evoking memories of my childhood in the north of England. I converted the tiny kitchen of the studio into a darkroom and spent many days taking pinhole photographs around Paris. To calculate exposure times in the scarcity of daylight and the absence of technology I subconsciously found myself writing phrases that could have come directly from Constable, such as 'very grey - no sun - late afternoon - heavy cloud' 1and a 1/2 minutes and 'blue sky and cloud - late pm - sun shining - of sky' 10 secs. On my return to Australia the phenomenon of twilight stayed with me. In *Crepuscule* (1997) (15) I constructed a large grid of printed flat varied greys and overprinted this with a nineteenth century text about the phenomenon of twilight in silver that revealed itself only as the viewer moved in front of it. Again (16), this was an attempt to position the viewer physically in the work and to replicate the atmospheric obscurity of a European autumn without images, only a fragmented text. *Drift* (1998) (17) was a similar gridded piece, which combined the experiential with the scientific or factual. I drew upon my memory and experience of being in snow, its colours and patterns with texts in Latin and English from the writings of Johannes Kepler who, in the seventeenth century, made a study of the structure of snowflakes and discovered that no two were the same. The title *Drift* (18), and its several meanings, was intended as a clue in the viewers’ experience of the piece.

Since 1998 I have been undertaking a PhD by project in Fine Art, the subject of which is an investigation into the works by Constable and Turner that relate to atmospheric phenomena and how these have become an element of Englishness. Both these artists were influenced by scientific discoveries at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was a time of naming and
classification and even such amorphous entities as the clouds acquired names courtesy of Luke Howard. I have made numerous lists of words, lists that relate to the Latin names of clouds and their English equivalents (19), words for bad weather, words for good weather. In his book, The Invention of Clouds, Richard Hamblyn writes about the delights of discovery and naming.

This is what the future must have looked like for the many who crowded the auditoriums of the burgeoning theatre of science: not just a parade of man's ever increasing familiarity with the mutable territories of nature, but the unalloyed joy of their discovery and naming. Here was a cultural scene that delighted in both the unraveling of the processes of nature and the language forged in the attempt. As new forms of understanding emerged, new forms of expression, both literal and metaphorical, appeared alongside them to support them in their work. The new ways of seeing became increasingly bound up with the new formulations of words.  

*Every Cloud* (1998) (20) appropriated Luke Howard's classification of cloud names. Each word was printed onto varying shades of grey silk and then stretched over embroiderers' hoops. These were installed as if floating over the wall, representative of rising bubbles or falling drops of rain. The shimmering surface of the silk (21) and the quality of the printed text created a shifting field of delicate greys that moved in and out of legibility.

In *2 mornings and 1 evening* (2001) (22) I took the grey, mundane medium of cardboard, to represent dawn and dusk, grey times of the day, and embossed texts to evoke sunrises or a sunset and consider subtle differences of colours, in the mind's eye. Is it possible to differentiate in the mind (23) crimson from scarlet or scarlet from vermilion? What shade of blue (24) exactly is a gentian leaf (25)?

In *Sky Blue* (2000) (26), 5 digital prints with texts in relief printing, I hid the colour of the sky (27) behind heavy grey clouds (28) and invited the viewer to consider (29) the shade of blue (30) behind them (31) by presenting a single word (32).

During a recent trip to the Europe I read a weather forecast in an English newspaper that informed the public at large that because it was going to drizzle then it would be a *miserable day* I found this intriguing. How many English people were depressed that day because it had already been labelled 'miserable'?

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The final works I will show you are in response to the weather forecast above manifested in series of binary images. *What a Day!* (33) is a diptych in which the same photographic image of a rather cloudy day is presented on each panel but the column of text on each is of opposing words about the weather.

On the left hand panel, in blue are positive terms (34), 'bright, glorious, breezy...' and on the right in yellow ochre are the negative terms (35), 'dismal, bleak, ominous...'. This work not only strings together words for interpretation by the viewer but also the title opens up possibilities for intonation (36) or the sounds that the words make depending on the way they are spoken.

The title of the work *High/Low* (37) refers not only to terms for barometric pressure but also more mundane expressions of mood, possibly feelings brought about by the atmospheric conditions of the day.

This piece of work consisted of sixteen small panels - 8 of flat, sky blue lino prints and 8 photographic prints of grey stormy clouds each framed in their own colour - with, again, weather words printed subliminally on the glass. This time the words were totally contradictory (38), diametrically opposed to the images underneath - sunny words over grey skies and stormy words over blue in an attempt to challenge received notions relating, hopefully not only to our perception of the day, but also a wider context.

The final group of works, which was also the beginning of this paper, is untitled (39). It consists of 4 diptychs, each pair of panels being one of text printed in aluminium dust on aluminium (40) and the other a mundane sky overprinted with tiny numerals. As stated earlier, the left-hand panel (41) contains the key to the numerals on the right. The texts were drawn from a plethora of writings about the sky from Leonardo da Vinci to the present. I especially appropriated the habit of nineteenth century artists (42), who painted en plein air, to write notations on their drawings of colour, shade, temperature, wind etc (43). I wanted to imply the totality of that history as we look up on a daily basis to see *what kind of day it is* (44).

The inclusion of text in my work has opened up new and more relevant forms of expression and communication. Not all ideas necessarily have a visual outcome and words, whether spoken or imagined, are ever present. As stated earlier in this paper, text and image,
especially print, have long associations, however their combination is not always readily accepted as art, and, as W.J.T. Mitchell writes in his *Iconologies*,

We imagine the gulf between words and images to be as wide as the one between words and things, between (in the largest sense) culture and nature. The image is the sign that pretends not to be a sign, masquerading as (or, for the believer, actually achieving) natural immediacy and presence. The word is its 'other', the artificial, arbitrary production of human will that disrupts natural presence by introducing unnatural elements into the world - time, consciousness, history, and the alienating intervention of symbolic mediation.  

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7. Development of the Project

Throughout this project I have made experimental and developmental works that have engaged with various aspects of the research and have been presented in exhibitions, both curated group shows and individual. In all I have taken part in seventeen exhibitions and each has provided a challenge to draw together works in relation to certain themes or concepts and experiment with new and innovative work. They have also provided opportunities to present new work to the public and in some instances get a response in the form of a review. In the print-media based works I have made I have experimented with the inherent properties of printmaking, such as sameness and difference and repetition and reproduction, and employed a range of formal vocabularies, from minimalism to text-based conceptualism.

7.1 Defining the parameters

In the initial stages of the research I set about locating appropriate texts that outlined the cultural conditions of nineteenth century England and that included a selection of nineteenth century artists and writers whose work made references to atmospheric phenomena. The result of the literature search includes books, journal articles and catalogues as listed in the bibliography. I was also fortunate to be able to access primary research material in London in the British Library, the V & A Museum and The Tate Britain.¹ The examination of some of the cultural conditions of nineteenth century England and their impact on the work of the selected artists and writers has resulted in a series of essays that link my findings with personal experiences and the work of contemporary artists. The visual project is a synthesis of material gleaned from the essays with my experimentation with print-based media. Through it I have contributed to the body of knowledge by extending the practice of and ways of working with traditional and contemporary printmaking.

In response to the historical content in the essays I embarked upon a number of experiments to extend and expand the possibilities of printmaking and evaluate its role in contemporary art practice. Throughout the project I have experimented with considerations of scale, format,

¹ I spent time in the Print Room of the V & A Museum where, within 10 minutes of signing my name in pencil at the door, I held a watercolour by John Constable in my hands. After an hour or so I was allowed to unpack whole Solander boxes of the works on paper by Constable and Turner, and take photographs of them. In the British Library, where I spent 4 days, I accessed original publications by Robert Fitzroy and Luke Howard among others. Joseph Banks had owned one publication by Luke Howard, he had written his name inside the front cover.
uses of the matrix, conjoining of old and new technologies, the use of text both on its own and in conjunction with an image and finally, framing.

During this project I have also developed artwork in response to personal experiences of atmospheric phenomena, which include encounters with the weather that occurred on extended walking trips and reflections on more mundane or urban experiences.

I have constructed many of the works in such a way that they could be re-presented in subsequent showings, each exhibition allowing a different configuration of works and therefore inviting variations of readings. The development of the work has not been incremental leading to a final exhibition with a conclusive body of work. As I evaluated each body of work, some aspects of it were incorporated into the work that followed on directly while other aspects were taken up again further into the project.

A number of the exhibitions I have exhibited in have been publicly reviewed in newspapers and on websites and have provided valuable insights into the work. I include the reviews in the Durable Visual Record along with any references to the work in catalogues and books.

7.2 Experimentation, Presentation and Evaluation

In accordance with the methodology I began the project by experimenting with the processes of printmaking including traditional and contemporary means of production, especially relief printing and photography. In the initial experimental body of work I explored a range of atmospheric phenomena and effects such as dust, snow, wind, mist and clouds along with certain times of the day such as twilight. Inherent in each of the effects above were notions relating to sameness and difference and repetition. I constructed each piece of work from a number of component parts in order to increase the overall scale or vary the presentation. Most of the pieces were subsequently arranged and presented, either in a grid formation or in a more random way. I employed grids to suggest order and regularity, as in the ordering of natural things at the beginning of the nineteenth century including aspects of atmospheric phenomena such as clouds. The more randomly arranged pieces such as dust, represented effects that seemingly had no particular order. I also experimented with the use of a matrix (plate or block), printed in various ways, to elicit different moods and also to allow completely new readings of the work. One of my main concerns was to make the viewer an active participant in the work and I experimented with a number of ways to achieve this. One
method was to increase the scale or dimensions of the work so that it could not be read from a single position. My intention was to encourage my viewer to look at the work from a number of positions and/or travel the length of the work in order to experience it. Some of the works included elements that could only be seen when the light fell on them from a particular direction.

The figures in brackets after the titles of the works are references to the illustrations in the durable visual record. I haven’t described all the works in each of the exhibitions, only the ones that are most relevant to the development of the project.

**element**

The first experimental works were exhibited in my exhibition, *element*, at Galerie Düsseldorf in Perth, 31 May - 21 June 1998 (ill. 1) and in which I played² with the various meanings of the word *element* in the work and its presentation.

*element*, *n.* 1. a component or constituent part of a whole. 2. (*pl.*) atmospheric agencies or forces: *exposed to the elements.* 3. the sphere or environment adapted to any person or thing: *to be in one's element.* 4. *maths.* a. a member of a set. b. part of a geometric figure.³

Below, I have described some of the individual works in some detail as they were not only the starting point of the project, but they also illuminated many ways of working that I subsequently developed in the ensuing works throughout the period of research.

I made *Dust* (ill. 2) to not only experiment with printmaking processes but also to investigate the potential for the subject to acquire the properties of the element it represented. The dictionary definitions for dust include: a cloud of fine dry particles, that to which anything is reduced, and detritus. In meteorological terms, atmospheric dust splits light - by scattering, refraction and reflection into its component colours – orange, red, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet, but predominantly because of its density into the red/orange end of the scale.

Each particle of dust has a shape and like snowflakes, all dust particles have a similar structure although no two are alike. Dust, from volcanoes that erupted in the nineteenth century such as the Tamboro in 1816, and from the smog in cities such as London, was

² I have used the word ‘play’ on a number of occasions and it is interchangeable with ‘experiment.’ However I do consider many of the experiments to be quite playful and therefore this is an apt word to use.
noticed and remarked on by many artists and poets at the time. It also accounted for failed harvests and respiratory conditions. Dust is responsible for brilliant sunsets and dawns and also the blueness of the sky although the particles themselves are grey or neutral-coloured.

To construct this piece of 130 elements, I used some of my discarded black and white photographic images of clouds and the sky that had gathered, like dust, in the back of plan drawers. I transferred fragments of these, through solvent transfer, onto dust-shape⁴ pieces of rag paper. The result was a predominantly grey image, each fragment being similar in shape but different. In fact no two pieces were alike. On the reverse of each I relief-printed one of the colours of the rainbow. I installed the pieces quite randomly on the wall in the shape of a dust cloud, approx 220 X 340 cms. When the whole was brightly lit, haloes of colour appeared around each fragment, reflecting off the wall. When viewed from an oblique angle, brilliant colour emanated from behind each fragment, recreating the scattering of light produced by a cloud of dust.

This early attempt to make the work more experiential resulted in the viewer being drawn into the work to see the detail of images and then to move well back to experience the piece as a whole. The viewer’s curiosity was aroused by the hint of colour surrounding each piece and led her to view the piece also from an oblique angle.

I drew upon an experience of snow camping at sunset on the Snowy Bluff in the Alpine National Park, Victoria to make Drift (ill. 3 – 5) a piece of work of 100 panels, 85 X 185 cms. The snow sparkled in the evening light and glowed pink; shadows were icy blue. Although snow was barely recorded in nineteenth century art and poetry, I was fascinated with the properties of snowflakes, of sameness and difference that were first examined by Johannes Kepler in 1611⁵ when he first made the discovery that no two are alike although each has a similar structure being six-sided.

Drift was printed from four photo-etched plates (two of images and two of Kepler’s text, in English and in Latin) and one flat lino block.⁶ I utilised a random method of printing - light

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³ Taken from the Macquarie Dictionary 1981, Griffin Press: South Australia
⁴ In the 19th century in France it was discovered that dust particles, like snowflakes, were all different and yet had a basis structure that was common to each.
⁶ I used this same A4 piece of lino throughout the project. In all, I must have printed about 3,500 separate pieces from it.
grey image over flat dark grey - dark grey image over flat light grey; text over image and
image over text, with a final dusting of pearl or silver. The reverse of the panels was printed
in alternating pink and blue, highlight and shadow. Using this method each of the panels was
similar but no two were alike. I arranged them as a field in a formal grid format that required
the viewer to walk across the face of in order to experience the shifting text and images that
were made evident as light fell onto the work, with no focal point and where no single
element dominated.\(^7\) The viewer also became aware of the colour behind each panel.

Throughout this project I have eschewed editioning\(^8\) any of the work and this has caused some
consternation with at least one critic. In his review of an exhibition in 2002, Neville Weston
questions the fact that the prints do not conform to normal documenting procedures for prints.
He says, 'Because printmaking had its origins in the provision of multiple copies for a
growing market, it is interesting to see that some of these works are unique while others are in
editions of eight. But as some are inkjet prints, how can we tell that they are restricted to that
edition size?'\(^9\) I have made more than one copy of most of the inkjet prints but have not been
consistent in this. I have altered the scale of the work or I have varied the overprinting by
hand printing text on one set and screen-printing it on in another, for example. Therefore all
the prints that I have made throughout this project are monoprints.

_Gust_ (ill. 6), was the result of encountering the poetry of the Beaufort scale\(^10\) that was used
primarily to measure the strength of the wind at sea and later on land. Wind speed in the air
was not accounted for at the beginning of the nineteenth century when the scale was devised.
_Gust_ consists of thirteen panels each corresponding to a number on the Beaufort Scale for
wind speed. In each panel a small photograph of a cloud is bounded top and bottom by a
black band\(^11\). The cloud floats effortlessly through the centre of the panel. On drafting film I
photocopied the descriptions for wind, at sea at the top and on land at the bottom. Each

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\(^7\) Images of snow are rare in the 19\(^{th}\) century. Constable and Turner made few paintings of snow scenes and little
poetry was written about it. This could possibly have been because of the difficulties in remaining for long
periods in such an environment.

\(^8\) The edition is a set of prints where each is exactly the same as the others. The edition is usually limited, and
numbered. This is predominantly for commercial reasons but the belief, that this constitutes an 'original print'
persists.

\(^9\) Neville Weston, 'Brush with words no contest', in _The West Australian_, June 1 2002, p. 13.

\(^10\) This scale was devised in 1805 by Sir Francis Beaufort, who joined the British Navy at the age of 13. He later
rose to the rank of admiral ... The scale was originally based on the effect of wind on a fully rigged man-of-war
... and in 1874, it was adopted, in a modified way, for international maritime use.' Crowder, Bob 1995, _The
Wonders of the Weather_, Australian Government Publishing Service: Canberra, p. 84.
photograph is sandwiched with the text between panels of acrylic and battened down with bolts, one in each corner. The thirteen elements in total were 265 cms long.

By walking slowly along the panels and reading the text, in the imagination of the viewer wind speed increases, the trees sway and the waves build up. The cloud seemingly is unaffected by this. I return to these ideas of ‘images in the mind’ brought about by language in later work and it becomes one of the main concerns of my project.


In *Every Cloud* I experimented with materials other than paper to print on and an alternative framing device to the conventional one. I took thirty-three of the most poetic of the cloud names and printed each in silver on to pieces of silk in varied shades of grey. These were then stretched and ‘framed’ in an embroidery hoop that I painted sky blue and silver. One of the intentions was to represent the water droplets rising to form a cloud (‘exhalations from the earth’) or falling as in drops of rain. The other intention, and I have to stress that this was an experimental work, was to engage with the fact that very few females are named either as artists or scientists during the nineteenth century. I had an image of women at home, embroidering, while their male counterparts were discovering new things, naming them and engaging with them in art and literature. (This was not something I pursued as it was quite beyond the scope of the project). Ted Snell describes this piece in his review.

*Her interest in the work of John Constable is once again evident in her extraordinary work Every Cloud ...* Several earlier works have paid homage to Constable but in this new work she has provided a wonderful counterpoint to his work. With the passion of a lexicographer she has described 33 cloud forms from cirrus and cumulus to the

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11 This was actually accidental. I had a roll of black and white film processed and asked for a contact sheet. What I got was a contact strip, my images printed side-by-side on a long strip of photographic paper with an overexposed band of paper top and bottom.

whimsical lenticularis, or lentil-shaped. Each word, in calligraphic script, is printed on to silk and then stretched over round embroiderers' hoops which float over the far end wall of the Galerie Düsseldorf ...The shimmering surface of the silk and the translucent quality of the relief printing of the text create a shifting field of delicate whites and grey that moves in and out of legibility. Echoing the sky and the clouds that float within it, the gallery wall is transformed. This transformative power of images and text is at the heart of Duxbury's project.13

Mist, brume, gauze, haze, vapour, fog, steam, fume, exhalation. In Brouillard (ill. 8), I embossed these words into the grey washes of ink and watercolour of nine small-scale paintings, barely visible except when viewed from a certain angle. The suggestion of landforms enveloped in mist - appearing and disappearing as the vapour swirls - encountered on the walk up Mt Howitt (as described in 4.8 of the exegesis) was the impetus for this piece depicting shifting greys and odd glimpses of land. Watercolour in this instance was the ideal medium for the capricious atmosphere that I later 'fixed' with the embossed text.

The nine, warm grey events in Brouillard (fog) glow with intense light from somewhere beyond the surface of the superbly handled watercolours.14

Although these were not prints I treated them in the same way as a print, each watercolour similar but different to the rest, as if the mist had shifted or dissipated in the time it took to flood each panel of paper with another wash of watercolour.

lightfingered

In accordance with my methodology I spent a period of time in the Digital Imaging Laboratory that had been initiated in the then Department of Fine Art at RMIT, where I learned how to make photographic images using a computer. The intention of my project in the lab was to somehow emulate the qualities of aquatint or mezzotint, techniques widely used in the nineteenth century, by Constable and Turner as well as others, and that I had used extensively in previous years.

Through much trial and error, I developed five large-scale colour digital prints, each 75 X 105.5 cms that I titled Sky Blue I - V (ills. 13 – 17), from tiny black and white photographs of cloud formations that I had taken on a walk in the Alpine National Park in one day. I scanned the contact photographs at a high-resolution enabling considerable enlargement of the images

and manipulated them to make them extraordinarily dense and only barely coloured¹⁵. I then overprinted each large-scale inkjet print painstakingly by hand with a single small word, centrally placed, each word to represent a shade or colour of blue.

$sapphirine, caerulean, azure, ultramarine and indigo$

Through my investigations of the culture of the nineteenth century and in the diaries and work of nineteenth century writers and artists I discovered that there were very few references to blue sky. It was either not important and therefore not recorded or it didn't affect the subject. It is something I have considered throughout the project especially in relation to grey. In his book of 1818, *The Climate of London: deduced from Meteorological Observations, made at different places in the neighbourhood of the metropolis*, Luke Howard refers to the 'cyanometer.' This was a circle of paper tinted with segments of various shades of blue that could be folded and carried in a pocket. When the cyanometer was opened out and held against the sky, both could be seen at the same time and the blue of the sky determined from a shade of blue on the paper. The Swiss physicist and geologist Horace Bénédict de Saussure invented the cyanometer at the end of the eighteenth century and the shades of blue related to European skies. Only half the range of the blues on the cyanometer could be experienced in English skies. The blue sky is always there of course although for most of the time it is hidden behind grey clouds. Blue is inferred in the nineteenth century more than made evident. For *Sky Blue* I printed the 'blue' words, using a 'romantic' font, in silver ink rendering it visible only in certain lighting conditions. By moving across the work the viewer would briefly be aware of the word - a hint of blue sky lurking behind the grey of the clouds. The words too stood for more than simply a shade or a colour. Each word resonated with memory and associations.

I was one of a selected number of artists invited to develop a project in the Digital Imaging Laboratory. Each of us had worked in our own individual way of course, but the common use of the large format printer had rendered the resulting works similar in a particular way. I curated an exhibition of the work made there and toured it through the eastern states of Australia. I titled it *lightfingered* to acknowledge the lightness of touch in making the large-scale prints and also the possibilities for 'stealing' images and transforming them through the computer. This exhibition went to Orange Regional Gallery, NSW; James Cook University, Townsville; Plimsoll Gallery, Hobart; Hamilton Regional Gallery, Victoria; University of

¹⁵This was the first instance where I altered the scale of the original image so drastically. I continued to play with this throughout the project, especially by scanning slides, both colour and black and white and making
Central Queensland, Toowoomba; RMIT Faculty Gallery, Melbourne, during 1999/2000.
At the conclusion of this series of digital images with hand printing along with the experimental works made for element, I had compiled a vocabulary or way of working that I would use through the remainder of the project. It included, large-scale, flexible, multipanel works, works that combined text and image, experimental, experiential pieces comprising of a great number of component parts and photographic images, printed digitally with the addition of hand-printed text. I also was keen to continue to explore the effects of printing both front and reverse and in ‘floating’ the work in front of the wall in its presentation.

Dust

Later in 1999 I had the opportunity to experiment further with some of the above ways of working. Referring to my intention to experiment with repetition and reproduction I used a very small experimental space, to extend a previous piece of work to make it more experiential. This became dust (ills. 18 – 19), constructed for Spare Room, RMIT Project Space, 6 September - 1 October 1999. The dimensions of the space were 350 X 250 X 450 cms and this time I reused the same 'dust' pieces from element with the addition of another set to multiply the number of fragments (to approximately 300 pieces) and extend the work. The intention was to make the dust cloud an actual experience rather than a representation and I did this by completely surrounding the viewer in the work, by 'scattering' the fragments over the 4 walls of the space.

The resulting work was three-dimensional and disorientating. In this installation, as the viewer moved into the space and turned to experience the work it was as though the pieces themselves were swirling and the viewer caught up as in a dust cloud or a smoggy environment. Relief was provided by hints of colour that reflected onto the wall from behind the work.

The Colour of Water

In late 1999 I was invited to make a piece of work for the Perth Festival to be exhibited at Galerie Düsseldorf in early 2000, the theme of which was Water (one of four consecutive

significant enlargements.
years addressing the four elements). Turner’s images of sky and water, especially at dawn and
dusk, influenced the construction and thinking behind the work that I devised. In 1811 Turner
wrote a note to Sir Humphrey Davy in which he listed a variety of the characteristics of water
especially of its mirror-like qualities in the ways that it reflects the sky.

Quantity, division, clear or turbid, all present such ever pleasing and perpetual
changes whether from the Mountain Stream struggling impediments or spreading its
wandering stream in the unruflled Lake undistorted possessor (?) or
as the Western wave
whose broad cerulean mirror
gave back in beamy visage calm and bright
to the sky
with splendour undiminished
And each cloud glowing unempurpled gold (azure purple)
High shone, gleaming around his throne
Or lashed into foam and spray painted to the imagination the overwhelming majesty
and power of the ocean as, Dr Night Thoughts Glean (?)
Thou dreadful and tumultuous home of death
where most he dominates.16

My intention was to represent the sunrise and sunset in the manner of Turner and the ways that
they are reflected on water as colour and gold and silver. Concepts of sameness and difference
were taken into consideration along with reflection and refraction and moods in relation to the
beginning and end of the day. I used four photographic images of water and printed each
several times in two ways using the same photo-etched plates, overprinting flat colours of
blue. I printed one set of light blues for the ‘dawns’ and another set of dark blues for ‘dusk’;
one set tinged with gold (dawn) and one set tinged with silver (dusk). On the reverse of the
‘dawns’ I printed a strip of pink, on the reverse of the ‘dusks’ strips of orange.

This resulted in As the Western Wave (morning) and As the Western Wave (evening) each
consisting of thirty-five panels with an overall size of 60 X 155 cms, the morning and the
evening versions of the same images (ill. 20). Viewing them together one is aware of their
sameness, in that are made from exactly the same plates, and their differences, in their tonal
qualities and mood made by the use of cool blue and silver and bright warm blues and gold.

I could see the importance of colour and tone in transmitting a mood or feeling. Throughout
the remainder of the project I used these discoveries to play with associations of colour to
mood. I used grey to evoke sadness, even depression, and blue, especially bright sky blue to
represent lighter moods and feelings. However, as noted above, in my research of the

nineteenth century I found few references to blue sky; overwhelmingly allusions were to grey, overcast skies and clouds.

**Sudden Shower**

In mid 2000, I had access to a large experimental space, Temple Studio in Melbourne, which gave me the opportunity to test out another experiential piece. My challenge was to represent an atmospheric phenomenon that is only experienced under certain specific conditions and is an individual experience - a rainbow\(^{17}\). It was a phenomenon that had captured the imaginations of artists and writers in the nineteenth century despite Newton's scientific explanation for it a century or so earlier. I printed almost a thousand strips of paper, approximately 3 X 20 - 30 cms long, ten at a time from a sheet of uncut lino, in a rainbow roll of graduated greys. A third of the strips were also printed on the reverse in colours of the rainbow – red, orange, yellow, green and blue

I stuck each strip to a thinner piece of Fomecor, to give the piece some depth. When attached to the wall in the configuration in the image and lit with a bright light, a rainbow could be seen reflecting off the wall when viewed from an oblique angle. It became a three-dimensional drawing of a rain shower, a moment caught from fleeting time, captured as the first drops had begun to fall and before they reached the ground.

‘Rainbows are very personal\(^{18}\)’

In this installation, *Sudden Shower* (ill. 21), not all visitors experienced the rainbow on first viewing as it could only be seen when just entering or leaving the space although a halo around the strips with colour on the reverse could be faintly discerned when viewing the work head-on and hinted at something more.

This installation was an attempt to take printmaking right out of the frame; in fact the frame became the limits of the wall. On a second occasion I installed *Sudden Shower* at RMIT Galleries in the Korea-Australia Exchange Exhibition of 2000 (ill. 22). In her catalogue essay, Maria Zagala, from the National Gallery of Victoria’s Department of Prints and Drawings, commented on the investigations and range of formats that the Australian artists were employing. Of *Sudden Shower* she said, ‘The inclusion of Lesley Duxbury’s subtle

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\(^{17}\) Rainbows are produced by refraction and reflection of the sun's rays by millions of falling raindrops. If you look away from the sun the rainbow will appear in an arc at an angle of about 42 degrees from the direction of the sun's rays. A person standing beside you sees different rainbows produced by different sets of drops, therefore your rainbows are yours and yours alone.' (Crowder, Bob 1995, *The Wonders of the Weather*, Australian Government Publishing Service: Canberra, p. 231).

installation wall piece *Sudden Shower* (1999), highlighted how poetic these investigations can be.\(^{19}\)

**Un/natural Selection**

In 1996 during my residency at the Cité internationale des arts in Paris, I read in an English newspaper that the day ahead would be 'miserable' because it was going to drizzle. This forecast had occupied a place in my memory since then. In the early 1800s Captain Robert Fitzroy had introduced words such as 'gloomy' and 'bright' into his descriptions of the weather, which are still in use contemporary weather forecasts. These were terms I would play with in the next few works.

The title of this group exhibition, *un/natural selection* held at First Site Gallery in 2001, conjured up images of the natural world with an unnatural focus. The thought that a daily occurrence such as a condition of the weather could evoke such a strong reaction or mood as the one above appeared odd and I investigated more words that could have these double effects - words for weather as well as mood or state of mind. I scanned a photograph of a cloudy sky that could be read as threatening rain or promising sunshine and made 2 identical large-scale images on the computer, each 76 X 105.5 cms.

On one I superimposed a column of words in ochre and over the other a column in blue.

Ochre words - Miserable - dreary - foul - bleak - ominous - dismal - overcast
Blue words - Bright - balmy - splendid - glorious - fair - airy - breezy

Unlike the large-scale digital prints of *Sky Blue*, for this work I embedded the columns of words into the print itself making them an integral part of the print. I titled this work *What a Day!* (the exclamation mark was significant) and I relied on the viewer to 'speak' it mentally. It could be intoned as WHAT a Day! (a wretched day) or What a DAY! (a beautiful day). The emphasis on the word would rest with the viewer (ill. 23) and would depend on their mood.

*What a Day!* (2001), began with the memory of a London weather forecast in 1996, which described the day ahead as 'miserable'. Two identical inkjet prints of a cloudy sky, surfaces of dense, radiant, sooty, greys, each has a column of weather words overprinted in translucent, utterly contemporary sans serif capitals. On the left, in blue, are positive terms 'bright, glorious, breezy ...' on the right in yellow 'dreary, bleak, ominous...'. Beyond a demonstration of the inescapable relation of word and

\(^{19}\) Maria Zagala 2000, *Korea-Australia Exchange Exhibition of Prints*, Publication supported by Korea-Australia Foundation and Dept. of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra.
image, their opposition invokes the very weather of the soul, the metaphysics of light beyond darkness and the act of (re) creation we commit whenever we contemplate the sky. Words force the viewer to become present, to occupy the centre of the work, to choose a path across the shifting skies.20

Deceptivly the colours of the text altered the perception of the colour of the grey sky that they were a part of, making one image appear cool and the other warm relative to the words it contained.

_Deceptio Visus_

The work, _What a Day!_ was instrumental in leading me to further explore the ways in which we are deceived by our perception of the world around us, hence the title of this exhibition that I held at Stephen McLaughlan Gallery, Melbourne, 3 - 26 May 2001, (ill. 24). This was a small gallery with 2 short walls facing each other separated by a longer one. For this space I developed two new works; one a multi-panel print and the other a set of small paintings (oil on embossed paper on canvas)

The work, _High/Low_ (Inkjet and relief prints on paper, silkscreen on glass, acrylic on wood, each 28 X 28 cms, ill. 26), refers to atmospheric pressure that determines the weather21 and also to the moods that we call high and low.22 In this piece I represented the 'highs' in the cloudless, sky blue panels and the 'lows' in the grey, cloudy ones. Using the two opposing short walls of the gallery I installed one set of this piece on one wall 'grey over blue' and on the other 'blue over grey' in an attempt to indicate that neither mood dominates the other. In this work I reversed the meanings of 'high' and 'low' words by superimposing them over their opposing panels. The words, a single one on the glass of each frame, were screenprinted in transparent ink. Again, as in previous work, the intention was for it to become visible only in a certain light or when viewed from a particular angle. The viewer became responsible for its discovery and interpretation.

_Shift_ (Oil and embossing on paper on canvas, acrylic X 10, each 12 X 15 cms, ill. 27), paired two images seemingly only seconds apart, the blink of an eye, to explore sameness and difference. On the backs of his cloud studies, John Constable had made notations that referenced a particular time of day. However it was clear that they must have been added at a

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20 David Bromfield 2002, 'The Sky is for all' in _ZOOM_, Gippsland Art Gallery · Sale: Victoria, pp. 5-6.
21 In general low pressure brings rain and cloudy weather where high pressure produces fine, sunny days.
22 High refers to feeling elated or merry while Low usually means depressed or dejected.
later time as they also made reference to the weather that proceeded the recording. They indicate Constable's awareness of the passage of time and change. His comments that 'no two days are alike, nor even two hours' was the starting point for this work. Like Constable I painted in oils on paper that I later glued to canvas. Each pair of small paintings consists of a cloud-like painted surface of soft greys that echo the flat, interminable grey skies of a European winter when it seems that time has stood still. Into the lower edge of each panel of paper I embossed the time in hours : minutes : seconds, as a way of visually representing the passing of time. I attempted to paint each panel exactly the same; inevitably there were differences that were minute. In each pair of paintings the difference in time between each was minute - a couple of seconds to almost a minute. The embossing meant that the viewer had to be aware of this and, again, it was revealed only in a certain light.

No Muttering

No Muttering was a curated exhibition that 'explores the exciting, inventive and sometimes unusual print processes being used by sixteen contemporary Australian artists...The artists in this exhibition all stretch print to its limits in one way or another.' I used this opportunity to test out another way of installing High/Low (ill. 28, top), this time as a single piece although I continued to alternate sets of blue and grey. In this configuration blue became grey as the viewer moved across it and underneath grey became blue indicating an unending succession of highs and lows that are both our moods and our weather system.

Cardboard

This curated group exhibition, at the Fremantle Arts Centre in Western Australia, challenged the participants to use the humble material cardboard as a medium. I reflected on the work I had made for Deceptio Visus. I felt I was asking the viewer, not only to consider the way that we describe the world in relation to images and/or feelings but also to imagine moods in relation to what is seen. The powerful role of the imagination was something that I had considered in previous work, but the exhibition cardboard gave me the opportunity to explore text as a trigger to the imagination in order to evoke an image.

23 Rilka Oakley, the curator of 'No Muttering' in her catalogue essay, n.p.n.
I took 4 full-sized sheets of ordinary mount board 80 X 105 cms, (cardboard usually used to window-mount prints) each one a different shade of grey. Into each I embossed a large-scale text derived from some of John Ruskin’s descriptions of the sky at sunrise and sunset. I titled the work for this exhibition, *3 Mornings and 1 Evening* (ill. 28, bottom). The embossing caused the text to be raised above the surface of the cardboard and was revealed when lit by a directional light. The descriptions evoked colour and requested the viewer to imagine different shades of colour in the mind’s eye. For instance, are we able to discern the difference between scarlet and vermilion in the absence of the colour itself? Descriptions and individual words evoke images in an individual way, thus we all imagine our own weather. The long poetic descriptions of Robert Fitzroy, John Ruskin, and William Wordsworth were invitations to use the imagination to conjure up shades of red, grey, blue, yellow etc. In my particular pieces dusk and dawn were also only discernable through the text and required the viewer to determine them based on individual knowledge and experiences of sunrise and sunset.

Lesley Duxbury’s large works *Three Mornings and One Evening* have us considering the subtle difference of colours, in the mind’s eye. On four surfaces, each a different shade of grey, the artist verbalizes colour in embossed statements. Using words like ‘crimson’ and ‘vermilion’, Duxbury attempts to describe the hues seen at the ‘grey’ times of the day; dawn and dusk. I suggest you look at this series as you would a sunrise or set; intellectually analyse it if you must but more importantly enjoy what you see.24

**Seeing Double**

*Seeing Double - double vision, double take, double edged, double image, double minded, doublethink.*

At the time of this exhibition at Galerie Düsseldorf in Perth (ill. 29), I had built up quite a bank of images, some of which could be reproduced or repeated. I re-presented some earlier pieces of work along with new ones, to elicit new readings in relation to the theme of the exhibition. The doubling of meaning or intention was clearly indicated in such works as *High/Low* (ill. 30) and *What a Day!* but was also evident in *Sky Blue*, although that had not been my intention at the time of its making. To these 3 existing works I added 4 untitled pieces and a series of small inkjet prints that I titled *After J.M.W. Turner.*

24 Judith McGrath in the review of *A National Exhibition of Cardboard Art* curated by Paul Moncrieff, in http://www.artseeninwa.com
I made a series of 4 diptychs that I left untitled, Untitled I – IV (ills. 31 - 34) because they already contained text and required no further clues. Each diptych consisted of one panel of a photographic image and the other a text, each panel being 60 X 80 cms. The text panel of the diptych was aluminium, screenprinted and flocked with aluminium dust. Its corresponding panel, an inkjet print of a very ordinary sky onto which I had printed small numerals was mounted on aluminium. The text on the aluminium panels was the key to the numerals on the print of the sky and originated in actual notations made by artists in the nineteenth century along with my own. There were no frames and the prints were installed in such a way that they appeared to float in front of the wall. I randomly printed the small numerals in various parts of the sky in the photographic image, in silver so that again, they drifted in and out of legibility.

In his review of the exhibition Neville Weston commented,

Lesley Duxbury's prints occupy the gap between painting and poetry...[her] extraordinary metallically based works and inkjet prints [also] derive from the optical response to the world, and particularly the sky...Her unsettling meteorology and occasional arcane references, however, are so exquisitely made that they stand outside logic...wrapped in their own mysterious language.

After J.M.W. Turner was a series of 6 small-scale inkjet prints derived from photographs that I had taken on various travels. They resembled some of Turner's more abstractly atmospheric paintings such as Rain, Steam and Speed - the Great Western Railway (1844) and Snow Storm - Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth making Signals in Shallow Water, and going by the Lead. The Author was in the Storm on the Night the Ariel left Harwich (1842).

Text &

The curated exhibition, Text & (ill. 35) included four artists who worked in a concerted way with text. I took this opportunity to put two pieces of work together that spanned a period of

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25 Before the invention of photography artists used various means to render the sky - recording information on the spot - notations in pencil with a numerical key. Turner made colour notes across the whole drawing indicated colours such as red, blue or dark shadowey clouds. Cornelius Varley wrote along the bottom of his watercolours - very descriptive - simple paintings. Hamish Fulton also makes notations in a similar way.

26 Neville Weston, 'Brush with words no contest' in The West Australian, Saturday June 1, 2002, p. 13.

27 Turner painted the latter in an attempt to show what such a scene was like. It is purported that he was lashed to mast of the ship to observe it and hardly expected to get out of it alive. In my work I attempted to connect his period in the 19th century with mine in the present and to double it in the use of images that derived out of direct experiences with extreme atmospheric phenomena. In my case the experiences occurred on walks in Chile, especially Tierra del Fuego, and New Zealand.
time. Eight years had elapsed since I made *Lux in Tenebris* (ill. 35, bottom left) and I reintroduced it into this exhibition to complement *2 Mornings and 1 Evening*, (ill. 36) which unfortunately it had become since one of the panels fell off the wall during its showing in Fremantle. (See the paragraph at the conclusion to this chapter where I write about framing). *Lux in Tenebris*, graphite and embossed tracing paper, was 800 cms in length and like some of the work made for this project required the viewer to walk along its length in order to read it. In this case it was literally ‘to read it’ as like its complementary work it contained no image. The text was in Latin, fragments of Isaac Newton’s ‘Theories of Colour’. Few words were recognizable to the non-Latin reader, although some hovered on the brink of recognition. My intention was for a narrative to evolve from partial understanding. *2 Mornings and 1 Evening*, was barely diminished by its loss of one part of it and combined with *Lux in Tenebris* it evoked colour in the mind of the viewer.

**ZOOM**

A survey exhibition of work spanning the years 1992 – 2002, *Zoom* did not include any new work, but did juxtapose work made during this project with previous work from the years 1994 – 1997. This gave me an opportunity to evaluate the work made from 2 distinct eras. I titled the exhibition ZOOM (ills. 37 – 41), to indicate the focus of the work and also movement. Work from 1994 – 1997 was predominantly very small scale, conventional in format and made using traditional techniques. The subject matter on the whole, however, was vast – huge tracts of ocean and endless landscapes that contrasted dramatically with more recent work. In this the focus was on minutiae such as dust, raindrops and snowflakes but in a contradictory way, represented on a very large scale. In this large regional gallery space, the Gippsland Art Gallery · Sale, I also had the opportunity to physically ‘move’ my viewer in order that they could experience the work more fully. The works were not installed in chronological order, which meant that tiny, postage-stamp sized mezzotints pre-1998 existed alongside wall-sized installations. The viewer was physically drawn in towards the work and out away from it in order to see and experience it. The size of the space and the clear viewing area enabled parts of works, such as shiny text or image, to appear and disappear as the viewer moved around the gallery and light fell on the work revealing or concealing it.
Installations

Like ZOOM this exhibition gave me the opportunity to re-present work in different conditions, this time Conny Dietzschold Gallery (ills. 42 – 43), a warehouse-like space on two levels. Unusually for a commercial gallery I was able to install 'non-commercial' work alongside work for sale. This was the first time that both aspects of my practice had been exhibited together. I installed Sudden Shower on a wall that was much smaller than any of the previous walls I had used and it suffered because of this. It was almost impossible to distance oneself enough from the work and the rainbow was the wrong scale. It proved to me that this really was a very large-scale work and its scale facilitated the experience of it. It was valuable to recognise this. In this exhibition I installed Sky Blue vertically, as I hadn't before, having always intended it to be a horizontal piece relating to the panorama and a sweeping gaze. However the vertical installation of the five components caused the viewer to lift the head from floor to sky, which in many ways was very appropriate to the work.

Act XII: new works on paper

In response to the theme of this invitational curated exhibition of works on paper – 'The works in Act XII are linked by two things; they are made on or with paper, and they coalesce in a performative thematic context, which broadly considers notions of staging in art and the artistic enactment of ideas' – I made Wink, Blink and Squint, inkjet, relief and silkscreen prints each consisting of three panels approximately 35 X 175 cms in size (ills. 44 – 47). My intention was one that had been in many of the works produced for this research project, which was to make my viewer an active participant or for this exhibition, the 'performer'. These works required the viewers to react to the prompt located in the centre of each of the works and thereby to be aware of themselves in the act of 'seeing'. In the catalogue essay Lesley Harding, the curator of the George Adams Gallery, writes,

Lesley Duxbury uses the process of movement and pause in her prints to mobilize the viewer's response while using the illusory, transient, obscurant subject matter of cloud formations and atmospheric effects. Her cloudscapes in this exhibition return us to the direct experience of passing time, complete with subliminal stage directions to blink, wink and squint. Duxbury is a master of mood. The tonal scales of grey in her works have a sensitive chromaticity and her surfaces are sublime. [...] Duxbury's cloud

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forms and dust particles are subjects of collective currency, and she links these to individual experience and memory by involving her viewers.  

*Wink, Blink* and *Squint*, is each a ‘doing’ word that separates a pair of images. The word *Wink* separates two identical clouds, the only difference being a slight variation in colour, one a warm grey and the other a cool grey. *Blink* separates two clouds that allude to slight movement, the blink of an eye and *Squint* separates two identical cloud images with the exception that one is slightly out-of-focus, an allusion to the possible differences in vision between the two eyes, or the long-distance sight that accompanies aging.

**Works on Paper 2004**

For this small group exhibition at Stephen McLaughlan Gallery in March 2004 I made a work based on a visit to Hampstead Heath in 2002. As I remarked in the essay (4.3 of the exegesis), the main difference in the view of sky then compared to that depicted in Constable’s studies was the intrusion of vapour trails from aircraft. Throughout this project I have used the computer very much in lieu of a darkroom, to produce photographic imagery; I had used few of the possibilities of Photoshop. For *Then and Now* (ill. 49) I made two identical images, in a similar way to previous pieces, but this time I used one of the tools of this software program to eliminate the vapour trail in one of the images, returning the sky to its pristine state. The texts came directly from one of Constable’s cloud studies for that particular day and from a newspaper weather forecast also for the same day 180 years later. In this piece the viewer was led to reflect on past and present, especially regarding the environment and also the similarities and differences, especially in regard to text recording the weather.

**Peculiar Weather**

The final body of work that I have compiled to conclude this research project is in two parts. One part is exhibited in Monash Gallery of Art, on the outskirts of metropolitan Melbourne and the other in the Faculty Gallery at RMIT University, a more experimental space. I have divided the work in this way for some of the reasons that I outline in my evaluation of the project below. Monash Gallery of Art is a public gallery that specializes in photography and has one of the finest collections of Australian photography in Australia. I have used this

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29 ibid. p. 4.

30 Photoshop is computer software that enables the manipulation and transformation of images.
space, to present in as straightforward a way as possible, a number of key works from the project. All the works have a photographic base – either photographic imagery or a photographic process ahs been used in the production of the work. I have titled this exhibition ‘Peculiar Weather’

**Peculiar** / adj. 1. Strange, odd, or queer. 2. Uncommon, unusual. 3. distinguished in nature or character from others. 4. belonging characteristically (to). 5. belonging exclusively to a person or thing. (from L. *peculiaris* pertaining to one’s own).

I have used the Faculty Gallery at RMIT University for an experimental installation of work that includes two large-scale, text-based pieces and a re-presentation of *Sudden Shower*. My purpose was to draw upon the experience of the weather as a daily encounter. Taken as a whole the work represents a day that begins with a grey dawn and ends with a cloudy dusk. Between time rain alternates with patches of blue sky and a rainbow appears. The work is unframed and boundless to a certain extent – even the edges of the walls are not boundaries or frames; images and parts of work cross the corners and run fluidly into the next piece of work. There is no sense that one phenomenon stops and another begins; it is a continuous process, recurring and inevitable. One of the intentions of this presentation was to make the work experiential, in other words, to make the viewer an active participant and that she will move towards and away from the work and also to look up and down.

7.3 **Achievements and some failures**

At the conclusion of this project I am in the position to look back at what could be considered to be its most and least successful aspects in relation to my stated aims and objectives. As one of the intentions of this project was to experiment and engage with the inherent qualities of Printmaking I shall address them in the order that I set out at the commencement of this chapter.

**Scale**

One of the most important discoveries I have made during this research is the tremendous versatility of print-media. Until I embarked on this project I had not explored the potential for multiple components and extremely large-scale work. I know of no one else who is working in this way. *Sudden Shower* and some of the installations of *dust*, have completely revolutionised the idea of the print in terms of classic seriality or repetition of a matrix,
especially the relief print, which is the oldest and most enduring of print mediums. The printing of an unlimited number of elements allows for many re-installations of work in a great variety of situations, its flexibility is boundless. In her book, Relief Printing, Ann Westley includes a section that she titles ‘Smashing the Glass’ in which she gives a number of examples of artists, including myself, who are extending the relief print beyond the frame and describes it as a medium of sculpture. Towards the end of this chapter she says, ‘Lesley creates a multi-dimensional print where the viewer is immersed in the experience. […] Detached from the constraints of editioning, and bearing no signature, date or number, the identity of the print subscribes to the subjective, tactile and sensual experience of the spectator.’

A further possibility for this way of working is for the individual elements to be made in more permanent materials. In many ways the ephemeral nature of the paper strips of Sudden Shower relates directly to its subject, the rainbow. However if these strips could be constructed out of another material such as aluminium, then a more permanent installation could be constructed such as on the side of a building where the rainbow would be revealed in bright sunshine and disappear in heavy clouds.

**Different uses of the matrix**

I have used both traditional and contemporary matrices in this project, from one A4-sized sheet of lino to the multimegabyte files on my computer. The piece of lino has been my loyal friend for six years. I have printed in excess of 3,500 elements from it and it has been transformed from a recognisable sheet of brown-grey material to a shiny plate, stained and flattened. At the other extreme, I have made digital files that I have used and reused varying the scale and format. Unlike a ‘fixed’ etching or lithographic plate, digital files are malleable, both their size and scale can be altered at the click of a button. So far there has been little concern about this and a number of artists continue to print out ‘an edition’ from a digital file and then trash it. Throughout this project, mainly because I have considered it to be experimental work, I have never printed more than one image at a time. I have made a body of work and if the need has arisen subsequently for the same or a similar image I have reprinted it, mostly in a different size or scale, or even through a different printer or on different paper. Hamish Fulton has always worked in this way. For the collector of prints, it

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32 See the Neville Weston review of my exhibition Seeing Double, 2002.
is certainly a problem but for someone who engages with an idea or concept rather than the print as a commodity, then it would be less so. There are certainly more debates to be had around this subject.

Conjoining of old and new technologies

From a personal perspective, this has been one of the achievements of the project. Like a number of artist/printmakers the impersonal quality of a machine printed image is not one I would previously have thought to consider in my repertoire of techniques. Even if an artist does not actually pull the print herself there is usually some close relationship with the printer who does. The printers of digital files, however, are in the main technicians, few with a ‘feeling’ for art as the majority of large-format printing is done for the advertising industry. During this project I was fortunate to find somewhere to get inkjet prints made on acid-free, 100% rag paper so that the finished result resembled more an etching than a poster. The quality of this paper also allowed me to overprint it, either with handmade type or photo silkscreen. Again, I am not aware of any other artists working in this way. Overprinting is not new and artists such as Bill Hart in Tasmania overprint many times using the inkjet printer, as do a number of British artists. Not only have I overprinted the new with the old, I have also placed them side-by-side in the same print, in a diptych or a triptych, which has also opened up a much more flexible way of working.

I have had work printed without any communication with the printer; again this is unusual in printmaking where artists work closely with printers. I have made images on my computer, sent them off to the printer through an internal network and picked up the finished work several hours later. Then & Now was such a work. The remote process is not evident in the work itself.

Some of the work I have made exists somewhere between a print and an object. Recently the Australian National Gallery acquired one of my Untitled diptychs from the Galerie Düsseldorf exhibition in Perth. As I write it is on exhibition in the Contemporary Galleries at the NGA in an exhibition of new acquisitions. Untitled I wasn’t editioned, it was most certainly a one-off and it wasn’t framed as a print. As the NGA is divided into various disciplines for collection

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33 By this I mean the large format printer. I acknowledge that a machine of one kind prints the majority of prints or another – a press, either manual or electric – but the handing over of a digital file to a printer is another matter.

34 See Transformations, the catalogue of the exhibition of the same name curated by Tristan Humphries in 1998
and exhibition, much in the way of art departments within educational establishments, then perhaps this may be an instance of those boundaries being crossed.

**Text (and Image)**

The use of text either on its own or in conjunction with an image has allowed me to make work that has opened up my practice especially in relation to the role of the viewer. Text and image have existed together since language could be written down. Usually text is used to describe an image or an image is used to illustrate a text. What I consider to be an achievement in this project is the relationship of text to image, whereby one compounds or illuminates the idea carried in the other, and the use of text on its own to evoke an image. Text on its own combined with scale have opened up the possibility for the text to also be the image. The wall-sized texts made for the final installation in the Faculty Gallery are an example of this. They not only refer to particular times of day and colour through the configuration of the text but its scale is the sky, its colour is that of dawn or dusk and its reflections are those of the particular times of day. Fragments of text are also more evocative than the complete text and I have gone into this in more detail in the transcript of the paper I gave for the *Image, Text and Sound Conference* in 2002, in the Appendix.

**Framing**

In concluding this evaluation, the issue of framing stands out as being not only the biggest failure but also the greatest success. I began to make work that eschewed the frame right at the start of this project and continued to exclude it (or reintroduce it) throughout the project. It has been both boon and bane. The favourable aspects of not framing are the flexibility that has been afforded to produce huge works unimpeded either by the cost or logistics of a large frame and the ability to make work that also includes the reverse of the print as a viable surface. In many of the works, I have utilized the back of the print to support the subject of the work or add to the overall meaning and intention. Examples of this would be a number of the prints from *e l e m e n t*, *Sudden Shower*, *dust, as the Western Wave (morning)* and *evening* and the most recent large-scale text pieces in the Faculty Gallery. Including the reverse of the work as a surface to be used has helped me to achieve some of the successful outcomes of this project. The downside of this process, and it is a practical rather than conceptual one, is most emphatically its fragility. Printing both sides of a piece of good rag paper renders it much stronger than normal especially if a number of overprintings have occurred. However the means of attaching such works to a surface such as a wall are
problematic. *Drift*, that I first exhibited in *Element* was, like many other similar pieces, attached to the wall with BluTac. I had considered this carefully when making the work and had taken pains to protect the back of the print from the adverse effects of this substance. What was unexpected for me was that the works were purchased and needed to be installed in other locations on a more permanent basis. The lifetime of the print was in no doubt; it would last indefinitely. But what of the way of securing it to the wall? One buyer had a piece of board constructed on which to install the panel of *Drift* and six years on I have had no complaints but I feel I cannot rule this out. I have also experimented with dispensing with a frame from what might be considered to be more conventional prints. These include the series *Sky Blue* and *What a Day!* *Sky Blue* has been printed four times – the initial prints in the Digital Imaging Laboratory and later on other large format printers and on various papers. Because these prints had been overprinted with text, in silver, I wanted as direct experience of the work as possible and had one set laminated to aluminium. I had been assured that the paper was tough and I made sure that the laminating process was archival and inert. What I hadn’t anticipated was that something in either the printing or laminating process made them attractive to insects! One print was completely destroyed by, what was certainly a cockroach and a couple of the others have been nibbled. I feel confident that the prints already acquired by public collections will be safe but I will not be able to display them this way in the future especially in other galleries. Because of the temporary nature of the large-scale, multi-component work I do not have the same anxieties.

*3 Mornings and 1 Evening* also suffered by a lack of clarity, on my part, regarding its installation. The importance of being able to view these prints from an oblique angle and the cost of transporting them to Fremantle persuaded me to dispense with a framing device. I did not include any attachments on these works, leaving it instead for the gallery to decide the best way to install them. The Velcro they used was not sufficient or strong enough to support the weight of these prints causing one to fall from the wall and become damaged beyond repair.
8. Conclusion

This project included specific research questions and aims and objectives that I have addressed both in the artworks and in the exegesis.

- **What significant changes occurred in the culture of early 19th century England that inspired artists and writers to place such particular significance on the representation of atmospheric phenomena?**

As I have elucidated in the essays, there were a great number of contributing factors during the first half of the nineteenth century that influenced the thinking and creative output of many artists and writers, especially in regard to the natural world. These changes also included discoveries and developments in science and travel that enabled artists and writers to reflect on their place in the world in relation to how they perceived it. Not only scientists but also artists and writers began to question the world that they inhabited. I have concentrated my enquiries into representations of atmospheric phenomena on the artists John Constable and Joseph Mallord William Turner. Through them and their similarities and differences I have been able to elucidate the affects of scientific and artistic advances. Both artists became interested in the sky through scientific texts and friendships with scientists in the early nineteenth century, as did the poet William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy. Through his art and writing John Ruskin was instrumental in stimulating the imagination and helping to make our experience of the weather, an 'English' one. Some of the most important changes were technological; the ones that allowed the people to go further and faster than ever before, to be able to record what they encountered with implements that they could not only use for drawing with but also to make notations. Biological discoveries enabled thinking about the origins and development of humankind, which in turn led men to question their place in the world both physically and psychologically.

- **In what ways have experiences of atmospheric phenomena and daily encounters with the weather entered the English cultural psyche?**

As I have indicated in a number of the essays, representations of atmospheric phenomena and our experiences of them have become daily occurrences. Although I have stated that I did not set out to make a comparative study, it appears clear that amongst the English there is a preponderance towards acknowledging the weather in all aspects of their lives, that outweighs
mere coincidence. I have traced this phenomenon from the eighteenth century and Samuel Johnson's proclamations about the English and the weather through the early nineteenth century when great cultural changes occurred right up to the present. I have related my own experiences as an Englishwoman, albeit far away from England, to illustrate the depths to which the weather has permeated the psyche no matter where in the world the English reside. This was also true in the early years of the nineteenth century when the English travelled far and wide out of necessity and as a part of colonial projects. The many weather reports and accounts of atmospheric phenomena during this period could be read as metaphors for the feelings they suppressed. How much easier it would be and so much more acceptable to complain of being cold or wet rather than unhappy or afraid.

Soon after I began this project in 1998 I came across the review of a tennis match, that I have included in the essay ‘Sunshine and Showers.’ I thought it remarkable at the time that a sporting event could be reported with a reference to ‘Constable clouds’¹ after all, how many readers would know what was being referred to? Could it be that sports’ fans in England were aware of John Constable and his paintings or was it something that had seeped into common knowledge, its origins unknown? As I have pursued this project I have become more and more aware of the English habit of referencing the weather; it sometimes appears that the weather is all that matters in life. I recently spoke to someone in New Zealand I had never met. Within minutes she told me how much she missed her family back in England, but at least the weather was better.

As this project comes to completion an exhibition at the Tate Modern in London is drawing record crowds that far exceeded expectations. The work is Olafur Eliasson's installation, The Weather Project. As a Dane/Icelander he has capitalised on the English obsession with the weather and mirrored it back to them, literally in this piece as his installation is made with materials that include smoke and mirrors. His intention is for the viewers to consider why they talk about the weather so much and how it impinges on English culture and their sense of themselves. His installation in the Turbine Hall comprises a huge bank of sodium vapour lamps in an arc formation that is mirrored in an arc of reflective material in the ceiling forming a circle to represent the sun. His is not the sun of a bright summer’s day however; mist is pumped into the hall every hour, so that the sun is viewed through a veil of cloud and

looms in a strange yellow glow. The more shadowy parts of the hall emit a sickly, misty gloom. 'He wants us to consider why we talk about the weather so much, and how weather impinges on our culture and our sense of ourselves. It is a disturbing and powerful work.' So powerful it seems that visitors feel compelled to lie down in order to take it all in having been thrown into such a confusion of emotions. Perhaps it is the experience of so much sunshine that is the most confusing aspect of this exhibition. The Tate Gallery website for this installation has many links – to meteorological definitions, weather facts and fictions and weather stories (readers are invited to email the gallery with their favourite weather tales). There are questions about not only our relations with each other during certain atmospheric occurrences but also queries as to whether or not the weather might effect business or even affect how much we are paid. And contemporary weather concerns are also addressed, 'But, like the weather, our perceptions [of the world] are in a continual state of flux. The dynamic variations in the composition of the ephemeral elements of The Weather Project parallel the unpredictability of the weather outside, which despite the efforts and sabotage of humankind still remains beyond our control.' A review of Eliasson’s project on the website concludes with, 'It is a vastly encouraging thought that art this complex and accessible can be seen for free in the middle of London. It’s also rather apt, located as it is in the capital of a country where people are famously obsessed with the elements.'

- **In what ways can print media be utilised to interpret 19th century images and texts and give them significance in contemporary art practice?**

I have used this research to experiment with and combine different and diverse print-based media such as relief printing, photography and digitally manipulated material along with the ways in which they can be presented. I have extended the scale of many of the works through the use of many smaller component parts within a single piece. This has allowed me to also account for concepts of similarities and differences that are inherent not only within Printmaking but also in our understanding of the weather. Some pieces have exceeded even being considered large-scale as they have become three-dimensional experiential pieces. *Sudden Shower*, for instance, became a 'print' 350 X 800 cms, certainly far greater than could

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3 From the Tate website, [www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/eliasson/default.htm](http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/eliasson/default.htm), 17/12/03.
4 [www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/understanding.htm](http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/understanding.htm), 17/12/03.
5 [www.knowtheledge.net/eliasson_weather.htm](http://www.knowtheledge.net/eliasson_weather.htm)
be accommodated within a conventional print room. *Dust* was presented in at least three different ways using the same elements. One of these was an installation that completely surrounded the viewer. Many of the inkjet prints have been printed on traditional printmaking rag papers with an overprinting of text via screenprinting or relief printing. This combination is novel and would have been impossible only a few years ago. Some of these prints have been mounted on aluminium, unframed, though their vulnerability is problematic. The same images can also be framed in a more conventional way and I have done this with the addition, in some instances, of screenprinting in transparent medium directly on the glass. This gave a different reading to the work and also involved the viewer in the act of looking. The idea of encouraging the viewer to be aware of their looking and perceiving has been an intention all through the project. This culminated in the prints *Wink*, *Blink* and *Squint* where the subject of the work was about the physical act of seeing.

I have investigated the ways in which early nineteenth century artists recorded their interpretations of the sky and I have re-presented these in contemporary ways using text and new technologies. Most of the artists I have looked at have used photography in some or all aspects of their practice. Photography has always been an abiding interest of mine, and this project has allowed me to reintroduce it via digital media into my practice.

Text has played an important role throughout the project – the texts from the nineteenth century such as diary entries and other notations such as the descriptions of the backs of Constable’s studies. In many ways these ‘voices’ from the nineteenth century have given a certain insight into the thoughts and contemplations of their writers; poems and prose have done the same. To have taken some of these writings and re-presented them in an utterly contemporary way has closed the gap between those times and the one in which we live. The concerns then are very similar to those of today, reflected in our comments about a common, ubiquitous experience. I have explored ideas about experience and representation through the work and how our perception of the world is a psychological as well as a physical experience, through images and text, both as experiential and through more conventional presentations.

To conclude; my research has brought together many aspects of the connections between the English psyche and atmospheric phenomena. Much of the evidence of this resides in many diverse publications, but not in any single one that I was able to find. I have located many different publications and the works of artists in my quest to seek out possible links and some
have been found in unexpected ways, for example, in a review of sporting activities. It may be that I have elicited sufficient evidence of this interrelationship to deduce that there is an on-going and enduring interest among the English in the weather to continue to suggest that it has become an element of the national psyche.
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