

William Gilpin at the Coast: A New Perspective on Picturesque Travel Writing

This article offers a new perspective on William Gilpin's picturesque travel writing by focusing on the coastal descriptions in two relatively neglected works: *Observations on the Western Parts of England*, first published in 1798, and *Observations on the Coasts of Hampshire, Sussex, and Kent*, published posthumously in 1804. Both tour accounts provide evidence of Gilpin's keen maritime interests and demonstrate that the concerns of his parish in Boldre in the New Forest, a community with close ties to the sea, significantly influence his work. Complicating the common critical assumption that Gilpin's travel writing is dominated by detached pictorialism, attention to the author's manuscript revisions to these works demonstrates the ways in which his own observations and experiences are layered with other narratives, both written and oral. The rhythms and relationships identified in Gilpin's writing reveal a complex spatial and historical understanding of the spaces of travel which transcends visual aesthetics and situates local landscapes within wider national and global contexts.

In his seminal study of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century representations of the seashore, Alain Corbin is critical of William Gilpin's coastal picturesque, situating it within a wider 'taste for limits' which strives for 'snapshot images' of landscape and place.¹ Without denying the fact that Gilpin's depiction of the English coastline in his picturesque tour accounts is significantly shaped by his aesthetic agenda, this article draws attention to other influences on and rhythms in his travel writing, with the intention of moving the discussion of his work beyond the issue of the writer's pictorialism. The new perspective on Gilpin offered here is that of a traveller and writer whose life, particularly in the period in which he is revising his travel accounts and preparing them for publication, is intimately connected to the sea and the English coastline. The maritime interests which permeate his descriptions of coastal landscapes, but which have received little critical comment, reveal the way in which Gilpin's writing is shaped by the concerns and interests of his parish in Boldre in the New Forest, where many in the community live in close relationship to the sea, and also by long-standing interests in his wider family.

William Gilpin (1724-1804), best known for his writings on travel and aesthetics, was a schoolmaster and clergyman whose literary output – both in manuscript and print – covers a diverse range of subjects and interests, and includes work in the fields of biography, education, and theology. Whilst most scholarly work on Gilpin's picturesque travel writing has concentrated on his accounts of the Wye Valley, Lake District, and Scotland, the focus here is two relatively neglected works:

Observations on the Western Parts of England (1798) and *Observations on the Coasts of Hampshire, Sussex, and Kent*, published posthumously in 1804. Whilst Gilpin's ostensible aim in these volumes is to elucidate the merits of landscape in terms of visual aesthetics, that ambition is repeatedly complicated by the emphasis he places on the shifting and unstable nature of coastal terrain. Coastlines are depicted as spaces of flux and transmutation, where the boundary between land and sea is ever-changing, and both the daily movements of tides, and longer term changes in coastal terrain, become richly layered with textual and historical significance. Distinctions between water and land are persistently undermined in favour of assertions of reciprocity and interchange: plains take on the characteristics of oceans, and travellers become navigators. Gilpin's picturesque has been described as 'an aesthetic theory extolling the primacy of perception and of the eye as sole protagonist of all visual adventures';² this article will problematize that interpretation by drawing attention to Gilpin's repeated inclusion of travelling encounters in which sight is impaired, and for which he selects methods of representation which are in fact non-visual. The surviving manuscript drafts of Gilpin's writings demonstrate that the traveller narrates place via other texts, other locations, and other historical periods, in connections that emerge slowly over time through multiple edits and reworkings of his accounts, as he reflects upon the relationship between his own observations and experiences and those of others. Far from a superficial aestheticization of landscape, what these manuscript revisions reveal is a careful layering of the author's own visual experiences with other narratives – sometimes scholarly, classical, biblical, some oral, taken from the local community – which demand that the reader understands the landscapes described beyond the frames of the prints provided in Gilpin's texts, or the rim of their own Claude Glass. These connections and rhythms in Gilpin's writing move his work beyond the boundaries of the coastal scenes he observes with his own eye, and consequently engender a shift from the local or domestic to a global understanding of place.

The analysis here builds upon critical writing that has begun to complicate our understanding of William Gilpin by drawing attention to the breadth and variety of his work and interests. Tim Fulford's proposition that 'oral narration undermines the conventional and picturesque representations of time and space'³ in Gilpin's writing productively qualifies the idea perpetuated elsewhere that his descriptive prose relentlessly seeks to use the language and principles of visual aesthetics to frame and

control the locations of travel.⁴ My analysis supports Fulford's reading, and also builds upon Robert Mayhew's work which has demonstrated the importance of looking at Gilpin's travel and aesthetic writings within the wider context of his life, and particularly his religious beliefs. Mayhew argues that critical work on Gilpin has failed to explore 'the relationship between the clerical Gilpin and the Picturesque Gilpin', either assuming that 'religion and aesthetics are separate spheres', or seeing his 'aesthetic and his moral/religious preoccupations as in tension with each other'.⁵ His work has demonstrated the significant relationship between Gilpin's role as an Anglican clergyman and educator, and his literary representations of landscape scenes, and has offered a more complex perspective on Gilpin than many other critical interpretations. Mayhew's intention to examine the connections and interrelations between the different aspects of Gilpin's life and work is one which chimes with the aims of this study, which seeks to highlight another facet of this author's identity – his interest in and connection to the sea, and the communities whose lives are bound up with it.

The shifting nature of the coastline

Observations on the Western Parts of England and *Observations on the Coasts of Hampshire, Sussex, and Kent* are both texts which amalgamate more than one travelling experience into a single account, and Gilpin himself claims that his form of travel publication 'did not require much historical exactness'.⁶ Manuscript drafts of *Observations on the Western Parts of England*, held amongst the Gilpin Papers at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, identify the text as a culmination of two tours made in 1775 and 1783. And although *Observations on the Coasts of Hampshire, Sussex, and Kent* is labelled as an account of a tour *made in the summer of the year 1774*, consultation of Gilpin's manuscripts makes clear that he also includes material from his notes of a journey into Kent made in 1768.⁷ This blurring of the temporal limits of the journey and text is echoed in the increased blurring of historical and geographical frameworks as Gilpin works his texts up through multiple drafts as he prepares them for circulation and ultimate publication.

Sections of Gilpin's coastal narratives do demonstrate him asserting visual and descriptive authority over what he sees. He gives a detailed account of Plymouth, for example, and confidently asserts that he acquires a 'clear geographical idea of this celebrated harbour'.⁸ The description is systematically developed, and in line with the

model of ‘circuit’ outlined in the Preface to *Observations on the Coasts*, with the emphasis on ‘land station[s]’,⁹ discursively moving out from inland locations towards the sea, from rivers out to bays. Without denying the prevalence of such passages of authoritative demarcation of coastal space, it is also important to point out that they are often punctuated by a very different kind of narrative discourse. In both *Observations on the Coasts* and *Observations on the Western Parts of England*, Gilpin’s own remarks are set against oral and written narratives of the coastline which in many ways complicate the ‘pictures’ of landscape constructed from his own observations. Fulford has already noted the significance Gilpin places on the stories which circulate orally within local communities, arguing that they disrupt the pictorialism commonly identified as the principal organising motif of his travel texts:

The villagers’ overheard stories of events in the landscape are reported by Gilpin in a way which exhibits his continued preoccupations with a lived rural experience that cannot be categorized by the pictorial values, the tasteful tableaux, of the picturesque.¹⁰

This fascination with oral history identified by Fulford in Gilpin’s writing on the Lake District and Scotland is also very much in evidence in his accounts of his journeys along the English coastline, where it complicates the traveller’s aesthetics by decentring the viewing I/eye, instead making the traveller the siphon for other people’s narratives. And contrary to commonplace critical assumptions about the picturesque as an aesthetics of vision, Gilpin repeatedly inserts stories of the coast which emphasise it as a deceptive terrain which thwarts easy visual cognition. One such story, prompted by observation of the creaks and bays near the estuary of the river Tamar (spelt ‘Tamer’ by Gilpin), introduces an element of self-satirisation into his writing by simultaneously suggesting the gullibility and ignorance of travellers, and exposing the flaws of picturesque aesthetics.

The story, like other sections of Gilpin’s coastal description, centres upon the deceptive nature of creaks and bays which are ‘beautiful’ at high tide, yet become ‘oozy channel[s]’ when the tide is out. Gilpin explains that ‘The picturesque beauty of a scene of this kind once cost a poor traveller dear’, and narrates the way in which the traveller, enchanted with the location of a house he encountered on his journey, hastily agreed to buy it:

But what was his astonishment, when, on taking possession, his lake was gone, and in its room, a bed of filthy ooze! How did he accuse his rashness, and blame his precipitate folly! [...] In vain he pleaded that he had been deceived; that he had bought a lake; and that, in fact, the object of his purchase was gone. ‘You might have examined it better,’ cried the unfeeling gentleman of the law: ‘What have we to do with your ideas of picturesque beauty? We sold you an estate, and if you imposed upon yourself, you have nobody else to blame.’¹¹

Gilpin highlights the problematic nature of his task as travel writer, attempting to give verbal and visual constancy to a landscape that is not stable, and can be something other than what is seen. The direct speech of the ‘gentleman of law’ implies that the author’s own aesthetics are disconnected from the local community, and establishes a clear dichotomy between the inhabitants of the coast, for whom the lawyer speaks communally as ‘we’, and the traveller who is categorically positioned as an outsider. The question ‘What have we to do with your ideas of picturesque beauty?’ cuts to the heart of much that has been labelled as problematic in Gilpin’s picturesque aesthetics,¹² and seems as urgently directed towards the author himself as it is towards the unnamed character of his tale.

The ‘oozy’ terrain of tidal creeks and bays is also marked out as evidence of long, historical changes in the coastline which can have a devastating effect on local communities. In *Observations on the Coasts*, Winchelsea, once a flourishing harbour of ‘greater splendour than any town in England, except the capital’, is described as suffering the consequences of the loss of its coastal position. Once surrounded by ‘a flowing tide’, it is two miles inland by the time Gilpin visits it in 1774, having been ‘first choked’, then ‘deserted’ and become marshland. The town’s fortunes declined, with the loss of its water, from the sixteenth century, and Gilpin laments that ‘we hardly find in history an instance of so flourishing a town reduced to such a state of intire insignificance’.¹³ Travelling east from Winchelsea, Gilpin encounters a landscape that ‘was formerly covered with sea’ but now ‘retreats farther from it every year’ in a ‘scarce perceptible’, yet ‘unremitted’ revision of the coastline. The newly emerging threshold between beach and inland vegetation is marked out as a site of creation where a primeval battle for supremacy is taking place:

In some parts near the sea, we observed vegetation just commencing. It seemed a strife between sterile sand and the genial powers of nature: something like what the poets tell us of the first efforts of creation;
 — Primam mundo natura figuram
 Cum daret, in dubio pelagi, terræque reliquit.

A few thin piles of grass were struggling for existence. Here the grass prevailed, and there the sand. In another century the powers of unremitting nature will decide the conquest; the sand will disappear, and the whole will become like the ground in its neighbourhood, a rich velvet carpet.¹⁴

The rendering of place in this passage is complex, and dependent upon an understanding of landscape as viewed in the present, within a wider temporal and geographical framework of reference that reaches into both past and future. Precise observations noted in the present-time of Gilpin's journey are layered with other forms of significance – literary and biblical – by suggesting a verisimilitude between the 'vegetation just commencing' which he has registered visually, and the commencement of life at the Creation. The Latin quotation the traveller provides is taken from Book IX of Lucan's epic poem *Pharsalia* or *De Bello Civili*, in which Nature, when first shaping the world, does not fully separate land and sea in the Syrtes (now known as the North African Gulfs of Sidra and Gabès), leaving the boundary between the elements to be contested.

Consultation of the Gilpin Papers held in the Bodleian Library reveals the extent of Gilpin's interest in the questions – religious, botanical, literary – which observation of the tidal and historic movements in the coastline prompted. And that inquisitiveness in turn suggests that, despite the traveller's own protestations in his aesthetic writings that the 'first source of amusement to the picturesque traveller' is the 'expectation of new scenes continually opening, and arising to his view',¹⁵ Gilpin valued and took seriously the non-visual aspects of engagement with landscape. Like other travellers in this period, Gilpin revises and works up the initial, mainly visual, impressions recorded during the course of his journeys, in order to incorporate the findings of later reading and research, or indeed further contemplation. In a set of ten notebooks containing an early draft of *Observations on the Coasts*, at this point bearing the working title 'Sussex, and Kentish coasts', Gilpin appears to ask himself a direct question about the nature of the changes he observes in the coastline. On the blank page facing the passage describing the appearance of 'vegetation just commencing' quoted above (which in this manuscript version lacks the Lucan quotation) Gilpin asks himself a question, which he has subsequently crossed out: 'Q. Whence comes the seed of the vegetation?' (Figure 1).¹⁶ This seems to reveal a fundamental interest in origins which is perhaps unsurprising from a member of the clergy, yet many commentators do fail to comment on this kind of (non-aesthetic)

interest in Gilpin's writing. The crossing out of this question in the manuscript may in fact indicate that Gilpin had, at least partly, answered it in later versions of his account, by developing this passage through the addition of the quotation from Lucan's *Pharsalia* and thereby offering that Creation story as a way of understanding the contemporary coastline.¹⁷

Gilpin's reference to Lucan is part of a much wider pattern of intertextuality and influence within his travel writing and landscape aesthetics which has received little sustained attention in criticism.¹⁸ Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which powerful transformations take place upon numerous shorelines, provides another classical reference point for expressing the transformative nature of shifting coastal territory, one that is present from early drafts. Gilpin's depiction of the hybrid nature of the coastal scene, which mixes maritime and agricultural/pastoral features – 'Anchors and ploughs, hulks of vessels and barns, masts of ships and oak trees, waggons and boats' – is modelled on Ovid's portrayal of the topsy-turvy world left behind after the flood.¹⁹ And the giant, Bevis, after whom a tower of Arundel Castle is named, is depicted as 'wade[ing] the channel of the sea' in the wake of Virgil's Mezentius and Polyphemus.²⁰ Such intertextualities develop a discourse of connection and relationship that actually serves to undermine any attempt to 'frame' this marginal landscape through picturesque rules; instead they emphasise the coastal margin as permeable, and transitional, part of a rich and various tradition of representation that reaches through and across temporal and geographical boundaries.

The intertextuality of Gilpin's coastal travel writing reflects his interest in the relationship between place, community and storytelling. It also serves as a reminder of the hiatus between the acts of travelling and writing, and the long period of years over which the texts take shape. Gilpin makes explicit reference to these issues in the dedicatory letter which prefaces *Observations on the Western Parts of England*. In it he expresses hopes for the 'advantages' that are the consequence of the book having 'lain by me these twenty years,' chief of which he considers to be the opportunity those years have offered him for the development of global comparisons in nature and landscape: 'It was always a particular amusement to myself, and I hope it may be also to others, to see how variously Nature works up the same modes of scenery, in different parts of the world.'²¹ Gilpin suggests that the intertextuality of his work enables an understanding of place that moves beyond the geographical limits of his

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journey; and in rejecting ‘chronological exactness’ he offers an interpretation that instead prioritises patterns of similitude and connection.²²

Coastal fogs and the blurring of textual boundaries

Just as Gilpin’s travel writing considers the changing nature of coastal terrain, he similarly explores his own shifting relationship to that landscape, in prose that vacillates between confused ambiguity and perceptive and cognitive clarity. We see this in the description of Dover in which Gilpin details his night-time experience at a noisy port-side inn. The traveller is initially immersed in a confusion of sounds: ‘of what number of interlocuters they consisted, no conception could be formed, as no particular tone of voice could be distinguished; nor indeed in what language they spoke’. This aural chaos gives way to absolute clarity of perception and understanding when, unable to sleep, the traveller gets up, dresses, and goes to the window to ‘observe the busy scene before me’. The scene he describes is one shaped by, and understood through, synchronous rhythms of movement and sound which connect the macro and micro elements of the harbour. The whole scene is one of ‘fluctuating motion’, in which the ships’ ‘motions forward and backward’ are in unison with the ‘gentle rippling, and suction of the water among the stones and crannies of the harbour’.²³ What was originally a passage of detached landscape description in early manuscript drafts gains a personal and social dimension with the elaboration of the scene in its preparation for print, as Gilpin uses description of place as a means of exploring his own cognitive and sensuous relationship with his environment.²⁴ This transition from obscurity to clarity is repeated elsewhere in Gilpin’s travel writing, and establishes a positive pattern of observation and understanding which places emphasis on progression from thwarted or limited knowledge towards better, fuller understanding.

In *Observations on the Western Parts of England*, Gilpin describes Bridgwater Bay, Somerset, as ‘wrapped in the ambiguity of a hazy atmosphere’. He goes on to explain how the ‘going off of mists and fogs is among the most beautiful circumstances belonging to them’; ‘it often occasions a pleasing contrast between the *formed* and *unformed* parts of a landscape’.²⁵ This argument about the relationship between ‘formed’ and ‘unformed’ parts needs to be understood in the wider context of the preference for partial concealment which is a fundamental tenet of Gilpin’s picturesque theory, particularly prominent in his discussion of the aesthetic appeal of

ruins, which would be developed by other picturesque commentators such as Uvedale Price.²⁶ Gilpin also uses the theme of mists and fogs to establish a dialogue with other narratives of coastal regions. Having described the fog lifting from the Welsh coastline, as observed from across the Bristol Channel, Gilpin segues into accounts of other memorable encounters with coastal fogs by other travellers in different locations:

The exhibition we just had of the fog's leaving the Welsh coast, was a *pleasing* one; but where there is a coincidence of grand objects under such circumstances, the exhibition is often Sublime. One of the grandest I remember to have met with was presented at the late siege of Gibraltar.

[...] Innumerable masts were just discerned from that lofty situation; but could not be seen from the lower parts of the castle, being obscured by a thick fog [...] In this uncertainty the garrison remained some time; while the fleet, invested in obscurity, moved slowly towards the castle. In the mean time, the sun becoming powerful, the fog rose like the curtain of a vast theatre, and discovered *at once* the whole fleet, full and distinct before the eye.²⁷

The metaphoric frame of the landscape in this instance is the proscenium arch, with the transition from obscurity to clarity made in the moment when the fogs lift like a theatre curtain, an image he has taken directly from John Drinkwater's *History of the Siege of Gibraltar* (1785), which he acknowledges in a footnote. In Gilpin's hands, the watching eyes of Drinkwater's 'anxious Garrison' in the signal-house become the symbolic eye, of an aesthetically detached viewing subject which, initially thwarted, ultimately triumphs in absolute cognition.²⁸

That moment of visual clarity is short-lived in the travel account, however, as the next paragraph immerses the reader in yet another journey, this time John Meares's *Voyages made in the years 1788 and 1789, from China to the North West Coast of America* (1790). Gilpin recites the story, told by Meares in his travel journal, of the four days that he and his crew spent landlocked in 'unknown bays and gulphs', enveloped by thick fogs on the north American coast:

While the unhappy crew were ruminating on the variety of distresses that surrounded them, about midnight they were alarmed with the sound of waves bursting and dashing among rocks, within a little distance of the head of the ship. Instantly turning the helm, they tacked about. But they had sailed only a short way in this new direction, when they were terrified with the same dreadful notes a second time. They altered their course again: but the same

tremendous sound recurred. At length day came on; but the fog continuing as intense as before, they could see nothing.²⁹

Repeatedly in this account, which runs for over two pages, Gilpin emphasises failed vision and the disorientation of travellers who ‘see nothing’. At the same time he highlights the ways in which, for these temporarily blinded travellers, the sense of hearing becomes the primary means of experiencing place, and it is attention to that aural experience that ultimately saves the sailors from annihilation. When the fogs do finally lift it is not narrated as a moment of exultation for the travellers, merely as visual verification of the dangerous location which they had previously experienced as soundscape: ‘Four days they continued in this dreadful suspence, tacking from side to side: on the 5th the fog cleared away, and they had a view at once of the terrors that surrounded them’.³⁰

Through these two examples of coastal fogs, narrated in succession in his travelogue, Gilpin takes a digressive turn which moves his text far beyond the landscapes of the English home tour, and undermines the primacy of vision. The existing manuscript copies of this work evidence the way in which these connections and comparisons were developed and elaborated over time as the traveller revised his texts, making distinct additions across at least four drafts.³¹ These comparative, intertextual excursions suggest that Gilpin comes to conceptualise his own travelling experiences as part of a wider, global discourse of representation with, in this instance, the consideration of blurred vision facilitating a blurring of the spatial and textual boundaries of his narrative. There are examples of such practice throughout these tours. A similar movement is in evidence in Gilpin’s discussion of the River Tamar, which moves via Virgil’s *Aeneid*, to the ‘vast surface’ of the Mississippi, and draws to a close in the shades of a Chinese river overhung by an ‘amazing perpendicular’ rock.³² In these complex movements across textual and national borders Gilpin reveals a consistent fascination with the delineation of unseen connections between England and elsewhere. The narrative patterning of Gilpin’s prose which frequently moves from obscurity to clarity, partial to fuller understanding, is suggestive of that other, wider impulse to extrapolate outwards from the local to the global.

Rhythms of Weather, and the Great Storm

Gilpin's textual movements between home and abroad are again in evidence in his discussions of storms. Describing Rye, he observes that 'the tides on this coast are sometimes affected by storms on the opposite shores; and we found in the public papers, a week after, that there had been at that time, a violent storm on the coast of Holland'.³³ This understanding of British weather within the wider context of international weather patterns is given a historical dimension in Gilpin's frequent references to the Great Storm of 1703, which provides a significant narrative anchor point for his assessment and interpretation of contemporary weather events, and also for his evaluation of the merits of a number of port-towns.

Gilpin states that when 'the great storm of 1703 ravaged all these shores with peculiar fury, Minehead was the only harbour which could defend it's [*sic*] shipping'. And the coastal landscape near Bridgewater and Bristol is described as continuing to bear witness to the deluge:

In the memorable storm of November 1703, it was a melancholy scene. The sea broke over it with great outrage, and did surprising damage. In many places, as you travel through it, you see marks set up by the country people, to show how far the sea poured in at that time.³⁴

The storm of 1703 is also described in *Observations on the Coasts of Hampshire, Sussex, and Kent*, where it follows, and is incorporated into, a discussion of the dangers of the Goodwin Sands off the Deal coast in Kent. Described as the 'most frightful Syrtes on any coast perhaps in Europe', it is the site of many shipwrecks, and Gilpin depicts the ships as being devoured: 'She is sucked in, and often disappears'. Again, it is those elements of the landscape that evade visual cognition that the traveller emphasises here: the dangers lie underneath the water, and the remains of previously wrecked vessels sink below the sands to leave no visible trace. The Great Storm is proffered as a significant historical example of major human loss in this region:

As the tempest came on, the ships soon lost all order as a fleet – Signals were no longer seen, or heard. Each single ship had only to endeavour its own safety. Not an anchor held. Four ships of the line were driven on the sands, and perished with all their crews – the Stirling Castle of eighty guns – the Restoration of seventy-four – the Northumberland of seventy – and the Royal Mary of sixty-four. Besides the damage of various kinds, which England suffered in that night, its navy alone lost thirteen ships.³⁵

Gilpin demonstrates an attention to the historical details of the night, particularly the size and names of the ships, which signals an interest in and familiarity with maritime discourse. Once again, he focuses in on the sailors' experience of sensory deprivation: 'Signals were no longer seen, or heard'. And, despite the fact that the passage counts the losses of the night in terms of ships rather than bodies, the stark emphasis on the fact that there were no survivors moves the narrative beyond the aesthetic agenda usually associated with Gilpin's travel writing. Such passages challenge the premise that he 'avoided the distractions of reality', and problematizes the assumption that 'wilful ignorance of real pain and suffering' was a requirement for his mode of picturesque travel and description.³⁶

The storm of 1703 produced a 'flood of printed matter' including 'broadsheets and penny pamphlets'³⁷ and in the absence of clear acknowledgement of his sources it is hard to determine the textual origins of Gilpin's information, writing over seventy years after the event had taken place. One of the most substantial textual responses to the hurricane, Daniel Defoe's *The Storm* (1704), offers a possible model and source for the travel writer. One of three accounts of the storm produced by Defoe,³⁸ the work was 'commissioned through an advertisement posted by the author in the London Gazette and elsewhere' which invited readers to contribute their accounts of the ways in which their local area had been affected by the storm.³⁹ The resulting narrative was, therefore, a composite, polyphonic text which foregrounded the mass, collective nature of storm experience, and privileged local knowledge. Scott T. Juengel states that Defoe's *Storm* 'mobilize[s] a discursive network of shared witnesses that at once takes measure of the tragedy while disaggregating any omniscient, or even adequate point of view'.⁴⁰ The intertextuality and incorporation of oral history in Gilpin's travel writing similarly decentres the authorial voice, and the dismissal of Gilpin's prose style as 'scrappy' by one critic hints at frustration with a comparable lack of 'adequate' – by which might be meant singular – narrative perspective.⁴¹

If Gilpin was influenced by the authorial method of Defoe, there are, however, some essential differences in the ways the two writers approach their subject matter. Defoe's literary response was quick and decisive, a journalist's opportunistic response to an important contemporary news story, but also, perhaps, a way of making sense of

his own experience in the aftermath of the hurricane: he had ‘narrowly escap’d’ when part of a house fell.⁴² The composition of the work was also at least partly motivated by political and religious concerns: ‘the collected information was for circumstantial evidence of divine justice which proved that God sided with the Dissent’.⁴³ Defoe sees the global reach of the storm as an aberration rather than part of a wider system of connection and rhythm as is emphasised in the work of Gilpin. He claims that storms taking place elsewhere are not usually felt at home:

We feel nothing here of the Hurricanes of *Barbadoes*, the North-Wests of *New-England* and *Virginia*, the terrible Gusts of the *Levant*, or the frequent Tempests of the *North Cape*. [...] Even at home we have had Storms of violent Wind in one part of *England* which have not been felt in another.⁴⁴

In the amateur meteorological discourse of Defoe, weather systems are local and contained; the Great Storm is unusual, indeed it is ‘great’, because its consequences are so far-reaching.

Gilpin’s views of regional and national weather, including the events of November 27, 1703, are expressed in *Observations on the Coasts* and *Observations on the Western Parts* in much more European, and sometimes global, terms. There is also evidence beyond his travel writing of these interests in weather patterns. Amongst the Gilpin papers held by the Bodleian is ‘An historical account of the weather’, covering the years 1765-1783, which records the weather in Gilpin’s home location – firstly Cheam, Surrey, then Boldre in the New Forest – but sets that in the context of wider national and international weather conditions. The summer months of 1783, for example, are described as ‘extraordinary’ because of the ‘state of the atmosphere’ which was, throughout the summer, dominated by ‘vapours’ and ‘fog’ which were widely being attributed to the ‘dreadful earthquakes’ in Calabria, Italy.⁴⁵ This is corroborated by another careful observer of the weather, Gilpin’s (almost exact) contemporary Gilbert White; both men fall into a significant group of ‘clerical naturalists’ or ‘chorographers’ who grew in numbers from the mid-eighteenth century, and pursued meteorological investigations, often privately, alongside their occupational duties.⁴⁶ Addressing Daines Barrington in *The Natural History of Selborne* (1789), White describes the ‘summer of the year 1783’ as ‘an amazing and portentous one’.⁴⁷ Like Gilpin, White attributed these ‘phænomena’ witnessed in his home environs to events taking place in Europe – earthquakes in Calabria and parts of

Sicily, and ‘a volcano sprung out of the sea on the coast of Norway’. They were actually the consequence of the Laki fissure eruption in southern Iceland which began in June 1783.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, White’s suggestion that the effects were felt ‘beyond’ the ‘limits’ of Europe finds an echo in Gilpin’s weather journal: ‘Advices from the continent [...] shewed it had equally overspread all the countries of Europe and by degrees it was found to be universal all over the globe’.⁴⁹

In addition to his willingness to discuss local weather in terms of wider global patterns, Gilpin’s coastal travel writing also poses an implicit challenge to the way in which Defoe casts moral judgement on particular coastal communities. This is so in the case of the inhabitants of Deal, who Defoe condemns for ‘their great Barbarity in neglecting to save the Lives of abundance of poor Wretches’ who were wrecked upon the Goodwin Sands in the 1703 storm. The people of Deal are accused of taking boats out towards the Sands ‘in quest of Booty, and [...] Plunder’ instead of saving lives.⁵⁰ In his stigmatisation of the Deal people as immoral, self-serving, and corrupt, Defoe articulates a common stereotype of coastal communities in this period, one which presents them as deviant, and associates their topographically peripheral location with behavioural practices that were themselves considered marginal, and outside of normal societal expectations and practices. Gilpin’s impressions of the town over half a century later are very different. Of the ships that get wrecked upon the Sands, he writes:

On these dreadful occasions nothing can exceed the courage and dexterity of the seamen of this coast. When a ship is observed to be thus entangled, they launch a boat, and fearless of danger, amidst the most raging sea, push to the wreck; and bring off the men, and whatever of most value that can be thrown on board. Many instances we heard of wonderful intrepidity on these occasions;⁵¹

In Gilpin’s account, in what are again additions made in the later stages of the text’s revision before publication,⁵² the men of Deal become absolute examples of valour and skill: ‘nothing can exceed’ their ‘courage and dexterity’. Gilpin’s proclivity for local oral history cements this positive message, implying that the authenticity of this description can be trusted because its substance has been confirmed through repeated telling.

Whilst the syntax of Gilpin’s account ensures that the locals’ concern for the welfare of the human victims of catastrophe is emphasised over their interest in

material spoils, the story Gilpin goes on to tell complicates that assertion. He narrates the tale of a Dutch vessel stranded on the Goodwin Sands in a ‘violent storm’:

Her distress was soon observed from the shore; and two or three boats pushed off immediately to her relief. The necessity of the case required expedition; but the Dutch captain thought it prudent first to settle the bargain. As the Dealmen venture their lives on these occasions, the gratuity they expect, and indeed what they reasonably may demand, is rather considerable. The Dutchman said it was exorbitant, and began to beat them down. The Dealmen, told him, they made only their usual charge, and could not make a precedent for taking less; reminding him withal, that the time was pressing, and begged him to make haste. The prudent Dutchman however, told them, he would give them no such money – they might go about their business – and he would manage his own affairs himself. The next tide made the case desperate – the ship was swallowed up, and every man on board perished.⁵³

This anecdote is introduced by Gilpin as an example of ‘Dutch economy’, and the language of financial exchange proliferates in its telling, strangely reducing a tragic story of catastrophe and human loss to a cautionary tale about the dangers of penny pinching. The only human emotion clearly articulated in this narration is ‘distress’, yet instead of expressing human plight, it serves to anthropomorphise the ship, therefore eliding any clear and tangible expression of individual human suffering to which the reader can relate.

Whereas Gilpin had previously insisted on the heroism exhibited by the inhabitants of this coastal town, the morality of the Deal men (and indeed of the Dutch captain) is here more ambiguous. However, in the context of eighteenth-century attitudes towards the behaviour of coastal communities, Gilpin seems to be making an important point. Despite ‘centuries of prohibitive legislation,’ wrecking continued well into the nineteenth century on many parts of the English and Welsh coastlines, and Deal was one of the main sites of documented wrecking activity in the period. Defoe’s account of Deal in the early years of the eighteenth century implicitly categorised the activities of the locals in response to the Storm as wrecking, an illegitimate practice, often associated with violence, through which ‘wreckers appropriated [...] property for their own use’. Gilpin, however, in his careful emphasis on the justifiability of financial recompense for the rescuers, depicts the inhabitants of Deal as salvors, men who lawfully ‘rescued wrecked or stranded property in order to receive a share from the legitimate owners or insurers’. Gilpin does not deny the financial nature of the transaction that takes place on the Goodwin

Sands, therefore, but, in a period of continued unlawful wrecking off the coast of Deal, the traveller's text serves as a significant counter-narrative, one which reveals empathy with the coastal community.⁵⁴

Gilpin was not ignorant of the continued practising of wrecking in some coastal areas, a point confirmed by his negative reference to the most notorious practitioners in Southern England, the Cornish,⁵⁵ in the final pages of *Observations on the Western Parts of England*. Turning to the subject of shipwrecks off the Isle of Wight coast, Gilpin acknowledges the moral dilemma posed by pursuance of the picturesque: that it promotes scenes of human suffering as a source of aesthetic pleasure. The subject of wrecks he describes as both 'picturesque' and 'dreadful'; he proffers the shipwreck as an ideal subject for a painter, and implies a correlation between dramatic and painterly treatment of tragic material: 'As the distresses of mankind furnish the choicest subjects for dramatic scenes, so do they often for painting'.⁵⁶ The subject is not developed along aesthetic lines, however, nor is the shipwreck scene framed for us by the disinterested eye of the traveller/observer. Rather, Gilpin inhabits the perspective of 'the inhabitants of these dangerous coasts', whose clarity of vision and understanding is made poignant in contrast to the unseeing, unknowing sailors:

They see that every wave, which beats over the perishing vessel, drives her nearer some reefs or rocks, well known to them, though the seaman knows it not. Signals can be of no use; yet they make what signals they can to point out the danger. In a short moment the dreadful crash arrives. The labouring vessel, now beating among the rocks, gives way in every part; and the hospitable islanders, very unlike their neighbours on the Cornish coast, have nothing left but to do every thing in their power to save the miserable people, and what they can from the wreck.⁵⁷

Gilpin narrates a community who have to bear the burden of being watchers, whose clear vision does not equate to agency, but who do what they can. By filtering the scene through these troubled observers Gilpin denies himself and the reader straightforward aesthetic access to the action. Instead he demands that the scene is understood as one of suffering on both sides, as a site of emotional and ethical intensity that is meaningful in specifically regional and local terms (those in the Isle of Wight do not exhibit the same behaviour as the Cornish), rather than in the universalising aesthetic discourse of the picturesque.

Maritime interests

The maritime interests in evidence in Gilpin's writings have received little attention, yet they are significant for a full understanding of his work. Writing the first comprehensive biography of William Gilpin, William D. Templeman emphasised that his status as a travel writer and aesthete was inseparable from, in fact in some ways the product of, a range of other activities all of which contributed to the public persona of Gilpin as he was known by his contemporaries.⁵⁸ Carl Paul Barbier also went some way towards challenging the narrow perspective on Gilpin produced by analyses of his work which privilege his picturesque interests over all others, arguing that 'We have tended to look upon Gilpin as a man shackled by his picturesque theory, whereas, in fact, for him, theory never prevented his seeing clearly nature in all her moods wherever he had occasion to observe her'.⁵⁹ Attention to Gilpin's maritime interests and experiences, and their influence on his literary output, offers a new perspective on Gilpin, and reminds us of the complex web of interests and influences that those early biographers emphasised, but which has been lost sight of by some later commentators. Stories of the sea and coastline play a significant role in Gilpin's life, from his childhood in Scaleby, to his later years in the New Forest, providing a point of connection between his personal and familial life and his travel writing, in particular his coastal descriptions.

There are connections between Gilpin's coastal life and travels and the wider stories, traditions and interests of his family. For example, both Gilpin and his grandfather William Gilpin Senior were dismissive of the craftsmen who provided carvings and painting for ships.⁶⁰ And both men acted as patrons to younger men with naval connections. One of the celebrated Gilpin family stories of artistic patronage, which Gilpin himself retold in his *Memoirs of Dr. Richard Gilpin* (composed in 1791), narrates William Gilpin Senior's patronage of Matthias Read. In the *Memoirs*, Gilpin relates how, at Whitehaven, his grandfather identified the talent of Matthias Read, a local painter, who was 'employed chiefly in daubing colours on the heads & sterns of ships'.⁶¹ William Gilpin Senior went on to patronise Read, who became a successful local artist. Similarly, other writings left by Gilpin demonstrate him taking on the role of patron within his own local coastal community. Writing letters from Boldre in the last years of his life, Gilpin narrates the way in which he had assisted the son of a man within his Parish, who 'lives by fishing, & dragging for oysters'. The tale

is recounted in detail in three letters to his grandson William Gilpin in 1800, and is also included in his correspondence with his friend Samuel Rogers early in 1801.⁶² In those letters Gilpin provides an epistolary biography of a boy named Henry Harnett who, whilst working out at sea for his father (while still ‘under age’), was press-ganged into naval service.⁶³ After some years, during which Harnett became a skilled sailor and regularly sent ‘press-money’ home to his family, Gilpin used his influence with the controller of the navy to get the young man a commission to be ‘master of the Harpy sloop of war’:

About a fortnight ago the Harpy lying at the mouth of our river, waiting to convoy a Lisbon fleet, Mr. Harnett came on shore to visit his parents. He visited me also; & instead of coming to the kitchen door, with a thrum-cap on – a basket of oysters on his shoulder, & a pair of shoes, which were neither akin to each other, nor to his feet; he was introduced into the parlour, dressed in a handsome uniform; & with a hat cocked as bravely as the best of them.⁶⁴

Harnett is depicted as a man who has overcome adversity to achieve social mobility and, significantly for Gilpin, never forgets his family and his Parish. He also provides Gilpin with yet another storm narrative, having encountered a ‘violent storm’ in the English Channel. Having heard the ‘particulars of his deliverance’ from Harnett himself, Gilpin retells the storm story in a letter to his grandson, telling him how he had suggested to Harnett that his experiences might be better understood within the context of the ‘beautiful description of a storm’ in Psalm 107.⁶⁵ Gilpin here reveals the way in which his responses to such maritime dramas are filtered through biblical discourse; he endeavours to ensure that these young men – Harnett and his own grandson – ultimately understand this salvation as God’s work.

This remarkable story about one individual is revealing about the nature of the community Gilpin was part of in this last part of his life, in Boldre in the New Forest, where he had taken up the position of vicar in 1777 after handing the headship of Cheam School over to his son William. Boldre was a ‘channel-coast parish’⁶⁶ beside the Lymington River which runs into the Solent, and Gilpin described the area in detail in *Remarks on Forest Scenery* (1791). Via the fold-out map contained in the volume (figure 2), and the textual substance of the narrative, he emphasises the fact that the New Forest itself was historically demarcated by coastal borders:

In it's [*sic*] earlier form [it] was a kind of peninsula, bounded by the bay of Southampton on the east – by the river Avon on the west – and on the south; by the channel of the isle of Wight, as far as the Needles; and to the west of those rocks by the ocean.⁶⁷

Both Barbier and Templeman have stressed the significance of Gilpin's achievements in Boldre which, at the time, was perceived to be a 'large and lawless parish' which Gilpin managed to 'tame'.⁶⁸ Gilpin's accounts of the (mis)fortunes of Harnett exemplify the way in which many of his parishioners depended on the sea for their livelihoods, but also remind the reader of the poverty, uncertainty, and dangers that accompany the kind of coastal subsistence that they pursued.

Regionally, William Gilpin is often associated with his birthplace in Cumbria, or with Cheam in Surrey where he was a headmaster. The latter years of his life in Boldre are significant too, however, not least because it was the desire to 'initiate a plan he had long conceived' to build a school in the parish that prompted him to publish his travel writing and drawings.⁶⁹ The specific topographical and social characteristics of his parish in Boldre need to be noted: he was now part of a parish with close ties to the sea, and with coastal life. Boats and shipping were, in these years, a feature of Gilpin's landscape,⁷⁰ and there is clear accumulative evidence of his interest in seafaring. Beyond the examples in his travel writing, and the personal involvement he had in the lives of parishioners, Gilpin's biographical writings also display an interest in lives spent at sea. These include the posthumously published *Memoirs of Josias Rogers, Esq., Commander of His Majesty's Ship Quebec* (1808), which recounted the naval career of another of Gilpin's parishioners, and the unpublished 'Life of Black-beard the pyrate'.⁷¹ There are also other textual excursions into the realms of shipwreck. Many of the letters in Gilpin's unpublished letter-writing manual are written from the perspective of young men who have voyaged overseas, and there is explicit reference to shipwreck on more than one occasion.⁷²

Like other aspects of the coastal landscapes and communities Gilpin describes, the lighthouse serves as a point of connection between his travel writings and his wider views relating to his family and his faith. In a letter quoted by Richard Warner, Gilpin uses the lighthouse as a metaphor for describing the example offered to him by his ancestors, an allusion which fittingly casts his life as a sea journey: 'A lighthouse may serve equally the purpose of leading you into a haven, or deterring you from a rock. I have the pleasure, however, to reflect, that my three ancestors [...] were all of

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the former kind.’ In that same letter, Gilpin describes the way in which, via his son John’s emigration to Philadelphia, the life of his family has taken on an international dimension: ‘in a century or two, I shall, probably, enlarge myself over several leagues of the New World’.⁷³ The principles of continuity and connection which this article has shown to be intrinsic to Gilpin’s approach to travel and aesthetics in his journeys along the English coastline are here at the heart of the language he employs to give expression to his pride in and hopes for his family.

The new perspective on William Gilpin offered by consideration of his maritime interests, with particular attention to manuscript revisions of his travel writing, confirms the breadth of his influences. The traveller’s accounts of the English coastline reveal more than aesthetic concerns, and complicate the assumption that his writings consistently display ‘myopia’ regarding ‘larger moral and political contexts’.⁷⁴ Similarly, the complex intertextuality of Gilpin’s writing, and his repeated textual excursions beyond the temporal and geographical frameworks of his actual journey, insist that we reconsider his status as a home tour traveller whose commentary is dictated by the prescriptive rules of aesthetic pictorialism. Sidney K. Robsinson has argued that ‘visibility would appear to be the key to a category with such a name, but the Picturesque, rather than ratifying visibility, shows us how unreliable it ultimately is’.⁷⁵ Gilpin’s coastal writings certainly bear that statement out, and demonstrate the significance of other, non-visual methods of ‘seeing’ landscape. *Observations on the Western Parts of England* and *Observations on the Coasts of Hampshire, Sussex, and Kent* pay testimony to the rhythms of the sea and its literary and community history, offering us a new perspective on William Gilpin, and the way in which his discourse of travel and aesthetics transcends the shifting, uncertain boundary of England to reach out to other coastlines.

¹ Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea: The Discovery of the Seaside 1750-1840*, tr. J. Phelps (London, 1995), 141-2 and 146.

² Francesca Orestano, 'The Revd William Gilpin and the Picturesque; or, Who's Afraid of Doctor Syntax?', *Garden History*, 31 (2003), 163-79 (p.163).

³ Tim Fulford, *Landscape, Liberty and Authority: Poetry, Criticism and Politics from Thomson to Wordsworth* (Cambridge, 1996), 147.

⁴ See, for example, Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800* (Aldershot, 1989), 67.

⁵ Robert Mayhew, 'William Gilpin and the Latitudinarian Picturesque', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 33 (2000), 349-66 (p.356).

⁶ William Gilpin, *Observations on the Western Parts of England, Relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty. To which are added, a Few Remarks on the Picturesque Beauties of the Isle of Wight* (London, 1798), v. This work will subsequently be referred to in notes as *Western Parts*.

⁷ See the title page of 'Observations, relative chiefly to Picturesque beauty, On different parts of the West, & South Of England [...] 1775; & [...] 1783', transcribed by Catherine Brisco, with additions by Gilpin, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Gilpin Papers, Eng. misc. e. 510; also Eng. misc. e. 559. The 1768 tour is documented in 'A Journey through Kent' (1768), Oxford, Bodleian Library, Gilpin Papers, Eng. misc. e. 511/1-3. The Gilpin Papers held by the Bodleian Library include manuscripts relating to William's Gilpin's published works, correspondence and other of his papers. They also include papers of other members of the Gilpin family.

⁸ *Western Parts*, 201.

⁹ Gilpin, *Observations on the Coasts of Hampshire, Sussex, and Kent, Relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty: Made in the Summer of the Year 1774* (London, 1804), 7. This work will subsequently be referred to in notes as *Coasts*.

¹⁰ Fulford, 143.

¹¹ *Western Parts*, 200.

¹² For politicised readings of Gilpin's works which consider the picturesque as a discourse which excludes certain individuals – for example women and the lower classes – from participation, see, for example, Stephen Copley and Peter Garside (eds), *The Politics of the Picturesque* (Cambridge, 1994);

and Elizabeth Bohls, *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics, 1716-1818* (Cambridge, 1995), chapter 3.

¹³ *Coasts*, 59-61.

¹⁴ *Coasts*, 67-8.

¹⁵ Gilpin, *Three Essays: on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape: to which is added a Poem, on Landscape Painting*, 2nd edn (London, 1794), 47.

¹⁶ Gilpin, 'Sussex, and Kentish coasts', 10 vols, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Gilpin Papers, Eng. misc. f. 194/1-10 (194/6, fol. 124v).

¹⁷ The reference to Lucan is first introduced in additions made by Gilpin to the final existing draft of *Observations on the Coasts*, the main text of which is in the hand of his friend Catherine Brisco. 'Observations on the coasts of Hampshire, Sussex, and Kent, relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty; made in the summer of the year 1774', transcribed by Catherine Brisco, with corrections and additions by Gilpin, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Gilpin Papers, Eng. misc. d. 560, fol.44v.

¹⁸ Malcolm Andrews has explored the significance of classical models of landscape representation and appreciation for picturesque tourism generally, chapter 1. And Hugh Sykes Davies has briefly pointed out the extent of classical reference in Gilpin's writings in *Wordsworth and the Worth of Words* (Cambridge, 1986), 233.

¹⁹ *Coasts*, 28.

²⁰ *Coasts*, 32.

²¹ *Western Parts*, iv-v.

²² *Western Parts*, v.

²³ *Coasts*, 82-3.

²⁴ This discussion of the noise of the company at the Dover inn, and Gilpin's own inability to sleep, is inserted in the final existing manuscript draft of *Observations on the Coasts*. He crosses out a much briefer introduction to the section and replaces it with this new material. See 'Observations on the coasts of Hampshire, Sussex, and Kent', Eng. misc. d. 560, fol. 56v.

²⁵ *Western Parts*, 161-2.

²⁶ See, for example, Uvedale Price, *An Essay on the Picturesque* (London, 1794), 17-18.

²⁷ *Western Parts*, 162-3.

²⁸ Gilpin borrows some of Drinkwater's phrasing exactly, but reworks other parts. See *A History of the Late Siege of Gibraltar*. 3rd edn (Dublin, 1786), 185.

²⁹ *Western Parts*, 164.

³⁰ *Western Parts*, 165.

³¹ The section is developed and expanded across the following manuscript versions: 'A tour round the western counties of England', 15 vols, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Gilpin Papers, Eng. misc. f. 192/1-15; 'Remarks on the Western parts of England [...] 1775', Eng. misc. e. 508; 'Observations, relative chiefly to Picturesque beauty, On different parts of the West, & South Of England [...] 1775; & [...] 1783', Eng. misc. e. 510; 'Observations (relative chiefly to Picturesque beauty,) on different parts of the West, & South Of England [...] 1775; & [...] 1783', Eng. misc. e. 559.

³² *Western Parts*, 237-9 and 241.

³³ *Coasts*, 65.

³⁴ *Western Parts*, 168 and 155-56.

³⁵ *Coasts*, 90-92.

³⁶ Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth* (London, 2000), 135; and Timonhy M. Costelloe, *The British Aesthetic Tradition: From Shaftesbury to Wittgenstein* (Cambridge, 2013), 145.

³⁷ Scott T Juengel, 'The Early Novel and Catastrophe', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 42 (2009), 443-50 (p.446).

³⁸ The full title of Defoe's work was *The Storm: or, a Collection of the most Remarkable Casualties and Disasters which happen'd in the late Dreadful Tempest, both by Sea and Land* (London, 1704). He also published two other responses to the 1703 storm. 'The Lay-Man's Sermon on the Late Storm' was published prior to *The Storm*, in 1704; the other, a poetic piece entitled 'An Essay on the Late Storm,' was published shortly afterwards.

³⁹ Juengel, 447.

⁴⁰ 447.

⁴¹ Davies, 228.

⁴² Defoe, *The Storm*, 25.

⁴³ Vladimir Janković, *Reading the Skies: A Cultural History of English Weather, 1650-1820* (Chicago and London, 2000), 63.

⁴⁴ Defoe, 25, 46-7.

⁴⁵ 'An historical account of the weather, during twenty years; from 1763 to 1785', Oxford, Bodleian Library, Gilpin Papers, Eng. misc. d. 564, fols 68r-74r.

⁴⁶ Janković, 113-17.

⁴⁷ Gilbert White, *The Natural History of Selborne*, ed. P. Foster (Oxford and New York, 1993), 279.

⁴⁸ See Thorvaldur Thordarson, and S. Self, 'The Laki (Skaftar-Fires) And Grimsvotn Eruptions in 1783-1785', *Bulletin of Volcanology*, 55 (1993), 233-263.

⁴⁹ By 'advices' Gilpin refers to reports in the press; alongside his journal entry for 1783 he has pasted newspaper cuttings relating to these unusual weather conditions, which include a piece 'On the extraordinary State of the Atmosphere, ' dated Paris, July 4, 'An historical account of the weather', fol. 69v.

⁵⁰ Defoe, 199-202.

⁵¹ *Coasts*, 90.

⁵² This digression on wrecks and the dexterity of the sea-men is absent from Eng. misc. d. 560.

⁵³ *Coasts*, 90-91.

⁵⁴ I am following John G. Rule's definition of the term wrecking here, which uses it to refer to all unlawful acts of appropriating material goods from wrecked ships, as opposed to the narrower application of the term to the deliberate luring of ships onto rocks (for which there is remarkably little concrete evidence from this period). See John G. Rule, 'Wrecking and Coastal Plunder', in Douglas Hay, Peter Linebaugh, John G. Rule, E. P. Thompson, and Carl Winslow, *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York, 1975), 167-88 (pp.184,170, 172, and 179).

⁵⁵ See Rule, 169.

⁵⁶ *Western Tour*, 341.

⁵⁷ *Western Parts*, 342.

⁵⁸ William D. Templeman, *The Life and Work of William Gilpin (1724-1804): Master of the Picturesque and Vicar of Boldre*, in *Illinois Studies in Language and Literature*, 24.3-4 (Urbana, Illinois, 1939), 9.

⁵⁹ Barbier, 25.

⁶⁰ Gilpin's discussion of the subject, prompted by his visit to Portsmouth harbour, and narrated in *Observations on the Coasts*, is uncompromising: the carvers are described as a 'useless tribe', and the

carvings themselves are dismissed as ‘not only vile in themselves, but rendered doubly so by daubing them over with glaring colours’. See *Coasts*, 23.

⁶¹ Gilpin, *Memoirs of Dr. Richard Gilpin, of Scaleby Castle in Cumberland*, ed. W. Jackson (London and Carlisle, 1879), 17.

⁶² See Rev. William Gilpin to William Gilpin, Vicar’s Hill, Jan 10 1800, September 13 1800, and December 3 1800, in Alain Kerhervé (ed.), *William Writes to William: The Correspondence of William Gilpin (1724-1804) and his Grandson William (1789-1811)* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2014), 147-51, 159-61, and 162-65; and William Gilpin to Samuel Rogers, Vicar’s Hill, Jan 23 1801, in Barbier, 58-59.

⁶³ Gilpin spells the name Hornett in his correspondence with his grandson, despite acknowledging that Harnett himself spells his name with an ‘a’ rather than an ‘o’. See Rev. William Gilpin to William Gilpin, in Kerhervé (ed.), *William Writes to William*, 162.

⁶⁴ William Gilpin to Samuel Rogers, in Barbier, 59.

⁶⁵ Rev. William Gilpin to William Gilpin, in Kerhervé (ed.), *William Writes to William*, 163.

⁶⁶ Templeman, 151.

⁶⁷ Gilpin, *Remarks on Forest Scenery, and Other Woodland Views (Relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty). Illustrated by the Scenes of New-Forest in Hampshire*, 2 vols (London, 1791), vol.2, 8.

⁶⁸ Barbier, 2, and Templeman 149. See also Gilpin, ‘An Account of the Revd William Gilpin, Vicar of Boldre in New Forest’, in *Memoirs of Dr. Richard Gilpin*. 109-53 (pp.136-7).

⁶⁹ Gilpin, ‘An Account of the Revd Mr Gilpin’, 143.

⁷⁰ Boldre Bridge, which was a short walk from the vicarage and church, was a landing place for ships which ‘anchored at high tide on the Marsh’, Perkins in Templeman, 152.

⁷¹ Gilpin, ‘The life of Black-beard the pyrate [Edward Teach]’, in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Gilpin Papers, Eng. misc. d. 567, fols 26-63.

⁷² See, for example, Letters 106 and 121 in Alain Kerhervé (ed.), *William Gilpin’s Letter-Writer* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2014).

⁷³ Richard Warner, *Literary Recollections*, 2 vols (London, 1830), vol. 1, 367-8. The ‘three ancestors’ Gilpin refers to are his great grandfather, grandfather, and father.

⁷⁴ Carl Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination* (Oxford, 2007), 55.

⁷⁵ Sydney K. Robinson, *Inquiry into the Picturesque* (Chicago, 1991), xiv.