



---

**Camargo Sá, Renata. “John Constable’s Moving Clouds.”**  
*Evental Aesthetics* 2, no. 4 (2014): 8-22.

**ABSTRACT**

One of John Constable’s highest achievements, his “skying” campaign of the summers of 1821 and 1822 in Hampstead Heath, connects the seventeenth-century approach to landscape to the modernist vision of it in a singular manner. This is the starting point of my investigation of Constable’s cloudscapes, an investigation that aims to bring attention to their vanguard position in actually heralding the concept of “lifeworld,” a concept that was to prove crucial to the development of Modernism. In connecting the Dutch quotidian approach to life with the impressionists’ search for immanence, Constable’s skies became an essential bridge in the history of modern art. His own very personal treatment of natural phenomena as manifestations of spiritual life represents the transition from the naturalist view of nature to a more human-focused – later to be called realist – view of the natural world.

**KEYWORDS**

John Constable, cloud sketches, British romanticism, landscape painting, Hampstead Heath

# John Constable's Moving Clouds

Renata Camargo Sá

The most cogent evidence that the modernist investigation of the puissance of the world of senses had its beginnings with the Dutch quotidian approach to life, rather than in the optical researches of the impressionists, can be found in the "skying" campaign held by John Constable during the summers of 1821 and 1822 in England's Hampstead Heath. Constable's well-known admiration for the paintings by landscapist Jacob Van Ruisdael helps confirm my assumption of the decisive role Dutch art has played in the evolution of modern art.<sup>1</sup> In Ruisdael's canvases, Constable seemed to have discovered an alternative to the mind-based Latin interpretation of life, which, in turn, resulted in the development of his own personal narrative, a narrative that was to be decisive in the surpassing of illusionism by modern art. This article examines how the romantic sensibility and its affinity for nature conveyed by Constable's cloudscapes function as a thread that connects the Dutch interpretation of the lifeworld to the phenomenological inclinations of modern art.

“Skying” is what Constable used to call his studies of clouds.<sup>2</sup> The term’s uncommon gerund form suggests that his observations were aimed at action rather than contemplation. To put it simply, he looked at the sky as a constantly moving phenomenon. As early as 1812, we find him expressing ideas about the dynamism of nature. On September 12, in a letter to his future wife Maria Bicknell, he writes, “I have not resumed my landscape studies since my return. I have not found myself equal to the vivid pencil that landscape requires.”<sup>3</sup>

It can be said that it is the sky that best inspires the experience of dynamism summoned by the physical world. Thus, studies of clouds are always about volume, *the* most typical property of physical objects, and clouds moving in the sky tend to intensify our sensation of volume and space. At the same time, there is nothing like looking at the sky to evoke metaphysical speculations – to look at the sky is one of those characteristics of the human animal that most contributed to the gap separating *Homo sapiens* from the other animals. In the “sketches” of clouds, Constable seems to be taken by the ambiguity between physics and metaphysics that naturally evolves from our perception of clouds and skies. Such ambiguity received particular attention in Constable’s time following the ideas and practices brought to the fore by the Enlightenment.

The romantic pathos blooming in Great Britain during the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century is generally attributed to the introduction of German idealism (Kant and Hegel) into its philosophical circles. Recent scholarship, however, shows that the tension between the so-called philosophy of common sense – from Scotland and “the way of ideas” from the continent – also played a very important role in shaping romanticism.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the influence of Dutch landscape painting in Constable’s studies of clouds must be seen in connection to the notion of truth that was flourishing within the insular culture of Great Britain. I am subscribing here to Martin Heidegger’s premise that “the History of the essence of Western art corresponds to the change in the essence of truth.”<sup>5</sup> For this reason, I am assuming that historic forces as obtrusive as industrialization and the Enlightenment – which brought about the collision of opposing values such as the material versus the spiritual or the work ethic versus the exploitation of nature and human beings – were also fundamental to the construction of the romantic perspective. The historic mood created by accelerating industrialization rekindled the old conflict between physics and metaphysics. Not coincidentally, this conflict is perfectly illustrated by the dual role that clouds play in our imagination.

Thomas Hobbes' old, famous statement that "everything that exists is matter or matter in motion" helps one understand the cultural tradition behind Constable's studies of clouds.<sup>6</sup> Although a similar atmosphere, dominated by a more empirical than mental inclination, also predominated during Ruisdael's time, his clouds never moved as freely as Constable's – instead being fastened to the earth in order to compose sceneries. Notwithstanding its privileged position in the composition, the sky in Ruisdael's canvases remains the combined part of a finished whole. It is fair to say that in Ruisdael an *idea* of clouds still precedes the actual experience of them. The tradition of landscape painting in the Netherlands set models for the depiction of clouds and skies, which, given the country's flat topography, became major themes of their artistic endeavors. Furthermore and more importantly, seventeenth-century Holland lacked the necessary mental framework for the emergence of the free-flowing spatial configuration that Constable succeeded in achieving.

The reason why Ruisdael's clouds fail to evoke the lack of constraint that one senses in Constable's work arises as a result of the weight that the material world had within Dutch culture. Specialists in Dutch art have agreed that this cultural and historical feature is connected to the compliance of their seicento art with the emerging Protestant and capitalist cultures. Their ethos reverberates in their aesthetics hence the emphasis in their painting on the physicality of such things as furniture, carpets, fruits, architecture, and garments. In Dutch art, sometimes even people can be depicted in a "commodified" manner.<sup>7</sup> It is widely recognized that there is a dialectical confrontation between this mundane aspect of their culture and the growing Puritanism that helped shape our modern economic system. In this sense, by substituting the sensual (and idealized) approach of most Italian and Spanish Catholic art with Puritan moral standards, the Dutch take on life at this time assumed an instrumental character, but it also anticipated, contradictions aside, what we in more modern times understand as *lebenswelt*.

This growing instrumental logic helped deprive, for example, the objectively described Dutch clouds of the kind of imagination that is derived from idealistic sensibilities, either classical or anticlassical. An anticlassical imagination is precisely what makes Constable's clouds the expression of the continuous transformation of entities. Despite my admiration for Ruisdael, I must say that one ought to be born a Johannes Vermeer or a Rembrandt to be able to transmute culturally inherent materialistic values into spiritual ones. Only in such rare cases can one find objects that have become invested with a spiritual meaning by way of

their proximity to the sitter's *spirituale*.<sup>8</sup> As far as clouds are concerned, however, the history of art had to wait for the next century for an emotional painter like John Constable to appear – someone who would make us sense a cloud's ethereal quality as vividly and realistically as we perceive its material properties. Presented as such, Constable's clouds seem to invite us to reenact some sort of epiphany.

The fact that they were taken as studies is also of capital importance to the type of freedom that the little paintings by John Constable evoke. In fact, their beauty is intrinsically dependent upon the lightness that we attribute to immaterial beings as well as to the freedom of the unfinished. This perception corresponds with another of Hobbes' intuitions – that the spirit is also matter in movement. This thread of thought leads us even further: it takes us to an oblique connection between the pure cloud sketches by Constable and the slaves by Michelangelo, sculpted almost three hundred years before.<sup>9</sup> This seemingly odd association is based on the idea, common to the art of both, that only through the experience of art can an ideal reality be envisaged. An ideal reality (as paradoxical as this expression sounds) is the very "realm of freedom," wherein all contradictions have been surmounted: soul and matter, good and evil, nature and culture. To these we can add the horrible social discrepancies that were produced by the then recently devised industrial processes of production. In the realm of freedom, all production processes would be alike artistic creation, unfolding thus from experience and imagination, never from the exploitation that is founded on inequalities. In such a realm, art's commonly held task of "redeeming" society would be made unnecessary.

The world that Constable brings out is slowly revealed before our eyes. By his use of the term "skying," we grasp that he experienced the "celestial" as processes of *revelation* of the empirical world. I must stress the apparent ambiguity between empirical reality and the idea of revelation because, to my eyes, Constable's skies demonstrate that matter is the abode of spirit (a view that significantly coincides with the empiricist tradition of English and Scottish thought). During the production of their works, artists rely on procedures that determine in great part the manner by which we behold them afterwards. Accordingly, Constable's cloud studies ought to be perceived as processes of revelation. In other words, rather than pure entities like ideas or mathematical formulas, they ought to be perceived as visions – therefore imperfect and incomplete.

Visual studies on perceptive processes became a hallmark of early modernity and are easily traced back to romanticism's rupture with the classical static models. In this sense, Constable's fleeting brushstrokes, unfinished surfaces, and faithfulness to vision rather than to concepts prompt to move the more stationary clouds by Ruisdael, prefiguring the empirical space that was later explored by impressionism. His conception of art thus complies with the nineteenth-century artistic tendency to question the predominant rationalist categories of the Enlightenment as much as those of neoclassical revisionism. Contrary to an adherence to established models, the paintings by Constable make art move ahead, anticipating the coming critiques of the humanist/metaphysical genesis of being that developed in parallel to the search by impressionists for immanence and everyday life. Above all, they confirm the paintings' homeland, their very identity with the land of empiricism *par excellence*. In so reasoning, one can conclude that only the unwary could suppose France to be the home of *peinture en plein air*.

It was only in the 1930s that the sketches by John Constable received some serious scholarly attention. To this day, his oeuvre is still not as popular as William Turner's, his only real counterpart in British painting. Constable's professional biography is not without frustrations, caused mainly by the public's and sometimes even his own peers' failure to understand his undertakings.<sup>10</sup> The fact that the small paintings that we are concerned with here were for a long time considered studies certainly helped delay their recognition. This fact must be confronted with a preoccupation voiced by Samuel Taylor Coleridge regarding the situation of poetry in his day. For Coleridge, the growing masses of literate people did not correspond to an increase in lettered individuals. This made him afraid that their lack of taste, as he perceived it, would mean a continued desecration of literature itself.

The situation Coleridge saw in literature was also felt within the visual arts. Motivated by the decline of aristocratic patronage, both the iconography and the quality of artworks slowly began to rely upon the taste of a less cultivated public, a public that might have been indifferent to the more dashing and cutting-edge works produced by John Constable.<sup>11</sup> Although it is risky to assert that "lack of taste" alone led to the prolonged indifference towards the sketches of clouds, some of Constable's commissioned works attest to a certain taste for the conventional, which very likely imposed itself upon him. This circumstance, added to the fact that the sketches were never exhibited during his lifetime, could have

reduced the chances for them to have been appreciated as finished and autonomous cloudscapes as we see them today.

These “skying” ventures and their indifferent reception prove the idiosyncrasies of art history as well as our myopia. Their vanguard position is continuously revealed anachronistically by more recent art works. Surely works by the impressionists but even paintings as recent as Jackson Pollock’s make us recognize that the alleged incompleteness of Constable’s studies was due to his advances towards something as new to his contemporaries as realism.

A passage in an 1812 letter from his friend John Fisher reads as follows:

I am now looking at it [a painting Constable presented him]. It is most pleasing when you are directed to look at it; but you must be taken to it. It does not solicit attention; and this I think true of all your pictures, and the real cause of your want of popularity. I have heard it remarked of Rubens, that one of his pictures illuminates a room. It gives a cheerfulness to everything about it.<sup>12</sup>

His friend’s appraisal proves that his vanguardism was being really misunderstood. The sentence “it does not solicit attention” implies that the general taste was more inclined to the Arcadian opulence of idealized, panoramic views of nature, such as Claude Lorrain’s for example, than to Constable’s immanent vision and therefore quotidian rendering of the theme of nature. Considering also Rubens, the example given by Fisher as the correct model to emulate, the reader is informed of the type of grandeur the public of the day wanted to see portrayed in art.

Constable was aware of this, and in another letter to Maria Bicknell, he wrote:

There is room enough for a natural painter. The great vice of the present day is bravura, an attempt to do something beyond the truth. Fashion always had, and will have, its day; but truth in all things only will last, and can only have just claims on posterity.<sup>13</sup>

At the time the cloudscapes were made, those works that Constable considered finished enough to be exhibited consisted of commissions for portraits and landscapes depicting buildings, most often churches. As we

look at them today, it is almost undisputable that their quality is inferior to the series of pure clouds. Ironically, the paintings by John Constable today reach the highest prices for all British art.

---

In my understanding, the greatest value of Constable's paintings of clouds lies in their ability to reconcile universal with particular categories, manifesting a primary aspect about the ontology of art. Likely, this aspect is art's hardcore, the only of its features that remained unchanged throughout its history. I am referring to art's persistent refusal to be defined, its rejection of an identity against which other identities can be confronted. In order to be closer to what art could actually be, we first have to give up subjecting its being to the principle of propositional truths, accepting that its very actuality depends upon the embodiment of other beings.

I am focusing on the series of clouds because I think the series represents Constable's masterpieces – and I take masterpieces to be those works that better unveil the enigma of art. Therefore, following Heidegger's tendency to universalize from particulars, I would assert that if *Dasein* is the being that thinks the truth of beings, masterpieces are works that best unveil the truth about the being of art. And they do this without recurring to any immutable essence but by allowing truth to overflow from the transit of historical time.

Since historical time is a human construction, the truth that is unveiled by art can only be cultural. The paintings by Constable unveil truths that were forged by what we have labeled romantic. Above all, by way of such a sensibility, the works unveil the period's artistic resistance to the dominant belief in the harsh separation between culture and nature. The Enlightenment's treatment of nature as object deepened the subject's suspicion of it, widening a separation that many consider false. Constable's empirical studies of the cloud formations of Hampstead Heath suggest the idea of humanity's oneness with nature. Because the viewer sees himself immersed in clouds, he naturally *believes* in what he sees, which makes him reject the Cartesian methodic doubt. A word to the wise is enough: such a feeling suffices to clear out the stale debate over whether Constable's rendering of clouds had been determined by his

readings of Luke Howard's *Essay on the Modification of Clouds* of 1803 or Thomas Forster's *Researches about Atmospheric Phaenomena* of 1815. Interesting as these may have been to him, it is obvious that they were not an *a priori* to his paintings of clouds.<sup>14</sup>

The sketches of clouds can never be reduced, as earlier interpretations attempted, to the annotations found on their back about the weather, the direction of clouds and winds, etc. The emotional content of Constable's clouds is paralleled only by the poetry of his contemporaries: "I wandered lonely as a cloud" wrote Wordsworth; and William Cowper's famous line: "God made the country, and man made the town."<sup>15</sup> Therefore, to force the relationship between John Constable's "skying" and the recently founded science of meteorology is not simply a gross misunderstanding of art but of the whole cultural environment that allowed for the emergence of a certain sensibility that dreamed about the reconnection of the human being with nature. Instead, we should be seeing these paintings as poetic expressions about the encounter of a spiritual being (man) with nature.<sup>16</sup> Through art, Constable's very personal experience of the sky is universally comprehended and shared. By the same token, this typically universal entity, the Sky, when drawn so close to us, acquires the airs of a parochial, almost local and, characteristically, English phenomenon.

Because empirical modalities of knowledge are conditioned by particular apprehensions, themselves determined by a number of historical, social, and psychological factors, it is precisely in perception where the gap between Constable's clouds and impressionist art can be found. The concern of impressionists with the optical impression of phenomena under specific lighting is clearly secondary for Constable, who was preoccupied instead with the problem of how paintings embody our apprehensions of the world. Constable realized that these apprehensions are spiritual, thus, determined by the feelings and reasoning that the world prompts in us to live. In grounding his works in spirit rather than in sense stimulus (like optical impressions for instance), Constable heralded Cézanne's quest for the intelligence inherent in our visual capacity. His *Stroke at Nayland* of 1810–11 at the Metropolitan Museum in New York tacitly endorses this point. Cézanne's quest, as we know, represented a new beginning, one that impelled art away from the impressionists' more optical than visual preoccupations.<sup>17</sup>

In the visual arts, it is upon this very difference that the problem of knowledge ultimately rests. The difference between visual perception and

optical reception guards the huge gap separating the idea of universal that defines the life of the spirit from the particularity of sensorial life – in other words, the difference between empirical knowledge and sensual stimuli.

The clash between universal and particular categories was a theme of major importance in the first decades of the nineteenth century. As mentioned, the studies of clouds appeared in the early days of the first Industrial Revolution, an epoch marked by the rising contradictions of instrumental reason. In contemplating this historical conjuncture, one needs to both consider the ancient duality between *poiésis* and *techné* that lies at the starting point of art theorization and resume the old question about the relevance of art to humanity (as in Coleridge's preoccupation above).

Art's productive force contrasts so dramatically with the emerging industrial processes that since the days of the industrial age, it came to represent the only alternative to the oppressive drive of the new economic model – a model that deeply altered the traditional system of cultural, moral, and ethical values. Constable's biography and correspondences reveal that he was much more engaged in the artistic developments of his time than in its political or economic turmoil. Nevertheless, given the dramatic social conditions that prevailed in England in the early nineteenth century, it is hard not to look at Constable's small pictures of clouds as representing a form of resistance, if only subliminal, to the new forces of production. However, great works of art never debase themselves in vain representing humanity's unreasonableness and inhumanness. So instead of lamenting the alienating rationality that was ruling the still incipient industrialism, Constable's clouds show us ideal forms of life, forms of life whose central principle is freedom. In this sense, the kind of political engagement of the next generation of painters such as Jean-François Millet and Honoré-Victorien Daumier seems almost anti-artistic. Constable's cloudscapes show that art and by extension freedom have nothing to do with political pamphleteering. Art expresses by the simple fact that it exists, a kind of spiritual truth that only unopinionated and nonutilitarian phenomena are able to express. In Theodor Adorno's impeccable line, "[art] criticizes society by merely existing."<sup>18</sup>

Art's spirituality demonstrates that its praxis surpasses all efforts that the incipient industry could possibly take in order to reach its standards of quality. The contradictions entailed by the exploitation, typical of the power relations found in the modern production system, are

above all anti-aesthetic. Power is anti-aesthetic since it presupposes and entails disharmony and disequilibrium. Therefore the contradictions in the industrial system of exploitation permeate even the best products that industries can possibly bring forth. Their inherent irrationality is diametrically opposed to the *promesse de Bonheur*, where art's rationale is rooted.

In light of the foregoing, the term "landscape painter" seems hardly appropriate to describe an artist like John Constable. The word "landscape", originating from the Dutch *landskip*, designates a stretch of cultivated field. Similarly to the French *paysage*, it refers to cultivated land rather than to the wilderness. Inherent in the expression "landscape" and in the French *paysage*, one senses the skeptical distance between subject and object that is absent from his canvases. In the cloud studies, above all, not only does he refuse models of any kind so that nature cannot be confined to any Neo-Platonic formulae, but he also rejects the domesticated nature found in rococo art. For Constable, nature is only accessible through perception, thus, determined by random encounters, surprises, and bedazzlement.

I firmly believe that the best way to critically assess a work of art is by grasping the manner by which it conveys the relationship that humans had with nature at the cultural moment the object was created. After all, nature is by far the most challenging aspect of human existence. Furthermore, nature's immediacy and therefore muteness is provocative to articulate beings like us. Among other things, the search for planarity in Modern art, whose beginnings Clement Greenberg claimed to have been Édouard Manet's achievement, can also be described as an effort to understand how humanity participates in nature's vitality beyond the rational explanations of the Enlightenment. I assume that this vitality (or the lifeworld) is the thread connecting previous perspectives, such as the Dutch vision of nature, and the more conspicuous realism of impressionist and post-impressionist art. To overcome illusionism – the goal that modern art imposed on itself after Manet – is but a part of unraveling the mystery behind the vitality connecting all things. Illusionism allows viewers to escape from nature's incommunicability and to return to it as it wishes through a vanishing point. As the world became more mediated (i.e., as nature became domesticated by science), the possibility of escaping became feebler and illusionism ever more retrograde.

When the Dutch portrayed nature and the objects of daily life from that dynamic and incarnated standpoint so typical of the modern

photographer, they announced the markedly “studied” indifference that came to characterize the passerby attitude of the modern *flâneur*. This change in the history of visual perception was occasioned by the growing association of objects (the seen) with the notion of commodities, which are basically objects whose semantics are restricted to their interchangeability and therefore emptied of content. Constable’s moving clouds figure as a turning point in the history of our belonging to and at the same time our estrangement from nature.

## Notes •

---

<sup>1</sup> See my “Espiritualidade Mundana: O Trabalho como Construção do Real,” *Viso: Cadernos de Estética Aplicada*, no. 5 (2009), <http://www.revistaviso.com.br/visArtigo.asp?sArti=41>; Constable’s admiration for Jacob Van Ruisdael dates back to 1797. He actually owned three etchings of the Dutch artist by the time of his death and, on a number of occasions, the press has associated his work with Ruisdael’s. In his letters, Constable praises the Dutch artist’s accomplishments, confirming that he had copied many paintings by Ruisdael in order to study his approach to nature. See C. R. Leslie, R. A., *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable, Esq. R.A: Composed Chiefly of His Letters* (London: Longman, 1845). <https://archive.org/details/memoirsoflifeofjoolesluoft>.

<sup>2</sup> Louis Hawes, “Constable’s Sky Sketches,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, no. 32 (1969): 349. Hawes believes the term is likely to have been adopted by Constable in reference to the expression *skoying*, used by Willem Van de Velde de Younger, to designate the type of cloud observation that he too used to do in Hampstead Heath.

<sup>3</sup> Leslie, *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable*, 37.

<sup>4</sup> Gavin Budge et al., *Romantic Empiricism: Poetics and the Philosophy of Common Sense 1780-1830* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” *Basic Writings from Being and time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*, edited with general introduction and introductions to each selection by David Farrell Krell, foreword by Taylor Carman (New York: Harper & Row, 2008): 206.

<sup>6</sup> Raymond Bayer, *História da Estética* (Lisboa: Editora Estampa, 1995): 151-2.

<sup>7</sup> See for instance the rendering by Gerard Ter Borch the younger of the theme of the presentation, in the painting of c.1600-1664, titled *An Officer Making His Bow to a Lady*.

<sup>8</sup> This is particularly perceptible in three examples. Firstly, in the whitewashed walls behind the front bench in Vermeer’s *Street in Delft*. Here, the dirt from the continuous use conveys a sort of life *veritas* that is confirmed by the actions of those who populate the picture. Secondly, in the shabby clothing of the prodigal son in Rembrandt’s painting, which becomes *spirituale* by the simple delicacy of love with which the father’s hand touches it. Occasionally, Frans Hals achieves this kind of mastery. In his *The Procuresses*, for instance, at the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem, the arrangement of the hands evokes the subtle relations of power among the sitters, as well as their psychological features. These instances demonstrate how spiritual truth can be conveyed through the relationship between the gestures of sitters and the physical objects that surround them. For the use of the term *spirituale* see *Leonardo: On Painting; An Anthology of Writings by Leonardo da Vinci with a Selection of Documents Relating to His Career as an Artist*, ed. Martin Kemp (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001): 315.

<sup>9</sup> Although Giulio Carlo Argan does not make explicit the relationship between Constable and Michelangelo, he does indeed mention the influence Michelangelo has had upon the romantic movement of the early nineteenth century. “Matéria e Furor,” *Clássico e Anticlássico* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1999): 311-318.

<sup>10</sup> Perhaps, the best example of this is revealed by the famous condemnation of Constable’s oil sketch *Water-meadows near Salisbury* as “a nasty green thing” by the critics of the Royal Academy. This sad episode is said to have occurred in 1929, when Constable, already a Royal Academic, was sitting as a counselor in this very committee that, unknowingly who the author was, castigated the painting he submitted. As a consequence, he withdrew the work from the competition. The embarrassment that

surrounds the story of this particular painting helped to make of it an extremely desired work by collectors.

<sup>11</sup> William Vaughn agrees with my position; c.f. “Constable Englishness,” *Oxford Art Journal*, no. 2 (1996): 23.

<sup>12</sup> Leslie, *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable*, 16.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Louis Hawes, “Constable’s Sky Sketches”, 344-365. Hawes traces the whole genealogy of Constable’s studies of clouds, in order to prove that his interest and rendering of clouds dates much before his contact with Luke Howard’s *Essay on the Modification of Clouds*.

<sup>15</sup> William Wordsworth, *Poems, in two volumes*. (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1807); William Cowper, *The Poetical Works of William Cowper, Esq.: with a Memoir of the Author* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1857): 197.

<https://archive.org/details/poeticalworksofwoocowprich>

<sup>16</sup> For a contrasting viewpoint; c.f. John Thornes, “Constable’s Clouds,” *The Burlington Magazine*, no. 920 (November, 1979): 697-699, 701-704. Or something as unpalatable as the following assertion: “Rosenthal also makes clear how in the latter part of Constable’s career the artist is constantly seeing himself battling against storms, and how he is at the same time introducing hints of hope in the rainbows.” This overly psychological, almost risible, interpretation was made by Michael Rosenthal and quoted by William Vaughan. “Constable’s Englishness,” *Oxford Art Journal*, no. 2 (1996): 23-24.

<sup>17</sup> As for beginnings, in Western art, Heidegger observes: “The beginning already contains the end within itself. A genuine beginning, however, has nothing of the neophyte character of the primitive. The primitive, because it lacks the bestowing, grounding leap and head start, is always futureless. It is not capable of releasing anything from itself because it contains nothing more than that in which it is caught. A beginning, on the contrary, always contains the undisclosed abundance of the awesome.” *Basic Writings from Being and time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*: 201.

<sup>18</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedeman, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998): 226.

## Bibliography •

---

- Adorno, Theodor W. *Aesthetic Theory*. Edited by Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedeman. Translated by Robert Hullot-Kentor. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- Alpers, Svetlana. *A Arte de Descrever: A Arte Holandesa no Século XVII*. Translated by Antônio de Pádua Danesi. São Paulo: EDUSP, 1999.
- Argan, Giulio Carlo. *Clássico e Anticlássico*. Translated by Lorenzo Mammi. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1999.
- Bayer, Raymond. *História da Estética*. Translated by José Saramago. Lisboa: Editora Estampa, 1995.
- Burroughs, Louise. "Hogarth, Constable, Turner." *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, no. 5 (1947): 125–130.
- Clark, Kenneth. *Landscape into Art*. London: Harper & Row Publishers, 1979.
- . *The Romantic Rebellion: Romantic versus Classic Art*. London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1974.
- Cowper, William. *The Correspondence of William Cowper*, Vol. 3. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904.
- . *The Poetical Works of William Cowper, Esq.: with a Memoir of the Author*. Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1857.
- Budge, Gavin, ed. *Romantic Empiricism: Poetics and the Philosophy of Common Sense 1780–1830*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007.
- Evans, Mark, Nicola Costaras and Clare Richardson. *John Constable: Oil Sketches from the V&A Museum*. London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2011.
- Hawes, Louis. "Constable's Sky Sketches." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, 32 (1969): 344–365.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*. Translated by David Farrell Krell. New York: HarperCollins, 2008.
- Hind, Charles L. *Constable: 1776–1837*. London: T.C. & E.C. Jack, n.d.  
<https://archive.org/details/constableocad00hinduoft>.