LANDSCAPE AESTHETICS AND THE IDEOLOGY OF PLEASURE



The Dun Cow, Durham. Early evening.

In conversation with Bianca (Carpeneti).

My early morning runs are troubling me deeply …

these encounters with a sublime picturesque [Link] [Link] [Link]





Photo – dawn on Holy Island. Watercolor – J.M.W. Turner (exhibited 1829) (the castle in the background)

Turner's figures in the landscape (they are on the shore by Cuthbert's island) indicate more going on than the conjunction of wind, sky and sea.

My concern – something of an *ascetic moment*, a *methodist moment* –

guilty pleasures

in landscapes and ruins that attest not to the realities of history, but to what the wealthy and powerful have done to turn labor on the land (and sea) into aesthetic allure.

The politics of land and ownership turned into a pleasant vista.

As I mentioned the other day [Link], Lindisfarne castle is a sixteenth century military fort by a nineteenth century industrial facility turned into a wealthy man's holiday home (Edward Hudson, proprietor of magazine "Country Life", commissioned Edwin Lutyens to oversee the *tasteful* conversion); Gertrude Jekyll added a walled garden.

How can we deny the taste, and this form of the landscape?





Lindisfarne – stairs and kitchen by Edwin Lutyens

The site in the 1900s, when Hudson bought the castle, was still dominated by an industrial facility – what was left of a substantial lime kiln works that had produced agricultural fertilizer. Over by the small harbor (the Ouse) were fish processing plants (mainly for gutting herring – and there are still some remains of the great fishing boats upturned on the shore – [Link]).



And, in a remarkable design gesture, Lutyens took the bricks used as ballast in the boats brought to carry the lime and used them, herringbone, for the new floors of the castle:



Here is how Thomas Girtin, contemporary of Turner, dealt with this conjunction of picturesque history and industry:



My concern

how do we deal with this now?

More thoughts to follow … [Link]