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978-1-108-06724-9 - *An Essay on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful: And, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape*

Uvedale Price

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An Essay on the Picturesque, as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful

Frustrated by what he saw as the over-grooming prevalent in British landscape gardening and associated with the work of Capability Brown, Uvedale Price (1747–1829) published this essay in 1794. He emphasises here the importance of naturalism and harmony with the surrounding environment. Providing examples of how certain features in a garden may be improved through adherence to picturesque principles, Price seeks to apply the lessons of landscape painting to the practice of landscape gardening. He also stresses the importance of paying attention to changing light and the effect of shadow. The essay appeared in the same year as ‘The Landscape’, a didactic poem by Richard Payne Knight (1751–1824), which was addressed to Price and is included at the end of this reissue. Price’s *Letter to H. Repton, Esq.*, a supplement to his essay, is reissued separately in this series in its 1798 edition.

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Frontmatter

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Frontmatter

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Frontmatter

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Uvedale Price

Frontmatter

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O N T H E
P I C T U R E S Q U E,
A S C O M P A R E D W I T H T H E
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U S E O F S T U D Y I N G P I C T U R E S,
F O R T H E P U R P O S E O F
I M P R O V I N G R E A L L A N D S C A P E,

B Y *UVEDALE PRICE, Esq.*

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IN EMINENTIA, QUÆ NOS NON VIDEMUS.
Cicero.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Uvedale Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

P R E F A C E.

THIS unfinished work (and such I fear it is in every respect) I did not intend publishing till it was more complete, and till I had endeavoured, at least, to render it more worthy the public inspection. I have, however, been induced to send it into the world earlier than I wished, from the general curiosity which my friend Mr. Knight's poem has awakened on the subject.

It would have been more prudent in me not to have afforded the public such an opportunity of judging, how much I am indebted to the effusion of friendship and poetry, for the high compliment he has paid me; were I now to say what I feel about my friend's poem it might appear like a return of compliment; and whatever could

A 2 in

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Uvedale Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

iv P R E F A C E.

in any way be so misconstrued, would be equally unworthy of us both.

I cannot however, resist the satisfaction of mentioning one circumstance, highly flattering to me, as it accounts for my not chusing to delay this publication. I had mentioned to Mr. Knight that I had written some papers on the present style of improvement, but that I despaired of ever getting them ready for the press; though I was very anxious that the absurdities of that style should be exposed. Upon this he conceived the idea of a poem on the same subject; and having all his materials arranged in his mind, from that activity and perseverance which so strongly mark his character, he never delayed or abandoned the execution, till the whole was completed. When it was nearly finished, he wrote to me to propose, what I consider as the highest possible compliment, and the strongest mark of confidence in my taste,—that my papers (when properly modelled) should be published

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Uvedale Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

P R E F A C E. v

lished with his poem, in the same manner as Sir Joshua Reynolds's notes were published with Mr. Mafon's *Du Frefnoy*.

This proposal, could it have been made at an earlier period, I should have accepted with pride; but my work had then taken too much of a form and character of its own to be incorporated with any thing else; for indeed almost the whole of what I have now published had been written some time before.

I flatter myself, however, that though my plan is totally different from his, and though in some particulars we may not exactly agree, yet the general tendency is so much the same, and our notions of improvement are upon the whole so similar, that my work may, in many points, serve as a commentary upon his; and I cannot wish it a more honourable employment. I have on that account judged it better, that what I had arranged should appear in its present state, now that curiosity is alive, than in a less im-

A 3 perfect

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Uvedale Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)**vi** **P R E F A C E.**

perfect one when the subject might have become stale. I think also, that in the light of a commentary it may possibly have more effect, when each person publishes his own ideas (tinged as they must always be with the peculiarities of different minds, yet tending to the same general end) than when two works are modelled to agree and coincide with each other.

In the course of printing this work I have been tempted, on numberless occasions, to insert passages from the *Landscape*, as the best and aptest illustrations of what I meant to explain and enforce. I found, however, that so many of them crowded upon me, and with such equal pretensions, that had I once begun I should have reversed my friend's proposal, and his poem would have become a commentary to my prose.

C O N T E N T S.

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Uvedale Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	Page.
T HE reasons why an improver should study pictures as well as nature - - - -	7
The general principles of both arts the same -	8
The present system of improving at variance with those principles - - - -	9
The manner in which a picture of Claude would probably be improved by an admirer of Mr. Brown - - - -	10

CHAPTER II.

C auses of the neglect of the picturesque in modern improvements - - - -	17
Intricacy and variety the characteristics of the picturesque; monotony and baldness of improved places - - - -	18
A dressed lane - - - -	20
A lane in its natural and picturesque state - <i>ibid.</i>	
A 4	Different

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-06724-9 - An Essay on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful: And, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape

Uvedale Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii	C O N T E N T S.	
		Page
	Different ways in which such a lane might probably be improved - - - - -	27
	Examples of two lanes that have been improved	29

CHAPTER III.

	General meaning of the word picturesque - -	34
	Mr. Gilpin's definitions of it examined - -	35
	It has not an <i>exclusive</i> reference to painting -	36
	The beautiful and the sublime have been pointed out and illustrated by painting as well as the picturesque - - - - -	37
	Apology for making use of the word picturesque-ness - - - - -	38
	The picturesque as distinct a character as either the sublime or the beautiful - - - -	39
	Picturesque <i>beauty</i> an improper term - - -	42
	The picturesque arises from qualities directly opposite to those of beauty - - - -	43
	What those qualities are - - - - -	44
	Picturesque and beautiful in buildings - -	46
	Ditto - in water - - -	53
	Ditto - in trees - - -	56
	Ditto - in animals - - -	58
	Ditto - in birds - - -	62
	Ditto - in men - - -	69
	Ditto - in the higher order of beings - - -	71
	Ditto - in painting - - -	72

CHAPTER

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-06724-9 - An Essay on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful: And, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape

Uvedale Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

C O N T E N T S. ix

CHAPTER IV.

	Page.
General distinctions between the picturesque and the beautiful - - -	76
Ditto - between the picturesque and the sublime - - -	80
The manner in which they operate on the mind	84

CHAPTER V.

To create the sublime above our contracted powers.—The art of improving therefore depends on the beautiful and the picturesque -	90
Beauty alone has hitherto been aimed at -	91
But they are seldom unmixed, and insipidity has arisen from trying to separate them - -	92
Influence of their mixture in the human countenance - - -	<i>ibid.</i>
Ditto - in flowers, shrubs, and trees - - -	94
Ditto - in buildings - - -	98

CHAPTER VI.

It has been doubted by some whether <i>smoothness</i> is essential to the beautiful - - -	101
Effects of smoothness and of roughness in producing the beautiful and the picturesque, by means of repose and irritation - - -	103
+	Repose

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-06724-9 - An Essay on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful: And, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape

Uvedale Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

* CONTENTS.

	Page.
Repose the peculiar beauty of Claude's pictures	109
Character of the pleasures that arise from irritation - - - - -	110
Effects of repose and irritation as caused by light and shadow - - - - -	111
Character of Rubens's light and shadow - -	113
Ditto - of Coreggio's - - - -	115
Ditto - of Claude's, and his landscapes compared with those of Rubens - - - -	116

CHAPTER VII.

Breadth of light and shadow - - - -	120
Twilight - - - - -	123
The effects of twilight should be studied by improvers - - - - -	126
Difficulty of uniting breadth with detail - -	129
Breadth alone insufficient, but to be preferred to detail without breadth - - - -	131
Application of the principle of breadth to improvement - - - - -	132
Objections to buildings being made too white	134
Distinctness - - - - -	138

CHAPTER VIII.

On the beautiful, and on what might be termed the picturesque, in colour - - - -	141
Why autumn, and not spring, is called the painters season - - - - -	143
The	

*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-06724-9 - An Essay on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful: And, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape

Uvedale Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS. xi

	Page
The colouring of the Venetian school, and particularly of Giorgione, Titian, and their imitators, formed upon the glowing tints of autumn - - - - -	153
That of Rubens more on the fresh colours of spring - - - - -	156
Character of the atmosphere, and of the lights and shadows in spring, and in autumn -	<i>ibid.</i>

CHAPTER IX.

On ugliness - - - - -	161
Angles not <i>ugly</i> , though not beautiful - -	<i>ibid.</i>
Deformity is to ugliness what picturesqueness is to beauty - - - - -	163
<i>Ugliness</i> and deformity in hills and mountains -	165
Ditto - in trees - - -	<i>ibid.</i>
Ditto - in ground - - -	166
Deformity in ground, &c. not so obvious - -	168
Connection between picturesqueness and deformity - - - - -	169
Ugliness in buildings - - - - -	170
Ugliness in colours - - - - -	<i>ibid.</i>
Effects of deformity and ugliness compared; and illustrated by sounds - - - - -	171
Effects of the picturesque when mixed with ugliness - - - - -	173
The excess of the qualities of beauty tend to insipidity; those of picturesqueness to deformity - - - - -	175
Application	

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-06724-9 - An Essay on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful: And, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape

Uvedale Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii	C O N T E N T S.			
				Page.
	Application to improvements	-	-	179
	Beauty, picturesqueness, and deformity in the			
	other senses	-	-	<i>ibid.</i>

P A R T II.

CHAPTER I.

How far the principles of painting have been				
applied to improvements	-	-	-	183
Kent, one of the first improvers on the present				
system	-	-	-	184
Mr. Brown	-	-	-	187
The clump	-	-	-	190
The belt	-	-	-	192
The-avenue :— that and the belt compared	-			193
The usual method of thinning trees for the				
purpose of beauty considered	-	-	-	201
Ill effects of clumping an avenue	-	-	-	203

CHAPTER II.

Trees considered generally	-	-	-	206
Necessary accompaniments to rocks and moun-				
tains, and to every kind of ground and of				
water. An exception with regard to the sea				207
The variety and intricacy of trees	-	-	-	209
Those which are remarkably full of leaves, not				
always preferred by painters—the reasons	-			210
				Plantations

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-06724-9 - An Essay on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful: And, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape

Uvedale Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)C O N T E N T S. xiii

	Page.
Plantations made for ornament the least admired	
by painters - - - - -	212
The established trees of the country ought to prevail in the new plantations - - -	<i>ibid.</i>
Clumps or patches of a larger size - -	215
Large plantations of firs have a harsh effect from not harmonizing with the natural woods of the country - - - - -	220
Bad effects of planting too close - - -	221
The necessity of a proper <i>balance</i> in all scenery, both in point of form and of colour - -	222
Inside of close plantations of firs - - -	223
Difference of its character from that of a grove of spreading pines - - - - -	224
Fir plantations improper for boundaries - -	225
A common hedge often a more effectual boundary, and some highly beautiful - - -	227
This points out the necessity of a mixture of thorns, hollies, and the lower growths in all screens—the same method may be extended to all ornamental plantations - - -	228
The use of such a mixture of the lower growths, if such a plantation should be thinned, after many years neglect - - -	229
Contrast of such a plantation with a close wood of firs only - - - - -	233
Its variety would not arise merely from a diversity of plants—variety in forests produced by a few species - - - - -	234

Continued

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-06724-9 - An Essay on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful: And, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape

Uvedale Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xiv	C O N T E N T S.	Page.
Continual and unvaried diversity a source and a species of monotony	- - - -	236
Accident and neglect the sources of variety in unimproved parks and forests	- - -	238
The reasons why lawns have in general little variety	- - - - -	238
Why a lawn looks ill in a picture	- - -	239
Why the most beautiful lawn, painted by Claude, would not be equal to his best pictures	- -	
Verdure and smoothness, which are the characteristic beauties of a lawn, are in their nature allied to monotony	- - -	241
Improvers, instead of remedying that defect, have added to it	- - - - -	<i>ibid.</i>
Soft and smooth colours, like soft and smooth sounds, are grateful to the mere sense; a relish for more artful combinations acquired by degrees	- - - - -	243
Such a relish does not exclude a taste for simple scenes, and for simple melodies	- - -	

CHAPTER III.

On the general effects of <i>water</i> in landscape	246
Mr. Brown's artificial rivers have no objects of reflection	248
The formal sweeps of such imitations, contrasted with the intricacies and varieties of natural rivers	250
Water	

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-06724-9 - An Essay on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful: And, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape

Uvedale Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)C O N T E N T S. xv

	Page.
Water with a thin grassy edge like an over- flowing - - - - -	252
No professor has yet endeavoured to make an artificial river like a natural one - - -	253
It must be done by attention to the banks, and to objects of reflection, as an artificial river must be without motion - - - -	255
Objects of reflection peculiarly suited to still water - - - - -	256
Remarks on the expression of a fine <i>sheet</i> of water - - - - -	<i>ibid.</i>
The great water at Blenheim - - - -	258
The water below the cascade - - - -	263
<hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/>	
Conclusion - - - - -	266

O N