

Some initial bibliographical notes on
the Sublime, the Beautiful and the Picturesque.

A glance at a chronology of landscape architects and writers discussing the beautiful and the picturesque would begin something like this: Charles Bridgeman. 1690-1738, William Kent. 1685-1748, Capability Brown, 1715 or 1716-1783.

Before them John Dennis had written *Miscellanies*, 1693. Dennis was a pioneer of the concept of the sublime as an aesthetic quality. After taking the Grand Tour of the Alps he published his comments in a journal letter published as *Miscellanies* in 1693, giving an account of crossing the Alps where, contrary to his prior feelings for the beauty of nature as a 'delight that is consistent with reason', the experience of the journey was at once a 'pleasure to the eye as music is to the ear', but 'mingled with Horrors, and sometimes almost with despair.' Edward Niles Hooker (ed.). *The Critical Works of John Dennis*, Volume I, 1692-1711, Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1939.

The significance of Dennis' account is that the concept of the sublime, at the time a rhetoric term primarily relevant to literary criticism, was used to describe a positive appreciation for horror and terror in aesthetic experience, in contrast to Anthony Ashley Cooper, The Third Earl of Shaftesbury's more timid response to the sublime, *Characterisks of Men, Manners, Opinions. Times*, 3 volumes, 1711.

Thomas Gray, travelling the Alps with Horace Walpole in 1739, writes to Richard West, 'Not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry.' From the Lake District in 1769 addressed to Thomas Wharton he writes, '...that turbulent chaos of mountain behind mountain roll'd in confusion.' (Gray. 1935: 125 and 127.)

Edmund Burke. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 1756.

Immanuel Kant. *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, 1764.

William Gilpin. *Essay on Prints*, 1768, 'the kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture'.

Arthur Young. *A Six Weeks' Tour through the Southern Counties of England and Wales, A Six Months' Tour through the North of England and the Farmer's Tour through the East of England*, 1768-70.

William Gilpin. *Observations on the River Wye and Several Parts of South Wales, &c., Relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty*, 1770.

William Gilpin. *Wye Tour*, 1782, *Lakes Tour*, 1786, *Scottish Tour*, 1789, and so forth.

Immanuel Kant. *The Critique of Judgement*, 1790. (The first part is titled 'The Critique of Aesthetic Judgement.' and includes his thesis on the mathematical sublime and the dynamic sublime.)

William Gilpin. *Three Essays: on picturesque beauty; on picturesque travel; and on sketching landscape: to which is added a poem, on landscape painting*, 1792.

Uvedale Price. *Essay on the picturesque*, 1794.

* Ann Radcliffe. *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794.

William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems*, 1798. For example, 'Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey, on revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a tour, July 13, 1798,' by Wordsworth.

Wordsworth and Coleridge. *Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and Other Poems*, 1802.

Richard Payne Knight. *An Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste*, 1805,

Humphry Repton. *An Inquiry into the Changes of Taste in Landscape Gardening, with some Observations on its Theory and Practice*, 1806.

* Jane Austen. *Sense and Sensibility*, 1811.

* Jane Austin. *Northhanger Abbey*, 1818.

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