

THE PICTURESQUE

I. INTRODUCTION

In the last chapter I argued that eighteenth-century English gardens, though declared sisters to painting as well as poetry, neither copied landscape paintings nor functioned like them. I should like now to explore two further relations that may have held between gardens and paintings in the eighteenth century: (1) gardens remind us of particular paintings or of the style of a particular painter, and (2) gardens are created using the principles and techniques of painting.

The first relationship, that gardens remind us of paintings, or that we see gardens in terms of paintings, leads to an exploration of the *picturesque*, an aesthetic category first popularized in England in the last third of the eighteenth century. The term picturesque was applied to landscapes in many guises---to landscape poems and landscape paintings, as well as to gardens and natural scenes. I should like to begin my discussion of the picturesque by singling out two gardens that seem to require us to take painting into account when we interpret them.

Charles Hamilton's Painshill Park, described in detail at the beginning of chapter 4, is the first garden that I want to mention in the context of the picturesque. Recall that Painshill resembled Stourhead in layout. Circling a central lake, viewers encountered stylistically varied assortment of structures and an artfully designed set of vistas. Despite its similarities to Stourhead, I offered evidence that Painshill should be classed as "painterly" rather than a poetic garden. First, particular sections of the garden were said to copy particular paintings by Salvator Rosa and Gaspard Dughet; second, no obvious iconographic program links Painshill's architectural and sculptural components in the way that so many of Stourhead's features refer to the *Aeneid*; and finally, contemporary viewers commented predominantly on visual aspects of the garden, emphasizing the composition and sequence of scenes rather than some underlying meaning conveyed.

Painshill engages the art of painting and the concept of the picturesque in both of the ways set out at the beginning of this chapter: (1) portions of the garden seem to *remind* viewers of the work of particular artists, setting in motion trains of association that link scenes in the garden to paintings visitors have seen in the past; and (2), Hamilton seems to have employed the principles of painting to construct the scenes, landscapes, and vistas mentioned earlier.¹

Before assessing these claims, let us consider one more English eighteenth-century garden. In 1758 Thomas Duncombe improved his Yorkshire estate by carving a half-mile long grassy terrace atop a steep hillside. The hill overlooked the sprawling ruins of Rievaulx Abbey, a thirteenth-century Cistercian monastery, and Duncombe's terrace was intended to provide a panoramic overview of that site. Visitors walking along the slope encountered a changing set of stunning vistas as different portions of the monastic complex came into view. The skeletal remains of the chapter church dominated the ruins. Ghostly ranks of clerestory windows topped the Gothic arches of its lower bays. Each end of Duncombe's terrace was marked by a temple, one round and in the Tuscan style, the other square with an Ionic portico. The latter temple was equipped as a "banqueting room," with frescoed walls and ceiling, elaborately carved woodwork, ornate furniture, and a subterranean kitchen.

Rievaulx Terrace was clearly a marvelous pleasure ground for its owner and his guests. In designing the terrace, Duncombe was guided by a number of precedents. His grandfather, the

first Thomas Duncombe, had commissioned a similar terrace after completing his new house, Duncombe Park, in 1713,² while the idea of including actual ruins may well have come from John Aislaby's neighboring Yorkshire estate, Studley Royal, which incorporated the Gothic ruins of Fountains Abbey.³ Despite these influences, Rievaulx Terrace is unique. While other English gardens had incorporated actual ruins or built artificial ones, Duncombe dispensed with the garden altogether and provided nothing but a view. In creating his terrace he appropriated that view and framed it in a way that controlled and orchestrated each viewer's experience. If we consider Rievaulx Terrace as the limiting case of an English landscape garden, we can see that it marks the culmination of an aesthetic revolution. It epitomizes eighteenth-century taste for the picturesque.

2. THE PICTURESQUE

The picturesque figured in discussions of eighteenth-century English gardening. In fact, some garden historians acknowledge a gardening style *called* the picturesque, associated primarily with the work of Humphry Repton. But the concept played a much broader role in eighteenth-century cultural life. Christopher Hussey characterized the picturesque as an aesthetic discovery---the discovery of visual qualities. He claimed that in the picturesque era "the relation of all the arts to one another, through the pictorial appreciation of nature, was so close that poetry, painting, gardening, architecture, and the art of travel maybe said to have been fused into the single 'art of landscape'."⁴ The art historian David Watkin remarks, "Between 1730 and 1830, English poets, painters, travellers, gardeners, architects, connoisseurs, and dilettanti, were united in their emphasis on the primacy of pictorial values. The Picturesque became the universal mode of vision."⁵

Despite this agreement, it is very difficult to come up with an adequate definition of the picturesque. The term was first used in the sense I wish to trace by the Rev. William Gilpin in his treatise *An Essay on Prints* (1768). Gilpin defined the picturesque as "a term expressive of that peculiar kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture."⁶ Unfortunately, his definition does not help us to identify picturesque items or understand their charms. And one source reports that "by 1801 a supplement to Johnson's *Dictionary* allowed a range of meanings which include what is pleasing to the eye, what strikes the viewer as singular or appeals to him with the force of a painting, what is expressible in painting or would either afford a good subject for a painted landscape or help in conceiving one."⁷

Despite this vagueness, a considerable picturesque industry sprang up. Gilpin traveled to remote regions of England, Scotland, and Wales throughout the 1770s. He kept journals of his tours, illustrated with pen-and-ink sketches. Gilpin subsequently published five volumes recounting his travels to, and appreciation of, the Wye Valley (1782), the Lake District (1786), the Scottish Highlands (1789), forest scenery (1791), and Cambridge, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and North Wales (1809).⁸ The titles of all five books included the phrase "Observations relative chiefly to picturesque beauty." They became immensely popular, serving as guides for generations of "picturesque tourists" who retraced Gilpin's steps while seeking out the scenes he had described. In *The Search for the Picturesque* Malcolm Andrews describes the picturesque in terms of the "particular pleasure of comparison and association" (39). He speaks of the "habitual exercise" of these capacities (3) and notes that "one of the chief excitements for the Picturesque tourist was the recognition and tracing of resemblances between art and nature" (39). That is, for

tourists in search of the picturesque, natural landscapes came to be seen in terms of painted ones. We have seen, in connection with the grand tour (chap. 2), how a taste for landscape art arose in eighteenth-century England. Gentlemen on the tour encountered landscapes unlike any they had seen at home: first the Alps, rugged and forbidding, then the Roman campagna, replete with ruins alluding to an arcadian past. These experiences made the travelers newly receptive to the landscape paintings of the French and Italian masters.⁹ Englishmen sought out, championed, and collected works by Claude Lorrain, Nicholas Poussin, Gaspard Dughet, and Salvator Rosa.

Not only were eighteenth-century tourists expected to seek out and appreciate picturesque sites, where appreciation involved noting similarities between the literal landscapes and painted ones; they were also expected to produce their own pictures. That is, picturesque tourists were to go about equipped with Claude glass and sketch pad, capturing on paper the scenes in nature that reminded them of famous landscape paintings. Very explicit directions were offered in the guidebooks for creating suitable---i.e., picturesque---pictures. The books identified "Station Points" where the tourists should pause and produce their sketches. Here is one example quoted by Andrews, instructions from James Clarke's *Survey of the Lakes* (1787) on how to paint Ullswater:

The side-screens will be Ewe-Cragg, the rising ground in Gowbarrow park, and some other less striking objects on the right hand: on the left, a small coppice, Sandwich-Dod, Sandwich-Cascade, and Birk-Fell: the front screen will take in Glencoyne-House, Lyulph's Tower, and the picturesque ground on which they stand; whilst Glencoyne Pike, Common-Fell, Catesby Pike, and Helveylin, succeeding each other in just degrees of distinctness, close the distances (30).

Consider one more example, instructions from R. H. Newell's *Letters on the Scenery of Wales* (1821) for capturing Llaugharne Castle: "Bring the Castle exactly *within the angle* made by the sloping hill and woody steep *before* it. Then ascend or descend, till the *water* and *three* of the promontories appear above the castle. In this station the sea bounds the distance" (30).

Such a rigid approach to the appreciation and representation of landscape scenery could not but become formulaic and stultifying. Andrews explains that English landscape painters embraced principles derived from the works of Claude and Dughet. These principles included an "obligatory, mellow master-tint," a structural division of the painted scene into three distances---"a background, a strongly lit middle or second distance, and a darkened foreground"---and "the device of the *repoussoir* object, the foreground framing trees, or the tree and ruin, or mountain sides, to prevent one's eye from straying outside the canvas and to push it into the middle distance" (29).¹⁰ Strict reliance on conventions of this sort had a deleterious effect on both landscape painting and landscape appreciation. Andrews comments, "The limitations of the Claudean orthodoxies had important consequences for the Picturesque tourist, whether or not he was himself a painter. It limited the kinds of landscape eligible for praise and study" (34).

A tension should be evident in even the limited account of the picturesque sketched so far. If "picturesque" is glossed according to Gilpin's usage to mean "whatever might look good in a picture," then any and every landscape scene is potentially picturesque. That is, the term is so all-inclusive as to be almost meaningless. If, on the other hand, the ideal landscape to be imitated and appreciated is that which exhibits the structure of a painting by Claude, then many other sorts of appealing landscapes are overlooked, for instance, those that would be represented by Dutch and Flemish masters, by Rosa and Girtin, and so on. In sum, our initial approach to the

picturesque via Gilpin's guidebooks and the tourist tradition they generated has led to a standoff between two equally unhelpful interpretations. The first---"like a picture" [any picture]---is too broad, while the second---"like a Claude"---is too narrow. I would like to begin again and examine a more theoretical take on the picturesque, one generated by the debate later in the century between Sir Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight. While neither theorist in the end provides us with a more satisfactory link between literal landscapes and pictured ones, the details of their disagreement are interesting in and of themselves and illuminate garden history in a number of ways.

3. PRICE AND KNIGHT

Let me briefly set the scene. Born three years apart, Sir Uvedale Price (1747--1829) and Richard Payne Knight (1750-1824) became neighbors and friends. Price was educated at Eton and at Oxford. Knight, sickly as a child, was educated at home and never went to university. As young men both inherited Herefordshire seats and both embarked on grand tours. Price came into the estate of Foxley at the age of fourteen, the same age at which Knight inherited Downton.¹¹ From 1774 to 1778 Knight built Downton Castle, a crenellated, irregular country house whose asymmetrical plan Nikolaus Pevsner declares "extremely unusual" for the time. Moreover, Downton's medieval exterior with round and polygonal towers and battlements belied its Grecian interior with classical orders throughout and a round dining room in imitation of the Pantheon.¹²

Price described the three major preoccupations of his life as "pictures, scenery, and music."¹³ Pevsner calls him a "one-book author" compared to Knight who wrote on topics ranging from the worship of Priapus to the Greek alphabet to judgments of taste---though Pevsner says of three publications on the picturesque that appeared in 1794, "One of these was a masterpiece: Uvedale Price's *Essay on the Picturesque*."¹⁴ Knight became a member of the prestigious Society of Dilettanti in 1781 and was proud of his independent status as a scholar.¹⁵ Both men wrote more than one work on landscape and the picturesque. Knight's initial effort, *The Landscape* (1794), a "didactic poem," was followed by a much more ambitious aesthetic treatise, *An Analytic Inquiry into the Principles of Taste* (1805), while Price revised his *Essay on the Picturesque* (1794) for expanded editions in 1796-98 and 1810,¹⁶ and he published *A Dialogue on the Distinct Characters of the Picturesque and Beautiful* (1801) to counter a note Knight had added to the second edition of *The Landscape*.¹⁷

Although their discussions of the picturesque became increasingly acrimonious, Price and Knight initially agreed in their judgments of landscape and of art. In fact, Knight invited Price to publish his *Essay* jointly with *The Landscape*. Price declined and the two works appeared separately in 1794. In the ensuing years doctrinal differences drove the two theorists apart. While they may have agreed in admiring rugged scenes, busy paintings, and "unimproved" gardens, the reasons behind their judgments differed significantly. Let me compare their theories as presented in Price's *Essay on the Picturesque* (1794) and Knight's *Analytic Inquiry into the Principles of Taste* (1805).

4. SIR UVEDALE PRICE

Price's *Essay* begins with a discussion of the art of laying out grounds. On page one he asks "Is the present system of improving founded on just principles of taste?"¹⁸ His answer is no. Thus Price's theory grew out of practical concerns with gardening and with landscape. His main target throughout the *Essay* was the landscape gardener Lancelot ("Capability") Brown, whose design principles Price found wanting.

Brown was perhaps the most famous gardener of the eighteenth century. He is said to have improved between 120 and 140 great country estates.¹⁹ Brown learned the rudiments of landscape gardening and design during seven years of employment at Kirkharle Tower, Northumberland. He soon began receiving commissions to confer about other properties. Among the well-known gardens he improved were Stowe, Chatsworth, Claremont, Kew, and Blenheim (where he received £21,500 for ten years' work.²⁰) In 1764 Brown was appointed master gardener at Hampton Court. Brown earned his nickname from his habit of saying of each estate he was invited to improve that it "had capabilities." He developed these capabilities by destroying the formal gardens and geometric plantings of his predecessors and replacing them with more natural elements. Brown's gardens featured rolling lawns, limpid lakes, clumps and belts of trees, and meandering roads and paths. They were notable for their *lack* of such traditional garden elements as terraces, temples, statues, fountains, and, above all, flowers. Brown generally brought the lawn right up to the edge of the house and dammed any available streams to make a large, central lake. At Blenheim Palace, considered by many his most successful commission, he altered the topography, eliminated the gardens, and flooded Vanbrugh's thirty-room bridge.

Price denounced Brown's formulaic gardens as monotonous and bald and compared him to a quack dispensing a single nostrum for all complaints (199 n.). Throughout the *Essay* Price disparaged Brown's inventiveness. Sometimes he attributed his assessments to anonymous others, for example, a "friend" who declared "he was quite certain there was not a housemaid in Blenheim to whom [Brown's great water] would not immediately have occurred" (259 n.). Elsewhere, Price speaks sarcastically of "the famous Mr. Brown, who has so fixed and determined the forms and lines of clumps, belts, and serpentine canals, and has been so steadily imitated by his followers, that had the improvers been incorporated, their common seal, with a clump, a belt, and a piece of made water, would have fully expressed the whole of their science, and have served for a model as well" (187). Another time Price compares Brown to a slug or snail trailing slime: "Former improvers at least kept near the house, but this fellow crawls like a snail all over the grounds, and leaves his cursed slime behind him wherever he goes" (268 n.).

Perhaps Price's cleverest attack against Brown occurs early in the *Essay* when Price imagines a painting by Claude Lorraine improved in the style of Brown---the terrain smoothed, the undergrowth cleared, the buildings whitened (12 ff.). Price says that a "Brownian painter" would most immediately note the lack of "that leading feature of all modern improvements," the clump, and would paint some in in the most conspicuous places. Next, noticing the connection and continuity---trees, bushes, and thickets linked together, growing alongside one another---the painter would declare "All this rubbish must be cleared away." He would then alter the painting to make the ground smooth and level and each group of plants separate and distinct. The trees shading the picture's ruins, temples, and palaces would be "expunged" (13) so that no architectural detail remained hidden. Finally, the Brownian painter would clear and level the banks alongside the water, paint out any plants, tussocks, stones, and stumps, and "clean and polish" the foreground, thus completing the ruination of a masterpiece of landscape art. Price closes with a thoroughly rhetorical query: "Is it then possible to imagine that the beauties of

imitation should be so distinct from those of reality, nay, so completely at variance, that what disgraces and makes a picture ridiculous, should become ornamental when applied to nature?" (16) The answer, obviously, is no. This whole thought experiment was designed to convince his readers that Brownian principles of design generate appalling landscape paintings, as well as appalling landscape gardens.

Price believed that proper gardening ought to borrow its principles from the art of painting. He argued that the leading principles of that art—those concerning "general composition, grouping the separate parts, harmony of tints, unity of character, [and] breadth and effect of light and shade" (8--9)—were equally applicable to the art of gardening. And he suggested that improvers treat painting as "a set of experiments of the different ways in which trees, buildings, water, etc., may be disposed, grouped, and accompanied in the most beautiful and striking manner" (5).

If Price's *Essay* merely exhorted gardeners to compose gardens the way painters compose paintings, it would not be very valuable. For although gardens delight all our senses, their primary appeal is visual, and gardeners are necessarily aware of such "painterly" concerns as color, texture, balance, form, perspective, and light and shade. There is more to Price's theory, however. He isolated a set of qualities which allowed him to mark what was missing in the gardens of Capability Brown and to establish criteria for successful improvements. These qualities comprise the picturesque.

Price's account of the picturesque was inspired by and modeled after Edmund Burke's work, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). In the *Inquiry*, Burke argued that the sublime and the beautiful were distinct aesthetic categories, associated with distinct qualities and giving rise to distinct passions. Burke initially sorted all passions under the two headings "self-preservation" and "society." The passions concerned with self-preservation were those connected with pain and danger. Since terror and astonishment would typically be aroused in dangerous or threatening situations, these were the passions generated by the sublime.

Burke defined the sublime as follows: "Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling."²¹ Obscurity, power, privation, vastness, infinity, difficulty; magnificence, loudness, and more were among the qualities associated with the sublime.²²

Burke subdivided the social passions into two further categories, (1) those concerned with sexual attraction and generation, and (2) those concerned with what he called "society in general." Category (2) involves social pleasures—for example, "good company, lively conversations, and the endearments of friendship" (43)—generated by such passions as sympathy, imitation, and ambition (44). Aesthetic beauty pertains to this second group of social passions.²³ In discussing the art of tragedy, Burke takes up some questions about imitation first posed by Aristotle in the *Poetics*. Burke notes, "It is a common observation, that objects which in the reality would shock, are in tragical, and such like representations, the source of a very high species of pleasure" (44). But rather than attribute this pleasure entirely to our delight in imitation, Burke also suggests that we actually enjoy others' misfortunes: "I am convinced we have a degree of delight, and that no small one, in the real misfortunes and pains of others" (45). He explains this not as a sign of our degeneracy or evil, but as a divine mechanism intended to heighten our sympathy with others: "and as our Creator has designed we should be united by the

bond of sympathy, he has strengthened that bond by a proportionable delight; and there most where our sympathy is most wanted, in the distress of others" (46).

Given the importance Burke attributes to the social passions that link us to others, it is not surprising that he defines beauty in terms of the pleasures they promote: "By beauty I mean, that quality or those qualities in bodies by which they cause love, or some passion similar to it" (91). Burke is careful to distinguish love---the passion that effects our connection with "society in general"---from lust---the passion concerned with sex and generation, although he often uses the same word for both.²⁴ The beautiful, then, is linked to love just as the sublime is linked to terror. And, just as the sublime is associated with such qualities as obscurity, power, privation, and vastness, so too the beautiful is associated with such qualities as smallness, smoothness, gradual variation, delicacy, and clear but mild coloration. Burke summarizes his discussion of beauty at the end of part 3 in these words: "On the whole, the qualities of beauty, as they are merely sensible qualities, are the following. First, to be comparatively small. Secondly, to be smooth. Thirdly, to have a variety in the direction of the parts; but fourthly, to have those parts not angular, but melted as it were into each other. Fifthly, to be of a delicate frame, without any remarkable appearance of strength. Sixthly, to have its colours clear and bright; but not very strong and glaring. Seventhly, or if it should have any glaring colour, to have it diversified with others" (117).

Applying Burke's definitions, a storm at sea, a gloomy forest, a lion, tiger, or rhinoceros, are all sublime (60), while a swan, a rose, and a garden by Brown are all beautiful (94-95). Price admired Burke's system, but thought it incomplete.²⁵ Many pleasing objects fit into neither of Burke's categories.²⁶ For example, a landscape painting by Gaspar Dughet lacked both the serenity of a Claude and the terror of a Rosa, yet Dughet's work was greatly admired in the eighteenth century. To explain such anomalies, Price proposed the picturesque---an intermediate category situated between the beautiful and the sublime and structured like them.

Price named intricacy and variety as hallmarks of the picturesque. He believed that they were great sources of human pleasure (17), and that they aroused in us the passion of curiosity. In fact, Price defined intricacy in terms of this passion, calling it "that disposition of objects which, by a partial and uncertain concealment, excites and nourishes curiosity" (18). Borrowing from Hogarth, Price declared that the beauty of intricacy was "that it leads the eye a kind of wanton chace" (198). He concluded that "intricacy in the disposition, and variety in the forms, the tints, and the lights and shadows of objects, are the great characteristics of picturesque scenery" (18).

In a later chapter, Price offered a more systematic definition of the picturesque in terms of three somewhat different characteristics: roughness, sudden variation, and irregularity. He called these "the most efficient causes of the picturesque" (45). Whether we attend to the first pair of qualities cited by Price---intricacy and variety---or to the trio mentioned later---roughness, sudden variation, and irregularity---it is clear that Price's theory makes the picturesque an objective property. *Any* object can count as picturesque if it exhibits roughness, sudden variation, and irregularity, or intricacy and variety. Furthermore, Price maintained that the picturesque extended to all our sensations, not merely sight, and that it prevailed throughout nature (40--41). By way of illustration, he discussed the picturesqueness of such diverse objects as water, trees, buildings, ruins, dogs, sheep, horses, birds of prey, women, music, and painting (chap. 3).

To support his theory, Price constructed various examples in which beautiful objects were contrasted with picturesque ones. He compared a Grecian temple to a Gothic palace, a

calm, clear lake to a rapid, raging stream, a smooth young beech to a rugged old oak, a horse to an ass, a sheep to a goat, Belisarius or Marius to beggars and gypsies, and so on. In each case the first item was beautiful, the second picturesque. Such comparisons point to one clear doctrinal difference between Price's account of the picturesque and that of William Gilpin. While Gilpin addressed all his tourist guides to travelers in pursuit of picturesque beauty, Price defined the picturesque in contradistinction to the beautiful. Thus on his view, the composite concept "picturesque beauty" could not arise. This is underscored by the title of his work, *A Dialogue on the Distinct Characters of the Picturesque and the Beautiful* (1801).²⁷

Price devoted part 2 of his *Essay* to applications of his theory to the art of improving. He criticized at length the style of Capability Brown. Special venom was reserved for two of Brown's signature items, the clump and the belt. For example, Price declared that "the great distinguishing feature of modern improvement is the *clump*; whose name, if the first letter was taken away, would most accurately describe its form and effect" (190). And again, "the belt lies more in ambush, and the wretch who falls into it, and is obliged to walk the whole round in company with the improver, will allow that a snake with its tail in its mouth is, comparatively, but a faint emblem of eternity" (192--93). More important, Price criticized Brown's gardens in terms of the picturesque principles just deduced. He objected to Brown's clumps because they contained trees of the same age and growth, planted in regular circular patterns. Unlike natural groups, which mixed timber trees with thorns and hollies and were full of openings and hollows, Brown's clumps were "as like one another as so many puddings turned out of one common mould" (191). Price insisted that smoothness and verdure could not make amends for want of variety (243), but instead became insipid and monotonous. In his chapter on water, he argued that water's most striking property was its ability to produce mirrorlike reflections. Yet the smooth banks of Brown's artificial lakes lacked just those objects---trees, bushes, roots, tufts, tussocks, stones, lichens, mosses, and more---which would make their reflections varied and interesting.

Price concluded with the wish that gentlemen with a taste for drawing and painting, knowledge of their principles, would do their own improving instead of hiring a professional to "torture their estates" (276). Such gentlemen should take art and nature as their models.²⁸ Price hoped that this would yield "a great variety of styles of improvement and all of them with peculiar excellencies" (276). Though Price's remarks seem to advocate any and every style of gardening, his discussion throughout the *Essay* stresses the beauty of picturesque scenes---those characterized by intricacy, variety, and sudden variation. And, Price claimed that the most successful improvers were those who "*leave . . . or create the greatest variety of pictures*" (286).

Price's conclusion shows his theory to be far from seamless. On the one hand, his attack on Brown is an attack on a particular style of gardening. Price doesn't advocate replacing it with some *other* dominant style, for he believes it is impossible to find one formula that suits all places (199). Price's advice that amateur improvers seek models in works of art thus defends an extremely weak sense of the picturesque, a sense in which all gardening is picturesque. The fact that gardens, like paintings, require attention to color, texture, balance, and so on, was not a discovery that was new to the eighteenth century. Garden designers and spectators alike had long been aware of these parallels.²⁹

On the other hand, the distinctive part of Price's theory introduces a second and stricter sense of the picturesque, one defined in terms of roughness, sudden variation, and irregularity. Note that this second sense has nothing to do with painting. All sorts of objects can

have the three essential traits, and many paintings lack them. I would guess that Price settled on these three qualities by asking what was missing in the gardens improved by Brown, and not by giving any thought to painting per se. Thus even though some gardens may be picturesque in Price's second sense, this establishes no particular affinity between gardening and painting.

5. RICHARD PAYNE KNIGHT

I have argued that Price's *Essay* suggests two accounts of the picturesque and that neither one is satisfactory. The fact that painters and gardeners share compositional concerns and techniques does not explain the sudden vogue for the picturesque. And Price's fascination with irregular and intricate objects and scenes does not link the picturesque to the art of painting. I want to turn now to the opposing theory of Richard Payne Knight to see whether it provides a more helpful understanding of eighteenth-century taste. Knight shared Price's disdain for the work of Capability Brown, yet his *Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste* offers a definition of the picturesque quite unlike that of Price's *Essay*. It was written from very different motives and reflects very different influences.

Even a brief examination will show that the *Inquiry* and the *Essay* differ in scope. Knight's work is much more ambitious than Price's. Knight was not addressing the relatively narrow issue of garden improvements; he was attempting to construct a full-fledged theory of taste, in the tradition of Gerard, Allison, Shaftesbury, and (ultimately) Kant. Accordingly, he organized the *Inquiry* by mental faculties, beginning with chapters on each of the five senses, followed by others on the association of ideas, imagination, judgment, and the passions. In addition, Knight's work is much more erudite than Price's. While Price's debt to Burke is clear, Knight's treatise is scattered with references to such figures as Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Reid, Newton, and more. Overall, Knight set out to answer the question "Is there a standard of taste?" And his attempt incorporated many of the intellectual currents of his time, among them associationism, subjectivism, and theories of the operations of the mind.

Knight discussed the picturesque in his long central chapter on the imagination. He differed most strikingly from Price in denying the picturesque a distinct objective character.³⁰ Declaring that Price's "great, fundamental error" was "seeking for distinctions in external objects which only exist in the modes and habits of viewing and considering them" (196), Knight located the picturesque not in the external world but in the observer's mind. That is to say, for Knight the picturesque was a mode of association.

Knight ascribed all intellectual pleasures to the association of ideas. He enunciated the basic principle of association as follows: "To a mind richly stored, almost every object of nature or art that presents itself to the senses, either excites fresh trains and combinations of ideas, or vivifies and strengthens those which existed before" (143). He offered various examples to illustrate this thesis. A peasant and a scientist, he claimed, would respond to the natural world quite differently. "Every insect, plant, or fossil, which the peasant treads upon unheeded, is, to the naturalist and philosopher, a subject of curious inquiry and speculation" (143). An uninformed observer would see the heavens as a blue vault with twinkling fires, while a learned viewer would be aware of "unnumbered worlds, distributed through the boundless vacuity of unmeasurable space; and peopled, perhaps, with different orders of intelligent beings" (144). And finally, mention of London or Paris would raise very different ideas in the minds of those

who had only heard of these cities, those who had visited them briefly, and those who had resided a long time in either capital (145).

While taste, for Knight, was based on feeling and sentiment rather than belief and opinion (3), a similar relativity applied with regard to judgments of taste.³¹ That is, people differently versed in the arts could be expected to appreciate painting, music, and poetry in different degrees. This was because "much of the pleasure, which we receive from painting, sculpture, music, poetry, etc. arises from our associating other ideas with those immediately excited by them. Hence the productions of these arts are never thoroughly enjoyed but by persons, whose minds are enriched by a variety of kindred and corresponding imagery" (145).³²

Knight defined picturesque objects and circumstances as those so connected to other objects in nature and circumstances in society as to "be enabled to excite similar or associated trains of ideas, in minds so enriched, and consequently to afford them similar pleasures" (146). He also claimed that such objects and circumstances would only afford pleasure to perceivers conversant with the art of painting (146). The following long passage spells out the mechanism by which association constitutes the picturesque:

This very relation to painting expressed by the word *picturesque*, is that which affords the whole pleasure derived from association; which can, therefore, only be felt by persons who have correspondent ideas to associate; that is, by persons in a certain degree conversant in that art. Such persons being in the habit of viewing, and receiving pleasure from fine pictures, will naturally feel pleasure in viewing those objects in nature, which have called forth those powers of imitation and embellishment The objects recall to the mind the imitations, which skill, taste, and genius have provided; and these again recall to the mind the objects themselves (154--55).

There is a certain reciprocity at work here. A connoisseur, viewing a picturesque scene, is reminded of various paintings it resembles, but later, viewing a painting, his thoughts turn back to the scene. Each enlivens the other and each acquires new meaning imported by intellect and imagination and not provided by sense alone.

Clearly, the picturesque as Knight conceived it is a subjective matter. It is shaped in each instance by the interests, experience, and reflectivity of the perceiver. To emphasize this point, Knight noted that we call opposite kinds of things picturesque. He listed among examples human figures---the boors of Ostade, the peasants of Gainsborough, the warriors of Rosa, the apostles of Raphael, and the bacchanalians of Poussin. Trees---the giant oaks of Ruysdael, the full grown pine or ilex of Claude, and the stumpy decayed pollard of Rubens and Rembrandt. And horses---the shaggy worn-out cart horse of Morland or Asselyn and the pampered war horse of Wovermans.³³ Knight concluded that we can't hope to enumerate or analyse all things that are picturesque. "To attempt to analyze, class, or enumerate the objects in nature, which are, in this proper sense of the word, *picturesque* would be vain and impractical; as they comprehend, in some degree, every thing of every kind, which has been, or may be represented to advantage in painting" (154). Thus his approach and Price's are diametrically opposed.

One might object that Knight's theory makes the picturesque ubiquitous. *Anything* can be picturesque, so long as it reminds *someone* of a picture. My Airedale might remind someone of a painting by Stubbs, but so too might my bright red Swingaway can opener. Knight offered no provisions for ruling out such "aberrant" associations.³⁴ He insisted that association

constitutes a mechanical operation of the mind, one we can't influence or control (136), and later he claimed "though we may analyze the principles of mental, as well as of corporeal pleasures, we can never discover the full extent of their operation" (232--33).

Some mitigating factors might undercut this objection. An individual's associations are limited not only by his memory and experience, but also by his culture. Within a particular society, popular trends and tastes give us a shared basis for association. For example, eighteenth-century Englishmen of Price's and Knight's class who had shared the experience of the grand tour, read many of the same books, and purchased many of the same prints would tend to think of similar paintings in similar circumstances. For such men, the works of Claude, Rosa, and Dughet became a sort of shorthand representing the three categories of the beautiful, the sublime, and the picturesque.³⁵ These considerations do not, however, defeat the objection to Knight's view raised above. For although such commonalities might well in fact constrain the picturesque, it remains promiscuous in *principle*.³⁶

We know that Price and Knight agreed in practical matters of garden improvements. How did their judgments compare with regard to the picturesque? Price described many rough and irregular natural scenes in the course of the *Essay* as he tried to persuade improvers of the attractiveness of rugged lanes, broken banks, gnarled roots, and overhanging trees. Would Knight have deemed such scenes picturesque? His theory of association counters Price's view, since perceivers acquainted *only* with beautiful and sublime paintings would not judge the scenes picturesque. That is, Downton, Foxley, and other rugged and varied landscapes would not remind these viewers of any landscape paintings of their acquaintance. Yet Knight also in places defines picturesque objects in terms reminiscent of Price's definition. For example, while discussing Flemish and Dutch painters, Knight says that "those objects and combinations of objects, which exhibit blended and broken tints, or irregular masses of light and shadow harmoniously melted into each other ... are the objects and combinations of objects, which we properly call *picturesque*" (150).

Conflicting strands emerge here in Knight's theory, much as they did in Price's. One strand suggests that Knight could mount a physiologically based argument to show that picturesque scenes would be universally admired. Let me briefly sketch that argument. Throughout the *Inquiry*, Knight distinguished purely sensory pleasures from those involving intellect and imagination. At the level of sensation, he argued, we are initially drawn to simple qualities but come to find them insipid and to prefer mixtures and diversities (46). "Colors, as well as sounds and flavors, are more pleasing when harmoniously mixed and graduated, than when distinct and uniform" (62). Again, "harmonious combinations of tones and flavors are more grateful than single ones," the eye prefers "tints happily broken and blended, etc." (151). Since such varied combinations are just those which mark Price's picturesque, Knight's remarks seem to provide physiological grounds for supporting Price's view. Transferred to the macrolevel, they encourage us to reject the smooth, monotonous gardens of Capability Brown.

In the end, this argument fails to effect a rapprochement between Price and Knight because Knight believed that taste was determined not by sensory factors but by intellectual ones. Knight maintained that the beauties of light, shade, and color were the only ones which affect the eye. He also held that painting imitates only the visible qualities of bodies. As a result, painting allows us to appreciate visually pleasing but otherwise offensive objects---decayed trees, rotten thatch, tattered worn-out dirty garments, and fish markets (70). Yet it doesn't follow that we prefer such objects overall. As Knight aptly noted, if this were the case we would admire not only such variegated objects as zebras, multicolored tulips, and jasper or porphyry columns,

we would also prefer pimpled faces to smooth ones (88). We do not prefer pimpled faces, and the reason is that "all the pleasures of the intellect arise from the association of ideas" (143).

Knight made clever use of satire to establish his point that taste is independent of any physiologically based preference for variety. Noting that "irregularity of appearance is generally thought essential to picturesque beauty" (199), Knight remarked that "no painter has ever thought of making a man or animal more picturesque by exhibiting them with one leg shorter than the other, or one eye smaller than the other" (199). An even more telling passage addressed an example from Price's work *A Dialogue on the Distinct Characters of the Picturesque and the Beautiful* (1801). One of the three participants in that dialogue commented on the picturesque appeal of a rambling and irregular parsonage, and another went on to reply, "I think there is a sort of resemblance between the good old parson's daughter and his house. She is upright indeed, and so are the walls, but her features have a little of the same irregularity, and her eyes are somewhat inclined to look across each other like the roofs of the old parsonage. Yet a clear white skin, clean white teeth, though not very even, and a look of neatness and cheerfulness, in spite of these irregularities, made me look at her with pleasure."³⁷ Knight venomously observed that to be consistent, Price should have extended the asymmetry beyond the girl's face. "The same happy mixture of the irregular and the picturesque must have prevailed throughout her limbs; and consequently, she must have hobbled as well as squinted; and had hips and shoulders as irregular as her teeth, cheeks, and eyebrows" (201--2).

Knight's theory, then, carefully distinguished sensory pleasure from the picturesque.³⁸ The physiology of our senses guarantees that certain sorts of blended and variegated sights, sounds, smells, and tastes will please. In fact, in his closing chapter on novelty, Knight proclaimed that "change and variety are... necessary to the enjoyment of all pleasure; whether sensual or intellectual" (426).³⁹ Yet, the picturesque transcends this sensory base in two respects: first, variety and irregularity don't guarantee a picturesque object or scene; and second, objects and scenes that *are* picturesque are not recognized as such by all perceivers, but only by those with the requisite knowledge of painting. Thus Knight resisted the objective pull of Price's theory.

While Knight's comments about the parson's daughter constitute an effective reductio of Price's position, in the end the two quarreling theorists were not that far apart. Both ended up endorsing freedom and variety in taste *and* in gardening. Price's exhortation that gentlemen improve their own estates and discover a variety of uniquely excellent styles was echoed by Knight's closing diatribe against rules of taste. Knight argued that critics, like casuists in morals, have "attempted to direct by rules, and limit by definitions, matters which depend entirely on feeling and sentiment: and which are therefore so various and extensive; and diversified by such nice and infinitely graduated shades of difference, that they elude all the subtleties of logic, or intricacies of calculation" (233). Knight insisted again and again that general rules cannot reach every possible case.⁴⁰ This I take it is Knight's answer to the opening question of his *Inquiry*. There is no standard of taste, nor should there be because all such standards are inevitably misleading.

6. TRANSFER OF TECHNIQUE

While neither Price nor Knight favored squinting women with pimpled faces, both undoubtedly preferred Rievaulx Abbey in ruins just as they preferred lanes rutted and woods overgrown.

Their attempts to justify these preferences and support them in theory comprise an interesting and important episode in the history of taste. I have tried to show that their efforts to identify the category *picturesque* pulled in different directions. While they may have agreed in their assessments of landscape gardeners and landscape paintings, they did not agree regarding what was picturesque and why. Moreover, Price's and Knight's theories of the picturesque, once their details are set out, have no essential connection to the art of painting. Price defined the picturesque in terms of objective qualities---roughness, irregularity, intricacy, sudden variation, and the like---which aren't possessed by each and every painting, and which characterize many objects that are not paintings. Knight defined the picturesque in terms of subjective qualities---individuals' associations---but these may be mistaken or idiosyncratic and thus fail to pick out any paintings at all.

There remains one interesting eighteenth-century debate which grew out of the pre-occupation with the picturesque; this debate has consequences for garden history and for the proposal that gardening and painting are sister arts. I have in mind a dispute between Sir Uvedale Price and the garden designer Humphry Repton concerning the claim that gardening and painting share principles and technique. This claim represents the weakest possible interpretation of the view that painting and gardening are sister arts. The debate between Price and Repton became quite convoluted. In this final section I will try to outline and critique its main twists and turns. We have already met Sir Uvedale Price. Humphry Repton, born in Bury St. Edmunds in 1752, came to the profession of landscape gardening late in life. After trying various ways to earn his living---textile manufacturer, merchant, civil servant, essayist, art critic---he suddenly decided, some five years after the death of Capability Brown, to set himself up as a landscape gardener. Repton was skilled at drawing and sketching, and his circle of acquaintance from his earlier years included experts in botany and horticulture.⁴¹ Dorothy Stroud writes that within two years Repton "had firmly established himself as the leading landscape designer of his day."⁴²

A hallmark of Repton's practice were his Red Books, leather-bound volumes in which he outlined his suggestions for potential clients. The Red Books described the improvements Repton had in mind and illustrated them through an ingenious system of flaps and slides that allowed comparison of each scene before and after its proposed alteration.

Some garden historians go so far as to identify a picturesque style of gardening, with Repton as its main proponent. In many respects, Repton carried on the design traditions of his predecessor Brown, whose gardens helped spark the picturesque movement by generating such antipathy in Price and Knight. Fleming and Gore report that after his father's death (in 1783), "The son of Capability Brown gave Repton access to his father's papers, tacitly admitting him as his successor; and, to an extent, Repton did consider himself in this role."⁴³ There were, however, stylistic differences between Brown's and Repton's creations. Comparing the two designers, Dorothy Stroud notes that Repton's "plantations tended to be thicker, while the small buildings in the grounds frequently assumed a rustic rather than a classical character."⁴⁴ Repton also objected to placing a belt of trees all around an estate; he planted groups of trees atop hills in a manner quite different from Brown's clumps;⁴⁵ also, he advocated a formal treatment, including flowers, terraces, and fountains, in the area directly around the house.⁴⁶ Though initially enthusiastic about the design principles defended by Price and Knight, Repton soon had second thoughts and distanced himself from their views. In the end, both his gardens and his gardening principles seem too eclectic and too conciliatory to merit the label "picturesque."⁴⁷ Nevertheless, his debate with Price regarding the applicability of principles of painting to the art

of gardening illuminates one last, attenuated sense of that term---one highlighting similarity not of form, nor of association, but of technique.

Repton and Price began discussing gardens, painting, and the picturesque because Repton felt that both he himself, as well as Brown, with whose work he was identified, had been unfairly attacked in Price's *Essay*. Price sent him an early copy of that work, and Repton was so distressed that he wrote "A Letter to Sir Uvedale Price, Esq.," of which he says that

this letter, which has been written at various opportunities during my journey into Derbyshire, has insensibly grown to a bulk which I little expected when I began it: I shall therefore cause a few copies to be printed, to serve as a general defense of an art which, I trust, will not be totally suppressed, although you so earnestly recommend every gentleman to become his own landscape gardener.⁴⁸

Repton also included the letter as a footnote to the Appendix of his volume *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening* (1794). Price in turn responded with a book-length "Letter to H. Repton, Esq., on the Application of the Practice As Well As the Principles of Landscape-Painting to Landscape-Gardening" (subtitled "Intended as a Supplement to the Essay on the Picturesque").⁴⁹ The subject of the exchange between the two authors was the extent to which the principles of painting could be applied to the art of gardening. In his *Essay*, Price defined the "great leading principles" of painting as general composition, grouping the separate parts, harmony of tints, and unity of character (64). He went on to add "breadth and effect of light and shade" to the list, noting that it is essential to painting but "at first sight hardly seems within the province of the improver" (64). A good deal farther on in the *Essay*, Price adds one last item to his list---connection---declaring that the "defect, the greatest of all [of the present system of improving] and the most opposite to the principles of painting, is want of connection---a passion for making everything distinct and separate" (179).⁵⁰

These are the principles on which Price believes landscape gardening should be based. I shall discuss the principles themselves---and the underlying assumption that each art has a set of leading principles---in more detail below. In exhorting gentlemen to be their own improvers, Price is urging them to study the masterpieces of landscape painting, extract these principles, and apply them in designing their estates. Thus he states in the *Essay* that:

If a taste for drawing and painting and a knowledge of their principles made a part of every gentleman's education; if, instead of hiring a professed improver, to torture his grounds after an established model, each improved his own place according to general conceptions drawn from nature and pictures, or from hints which favorite masters in painting, or favorite parts of nature suggested to him, there might in time be a great variety in the styles of improvement, and all of them with peculiar excellences (230).

Price returns to this same theme in the *Letter*: "It is true that I have very earnestly and generally recommended it to gentlemen who have places, that they should qualify themselves for becoming their own landscape gardeners, by one of the most pleasing and liberal of all studies; that of the principles of painting, the works of painters and of nature" (119--20). Elsewhere Price

notes that men of liberal education who pass time at their country seats are continually among landscapes (120--21), and he predicts that "with the least attention to pictures and to composition, the principles of landscape gardening would insensibly press themselves upon their minds" (*Letter*, 121).

Price does qualify his advice to this extent: he doesn't recommend that improvers study art exclusively; they must also study nature. Thus he remarks that "nothing can be farther from my intention... than to recommend the study of pictures in preference to that of nature, much less to the exclusion of it. Whoever studies art alone, will have a narrow pedantic manner of considering all objects" (*Essay*, 3).

Repton initially agreed with Price's views. Some time before publication of Price's *Essay* and Repton's *Sketches and Hints*, the two had taken a tour together down the Wye River valley.⁵¹ Both allude to the journey in their letters. Price recalls advising Repton, as they admired the striking scenery, to study "what the higher artists have done, both in their pictures and their drawings" (43). He also notes that Repton seemed *not* sufficiently acquainted with the work of the great masters, since he did not make the sorts of references to paintings that might have been expected:

I will frankly own, that from all the conversations which have passed between us, I had (perhaps rashly) conceived that you were not very conversant in them: I cannot recollect, amidst all the romantic scenes we viewed together, your having made any of those allusions to the works of various masters which might naturally have occurred to a person who had studied, or even observed them with common attention (43).

Repton himself remarks that "During the pleasant hours we passed together amidst the romantic scenery of the Wye, I do remember my acknowledging that an enthusiasm for the picturesque had originally led me to fancy greater affinity between *Painting* and *Gardening* than I found to exist after more mature consideration and greater experience" (70 n.). He places a similar disclaimer in a later edition of *Sketches and Hints*: "The want of duly considering the affinity between painting and gardening is the source of those errors and false principles which I find too frequently prevailing in the admirers or connoisseurs in painting: and I do not hesitate to acknowledge that I once supposed the two arts to be more intimately connected than my practice and experience have since confirmed" (57).⁵² The contemporary garden historian Edward Hyams admiringly quotes his predecessor, Marie-Louise Gothein, who in her work *Geschichte der Gartenkunst* (1928) declared Repton "the first man to free himself from the exaggerated idea of a similarity between painting and landscape gardening" (131).

In *Sketches and Hints* Repton identifies four principles of landscape gardening. These include such recommendations as "display the natural beauties of every situation" and "disguise the boundary to give an appearance of extent."⁵³ Interestingly, there is no overlap between these and the principles of painting cited by Price. This may be because Repton's principles are taxonomic rather than practical. They do not tell us how to design gardens--- where to dig, what to plant, what architectural features to incorporate. Rather, Repton offers his principles in order to distinguish the modern style of landscape gardening from what he calls the ancient style. (These differ above all in their degree of what we would deem naturalness.) Overall, Repton offers three arguments in the course of his writings for rejecting the theoretical relationship Price proposes between painting and gardening. The first argument concerns

differences between painted scenes and natural ones; the second concerns a conflict between aesthetic or picturesque values, on the one hand, and comfort and convenience, on the other; the third concerns claims of expertise. These arguments are convoluted, and they tend to blend into one another. Let me outline the first two.⁵⁴

Here is Repton's first argument. In chapter 8 of *Sketches and Hints*, he lists five differences between scenes in nature and pictures on canvas, all of them owing to technical facts about optics, vision, and linear perspective. They are:

- (1) The painter paints each view from a fixed spot, while the gardener "surveys his scenery while in motion" (53).⁵⁵
- (2) A garden or a scene in nature encompasses a "quantity of view, or field of vision... much greater than any picture will admit" (53).
- (3) The prospect or view down a steep hill is one of the most pleasing of all scenes, but one that cannot be painted.
- (4) The painter's light can come from any point of the compass but "can only be made strong by contrast of shade" (54).
- (5) Foregrounds are treated differently in gardening and in painting: "the neat gravel walk or close-mown lawn would ill supply the place, in painting, of a rotten tree, a bunch of docks, or a broken road, passing under a steep bank, covered with briars, nettles, and ragged thorns" (54).⁵⁶

In addition to these five conditions, which guarantee that our experience of gardens will be quite unlike our experience of painted landscape scenes, Repton notes some further differences in the knowledge required of painters, on the one hand, and garden designers, on the other. He claims that gardeners' practical knowledge in "planting, digging, and moving earth" will rein in the painter's luxuriant imagination. He also points out that the garden designer must have "competent knowledge of surveying, mechanics, hydraulics, agriculture, botany, and the general principles of architecture" (iv). Having established that the experience of a garden is unlike the experience of a painting, and that an artist who can paint a marvelous landscape scene may not have the knowledge needed to design a landscape garden, Repton sarcastically proposes that "If... the painter's landscape be indispensable to the perfection of gardening, it would surely be far better to paint it on canvas at the end of an avenue, as they do in Holland, than to sacrifice the health, cheerfulness, and comfort of a country residence to the wild but pleasing scenery of a painter's imagination" (70 n.).

Repton's remarks about sacrificing health, cheer, and comfort to wild scenery may seem both hysterical and beside the point, but his debate with Price eventually becomes focused on comfort and convenience, two "emotional" consequences of landscape. Here is how their debate becomes reoriented. Technically, Repton's claims are correct. (We have seen earlier that no painting can provide the exact same experience as viewing, in the normal way, the scene it represents.) But the fact that painted and natural landscapes yield different experiences does not establish that the principles of painting have no application to landscape gardening. That claim would be a non sequitur. So, Repton hasn't yet established his point.

For a time, the exchange between Repton and Price shifts to Repton's point 3, above, the one concerning scenes that can't be painted. Near the end of his "Letter to Price," Repton expands on this example, saying "I trust the good sense and good taste of this country will never be led to despise the comfort of a gravel walk, the delicious fragrance of a shrubbery, the soul

expanding delight of a wide extended prospect, or a view down a steep hill because they are all subjects incapable of being painted" (18--19). In his reply, Price devotes considerable space to discussing painted prospects. He concedes there is a technical sense in which a view from a high prospect cannot be painted. While "the *general* effect of looking down from a height on lower objects" (143) has been "perpetually expressed" in painting, no painting can capture "the *immediate and uninterrupted progress* of the descent" (143). But this, he argues, no more undermines the claims of painting to represent landscape than does the painter's inability to express the warbling of birds, the fragrance of flowers, or the motion of deer. Price closes the discussion with an apology: "Had I not so often heard this circumstance mentioned, and with great triumph, by the adversaries of painting, I should be ashamed of having said so much about an impossibility, that seems to have no more to do with the application of the principles of painting to objects of sight, or with the affinity between painting and gardening, than the impossibility of painting real sounds, real smells, or real motion" (144).

Initially, this looks like another flawed argument. I suppose the position Price sets out to topple is this: if there are certain scenes that can't be painted, then the principles of painting don't apply to all varieties of natural landscape and so can't serve as principles of landscape gardening. But Price soon changes his tune. The new claim is not that such scenes can't be painted, but that they don't make *good* paintings (140)! Unlike views from prospects, gravel walks, shrubberies, and close-mown lawns *can* be painted. But because they lack interesting texture and detail, they are not suitable for the foreground of a landscape painting. (In fact, Price includes prospects in this category as well. Noting that the view from a prospect generally comes from the highest and most open part of a hill, he claims that such a view necessarily lacks the sort of foreground and second distance required in a good landscape painting [130].)⁵⁷

One further change is rung on this theme as the debate continues. Good paintings, for both Repton and Price, exhibit three distances; the foreground is textured, not bare. But if we imagine a garden which realizes or reconstructs such a painting, our preferences suddenly change. Burdocks and rotting trees, briars, thorns, and nettles are the best occupants, aesthetically, of the foreground of a landscape painting. By contrast, trimmed shrubs, cropped lawns, and gravel walks are best suited to surround (constitute the "foreground" of) a house or its outbuildings. Similarly, what makes for a good foreground in a painting does not make for a good foreground in a garden.⁵⁸

Repton makes this point repeatedly. In chapter 7 of the 1794 edition of *Sketches and Hints* he derides Knight, saying "the enthusiasm for picturesque effect seems to have so completely bewildered the author of [*The Landscape*] that he not only mistakes the essential difference between the landscape painter and the landscape gardener; but appears even to forget that a dwelling-house is an object of comfort and convenience" (59). Comparing Downton and Foxley, the estates of Knight and Price, Repton notes that Price is more willing to sacrifice picturesque beauty to neatness near the house, but points out that "by this very concession [Price] acknowledges, that real *comfort*, and his ideas of *picturesqueness*, are incompatible."⁵⁹

For his own part, Repton states "I am not less an admirer of those scenes which painting represents; but I have discovered that *utility* must often take the lead of *beauty*, and *convenience* be preferred to picturesque effect, in the neighborhood of men's habitation" (60). In the "Letter to Price," Repton reiterates that "*in whatever relates to man, propriety and convenience are not less objects of good taste, than picturesque effect*" (70 n.). Declaring that both he and Brown were admirers of wild scenery, Repton claims that the lesson Brown took from his studies in Needwood forest, and that he himself took from his experiences in the forest of Hinault, was this:

"that the landscape ought to be adapted to the beings which are to inhabit it---to men, and not to beasts" (77). While the landscape painter may treat people as mere "staffage" to balance or fill his composition,⁶⁰ "The landscape gardener does more:---he undertakes to study their comforts and convenience" (77).

In a sense Repton and Price are arguing at cross-purposes. There are few particular claims on which they would disagree. Neither author would sacrifice safety or comfort to picturesque effect. Neither would mass rotting wood, beetling rocks, and clusters of thorns at the foundations of a house or the forefront of a garden. And both would admire landscape paintings in various styles---by Claude, Poussin, and Wilson as well as Rosa, Gainsborough, and Dughet.

Do the principles of painting in fact apply to landscape gardening? Repton concludes his letter with an extended and awkward trope. He claims that painting and gardening are not "sister arts, proceeding from the same stock, but rather congenial natures, brought together like man and wife; while, therefore, you exult in the office of mediator betwixt these two 'imaginary personages,' you should recollect the danger of interfering in their occasional differences, and especially how you advise them both to wear the same articles of dress" (74 n.). Whether we construe painting and gardening as sisters, or as husband and wife with a tendency to cross-dress, the claim that they share a set of principles turns out to be rather empty. Price tries to defend this claim by showing that Repton is caught in a pragmatic contradiction. That is, Price suggests that Repton's practice belies his principles. Since he sketches the proposed changes for each garden commission in a Red Book, he is *using* painting (and thereby its principles) to design each garden. But this too seems in error. We must distinguish here painting as a system of representation, and painting as a set of aesthetic principles. Repton's practice employs painting in the first sense, to portray gardens. Nothing follows about the use of the principles of painting to compose or design gardens.

In fact, there is a deeper question here---*are* there principles of painting in the second sense? Presumably, such principles would guide artists in the creation of excellent paintings. Would they guarantee such results? Rules regarding composition and technique can be followed in creating, say, a landscape painting. Here as in the other arts, no set of rules can guarantee success. In fact it was a common eighteenth-century belief, supported by both Pope and Hume, that genius shouldn't be constrained by rules.⁶¹ Setting aside the question of quality, what role might remain for rules or principles of landscape painting?

Repton defines landscape as "a view capable of being represented in painting," and goes on to add that it has two, three, or more well-marked distances.⁶² But this is too general to differentiate among landscapes. Compositional principles, if they can be formulated at all, would operate at one of two levels, that of particular genres, or that of what Wollheim called general and individual style. Thus John Barrell, in his book *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place*, isolates what he considers the structural principles which characterize landscapes by Claude. Claude's landscapes, he argues, share a fairly high viewpoint, tremendous depth, an area of light set just below the horizon which immediately attracts the eye, framing trees or buildings in the foreground, a series of planes alternating light and dark, the penultimate one in sunlight, and a road or bridge running diagonally and linking the planes.⁶³ Would following such compositional principles yield a Claudean painting? Surely one would also have to make stipulations about subject matter, color and tone, brushwork, and so on.

Similar comments apply if we pick other landscape styles or genres. Consider, for example, what Anne Bermingham in her book *Landscape and Ideology* calls the rustic landscape tradition, associated with the work of Gainsborough and Constable. Bermingham defines this

genre by saying that "Rustic landscapes differ from topographical studies in that their main intention is not to portray a famous spot, view, or monument but instead to evoke the countryside and rural life. The rustic landscape is not easily or satisfactorily assimilated into classical-romantic polarities."⁶⁴ The principles delimiting this genre would primarily address subject matter and its treatment rather than formal or technical matters.⁶⁵ Note that in each case (1) identifying a style or genre of painting, and (2) instructing painters in the creation of works of that type are correlative tasks guided by the same set of principles.

I have been suggesting that there are not principles of painting per se, but rather principles that delimit one or another genre or style of painting. Few of these would seem to be principles that would translate readily to garden design. As discussed in chapter 4, it is possible to create gardens that imitate, model, or allude to particular paintings or to particular genres or styles of painting. But each such garden would be singular, and the method of establishing this referential connection to a particular painting or group of paintings would most likely not be repeated. That is, it would not be a necessary or regular aspect of garden design.

If this is correct, then it follows that any principles shared by the arts of gardening and painting would be extremely general. They would be at the level of "Pay attention to color, balance, and texture; use perspective to create an illusion of depth; achieve unity of composition." Note that we are now at the level of principle cited by Price in his Essay. I suggest that such principles are without guiding force. That is, knowing that general composition, harmony of tints, breadth of light and shade, and connection are factors that we attend to in viewing paintings and that painters attend to in painting them, tells us nothing about what sort of composition and which varieties of tonal harmony, light and shade, and connection are desirable. Inevitably *all* paintings have some composition or other, some tonal relationships---harmonious or not, some degree of connection. But to grant this is to say nothing about whether the paintings in question are landscapes or portraits, linear or painterly, representational or abstract, excellent or appalling. Since features like those listed by Price have no normative force, I propose reconstruing them as *elements* of painting, reserving the term "principles" for rules or features that guide our actions in important ways.

I believe that an equivalent result holds for the art of gardening. That is, there are no principles of gardening, per se. There are principles or rules of thumb that guide the design of specific types of gardens---water gardens, terrace gardens, knot gardens, Zen gardens, shade gardens, desert gardens. And, at a more general level, there are elements of gardening that correspond to the elements of painting noted above. These claims can be supported by browsing through any contemporary books on garden design. For example, Alice Recknagel Ireys, in a volume entitled *Garden Design*, lists the following six principles of garden art: scale, proportion, unity, balance, rhythm, and focal point.⁶⁶ (I would once again denominate these elements rather than principles, since every garden possesses them to some degree---except perhaps for unity---and since merely having some scale or other, some proportion or other, and so on, doesn't guarantee quality.) A more ambitious text, also entitled *Garden Design*, by five authors aided by the Publication Board of the American Society of Landscape Architects, lists the following as elements of the garden: paving, turf and ground covers, steps, walls, and fences, gates and windows, structures, seats and benches, water, ornaments, light, and the plant palette.⁶⁷ These are not shared with painting in the way that Price's elements are; they are more garden ingredients than garden techniques. An earlier chapter of the same text breaks the garden down into experiential units---landmarks, landings, entries, corridors, vertical changes, water---and opportunities---places for exploration, gathering, dining, play, contemplation, and work.

In sum, these and other primers instructing readers in garden design do not make any explicit comparisons with painting. They do not mention particular principles or techniques of that art, nor do they invariably mention elements shared by painting and gardening. One final way to test Price's claim about the transfer of technique is to look at the actual practice of particular garden designers. Russell Page, for example, in his book *The Education of a Gardener*, first published in 1962, says "I know now that one cannot be taught to design gardens academically or theoretically. You have to learn the ways and nature of plants and stone, of water and soil at least as much through the hands as through the head."⁶⁸ (Compare this claim with the discussion of academies of gardening in chapter 2.) Yet at the same time, he says "Whether I am making a landscape or a garden or arranging a window box I first address the problem as an artist composing a picture; my pre-occupation is with the relationships between objects" (Preface). Later he notes "At the drawing-board, I work out my composition in terms of levels" (70). Yet do these procedural remarks indicate any deep relationship between the arts we are examining? Page lists the following as "timeless elements" of gardens: light and shade, earth, stone, and water, foliage and flowers (49). Thus the elements of gardens differ from the elements of paintings, and the transfer of technique that we have been exploring in this second chapter on gardening and painting turns out to be at a level so general as to have no effect on the actual process of garden design.⁶⁹ All one can conclude is that certain basic elements attended to by painters---color, texture, form, balance, composition, perspective, light and shade---also play a role in the creation of gardens.

7. CONCLUSION

Let us return now to the eighteenth-century concept of the picturesque, with which we opened this chapter. While this concept figured in and enhanced the appreciation of certain types of landscape, and also fueled the criticism of a particular style of landscape garden---that associated with Capability Brown---the picturesque did not figure centrally in garden design.⁷⁰ I believe that no particularly revealing connection between gardens and painting emerges from a study of the picturesque. Yet there has been considerable interest in this aesthetic category. Why did it flourish in the period we have been examining, and why did it decline?

In assessing the apparent popularity of the picturesque, we must realize that the concept has been greatly stretched. So far we have been examining the picturesque primarily as it applied to landscape aesthetics, and derivatively to garden design. Yet even in this regard, the label "picturesque" has been extended to such chronological extremes as to become almost meaningless; this is in addition to the strain imposed by internal tensions and inconsistencies like those in the theories of Price and Knight.

The chronological difficulties I have in mind are exemplified by a book by Morris Brownell taking Pope as a paradigm example of a picturesque gardener.⁷¹ For instance, Brownell writes that Pope's treatment of landscape reveals "a sensibility to picturesque landscape in natural scenery explicit enough to allow us to infer his adherence to something like an aesthetic of picturesque scenery."⁷² Of the interpretations of the picturesque we have canvassed so far, Brownell's approximates the last and weakest, the one I have labeled "transfer of technique." Given that Pope was gardening some seventy-five years before the publication of Price's *Essay*, and thirty-eight years before the publication of Burke's *Inquiry*, to which Price's work was indebted, it seems very unlikely that Pope was gardening in a style that fitted the late

eighteenth-century use of the term "picturesque."⁷³ Again, Edward Hyams, in his book *The English Garden*, labels all English gardens in the first half of the eighteenth century "picture-gardens."⁷⁴ The eighteenth-century travel literature discussed in chapter 2 above further blurred the boundaries of the picturesque, since rugged mountain scenes like those along the Welsh border---scenes reminiscent of the paintings of Salvator Rosa, and worthy, therefore, of the label "sublime"---were called picturesque, as were those in the lake country.

Hunt gives a simple account of the rise of the picturesque. He attributes it to loss of learning. Hunt claims that as patronage for the arts expanded in the eighteenth century, viewers were increasingly less equipped to puzzle out the meanings of complex emblematic works. Expressive and, ultimately, picturesque works were much more accessible to audiences no longer schooled in the classics.⁷⁵

Hunt's interpretation recalls passages quoted earlier in this chapter from Christopher Hussey and David Watkin. These authors identified the picturesque with the discovery and celebration of visual values. Yet celebration of the visual can cause other concerns and values to be downplayed or expunged. For some commentators, the picturesque as characterized by Price and Knight is morally problematic, since it singles out humble, rustic scenes (although the picturesque requires variety, a variety of jewels, baubles, and silks would not do) without any concern for their origins or limitations. Malcolm Andrews, in *The Search for the Picturesque*, suggests that "the Picturesque enterprise in its later stages, with its almost exclusive emphasis on visual appreciation, entailed a suppression of the spectator's moral response to those very subjects which it could least hope to divest of moral significance--the ruin, the hovel, and rural poverty" (59).⁷⁶

Andrews takes his analysis one step farther, proposing a link between the characteristically humble picturesque subjects and the viewpoint from which they were painted: "The social descent---palace to ruin to hovel---has an interesting analogy with the painter's changing viewpoint in the eighteenth century" (61). The picturesque viewpoint was a low one,⁷⁷ in direct contrast with the high prospects and panoramic vistas of earlier topographical paintings. For Andrews, this change is psychologically revealing. He concludes that the picturesque fixation testified to a crisis of sorts throughout England: "The repudiation of the high viewpoint in late-eighteenth century Picturesque theory suggests a failure of confidence" (63). That is, in repudiating the synoptic point of view characteristic of earlier prospect poems and topographical paintings, practitioners of the picturesque were also repudiating the certainties of the Augustan Age, expressing their doubts about man's ability to conquer and harness nature.

Other theorists offer similarly deep readings of the eighteenth-century psyche. For example, Anne Bermingham, drawing on the work of John Barrell, argues that the cult of the picturesque arose just when enclosure of the English countryside was accelerating. The natural world was romanticized precisely when it was in fact disappearing. Bermingham suggests that "In its celebration of the irregular, preenclosed landscape, the picturesque harkened back nostalgically to an old order of rural paternalism" (70). Later, she claims that the picturesque "mystified the agency of social change so that fate, and not the economic decisions of the landowning classes, seemed responsible. In this respect, the picturesque represented an attempt to wipe out the fact of enclosure and to minimize its consequences" (75). To some extent she concurs with Andrews, stating "A profound pessimism lay at the root of picturesque theory" (70).

With these last accounts of the picturesque we have come quite far from Price's and

Knight's criticisms of the bald, monotonous gardens of Capability Brown; far, too, from the Rev. Mr. Gilpin's enthusiasm for the actual sights and scenes of his native land. These later theories, linking the picturesque with enclosure and sweeping economic change, with insecurity and malaise, assume a close connection between landscape and well-being. In fact, the way we relate to landscape can both determine and reveal our mental and emotional states, as well, of course, as our social class, politics, and ideology. These connections raise questions that will be explored in subsequent chapters. How do we experience landscape, and in particular, gardens, given that they do not function precisely like their sister arts, painting and poetry? And, what is the fate of gardens today, given that many of the social and economic changes cataloged by Hunt, Andrews, and Bermingham have continued apace?