

Bibliotekarstudentens nettleksikon om litteratur og medier

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Pittoresk

(_estetikk) Engelsk: “picturesque”. En estetisk kvalitet som blir tilskrevet noen naturlandskap og noen kulturlandskap (f.eks. en park). Det som er pittoresk, har noe “malerisk” ved seg, noe som er variert på en behagelig måte.

Ordet “picturesque had been used to mean ‘as a painter would like’ or ‘worthy of painting’ ” (Mavis Batey i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1587022.pdf>; lesedato 12.10.22). “[N]är engelska neoklassiska kritiker använder honnörsordet “picturesque” för en text, är det ett sätt att prisa dess upphovsman för att han lyckats tillägna sig samma kvaliteter som en målare.” (Jonsson 1983 s. 103)

“The term picturesque originates from the Italian pittoresco, which translates as painterly or like a painting. The term encompasses the influence of artistic interests and the aesthetic ideals of fine art upon landscape gardening. [...] Picturesque painters included Nicholas Poussain (1594-1665), Claude Lorrain (c. 1600-1682) and Gaspar Dughet, known as Gaspard Poussin (1615-1675). Landscape gardeners were encouraged to think like artists, designing ornamental walks and viewpoints, rolling lawns and water features. The style pursued interesting textures, dramatic wild scenery, curious details and the full spectrum of dark to light to the delight of the viewer.” (<https://bishopsalace.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Definition-of-Picturesque.pdf>; lesedato 12.12.21)

“[T]he applications of the term are numerous: it can designate an experience, a method, a view or an object. As has often been said, it can be equally “in the beholder’s eye” and in the object itself. The fact that the term could be applied both to the subject and the object of perception is possibly one of the fundamental causes of the muddle. Moreover, the contexts in which it has been used are diverse (*belles lettres*, aesthetics, landscape painting, landscape gardening, art criticism, and tourism): “picturesque” pervaded most intellectual and artistic areas of the eighteenth-century.” (Laurent Châtel i https://www.persee.fr/doc/xvii_0291-3798_2000_num_51_1_1525; lesedato 08.03.25) Estetikken innen bildekunsten fikk lignende uttrykk innen det som har blitt kalt “landscape writing” (Laurent Châtel i https://www.persee.fr/doc/xvii_0291-3798_2000_num_51_1_1525; lesedato 08.03.25).

“At moments 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 may be said to have been fused into the single ‘art of landscape.’ The combination might be called ‘the Picturesque.’ ” (Christopher Hussey sitert fra https://www.persee.fr/doc/xvii_0291-3798_2000_num_51_1_1525; lesedato 08.03.25)

“The picturesque has been one of the most-discussed aesthetic concepts encompassing different disciplines covering landscape design, painting, and poetry since the eighteenth century. The wide usage of the term in different disciplines and approaches evolved in parallel with the debates on the feelings of the beautiful and sublime, as the two poles of the newly emerging discipline of aesthetics, in the eighteenth century. These debates locating the picturesque either on the side of the beautiful or the sublime also indicate the aesthetic content of the picturesque. Accordingly, the picturesque might be defined as a composition style combining and formulating the feelings of the beautiful and sublime [...] the picturesque was mainly shaped by the landscape painter William Gilpin who stated that the way nature is designed also leads us to perceive its beauty. And variety, irregularity, and surprise are the main principles for designing nature. [...] Creating the ‘prospects’ to frame the landscape in a visually pleasing way seemed as the main aim of the picturesque, though this frame contained the aesthetic effects provided through the multi-sensory definition of spaces to serve a pleasing ‘taste’.” (İlke Hiçsönmezle og Fatma İpek Ek i <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14601176.2023.2282196#d1e116>; lesedato 23.02.25)

Edmund Spenser, en engelsk dikter som levde på 1500-tallet, har ofte blitt knyttet til pittoresk estetikk. Han skrev hyrdediktet *The Shepherdes Calender* (1579) og det lange allegoriske diktet *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96). Franskmannen Hippolyte Taine hevdet i sin engelske litteraturhistorie at kjennetegn ved Spensers diktning er “the vastness and overflow of his picturesque invention. Like [den nederlandske maleren] Rubens, whatever he creates is beyond the region of all traditions, but complete in all parts, and expresses distinct ideas. As with Rubens, his allegory swells its proportions beyond all rule, and withdraws fancy from law, except in so far as it is necessary to harmonise forms and colours ... here are finished pictures true and complete, composed with a painter’s feeling, with choice of tints and outlines ... This reclining Acrasia has the pose of a goddess, or of one of [den italienske maleren] Titian’s courtesans. An Italian artist might be copy these gardens, these flowing waters, the sculptured loves, those wreathes of creeping ivy thick with glossy leaves and fleecy flowers.” (sitert fra <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10036/3156/DarnilleE.pdf>; lesedato 08.03.25)

“The Picturesque, especially as it evolved under William Gilpin’s tutelage, represents a ‘way of seeing’ rural life and activity.” (David Lambert i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1587101.pdf>; lesedato 12.10.22)

Den engelske kunstneren og forfatteren William Gilpin var blant de som skapte ideen om det pittoreske, i *Observations on the River Wye and several parts of South Wales, etc. relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty; made in the summer of the year 1770* (1782). Boka ble illustrert med tegninger basert på Gilpins egne skisser. “This set of essays by William Gilpin formalises his personal views on the ‘picturesque’.

The idea of the picturesque was a popular one in the late eighteenth century, emerging as a backlash against earlier ideas of symmetry and proportion. Gilpin was one of the early proponents of the picturesque landscape and wrote several books on the subject. These often took the form of edited journals of tours he had taken throughout Britain in the summer months. The routes taken by Gilpin – down the River Wye, through Devon & Cornwall, to the Lakes, into Scotland – were followed by both professional and amateur artists alike, and Gilpin’s recommendations were taken into account when sketches were made. Gilpin believed that an artist could use their own license to make a view more picturesque and these essays exemplify that. One passage for instance recommends that the water in a lake be made to appear rougher than it is in reality by paying particular attention to the slightest undulations of the surface.” (<https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/1151698/three-essays-on-picturesque-beauty-on-picturesque-travel-and-on-sketching>; lesedato 11.05.18)

“The picturesque is an aesthetic category developed in the eighteenth-century to describe, in the words of artist and author William Gilpin (1724-1804), ‘that peculiar kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture’. It was associated with fashionable landscape gardening, however its cultural significance extended far beyond this. [...] Gilpin published guidebooks to picturesque destinations such as the Wye Valley and the Lake District, and essays explaining how to sketch picturesque scenery. Poetry describing specific landscapes and coffee-table books filled with prints were also popular means of experiencing the picturesque. [...] the true qualities of the picturesque which were roughness, sudden variation, and irregularity. [...] applicable to all works of art, music, architecture, and literature.” (Jessica Fay i <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/what-is-the-picturesque->; lesedato 03.03.22) “Gilpin in fact wrote an essay on “Picturesque Travel,” effectively explaining how to “create” the picturesque in your mind’s eye when you view landscapes.” (<https://www.siue.edu/~jvoller/Common/picturesque.html>; lesedato 12.02.22)

“The invocation of a painterly model with which natural scenery might be compared was a key feature of the transformation of the landscape into an aesthetic object. For such an invocation assured the educated aesthete that his musings over the beauties and immensities of a landscape had a high-art precedence. [...]

Rusticity was a key hallmark, an ideal of man living happily within the elements of nature. It was an ideal that placed emphasis not just on the appeal of natural landscapes but on certain features which we thought to be especially characteristic of the organic side of nature, such as the withered bough of an ancient tree, for instance, or even the ruinous form of an old castle embedded in a mountainside. [...] The Picturesque movement was the apogee in the taste for nature and the natural during the eighteenth century. A decisive contribution to the formation of the Picturesque was made by William Gilpin in the form of series of tour guides which attempted to codify the practice of Picturesque tourism. In his first such handbook, *Observations of the River Wye* (1782), Gilpin seeks to define the rules of the Picturesque: “that of not merely describing; but of adapting the description of the natural scenery to the principles of artificial landscape; and of opening the sources of those pleasures, which are derived from comparison.” [...] For Gilpin, the chief consideration when viewing a landscape was whether the scene was fit to be made into a picture. Clearly, a prior notion of how a picture should look informs this criterion. [...] it was in the projection of an artistic or literary prototype upon the viewed landscape that offered that sharpest pleasure. “Thus,” as Malcolm Andrews points out, “a Welsh valley acquired a higher aesthetic value if it looked like a Gaspard Dughet painting.” ” (Christopher P. Jones i <https://medium.com/think-sheet/the-picturesque-913cb8254447>; lesedato 03.03.22)

“In 1794 Gilpin’s practical ideas for encouraging a ‘picture-imagination’ when travelling was developed into abstract picturesque theory by the two Herefordshire squires Richard Payne Knight and Uvedale Price. [...] John Nash had also learned from Price and Knight and had met Repton in 1790. It was a true meeting of minds in terms of picturesque planning.” (Mavis Batey i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1587022.pdf>; lesedato 12.10.22) Humphry Repton skrev bl.a. *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening* (1794) og *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening: Including some Remarks on Grecian and Gothic Architecture, collected from various Manuscripts, in the possession of the different Noblemen and Gentlemen, for whose use they were originally written; the whole tending to establish fixed Principles in the respective Arts* (1816).

De to britiske prestene Richard Payne Knight og Uvedale Price var fra slutten av 1700-tallet opptatt av pittoresk estetikk. “Knight challenged Price’s definition of the Picturesque in his second edition of *The Landscape* in 1795 and Price counter-attacked in 1801 with a light-hearted *Dialogue on the Distinct Characters of the Picturesque and Beautiful* in which Knight appears as Mr Howard, Price himself as Mr Hamilton, and, as a punchbag, a third Mr Seymour, who knows nothing about the Picturesque but is anxious to learn, is introduced. Mr Seymour is mystified by the way the two picturesque connoisseurs on their walk enthuse about a hovel under a gnarled oak, a rude cottage, thorns, heath, gypsies in the shadows, pollard oaks and a rusty donkey. Knight explains that the appreciation of these rugged ideas has been learned from painters but Price assures him that this appreciation comes

intrinsically from the objects themselves. Mr Seymour is still inclined to think picturesque objects are plain ugly.” (Mavis Batey i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1587022.pdf>; lesedato 12.10.22)

“[I]n the eighteenth century aesthetic theories of both landscape painting and gardening refer to literature almost like a touchstone. [Den engelske kunstneren og landskapsarkitekten William] Kent was said in his garden designs to have ‘realize[d]’ the beautiful descriptions of the poets, for which he was peculiarly adapted, by being a painter; Walpole defined ‘Poetry, Painting and Gardening’ as ‘the Science of Landscape’ and William Mason who of course coined the phrase about the gardener possessing ‘the poet’s feeling and the painter’s eye’, reported that ‘Mr Kent frequently declared he caught his taste in gardening from reading the picturesque descriptions of Spenser’.” (David Lambert i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1587101.pdf>; lesedato 12.10.22)

Thomas Daniell var en engelsk landskapsmaler. “It was the Daniells, Thomas and his son William, who fired the romantic imagination and gave a new dimension to the Picturesque by their depiction of oriental buildings and scenery. They first published, in 1788, *Select Views of India*, which was followed, in 1810, by *Picturesque Voyage to India*. They made a vast stock of drawings of Hindu temples, Moghul mosques and tombs and palaces, which were not just picturesque impressions but accurately delineated by camera obscura.” (Mavis Batey i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1587022.pdf>; lesedato 12.10.22)

“After returning from a walk, Edward Ferrars – of Jane Austen’s *Sense & Sensibility* – describes to Marianne Dashwood what he has enjoyed of the various views of the surrounding countryside. As a young lady of sensibility, Marianne asks Edward about what views had made an impression on him, hoping to engage him in an aesthetic conversation. This is his reply:

“You must not enquire too far, Marianne: remember I have no knowledge in the picturesque, and I shall offend you by my ignorance and want of taste if we come to particulars. I shall call hills steep, which ought to be bold; surfaces strange and uncouth, which ought to be irregular and rugged; and distant objects out of sight, which ought only to be indistinct through the soft medium of a hazy atmosphere... I like a fine prospect, but not picturesque principles. I do not like crooked, twisted, blasted trees. I admire them much more if they are tall, straight, and flourishing. I do not like ruined, tattered cottages. I am not fond of nettles or thistles, or heath blossoms...”

For all of Edward’s protesting his lack of knowledge, he had a clear understanding of a number of elements that make a landscape picturesque. The term picturesque is frequently misunderstood and misused to denote a general clichéd prettiness; in the eighteenth and into the early nineteenth centuries, however, it would have evoked

more specific and complex imagery. For some it was at the centre of philosophical and even a moral debate. The picturesque is not merely pretty; rather, it is a way of seeing that shows a preference for the striking and visually engaging elements of rough textures, line variety, “clara-obscura,” and deep emotions. The elements of emotion, subjective preferences, and imagination allow it to fall within the realm of Romanticism. It was primarily in contrast with the characteristics of classical beauty (including “linear, plane, closed, multiplicity and clearness”)” (Kimiko S. R. Fraser i <https://www.uvic.ca/humanities/history/assets/docs/honours-thesis---kimiko-fraser-2019.pdf>; lesedato 23.02.25).

Den britiske 1800-tallsforfatteren og estetiske teoretikeren John Ruskins “discussion of the picturesque in the fourth volume of *Modern Painters* [...] explains that the “essence of picturesque character” lies in “sublimity not inherent in the nature of the thing, but caused by something external to it; as the ruggedness of a cottage roof possesses something of a mountain aspect, not belonging to the cottage as such” (6.10). Ruskin had in fact used the same example previously in *The Stones of Venice*: “When a highland cottage roof is covered with fragments of shale instead of slates, it becomes picturesque, because the irregularity and rude fractures of the rocks, and their grey and gloomy colour, give to it something of the savageness, and much of the general aspect, of the slope of a mountain side. But as a mere cottage roof, it cannot be sublime, and whatever sublimity it derives from the wildness or sternness which the mountains have given it in its covering, is, so far forth, parasitical.” (11.159) His example of the rugged cottage roof reveals that the picturesque is a reduced form of the sublime which possesses its sharp oppositions and asymmetry without the large scale necessary to create impressions of grandeur. Since the irregular variety, which Ruskin takes to be the chief distinguishing mark of the picturesque, lacks any dominant unity, it does not partake of the beautiful; since it lacks vastness, it cannot produce the powerful emotions of the sublime. Depending in part on “resemblance or association” (8.237) of things sublime, the picturesque produces a minor form of delight.” (George P. Landow i <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/ruskin/atheories/3.2.html>; lesedato 05.02.18) Tre estetikker blir beskrevet i Walter John Hipple's bok *The Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Picturesque in Eighteenth-century British Aesthetic Theory* (1957).

“Considering the picturesque not just as an aesthetic model but as a multivalent social form – combining ideology, taste, and visual discipline [...] the American middle class was forged out of the economic and social structures of urban life in the antebellum era. That class perspective, however, was transported from the city to a variety of different spaces in the period: Rural areas were turned into tourist sites, farmland and rural villages were converted into suburbs, and even spaces within the city were converted into rural zones for public parks (such as New York’s Central Park). All of these sites expressed the social logic of an emergent middle class that saw landscapes as spaces for the cultivation of picturesque “taste.”

Far from the typical bland associations it now carries, the vision of the picturesque embraced by the new middle class of the midcentury was authoritative in relation to the landscape and was differentiated from the more utilitarian and materialist understandings of capitalist property owners on the one hand and from the views of property held by the working class, whether farmers or laborers, on the other. [...] many of our modern notions of environmentalism and cultural reform were articulated through the picturesque in this midcentury moment. Picturesque literary genres consolidated the values of a middle-class identity and transformed the national landscape.” (Evelev 2021 s. 2)

“The most famous example of the picturesque travel sketch in nineteenth-century U.S. literature was Washington Irving’s *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon* (1819), but the genre only gained in popularity throughout the midcentury. Implicitly didactic but also impressionistic, the travel sketch modeled the proper way to experience the picturesque, often by reproducing similar descriptions of the most common sights on the Northern tour route. Whether reading aspirationally about travel or traveling to the same sights to reconfirm their appreciations, picturesque tourists claimed an appreciation of the landscape superior to those who could only see its material properties and economic possibilities. [...] Nathaniel Hawthorne, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau – turned to picturesque travelogues for their early work and first books (or attempted books).” (Evelev 2021 s. 26)

“This association between New England and the picturesque is central to Catharine Maria Sedgwick’s *A New-England Tale* (1822), one of the earliest expressions of the New England village novel. [...] works like Sylvester Judd’s *Margaret* (1845), novels contained extensive literary treatment of the picturesque New England village and did not just use them as background scenery. These novels made explicit connections between the process of learning to read the picturesque New England landscape properly and the process of finding solutions to the problems within the village and the nation. These midcentury New England village novels often have extensive prefaces, lengthy narratorial asides, and authorial stand-ins who speak about interpretation of the landscape, training both their protagonists and readers in the protocols of the picturesque and in their application to American social problems. The picturesque enabled the novels’ characters and readers to interact with the landscape and shape it to their desires and needs, addressing such topics as temperance, pacifism, utopian communalism, the nature of middle-class social responsibility, threats to the traditional social and racial hierarchies, and the restoration of national order in the wake of the Civil War.” (Evelev 2021 s. 163-164)

“Starting in the mid-1830s, literary genres associated with new conceptions of rural, urban, and suburban spaces made the picturesque the central discourse for imagining how middle-class Americans should live within their landscape. [...]

In an essay entitled “A Dissolving View,” which she wrote for inclusion in the collection *The Home-Book of the Picturesque* (1849), Susan Cooper contemplates a contemporary village scene and imaginatively alters it, returning it not to a natural state but to an imaginary earlier state of settlement, describing it as “dwindled to a mere hamlet,” with “low, picturesque cottages ... irregularly grouped along a wide grassy street, and about a broad green which formed the centre of the village.” Cooper’s “dissolving” view reshapes the town into center village form with an anachronistic shape that it had never had before. This process of picturesque viewing was literalized in village design, as local New England historical societies throughout the mid-nineteenth century sought to preserve an older architecture that best reflected the picturesque aesthetics of contemporary taste and to encourage new development that fit within the anachronistic model of the center village. Calling for “the improvement of country villages” in columns for his *Horticulturalist* magazine at the midcentury, Andrew Jackson Downing repeatedly advocated designs based on the center village form with tree-lined streets, cottages, and a landscaped common or park area that reflected core picturesque design sensibilities and fulfilled the fantasy of a New England village past.” (Evelev 2021 s. 167 og 211)

Amerikaneren Henry Ward Beecher's roman *Norwood* (1869) “firmly locates Norwood within the picturesque stereotypes of New England, characterizing the region as “picturesque rather than grand.” In addition to including the descriptive signifiers of a picturesque setting, *Norwood* explicitly trains its characters (and implicitly its readers) in the protocols and logic of the picturesque throughout the novel. The narrator does not just describe the landscape; he guides and instructs the reader: “Look with my eyes, good reader, upon the town of Norwood, which, refusing to go down upon the fat bottom-lands of the Connecticut, daintily perches itself upon the irregular slopes west, and looks over upon that transcendent valley from under its beautiful shade trees, and you will say that no fairer village glistens in the sunlight, or nestles under the arching elms!” (N 3) Like many other New England village novels, Beecher’s *Norwood* promises to reward the reader not only with pleasant vistas, but also with a kind of knowledge or understanding of the landscape if they submit to the narrator or author’s stand-in as they elucidate the protocols of picturesque landscape appreciation.” (Evelev 2021 s. 199)

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