

The ancient Greeks distinguished two modes of representation: mimesis (imitation) and diegesis (narrative).

A description of a visual artwork is called ekphrasis.

Edmund Burke: *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757):  
Aesthetic judgment is not the result of an intellectual process but of instinctive feeling.

Feeling that something is beautiful = feeling that it is well-formed and pleases the senses = expression of male desire for sexual gratification.

Feeling that something is sublime = feeling that it has the power to crush and destroy one = expression of female fear and desire for protection.

William Gilpin: *Essay on Prints* (1768), *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)

Uvedale Price: *Essay on the Picturesque, As Compared with the Sublime and The Beautiful* (1794)

The picturesque is presented as a way out of the beautiful/sublime binarism: it is either a third form of aesthetic experience or a combination of the first two.

John Keats, from a letter to Benjamin Bailey, November 22, 1817: "I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of Imagination—What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth—whether it existed before or not—for I have the same Idea of all our Passions as of Love they are all in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty—[...]—The Imagination may be compared to Adam's dream—he awoke and found it truth. I am the more zealous in this affair, because I have never yet been able to perceive how any thing can be known for truth by consecutive reasoning—and yet it must be—Can it be that even the greatest Philosopher ever arrived at this goal without putting aside numerous objections—However it may be, O for a Life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts!"

*Endymion* (first stanza), 1818:

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:  
Its loveliness increases; it will never  
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep  
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.  
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing  
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,  
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth  
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,  
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways  
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,  
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall  
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,  
Trees old, and young, sprouting a shady boon  
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils  
With the green world they live in; and clear rills  
That for themselves a cooling covert make  
'Gainst the hot season; the mid forest brake,  
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:  
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms  
We have imagined for the mighty dead;  
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:  
An endless fountain of immortal drink,  
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Final stanza of 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' (spelling and punctuation of original publication in the *Annals of the Fine Arts*, January 1820):

O Attick shape! Fair attitude! with brede  
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,  
With forest branches and the trodden weed,—  
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought  
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!  
When old age shall this generation waste,  
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe  
Than ours a friend to Man, to whom thou say'st,  
Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty,—that is all  
Ye know on Earth, and all ye need to know.

Nathaniel Hawthorne

'The Artist of the Beautiful'

'The Birth-Mark'

'Drowne's Wooden Image'

John Ruskin 1819-1900

Emphasised the connection between art, nature and society; criticised classicism and Victorian neo-Classicism, which run contrary to the creative freedom of the artist.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB) founded 1848 by William Volman Hunt, John Everett Millais and Dante Gabriel Rossetti: advocated a return to the values of Quattrocento art; emphasised beauty, sincerity as opposed to convention. The PRB was embraced by Ruskin for its emphasis on nature.

Walter Pater London 1839–Oxford 1894

Originally intended to become a minister and enrolled at Oxford but lost his faith while keeping his fascination for the ritual and artistic aspects of religion.

Taught at Oxford. Wrote about Italian Renaissance painters (Leonardo, Botticelli, Michelangelo). Also influenced by romanticism (particularly Coleridge) and idealism (Plato).

The aesthetic movement appeared at a time when religion was losing its power to organise collective and individual life. Artists felt at freedom, or even required, to take up that role: to replace an old faith with a new one; to provide spiritual experiences; to bind people together.

Pater celebrated the high-quality moments in life which enlarge man's consciousness and enable him to escape the transience of life for a while: moments of "ecstasy" brought on by intellectual discovery, passion, the beauty of nature, or art. He encouraged readers to cultivate these moments, to refine their appreciation of them, their ability to recognise them, and occasions to experience them. One should fight routine and habits because they run contrary to the valuable moments that make life valuable.

Oscar Wilde (Dublin 1854 – Paris 1900)

'The Decay of Lying' (1889)

Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Wilde retained the idealistic and aesthetic conception of beauty of his predecessors, as well as their rejection of the conventions of academic art. However, he drew a sharp contrast between art and nature, and rejected nature's role in art.

Black is Beautiful

John Rock (1825-1866): American teacher, dentist, doctor, lawyer and abolitionist.

In an 1858 speech, he opposed the idea that African Americans were ugly.

In January 1962, brothers Kwame Brathwaite and Elombe Brath staged a fashion show called Naturally '62 (The Original African Coiffure and Fashion Extravaganza Designed to Restore Our Racial Pride & Standards' featuring the Grandassa Models. The phrase "Black is beautiful" was printed on the pageant's poster.

In the 1960s, a movement to promote natural African hair appeared.