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Joanna Knight reviews Roger Scruton's book 'Beauty'

Roger Scruton's new book 'Beauty' is a lucid and often graceful compendium of his reflections. He discusses beauty in nature and art, and above all in buildings. Even in an artistic paradise like the city of Venice, Scruton's attention moves quickly from the heroic buildings on the waterfronts to the 'modest neighbours' that surround them. 'Ravishing beauties', he says, 'are less important in the aesthetics of architecture than those that create a soothing context, a continuous narrative as in a street or a square, where nothing stands out in particular'.

Beauty may have its roots in sensuous enjoyment, but even at its humblest it appeals to something larger: a willingness to consider, compare and arrive at a judgement. The 'judgement of taste', as the philosopher Immanuel Kant called it, spans two worlds: a private world of individual subjectivity, as idiosyncratic as you please, and a public world where you defend and develop your tastes through conscientious discussion – where you try to reason me out of wearing a yellow shirt, for instance, and I try to persuade you to get rid of the Carmen ringtone on your phone.

Scruton explores beauty in its various forms, starting with nature. He maintains, for instance, that the beauty of unspoilt wilderness depends on an evident absence of any fixed centre, a lack of prescribed edges. The beauty of birds, animals and flowers, on the other hand, is rooted in their existence as self-defining entities with boundaries of their own. And the special beauty of the human body belongs not to a mere assemblage of body parts but to the personality that finds expression in it. All this beauty gives you, as Scruton puts it, a sense that a 'world that makes room for such things makes room for you'.

Gardens are different again. They are places where wild nature has been disciplined, more or less sympathetically, into artificial forms. Their beauty is not that of infinite landscapes but of bounded spaces that surround us, rather like architectural interiors; and they enable Scruton to move smoothly from considering natural beauty to the far more contentious terrain of high art. Scruton can be as perceptive about sculpture, painting and classical music as about the varieties of natural beauty, but inevitably he is more controversial.

2. Il candidato illustri la disciplina del riconoscimento dei crediti, dei trasferimenti e della mobilità studentesca (nazionale ed internazionale) secondo il Regolamento Didattico di Ateneo, evidenziandone gli organi decisionali e gli strumenti attuativi. Si soffermi, inoltre, sulle modalità di pubblicità e promozione dell'offerta formativa a tutela del diritto all'orientamento degli studenti.