THE EMBODIMENT OF SUBLIMITY: DISCOURSES BETWEEN VISUAL, LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTIONS OF SENTIENCE IN THE DRAWINGS OF HENRY FUSELI, 1770-78

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a thematically-based interpretation of Henry Fuseli's art-making focusing on his drawings of the 1770s - a period that is shown to be his most important phase of artistic development. Throughout the thesis I indicate how the characteristics of these drawings can be attributed to Fuseli's attempts to establish visual dialogues with particular theoretical perspectives, and I show how he used drawing to analyse and challenge dominant art practice's functions and attendant discourses. My close visual analyses of Fuseli's drawings note these images' relationships to his later artwork by demonstrating the underlying coherence and motivations of his creative methods. Moreover, the thesis shows how Fuseli's art practice of the 1770s provided conceptual foundations for his later *Lectures on Painting*. The thesis's four chapters examine Fuseli's understanding of artistic invention; his challenging of conventional artistic subject matters, modes of representation and their purposes; his understanding of the sublime and its use as an artistic device; and his comprehension and practice of artistic imitation. In conclusion, the thesis proposes that Fuseli crafted his drawings to encourage their viewers to have profound, disquieting, imaginative experiences, which motivated them to challenge their self-perceptions and that which was conventionally determined as sentient existence.

DEDICATION

In memory of Mr G.H. Boulton – this is for you Dad

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a thematic study of Henry Fuseli's artistry and the ideas that informed his decisions during what I contend was his most important period of creative development - his time in Italy, 1770-79. I argue that studying the drawings which Fuseli made during this decade allows us to ascertain the influences that shaped his visual style. I suggest that these Italian drawings' characteristics indicate that Fuseli wanted visual art to have particular functions that are identifiable. Analysing Fuseli's drawings of the 1770s closely, I contend that they expose the way in which his theoretical and visual interests encouraged him to focus on how visual art could be used to instigate the development of people's potentials to function as members of society, especially through the ways in which art might help to encourage an advanced understanding of self-hood - a complex issue which will be clarified during the course of this thesis. Consequently, I argue that Fuseli's drawings were conceived and executed in order to initiate modified perceptions of self and conceptions of lived experience among viewers. Furthermore, I suggest that his drawings of the 1770s should also be regarded as connected to his theories about art and its making which were presented, most notably, through his Royal Academy *Lectures on Painting* (1801-25).[1]

[1] Fuseli gave these *Lectures* as the Academy's Professor of Painting (which be became in 1799; he was elected to the Academy in 1790). Following his time in Italy Fuseli settled permanently in London, where he had lived previously during the latter 1760s. Thus, during this *Introduction*, and indeed throughout the thesis, Fuseli's art, and his ideas on art and artists, are assessed against theories that informed English artistic practice especially (which were developed out of a pan-European notion of academic art practice), those he would have had to address when seeking to establish himself as a professional artist in London.

In support of my argument I synthesise a variety of source materials. Principally associations are established between Fuseli's imagery, his theories of art, and dominant eighteenth-century aesthetic and philosophical discourses. Thus, my methodology presents a series of selected contexts that condition interpretation of that which is being studied. While this procedure creates a framework for understanding, it arguably also reveals authorial bias.[2] Yet, while this problem overshadows this thesis, as it does all previous Fuseli scholarship, choices still remain to be made about what should be studied (if one is to study at all). Accordingly, I acknowledge the need to be as transparent as possible about my selection and uses of source materials, and the parameters being established for this study.[3]

With this in mind the argument presented through the subsequent chapters seeks to discern relationships between Fuseli's drawings and wide-ranging eighteenth-century philosophical and aesthetic discourses. These include Fuseli's and Joshua Reynolds's art theories,[4] discussions of self-formation (for example, as articulated by

[2] This dilemma of historical research has been noted by Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson, see 'Semiotics and Art History', *The Art Bulletin*, 73:2, 1991, 174-208. Bal and Bryson argue that scholars' decisions, concerning which discourses to trace and relay to their audiences, effectively produce 'con texts', because scholars' choices of source materials, through which to frame their arguments, condition readers' understandings of that being researched. Bal and Bryson observe that 'Context […] is a text itself, and it thus consists of signs that require interpretation. What we take to be positive knowledge is the product of interpretative choices. The art historian is always present in the construction she or he produces', 175. Bal and Bryson expose all historical research's effective constructed-ness.

[3] Richard Clay has also discussed this issue in his essay 'Bouchardon's statue of Louis XV; Iconoclasm and the transformation of signs', in *Iconoclasm, Contested Objects, Contested Terms*, Stacy Boldrick, Richard Clay (eds.), London, 2007, 122, note 60. Clay observes that all researchers operate 'within the limits of time, space, and intellect' and that all a researcher can do is 'be transparent about the limits of one's choices'.

[4] Fuseli's *Lectures on Painting*, *Connoisseurship, Criticism and Art History*, selected by Sydney J. Freedberg, New York and London, 1979, and Reynolds's *Discourses on Art*, London, 1966.

Locke and Shaftesbury),[5] ideas of the sublime (proffered by Burke and Kames),[6] and conceptions of that which was believed to constitute sensate experience (for instance, theories of verisimilitude and of the wonderful).[7] Additionally, I assess primary sources concerning Fuseli's artistic life, for example, *Joseph Farington's Diary*,[8] Fuseli's English letters[9] and John Knowles' *The Life and Writings of Henry Fuseli*.[10] As my analyses of Fuseli's, and other artists', work focuses on the characteristics, and connotations, of particular images and objects, I make use of semiotic terminology and concepts.[11] Such an approach helps me to demonstrate that while the imagery assessed relates strongly to eighteenth-century aesthetic and cultural ideas, it also engaged in particular ways with certain subjects in a manner which permitted them to function effectively pedagogically. In sum it is argued that Fuseli's drawing ought to be identified as being underpinned by a consistent and unified creative and theoretical purpose. This, it is contended, largely characterised his visual oeuvre, his ideas of art making and of being an artist. To confirm this hypothesis I assess critically how Fuseli scholarship has interpreted his art and its functions.

[5] As relayed in Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), Shaftesbury's *Characteristicks* (1711), and through Dubos's *Réflexions critiques sur la poësie et sur la peinture* (1719).
[6] *The Philosophical Enquiry* (1757) and *Elements of Criticism* (1762).
[7] For example, as articulated through empirical thought – that of David Hume and Johann Gottsched – against thinking promoted by Gottfried Leibniz and Johann Breitinger.
[8] Eight volumes, London, 1793-1821.
[9] David H. Weinglass, *The Collected English Letters of Henry Fuseli*, London, 1982.
[10] Three volumes, London, 1831.
[11] The thesis makes use of the three main branches of semiotic study: Semantics – with regard to the relations between the visual signs employed by Fuseli and his contemporaries, and to what these can be said to refer; Syntactics – the relations between these signs in the formal structures of pictorial compositions; and Pragmatics – the relation between these depicted signs and audience.

Previous efforts to interpret Fuseli's artwork, although often persuasive, are incomplete.[12] In particular, earlier studies of the artist have not fully accounted for conceptual frameworks that significantly impacted upon Fuseli's understanding of himself - and the purpose of visual art - during his artistic style's development. Most notably, I suggest inadequate attention has been given to how Fuseli's experiences pre-1770, notably his Zurich education, affected his self-conception and his appreciation of the power, and potential, of art. Highlighting this omission, and demonstrating how my argument engages critically with those of previous Fuseli scholars, this *Introduction's* central sub-sections address themes of 'self' (*Conceptions of Self*) and of art's significance (*Art: its status and functions*). A summary of my argument, as it is articulated via the thesis's chapters, concludes this *Introduction*. However, to clarify my research's focus, I will first offer an over-view of scholarly opinions about Fuseli and his art. This, in turn, leads to a consideration of the core conceptual frameworks and issues addressed in this thesis.

Over-view of Fuseli scholars' opinions of the artist

Throughout this thesis I contend that Fuseli's formative influences allowed him to develop his artistic practice during the 1770s in a way that was underscored by a uniform purpose. The consistency these stimuli granted Fuseli's art making is not recognised by Fuseli scholars. Werner Hofmann's opinion is characteristic of attempts to interpret Fuseli and his art:

[12] Here again I am acknowledging Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson's argument concerning context, by recognising that all scholars are constrained by the terms they use to define their research.

> Fuseli […] is a complex artist, preferring the complicated to the simple, the curve to the straight line. He gives no clear-cut answers. In fact, it is debatable whether he is giving us answers at all.[13]

During the last sixty years many scholars, like Hofmann, have highlighted Fuseli's 'artistic obtuseness' when attempting his appraisal. This has resulted in numerous and sometimes contradictory opinions of the artist. Fuseli has, for instance, been 'recognised among the alertest minds of the day',[14] noted for his 'strange, expressive style',[15] and for his making 'the human figure the vehicle of an imagination [so as to reveal] much about the human mind and condition'.[16] Moreover, Fuseli has been deemed a man possessed of 'a profound grasp of […] major intellectual and aesthetic trends',[17] considered 'Shakespeare's painter',[18] and as one who developed 'a highly stylised, anti-academic graphic manner evocative of the excesses of Michelangelo and Mannerism'.[19] He was a person who sought to be distinguished

[13] Werner Hofmann, 'A Captive', *Henry Fuseli, 1741-1825*, London, 1975, 29.
[14] Eudo C. Mason, *The Mind of Henry Fuseli*, London, 1951, 13.
[15] Frederick Antal, *Fuseli Studies*, London, 1956, 1.
[16] Norman Reid, Foreword to, *Henry Fuseli, 1741-1825*, London, 1975.
[17] Carol L. Hall, *Blake and Fuseli – A Study in the Transmission of Ideas*, New York and London, 1985, 5.
[18] The title of Petra Maisak's essay 'Henry Fuseli – Shakespeare's Painter', *The Boydell Shakespeare Gallery*, Walter Pape, Frederick Burwick (eds.), Essen, 1996. A similar estimation of Fuseli and his art can be found in T.S.R. Boase, 'Illustrations to Shakespeare's Plays in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol.10, 1946-47, Kraus Reprint, 83-109; W. Moelwyn Merchant, *Shakespeare and the Artist*, Oxford, 1959; W.H. Friedman, *Boydell's Shakespeare Gall*ery, New York and London, 1976; Stephen Leo Carr, 'Verbal-Visual Relationships: Zoffany and Fuseli's Illustrations of Macbeth', *Art History*, 3:4, 1980, 375-387; Jane Martineau (et al), *Shakespeare in Art*, London and New York, 2003, and Stuart Sillars, *Painting Shakespeare – The Artist as Critic, 1720-1820*, Cambridge, 2006.
[19] Martin Myrone, 'Gothic Romance and the Quixotic Hero: A Pageant for Henry Fuseli in 1783', Tate Research Papers, Spring, 2004, www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/issue-01 (last accessed November 2011).

from ‘his contemporaries simply by virtue of his novelty’;[20] Fuseli was an artist ‘on the cusp between the Enlightenment and the Romantic movement.’ [21]

Thus, Fuseli is characterised as ‘an interesting individual’,[22] whose artwork possesses ‘uneven and contradictory qualities’.[23] Indeed, classifying Fuseli in this way continues to influence interpretation of his work; a comparable logic shaped the exhibition - and publication - *Gothic Nightmares* (2006).[24] This publication’s Foreword again indicated that Fuseli had a ‘divided identity’, that ‘has perplexed commentators’, leading to him being considered ‘an eccentric, driven by his personal idiosyncrasies and obsessions.’[25] Inspired by this perspective, *Gothic Nightmares* further alluded to Fuseli’s perceived unconventionality, declaring the exhibition/publication sought to foreground how his art ‘spans the divide – or imagined divide – between […] the high-minded and the sensational’, aspects effectively marking the supposed polarities of Fuseli’s artistic activity.[26] However, it has been suggested that as an artist Fuseli was more specifically grounded. Some scholars indicate that he was particularly influenced by his formative experiences and they imply that these provided Fuseli with a coherent set of theoretical perspectives which, subsequently, informed his art-making.

[20] Martin Myrone, *Bodybuilding, Reforming Masculinities in British Art 1750-1810*, New Haven and London, 2005, 172.
[21] Franziska Lentzsch (ed.), *Fuseli: The Wild Swiss*, Zurich, 2005, 10.
[22] Antal, 1956, 2.
[23] Martin Myrone, *Henry Fuseli*, London, 2001, 6.
[24] The show and publication’s full title was, *Gothic Nightmares: Fuseli, Blake and the Romantic Tradition*, and was held at Tate Britain 15 February – 1 May, 2006.
[25] Stephen Deuchar, Director, Tate Britain, Foreword to the *Gothic Nightmares* catalogue, Martin Myrone (ed.), 6.
[26] *Ibid*.

Foremost among these influences is considered to be Fuseli's formal education at Zurich's Collegium Carolinum, c.1758-59 to 1761. His tuition there, principally from historian Johann Bodmer and theologian Johann Breitinger, apparently formed 'the main ideas behind [Fuseli's] art'.[27] Equally, texts on philosophy and aesthetics, produced by members, and collaborators, of this Zurich intellectual circle, became 'a key source for […] Fuseli's own artistic theory.'[28] This theoretical foundation is noted as having been responsible for Fuseli's attachment to particular subjects, 'Fuseli [was] reading Homer, Dante […] Milton […] and, above all Shakespeare',[29] writers celebrated by his tutors as bringers 'of lost or hidden truths to man'.[30] Moreover, the ideas communicated to Fuseli in Zurich are noted as having been part of a pedagogic programme that emphasised 'cultural and moral reform.'[31] Notably, at the Carolinum, Fuseli was being trained as a preacher of an unorthodox religion; he was to be a Zwinglian minister.[32] The Carolinum's potent mix of philosophy, aesthetics and theology, led him to appreciate how it might be possible to undermine 'old orthodoxies from the inside',[33] and encouraged him to 'form a distinctive individual identity'.[34] During Fuseli's time at the Carolinum he also made drawings which, it has been suggested, reveal that 'he was clearly interested in capturing past religious

[27] Antal, 1956, 7-8. Education at the Carolinum was based around teaching the Old and New Testaments. It took the form of a three-tier system ranging from philology, through to philosophy, with theology at the head.
[28] Nicholas Powell, *Fuseli: The Nightmare* (Art in Context), London, 1973, 25. Powell refers in particular to J.G. Sulzer's *AllgemeineTheorie der schönen Künste* (1771) - on which Fuseli collaborated - which applied Bodmer's notions about literature to the visual arts, synthesising these with Winckelmann's neo-classical aesthetics.
[29] Hall, 1985, 12.
[30] *Ibid*., 115.
[31] *Ibid*., 13.
[32] Fuseli was ordained in 1761, and preached for one year. His Zurich schooling was strongly influenced by the non-conformist tenets of Zwinglianism, which effectively challenged the religious ideology employed by the established church.
[33] Mason, 1951, 14.
[34] Camilla Smith, *Religion, Morality and Pedagogic Methods in the Early Drawings of Henry Fuseli (1753-63)*, unpublished PhD. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2008, 35.

history, contemporary debates, and offering the viewer his sceptical vision of the future of mankind'.[35] Subsequently, it is inferred that such an emphasis can be detected in his artwork beyond the 1760s.[36] Later in this *Introduction*, in the sub-sections *Conceptions of Self* and *Art: its status and functions*, these scholars' views and those highlighted above, are investigated in greater detail to isolate the recurring themes of previous Fuseli scholarship. Throughout this thesis my analysis also indicates how these studies have overlooked certain aspects that contributed to Fuseli's sense of what it was to be an artist; filling such gaps in current scholarship shapes my thesis's argument. Beforehand, it is necessary to indicate the key conceptual notions, and the issues, underscoring my research.

Intention, invention and creation: a conceptual framework

From the above overview of interpretations of Fuseli and his art, we gain a sense of Fuseli scholarship's divergent nature. Much of this research accepts that 'contrariness and oddness' mark Fuseli's art, and personal disposition.[37] So nominated, scholars have tended to interpret Fuseli and his creative motivations through facets of this perceived contrariness. Even though there is evidence to suggest how Fuseli's formative years shaped and unified his later appreciation of himself and his artistic endeavours, many scholars seem to overlook this which may account for their highlighting of the more sensational aspects of his art and character.

[35] *Ibid*., 192.
[36] See Smith, 2008, 269, 'both the artist's early interests and creative output help the viewer to understand some of the characteristics prevalent in […] later […] works.'
[37] Martin Myrone, *Henry Fuseli*, London, 2001, 6.

In this thesis I argue that interpretation of Fuseli and his art should acknowledge how his Zurich education contributed to his appreciation of aesthetic and philosophical discourses, and to his mature perception of himself as artist. This allows for the assembling of a ‘big picture’ that can go some way towards accounting for Fuseli’s artistic motivations and the nature of his artwork. Moreover, acknowledging the influence of Fuseli’s schooling, helps to elucidate his ideas about art and artists, and explain his attitude to dominant art practice and theory. By saying this, I do not discount scholarly attachment to Fuseli’s perceived peculiarity. However, in this thesis, his supposed oddness is reconsidered in respect of the motivations which I argue underscored his artistry.

My argument proposes that the complex relationship between Fuseli and his artwork is evidence of his challenging of accepted artistic and conceptual paradigms. It is contended that Fuseli chose to contradict these normative protocols or, rather, sought their contra-diction; that is, I am arguing that his artistic stance contrasted with customary creative/theoretical conventions so as to offer a tangential, dissenting voice. Thus, Fuseli is considered to be unlike his contemporaries and as proposing ideas unlike theirs. For us to dispute convention necessitates understanding of that which is being contested. Therefore, key to determining Fuseli’s actual contra-diction of dominant theory, and perceptions of art and artists’ purposes, is assessment of the extent of his conceptual deviation. Much of what I argue Fuseli contested is theoretical, principally dominant writings on art and on the influence of artists over society and culture. In these treatises, connotative significance depended on accepting certain words as denoting ideas believed to be comprehended in a like

manner by author and reader. However, this semantic surety had been highlighted as fraught philosophically in John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), a text that Fuseli knew from the Carolinum.[38] For example, Locke noted that knowledge,

> being conversant about propositions, and those most common universal ones, has greater connexion with words than perhaps is suspected […] words […] come to be made use of by men as *the signs of* their *ideas* […] *they suppose their words to be marks of the ideas in the minds also of other men, with whom they communicate* [and] they *often suppose their words to stand also for the reality of things* [but] words […] are *the inventions and creatures of the understanding*, made by it for its own use […] the signification they have is nothing but a relation that, by the mind of man, is added to them [Locke's emphases].[39]

This thesis contends that Fuseli sought to question the supposedly sure association of words and concepts in contemporary aesthetic and philosophical discourses. It is argued that his image-making was central to his querying. Fuseli's questioning of the verity of normative creative/theoretical protocols can also be seen to contribute to the perception that he was, somehow, eccentric.

Support for my claims comes from acknowledging the influence of Fuseli's formal education. Some scholars maintain that this provided the principal ideas

[38] Published London, 1690. For information on Fuseli's knowledge of Locke see Camilla Smith, *Religion, Morality and Pedagogic Methods in the Early Drawings of Henry Fuseli (1753-63)*, 2008, 114, footnote 146.
[39] Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, abridged and edited by John W. Yolton, London, 1998, 227-236.

underpinning Fuseli's art, that led to his 'profound grasp of the major intellectual and aesthetic trends of the day', and to his desire to challenge orthodox thought and action.[40] Yet, previous Fuseli scholarship has not established secure connections between Fuseli's education and his mature artistic interests. I indicate correlations between Fuseli's Zurich schooling and his later challenging of dominant contemporary aesthetic/theoretical discourse. Therefore, I analyse Fuseli and his art in ways that, previously, have been incompletely addressed by scholars. I argue that Fuseli's widely recognised difference was formed through his forging of particular associations between philosophical, aesthetic and theological discourses that were initially absorbed through his Zurich schooling, but subsequently modified by experience. These influences' affect on Fuseli's perception of himself and purpose is contended to be fundamental for understanding the complexions of his artistic persona and imagery. Throughout the thesis I assert that the mindset Fuseli formed, by amalgamating these various theoretical discourses and by interrogating them through art-making that contested creative protocols, led him to consider his role as artist and the work he produced as being unified conceptually. Both were directed to a principal function, encouraging imaginative thought so as to initiate a heightened sense of human virtue. Considering this claim, the thesis focuses particularly on Fuseli's creative output of the 1770s, the decade during which he established the characteristics of the visual style most regularly seen in his later artworks.

Each chapter examines mainly the period 1770-79 and considers only Fuseli's drawings. Researching this thesis I have seen a significant proportion of the images I

[40] Hall, 1985, 5.

discuss first hand. I viewed a large number of Fuseli's drawings, and his paintings and prints after him, at the *Gothic Nightmares* Exhibition (Tate Britain, 15 February-1 May 2006, for example, Figs. 24, 66 and 68); Tate Britain's holdings of Fuseli's work were also examined, as were examples of Fuseli's artworks in, for instance, the collections of the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (Fig. 11), and Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (Fig. 119). While not inspecting other examples of Fuseli's work first hand I did view high quality digital reproductions of these, for example, Figs. 17, 18, 55, 69 and 104. Through such viewing it has been possible to assertain clearly the materiality of Fuseli's drawings. Assessing Fuseli's drawings in this way has allowed me to examine his applications of drawing materials, uses of graphic techniques and his visual manipulations of both subjects and pictorial space.

How I interpret Fuseli's drawings in this thesis develops our understanding of his paintings; common to both these drawings and paintings is Fuseli's comprehension of the visual and of particular artistic inspirations. For example, Fuseli maintained that space and form were the 'great characteristics' of visual art and that 'in forms alone the idea of existence can be rendered permanent.'[41] Indeed, he acknowledged that the forms of the human body, a feature of both his drawings and paintings, were 'the *physical* element of the art [Fuseli's emphasis]'.[42] Additionally, certain visual source materials (for instance, the antique and Renaissance and Mannerist art) and subject matters (for example, Shakespeare and Milton), are referenced in both Fuseli's drawings and paintings; actually, there is a correlation between them. In some cases the drawings being considered provided visual forms for Fuseli's paintings post-1779.

[41] Fuseli, Lecture III, 407.
[42] *Ibid*., 408.

Thus, my interpretations of Fuseli's graphic work of the 1770s can be acknowledged as equally significant for a general appreciation of his art between 1780 and his death in 1825.

Yet, Fuseli's drawings, unlike similar work by contemporaries such as Raphael Mengs or Jacques-Louis David, do not permit reconstruction of a trajectory tracing Fuseli's first-draft sketches through to finalised compositions and subsequent paintings. Largely, Fuseli's drawings of the 1770s have no direct painted equivalents, nor – for the most part – were they designed for public scrutiny; an exception being the drawing *The Death of Cardinal Beaufort* (1772) that was sent for exhibition at the Royal Academy, London, in 1774. Fuseli produced few paintings during the 1770s and his artistic attention was focused on the act of drawing.[43] These works appear to be personal experiments into the potential of subjects (notably Shakespearean), ideas, visual forms and graphic materials. Therefore, Fuseli's drawings provide a valuable tool for assessing how he negotiated relationships between his chosen source materials. They were part of a graphic-based mode of enquiry that related strongly to the eighteenth-century theoretical frameworks discussed above. Moreover, these drawings of the 1770s reflect Fuseli's continued use of certain visual forms and themes, those of his graphic work from the 1760s especially. Consequently, throughout the thesis, appropriate consideration is given to these earlier images to suitably situate Fuseli's drawings of the 1770s within his wider visual oeuvre. Accordingly, the subsequent four chapters and conclusion indicate ways in which Fuseli's graphic output c.1760-80 assists in more fully illuminating his

[43] Apparently, during 1774, Fuseli worked on a series of large-scale canvases on Shakespearean themes which have not been identified and are now lost.

mature appreciation of his role as artist and his developing awareness of the potential and purpose of visual art.

Addressing why Fuseli made art, and arguing that his work should be considered in particular ways, means confronting the thorny issue of artistic intention, the supposedly sure means of shedding light on an artist's aims. Tom Gretton has defined this process as 'agency in the production of meaning in relation to sculptures, paintings and prints [indicating] works of art properly mean what their makers meant them to mean.'[44] However, Gretton observes that while 'There is a compelling symmetry in this projective identification of intentions with effects', claiming identification of artistic intention, through examination of images or objects, reveals more about the interpreter than the artist: 'I suspect', Gretton notes, 'that 'intentions' are in any case always retrodictive fictions.'[45] However, Gretton characterises art objects in a way that sits well with how this thesis assesses Fuseli's work. Gretton proposes that art objects are 'the necessary products of a relationship in which cultural authority, cultural deference and cultural resistance are mixed together, of a situation in which new commodities have to function as vehicles both of incorporation into and of resistance to new cultural relations.'[46] Applying Gretton's conception of the art object affects how we think about Fuseli's art-making. Considering the recognised formal particularity of Fuseli's art, it is tempting to see his work as evidence of a desire to overturn existing visual conventions. However, while Fuseli's mode of representation suggests contravention of protocols, it does not necessarily

[44] Tom Gretton, 'Clastic Icons: Prints taken from broken or reassembled blocks in some 'popular prints' of the Western tradition', *Iconoclasm, Contested Objects, Contested Terms*, Stacy Boldrick, Richard Clay (eds.), London, 2007, 147.
[45] *Ibid*., 148 & 149.
[46] *Ibid*., 149.

signal a complete break with accepted standards. Yet, the 'contrariness and oddness'[47] of Fuseli's unorthodox, 'highly stylised, anti-academic graphic manner',[48] and choice of subjects, seems, according to conventional wisdom, to characterise him as being, in some respects, like an iconoclast.[49] However, I propose semantically developing this term by referring to Richard Clay's research into iconoclasm.[50]

Clay has provided a notion, sign transformations, which allows the two definitions of iconoclasm in the Oxford English Dictionary to be considered as inter-related. The OED notes that the term iconoclasm alludes to the physical destruction of images which have been set up as objects of veneration, and the figurative, or discursive, overthrowing or attacking of venerated conventions or beliefs that are regarded as fallacious. In this thesis I construct an argument which positions Fuseli's artistic and theoretical practices as being figurative attacks on accepted inventive principles. However, by utilising Richard Clay's research into iconoclasm I contend that Fuseli's manipulation of inventive processes, while not actually affecting the physical appearance of existing artworks, can still be considered iconoclastic, in respect of eighteenth-century aesthetic edicts.

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[47] Martin Myrone, *Henry Fuseli*, London, 2001, 6.
[48] Martin Myrone, 'Gothic Romance and the Quixotic Hero: A Pageant for Henry Fuseli in 1783', Tate Research Papers, Spring, 2004.
[49] For discussion of debates surrounding the concepts 'iconoclast', 'iconoclasm' and 'vandalism' see, for example, Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution*, London, 1997. Gamboni argues that actions taken against artworks, which result in their physical alteration, often cannot be understood other than in the context of particular artistic or theoretical aims. In respect of Fuseli's art practice being perceived as being 'like' iconoclasm, we should consider Gamboni's concept 'metaphorical iconoclasm' (which he uses to appraise the artistic activities of the early twentieth-century avant-garde). Gamboni draws attention to the difference between actually vandalising an artwork and artists' uses of a rhetoric of destruction when conceiving of actions to be taken (theoretically) against artworks. In Fuseli's case, his drawing practice does not actually deface or destroy existing art objects. Rather, it transforms them figuratively his drawings effectively serving as metaphors for change.
[50] Clay articulates this argument in his essay 'Bouchardon's statue of Louis XV; Iconoclasm and the transformation of signs' (in *Iconoclasm, Contested Objects, Contested Terms*, Stacy Boldrick, Richard Clay (eds.), London, 2007).

In his research Clay argues that while attacks on public sculptures during the French Revolution constituted a form of material sign transformation, he emphasises that such results from and leads to transformations of these objects at the level of discourse. Consequently, rather than acknowledging these attacks as simply literal breakings, we might see such acts as offering possibilities for conceptually remaking the targeted sculptures.[51] In particular, Clay forwards an argument that emphasises process. He proposes that the Revolutionary attacks on public statuary can be seen as part of a procedure which although resulting in 'a type of material sign transformation',[52] were also instances in 'ongoing processes of discursive sign transformation that precede, accompany and proceed from moments of physical breaking.'[53] Comparably, Fuseli has been considered highly proficient in the graphic transformation of visual signs, he is noted to be 'a master of allusion, [visual] quotation and paraphrase'.[54] Indeed, Fuseli referred to this mode of art-making in his *Lectures on Painting* where he noted that Michelangelo's artistic style was comprised of '*Sublimity of conception*, grandeur of form and *breadth of manner* [my emphases] by these principles he selected or rejected the objects of imitation'.[55] In keeping with Clay's contention that 'iconoclasm' ought to be seen as a particular sort of transformative process, this thesis argues that Fuseli's (apparent) rupturing of

[51] Clay argues that 'iconoclasm', like the word 'destruction', tends to focus attention on what he terms a particular moment in 'the life of the object', 94.
[52] *Ibid*.
[53] *Ibid*. Clay contends that his concept of 'material sign transformation' might suitably re-define that which has traditionally been termed 'iconoclasm'. A comparable idea to Clay's is forwarded by Ronald Paulson in, *Breaking and Remaking, Aesthetic Practice in England, 1700-1820*, New Brunswick and London, 1989.
[54] Werner Hofmann, *Henry Fuseli 1741-1825*, London, 1975, 29. Fuseli's appropriation of existing imagery has been noted by most scholars.
[55] See Fuseli's second Royal Academy Lecture, 1801, 382. As will be indicated throughout this thesis, Fuseli considered Michelangelo to be the artistic exemplar, the individual whom Fuseli sought to emulate as an artistic individual most closely.

existing visual conventions, through his drawings, comparably emphasises his interest in ‘re-making’ accepted artistic protocols. Actually, my appraisals of Fuseli’s artistry, and Clay’s conception of iconoclasm, present comparable interpretations of inventive process; both characterise invention as contesting, rather than reinforcing, normative aesthetic discourses concerning invention’s parameters. Yet, there are notable differences between my analyses of Fuseli’s artistry and Richard Clay’s arguments concerning iconoclasm.

In Clay’s examples of iconoclastic re-making (invention) – the breaking of statues – the transformation of visual signs took place in public. In comparison, Fuseli’s modification of existing visual forms, through the act of drawing, took place in private. Moreover, although Fuseli engaged in a process of transformation in the way that he appropriated, and paraphrased, his visual sources, unlike Clay’s iconoclasts he did not actually transform the visual signs constituting his source materials; Fuseli did not physically alter any existing artworks. Instead, Fuseli transformed the sets of conventions that governed how visual signs were mobilised; he materially transformed (through the drawing process) the visual codes that, in the eighteenth century, constituted dominant artistic practice. Fuseli’s drawings were the result of a discursive modification of the visual conventions that governed how particular visual forms ought to be depicted. In effect, Fuseli’s drawing procedures questioned the validity of these visual codes, and the conventions that they buttressed. The marks constituting his drawings point to a shift in normative discourse, and the images formed from those marks are identifiable as challenging standard debates due to existing knowledge of how these were regularly, visually interpreted. So considered,

my construal of how Fuseli's art practice can be thought to re-make (transform) accepted artistic protocols acknowledges the importance of Richard Clay's notion of artistic re-making through material/discursive sign transformations, but extends the parameters of his argument. My synthesising and developing of the implications of Clay's research helps us to reconsider Fuseli's artistic practices. Importantly, this thesis argues for a particular appreciation of iconoclastic practice in respect of Fuseli's work. To reiterate the point made earlier in this section of the *Introduction*, my interpretations of Fuseli's artistic endeavours conform to the OED's second definition of iconoclasm; that is, his work can be considered as a figurative or discursive activity focused on the attacking of venerated conventions or cherished beliefs which are regarded as fallacious. While the theme of transforming established conventions underscores the entire thesis, I chiefly consider the ways in which Fuseli graphically re-made the visual codes which informed customary eighteenth-century artistic practice in chapters two and four.[56]

While acknowledging these contemporary interpretative frames of intention and iconoclasm, the thesis seeks to assess Fuseli and his art against conditions that directly affected his art-making. Throughout the thesis, analysis of Fuseli's drawings is largely framed by eighteenth-century theoretical and visual discourses. However, while acknowledging that it is impossible to avoid inferring that Fuseli had certain intentions for his art it is worth noting another criterion, which might be applied when assessing his drawings - 'creativity'. Today, one might unthinkingly use the idea of artistic creativity to gauge aesthetic value. In the eighteenth century, the word

[56] *Drawing Analogies* and *Predetermined Mimesis*.

'creativity' did not exist.[57] Therefore, in this thesis, the word is avoided. Yet, where appropriate, the words 'creative', 'create', and 'created' are used, for all were employed in the period, albeit mainly to describe God's actions especially as portrayed in *Genesis*. In the eighteenth century the process that brought the world into being was understood as inseparable from the hands by which it was made. However, God's ability to produce something from nothing was believed beyond mortal scope. Such appreciation of the difference between divine and mortal agency influenced the period's conception of artistic practice, as is indicated, most particularly, in first half of the thesis.

Unlike contemporary interpretations of art making, which have tended to value highly production of the new as a demonstration of makers' originality, eighteenth-century professional artists were concerned with the concept of invention. In eighteenth-century terms, 'to invent', rather than implying actual innovation, indicated an artistic process through which 'the newness' of visual forms only reflected the degree to which an artist was able to reframe visual references that were derived from the work of notable predecessors – especially certain classical and Italian Renaissance artists - representing themes or subjects suitable for the project in hand.[58] An artwork's perceived aesthetic/conceptual value depended on the degree to which it conformed to this criterion. How artistic invention was understood to operate can be gauged from Jonathan Richardson's *An Essay on the Theory of Painting* (1715), where he stated that, 'In order to […] improve the invention, A Painter ought to converse with,

[57] Use of the term 'creativity' as part of regular English vocabulary has been traced to Alfred North Whitehead's *Religion in the Making*, 1927. See Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'Creativity and Tradition'*, Journal of the History of Ideas*, 44:1, 1983, 105-113.
[58] In this respect invention was credited with being the 'first part of painting' in Du Fresnoy's *De Arte Graphica*, Paris, 1668, 9.

and Observe all sorts of People, chiefly the Best'.[59] Richardson's dictates were subsequently rephrased in Joshua Reynolds's *Discourses on Art* (1769-90) which enhanced Richardson's concept of 'the best' reference materials and proposed that artistic invention should overlook defects commonplace in nature, in favour of generalised characteristics determined to exist in the ideal, 'central forms' that constituted classical figurative sculpture. Reynolds, defining this process in his third Discourse, noted that the central form was 'the abstract of the various individual forms belonging to [a] class.'[60] An artist making such use of representation was considered to be working in what Reynolds defined as the 'great style', one characterised by eschewal of a subject's particularities.[61] Reinforcing how this mode of artistic practice differed from creating something new, Reynolds stated 'Invention in Painting does not imply the invention of the subject',[62] for 'Invention, strictly speaking, is little more than the new combination of those images which have been previously gathered and deposited in the memory'.[63]

Fuseli's appreciation of art practice chimed with these assessments. While lecturing as Professor of Painting at the Royal Academy (1801-25), he observed that 'the term *invention* never ought to be so far misconstrued as to be confounded with that of *creation* [which is] incompatible with our notions of limited being [Fuseli's emphases]'.[64] The idea which Fuseli criticises, the assumption that human beings were capable of creating new things (this power Fuseli associated with the divine)

[59] Richardson, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting*, London, 1715, 82.
[60] Reynolds, Discourse III, 47.
[61] Reynolds introduced his definition of this style in his third Discourse, 44.
[62] Reynolds, Discourse IV, 55.
[63] Reynolds, Discourse II, 31.
[64] Fuseli, Lecture III, 408-9.

had been used previously in the eighteenth century to claim that artists, especially poets, possessed otherworldly creative abilities; it was a contention usually traced to the Earl of Shaftesbury's *Advice to an Author*, 1710: 'Such a poet is indeed a second maker: a just Prometheus under Jove'.[65] The thesis's opening chapter – *Visual Re-invention* - more fully examines the relationship between Fuseli's appreciation of artistic invention and the academic ideal. However, here considering his opinion against dominant eighteenth-century aesthetic discourse affords opportunity to assess my use of his *Lectures* in this thesis.[66]

Fuseli's *Lectures* were presented some thirty-plus years after the period of artistic activity being assessed (the 1770s). However, I contend that how and what he theorised was shaped by how he previously made art, what he made, and why it was made.[67] Therefore, I am arguing that Fuseli's drawings of the 1770s effectively served as interrogative 'graphic essays', permitting the visual rehearsing of ideas he later communicated through his *Lectures*. Support for this contention comes from the fact that a number of the ideas appearing in Fuseli's *Lectures* were previewed in his

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[65] *Soliloquy: or Advice to an Author*, London, 1710, 55.

[66] As was indicated in note 1 above, my comparisons between Fuseli's concept of art practice and academic protocols focuses on how art and artists were conventionally understood in eighteenth-century England. This English 'dominant aesthetic discourse' had been developed out of continental notions of academic art in the early 1700s; indeed, by the 1770s, the academic art theory and practice being promoted in England ostensibly conformed to a pan-European concept of appropriate artistic activity, and a related set of aesthetic theories.

[67] A comparable observation of the relationship between Fuseli's artistic and literary methods is made by Asia Haut. In her *'Visions Bred on Sense by Fancy'* Haut argues that the form of Fuseli's *Lectures* 'replicates his aesthetic style'. See *'Visions Bred on Sense by Fancy': The Transvaluation of Science, Sexuality and Polemics in the Work of Henry Fuseli and His Contemporaries*, unpublished PhD. thesis, University of Manchester, 2002, 182. Moreover, Gisela Bungarten, in *J.H. Füsslis (1741-1825) 'Lectures on Painting': Das Modell der Antike und die Moderne Nachahmung*, 2 Vols., Berlin, 2005, questions the presumed conceptual differences between Fuseli's art theory and practice. Additionally, Bungarten provides detailed assessments of the relationships, in Fuseli's *Lectures*, between the artists, artworks and other source materials to which he alluded. Bungarten's research notably examines Fuseli's considerations of the themes invention, artistic expression and imitation. Her considerations of Fuseli's art theorising provide useful conceptual frameworks for assessing further the characteristics of his artistry.

Aphorisms on Art (1788-1818) and in articles that he wrote for the *Analytical Review* (1788-98).[68] Moreover, throughout the thesis, I indicate how Fuseli's mature theoretical perspectives intersect with ideas communicated to him pre-1770. Thus, Fuseli's *Lectures on Painting* are presented as a – significant – stage within an ongoing process of thinking about and making art which was initiated during the 1770s. Indeed, during the eighteenth century artistic practice was understood as being largely determined by a multifaceted negotiation of conceptual and visual paradigms. For example, the 'grand' academic style was developed by assimilating, and reframing, conceptualisation of the visual with the idea that art should seek to rhetorically and ethically affect thought, and social behaviour, as the thesis's opening chapter indicates.[69] Therefore, within this thesis Fuseli's *Lectures* are continually presented as commensurate with this acknowledged relationship between eighteenth-century visual art and art theory. I use the *Lectures* to assist in ascertaining the particular complexion of Fuseli's imagery, and his appreciation of the purposes of art and artists. Vice versa, my analyses of Fuseli's drawings reveal his valuing of certain theoretical discourses.

In this thesis I argue that Fuseli, through his drawings of the 1770s, assessed the validity of regular visual codes and conventions. These drawings, being ostensibly private, served to inform Fuseli's own appreciation of dominant artistic protocols. As I

[68] A number of correspondences can be traced between Fuseli's *Lectures*, *Aphorisms* and journal reviews. See, for example, Fuseli's consideration of creation and invention in his third Academy Lecture (1801), 408-9 and in his 47th Aphorism. Additionally, Fuseli rehearsed ideas on the relationship of painting to poetry, appearing in Lecture III, 407, through several *Analytical Review* articles, for example, unsigned article on *The Arts* – I, June 1788, 216, and within an article of November 1794, signed R.R., XX, 259.

[69] A thorough assessment of the relationship between eighteenth-century visual art and socio-cultural ideas, is given by, for example, John Barrell in *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt*, New Haven and London, 1986.

contend throughout, these drawings informed Fuseli's theoretical comprehension of the form and function of visual art (especially its public reception), and of artists' cultural significance. As noted above, Fuseli relayed his ideas on art to the public through his *Aphorisms on Art*, articles for the *Analytical Review* and his *Lectures on Painting*. Additionally, Fuseli's drawings of the 1770s also visually informed his later paintings which, from the 1780s onwards, were frequently exhibited at notable venues, for example, London's Royal Academy. Therefore, each of these public-facing artworks, writings and verbal addresses, is united by Fuseli's conceptual/visual transforming of existing aesthetic conventions. Each of these modes of communication is underscored by a working process that was developed initially through his drawings of the 1770s. These drawings, when considered alongside Fuseli's later painted, written and spoken statements, I argue were the crucible within which he worked-out his stance in relation to accepted artistic theory and practice. So nominated, I contend that the form of Fuseli's drawings, c.1770-79, and the conceptual complexion of his ideas on art and artists, are closely related. In this thesis I assess how this relationship connects with dominant eighteenth-century aesthetic/philosophical conventions, and with Fuseli's education pre-1770. Furthermore, I propose that how Fuseli conveyed publicly his ideas regarding art, and artists', characteristics and functions, forced his audiences to re-evaluate their own conception of visual arts practice and its products. As such, Fuseli's varied creative activities contributed to a transformation of the codes conditioning visual art, and the way that these were publicly understood. Subsequently, how Fuseli revised these codes affected audience members' conceptions of the visual, of themselves and of their comprehension of their experiences. In these respects my interpretation

of Fuseli's artistic project can again be associated with Richard Clay's research into sign transformations during the French Revolution. Clay similarly contended that the Revolutionaries' (iconoclastic) alteration of royal statuary was conditioned by, and re-conditioned its public reception. Moreover, my analyses of the conceptual origins and visual characteristics of Fuseli's drawings can, as I suggested earlier in this *Introduction*, also be associated with Tom Gretton's interpretation of art objects; Gretton proposed that in order for new objects (ideas) to become commodified – they must necessarily operate in ways that both assimilate, and oppose, established cultural protocols.

Addressing omissions in Fuseli scholarship

This thesis questions what factors can be evidenced as having motivated and shaped Fuseli's art-making, helping in the assessment of why he made the type of images he did. While a number of scholars have considered 'how' and 'why' Fuseli made art, their interpretations inadequately attend to those inspirations that arguably influenced him most strongly. Consequently, these appraisals do not address fully enough the reasons for Fuseli wanting or needing to make images. David H. Solkin has critiqued this characteristic of Fuseli scholarship. His evaluation of Nancy L. Pressly's *The Fuseli Circle in Rome* notes that Pressly's analyses of Fuseli's art, although valuably assessing the 'how' and the 'what' of his visual style, fail to account for Fuseli's artistic goals.[70] Solkin argues that Pressly's conclusions are 'really parts

[70] Pressly, *The Fuseli Circle in Rome – Early Romantic Art of the 1770s*, New Haven, 1979.

of the same initial question; each simply adds another 'why?''[71] This thesis deals with 'the why' alongside 'the how' and 'the what' of Fuseli's art practice. Above all, the use of a particular mode of close visual analysis, one principally directed to Fuseli's drawings inspired by literature from the 1770s, provides new interpretations of his art. Although many scholars have examined Fuseli's artwork, my visual analyses broaden their assessments to address the issue of his need to make images. I propose that Fuseli's artistic aims are revealed by the associations he forged between his selection of visual sources, his choices and uses of graphic materials and processes, his theories of art and artists, and the aesthetic, philosophical and theological discourses which I argue most strongly informed his self-conception and artistic rationale. Indeed, throughout the thesis I indicate how the look of Fuseli's drawings can be attributed to his efforts to establish visual dialogues with particular theoretical perspectives. Thus, I suggest that the distinct visual analyses undertaken in this thesis can bring us closer to conceiving of Fuseli's creative project because my examinations of his drawings permit a viewing of the complex visual and conceptual layers which surround them. Therefore, this thesis highlights Fuseli's conception, but particularly making of images, employing these factors as crucial means for substantiating the arguments presented.

Alongside this visual/theoretical exegesis the thesis considers Fuseli and his art in other associated ways. It is also argued that the unconventionality of Fuseli's artwork resulted from his determination to challenge normative appreciations of art and artists. Additionally, it is proposed that this visual irregularity had a further purpose;

[71] David H. Solkin, review of Pressly's *The Fuseli Circle in Rome*, *The Art Bulletin*, 67:3, 1985, 507-515, 509.

the characteristics of Fuseli's artwork reveal his desire to have images function in unorthodox ways, focused particularly on audiences' conceptions of self. While each of these considerations of Fuseli's art is distinctive, my arguing for a correlation between them makes an original contribution to Fuseli scholarship.

As noted, Fuseli scholarship generally emphasises his unorthodoxy. Although this focus is most prominent, two principal interpretative frames are also discernable through which scholars have attempted to categorise Fuseli and his art. It has been claimed that Fuseli's Zurich schooling influenced his artwork. However, this contention has largely not been interrogated and Fuseli's mature art is not properly analysed in light of this education's themes. Additionally, among the diverse interpretations made of Fuseli it is possible to detect repeated scholarly interest in how his art reflects on, and responds to, aspects of eighteenth-century culture, most particularly those prevalent in England. For example, some scholars have emphasised Fuseli's favouring of sublime and gothic themes, both of which English audiences found fascinating.[72] Using these theoretical perspectives scholars have inferred that how Fuseli engaged with his chosen subject matters provides clues as to his concept of 'self'. Moreover, Fuseli's artwork is sometimes deemed to have specific functions. For instance, it has been suggested that his art was purposely designed to capitalise upon popular, and scholarly, interest in Shakespeare in late eighteenth-century England.[73] The following sub-sections of the *Introduction* analyse

[72] See, for example, Martin Myrone (ed.) *Gothic Nightmares: Fuseli, Blake and the Romantic Tradition*, London, 2006.
[73] See, for example, Walter Pape, Frederick Burwick (eds.), *The Boydell Shakespeare Gallery*, Essen, 1996, Jane Martineau (et al) *Shakespeare in Art*, London and New York, 2003, and Stuart Sillars, *Painting Shakespeare – The Artist as Critic, 1720-1820*, Cambridge, 2006.

the ways in which Fuseli scholars have dealt with these two interpretative strands, and indicates how this thesis addresses limitations in such efforts to account for the particular characteristics of Fuseli's artistry. What follows is divided into two, assessing, in turn, Fuseli's conception of self, and his artwork's status and function.

Conceptions of Self

This part of the *Introduction* explores how analysing Fuseli's formative experiences, and the ways in which these affected his self-perception while in Italy during the 1770s, can lead us to a better understanding of his self-conception. Here scholarly interpretations of Fuseli are assessed in light of how he articulated his sense of self, and against opinions of him given by his contemporaries during the 1770s. Also considered is the way that Fuseli's religious training impacted on his self identity, and how his self-understanding compared to more regular eighteenth-century notions of selfhood.

Insight into Fuseli's conception of himself, during his most important period of artistic development, comes via written communications from the 1770s between him, his Swiss and German friends, and his artist contemporaries in Italy. On 30 July 1770 Fuseli wrote to his friend from the Zurich Carolinum, Johann Lavater, indicating, at the outset, how he understood his time in Italy. Fuseli wrote, 'though I am less of a Christian than you […] the divine man will always inspire my head and my hand with the intensest ardour [yet] I shall always prefer Socrates and Brutus to the hermit

Jerome or Ambrose the bishop. I intend, however, to do what I do for the bettering of myself and therefore the world.'[74] Fuseli's framing of his Italian period through religious reference indicates the extent to which his perception of self, and goal, was affected by the theological bias of his and Lavater's Zurich educations. However, here, Fuseli allies himself with unorthodox role-models, his words being a possible homage to the non-conformist tenets associated with Zwinglianism. Significantly though, by 1770, Fuseli seems to have had a clear purpose – he aimed to work towards improving himself and, he infers, his self-improvement could serve as a catalyst for general human progress.

Many Fuseli scholars have noted that Fuseli's Zurich education affected his perception of (artistic) self and purpose, yet they have inadequately assessed this schooling's content and have fundamentally failed to acknowledge how it influenced Fuseli and his art. For example, Eudo C. Mason,[75] Frederick Antal,[76] and Gert Schiff[77] each acknowledge how Fuseli's 'mental universe' was nuanced by his Zurich schooling, indeed it is contended that Fuseli 'adopted certain ideas from Bodmer's and Breitinger's aesthetic system that were to have a decisive impact on his art'.[78] Yet, these scholars do not indicate how Fuseli realised this association of theory with art practice, or how he assimilated ideas and art-making to inform his self-conception. By contrast this thesis argues that particular cross-pollinations existed between

[74] Cited Mason, 1951, 163.
[75] *The Mind of Henry Fuseli*, London, 1951.
[76] *Fuseli Studies*, London, 1956.
[77] *Text und Oeuvrekatalog*, Zurich, 1973. This work builds on Schiff's research for his earlier Fuseli catalogue for the Zurich Kunsthaus (1969). See also *Henry Fuseli, 1741-1825*, London, 1975. A similar issue also characterises Nicholas Powell's *Fuseli: The Nightmare* (Art in Context), London, 1973.
[78] Schiff, London, 1975, 9. The ideas Schiff refers to include the relationship of mythologies to the poetic image, and the expression of human experience.

theories presented to Fuseli in Zurich, and his later art-making. It is argued that this relationship of theory and art practice helped to condition Fuseli's particular conception/production of art, and reinforced his sense of himself. Indeed, it is proposed that Fuseli's theological education continued to be an important influence during his time in Italy, leading him to investigate the possibility of using images as a way of reconciling art, life and spirit.[79]

Contrasting with the above mentioned scholars is Carol L. Hall's research which assesses the young Fuseli's theoretical interests and influences – including Zwinglianism, ancient and modern literature, classical and contemporary philosophy and aesthetics – and she proposes how these might connect conceptually.[80] Hall argues that Fuseli's schooling presented him with a series of interconnecting theoretical frameworks which, when viewed together, potentially clarify his conceptualisation of himself and his purpose. Because Hall focuses particularly on deducing Fuseli's relationship to particular scholarly strands, rather than determining how, or why, he employed these creatively or theoretically, she leaves unaddressed issues concerning Fuseli's self perception in respect of his artistry. However, her research usefully informs this study, as does Marilyn Torbruegge's, which focuses on how Fuseli's schooling impacted on his sense of self by encouraging his appreciation of the affective, and indeed spiritual, properties of particular literary works.[81]

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[79] A paraphrase of Peter Tomory's proposition that while in Italy Fuseli wished to 'to reconcile poetry and life, spirit and flesh' (*The Life and Art of Henry Fuseli*, London, 1972, 28), a contention which Tomory does not explore.

[80] Hall, *Blake and Fuseli – A Study in the Transmission of Ideas*, New York and London, 1985.

[81] See *Bodmer and Füssli: 'Das Wunderbare' and the Sublime*, unpublished PhD. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1968. The literature in question was biblical, and by Homer, Dante, Shakespeare and Milton. Christian Klemm references Torbruegge's ideas in his essay 'The Principles of Fuseli's Art, or the Aesthetics of the Stroke of Genius', in Lentzsch (ed.), 2005, 110, note 3. Here is indicated Torbruegge's contention that, 'the theory of the sublime in Fuseli is influenced by Bodmer and not, as

Additionally, Carol Hall alludes to Fuseli's perception of the artistic personality which, she argues, he understood as philosophically orientated and directed towards projecting nobility of mind and soul through the work of art. Hall determines this 'the synthesis of the person and soul of the artist with the work of art itself [which] came quite naturally to him [Fuseli]'.[82] In particular, Hall notes Johann Bodmer's powerful influence on Fuseli; Bodmer sought 'to find new 'Miltons' from among […] his attentive students'.[83] Thus, Hall contends, Bodmer's requirement that his charges should realise a sensibility commensurate with that demonstrated by those (literary) artists he was promoting as philosophical sounding boards, had a significant purpose. Like them Bodmer wished his tutees to act as bringers 'of lost or hidden truths to man'.[84] While Hall does not analyse this assertion further, chapters three and four of this thesis especially (*Transfiguring Terror* and *Predetermined Mimesis*), argue that Fuseli's conception of his artistic role was underscored by a comparable appreciation of the creative individual as a powerful agent of socio-cultural change.

Fuseli's theological education has been analysed, most insightfully in respect of his early drawings, by Camilla Smith.[85] In particular, Smith argues that Fuseli's making of these images was influenced by Bodmer's dictate that the Carolinum's students

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has otherwise been suggested, by the far later text by Burke, better known in England.' Klemm's access to these ideas was a shortened version of Torbruegge's principal argument, 'Johann Heinrich Füssli und Bodmer-Longinus: Das Wunderbare und das Erhabene', appearing in *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 46 Jg. Heft 1 (January 1972):161-185. The same source is listed among the secondary literature cited in Carol L. Hall's *Blake and Fuseli – A Study in the Transmission of Ideas*, New York and London, 1985. Torbruegge's 1972 article is also cited by Petra Maisak in, 'Henry Fuseli - Shakespeare's Painter', in *The Boydell Shakespeare Gallery*, Essen, 1996.

[82] Hall, *Blake and Fuseli – A Study in the Transmission of Ideas*, 1985, 74.

[83] *Ibid*., 17.

[84] *Ibid*., 115.

[85] *Religion, Morality and Pedagogic Methods in the Early Drawings of Henry Fuseli (1753-63)*, unpublished PhD. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2008. Smith further alludes to the significance of Fuseli's Zurich education for his art in, 'Between Fantasy and Angst: Assessing the Subject and Meaning of Henry Fuseli's Late Pornographic Drawings, 1800-25', *Art History*, 33:3, 2010, 420-447.

should seek to attain a more highly developed self-understanding. Moreover, she indicates how Zwinglianism affected both teaching materials and methods used at the Carolinum, and she assesses Fuseli's appreciation of the visual against these influences. In sum, Smith claims that Fuseli's drawings were effectively conflictive; they served to contest the values and practices conditioning Zurich life. Significantly, Smith suggests that Fuseli's adherence to particular conceptual paradigms, and his comprehension of the characteristics and objectives of visual art, inspired his understanding of himself and his purpose beyond the 1760s. While Smith's research focus means that her interpretations of Fuseli's drawings do not appraise this contention further, this thesis argues for Fuseli's continued use of such an oppositional mindset into the 1770s and beyond.

Apparently, Fuseli's experiences at the Zurich Carolinum notably conditioned his self-perception, and significantly contributed to his sense of art's possibilities. At the Carolinum Fuseli was trained as a Zwinglian preacher, being ordained on graduation in 1761.[86] This instruction arguably coloured Fuseli's later appreciation of himself and his objectives. Zwinglian preachers had an important role, they were characterised as prophets. Their task was to use their preaching to instil into people the importance of religious faith, so as to compel them to recognise their flawed and spiritually impoverished natures.[87] According to Zwinglianism all people were divinely predestined but must be made aware of the fact via clerical oratory. However, it was not the nature of Zwinglianism's elective doctrine 'to explain the inexplicable, but to

[86] Fuseli practiced in this capacity for approximately one year.
[87] Smith, 2008, 26, footnote 66 indicates how, within Zwinglianism, fear of spiritual deficiency was believed 'the key to all knowledge'. For more detail on this, and other aspects of Zwinglian belief see, for instance, Gottfried W. Locher, *Zwingli's Thought, New Perspectives, Studies in the History of Christian Thought*, Vol. XXV, Leiden, 1981.

bring [its] mystery to our minds'.[88] Such a concept of experience which made one aware of alternative, mysterious, interpretations of self and phenomena is used, especially in the second half of this thesis, to inform analyses of Fuseli's imagery. Fuseli's pictures, in keeping with his theological training's unorthodoxy, featured unconventional subjects. Whereas visual art directed to human enhancement might be anticipated to portray positive subjects, for instance sanctioned religious narratives, Fuseli's art focused on supernatural occurrences.[89] However, the thesis's final chapter shows that Fuseli's use of the supernatural can be squared with more usual conceptions of the religious, if twentieth-century interpretations of the sacred and profane are taken into account.[90]

Fuseli's Zurich schooling thus provided him with opportunities to foster a particular sort of visionary persona. Evidence of this persona's influence can be found in his 'Second Ode on Art', written in Rome during the 1770s. The Ode indicates how Fuseli employed far-sightedness when considering his stance to normative artistic practice, and to conventional perceptions of being an artist:

> Among the mobs that every northern wind
> Blows into your palaces, oh Rome, […]
> The Vermin of art
> [I wandered] with trembling foot among your temples,
> And cursed in furor insensate

[88] Locher, 1981, 140.
[89] Fuseli's interest in the supernatural he owed to his education. His mentors emphasised how theological truth could attain reasoned form by employing evidence of the supernatural as presented in Holy Scripture.
[90] The twentieth-century theories cited are by Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane, The Nature of Religio*n, New York, 1959, Emile Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society*, Miami, 1973, and Alain Besançon, *The Forbidden Image – An Intellectual History of Iconoclasm*, Chicago, 2000.

> The academies of London and of France […]
> I exclaimed: 'Is this the way to immortality?
> Did you create, Prime Mover, this, my exalted spirit,
> The sympathies of this, my soul,
> But to count muscles and to mix pigments?'
> Did Angelo unlock the gates of heaven
> And bid the gods stride among men
> In order now to arbitrate the quarrel
> Of French and Britons about nature and style?[91]

Fuseli, while clearly objecting to what he saw as the constraints that creative protocol placed on art practice, equally indicates the continued influence of his theological training. He identifies a correspondence between his artistic purposes, and his God-given soul, the theme of his letter to Lavater of 30 July 1770 cited above. Additionally, Fuseli's Ode infers a connection between his creative project and Michelangelo's – a chief influence, as argued especially in chapter two (*Drawing Analogies*) - particularly regarding what Fuseli interpreted as the Renaissance master's distinct visual bridging of earthly and supernatural realms.

While confronting conventional notions of being an artist, Fuseli's conception of self also challenged received ideas of personhood. As Dror Wahrman and others have argued, in the eighteenth century the prevailing understanding of personal identity was different to ours.[92] While we understand selfhood as characterised by

[91] Henry Fuseli, 'Second Ode on Art', trans., in A.M. Atkins, ''Both Turk and Jew': Notes on the Poetry of Henry Fuseli, with Some Translations', *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly*, 16, 1983, 209-10, cited Martin Myrone, *Bodybuilding, Reforming Masculinities in British Art 1750-1810*, New Haven and London, 2005, 168.
[92] Wahrman forwards his argument concerning self in the eighteenth century in *The Making of the Modern Self, Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*, Yale, 2004. His opinions are

psychological depth and a sense of individuality,[93] Wahrman contends that we should acknowledge how, for most of the eighteenth century, the idea of personal identity was tied to the notion of 'identicality', the 'collective grouping highlighting whatever a person has in common with others'.[94] Commensurately, religious practices, being central to the lives of the eighteenth-century majority, affected notions of identity and reinforced people's appreciation of their communal responsibilities.[95] These interpretations of personal identity and religious customs suggest how eighteenth-century people might have been inclined to resist intense self-examination, rather focusing on the degree to which they understood themselves 'as like' their peers. As noted above, this was not the concept of self that Fuseli was made aware of at the Carolinum, or that he later communicated in his 'Second Ode on Art'.

While at the Carolinum Fuseli's self-conception would also have been affected by the ideas of thinkers such as John Locke; [96] his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* offered an appreciation of selfhood that radically challenged

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corroborated by, for example, Roy Porter, in *Flesh in the Age of Reason*, London, 2003 (see, for example,116-117), Angela Goodden (ed.), *The Eighteenth-Century Body (Art, History, Literature, Medicine)*, Oxford, 2002 (for example,12-16), and John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination (English Culture in the Eighteenth Century)*, Chicago, 1997 (for example, 101-106).

[93] Such an idea only became more commonplace in the later 1700s; the *OED's* earliest recorded use of 'personality' as might be understood today, that which makes one person distinct from another, dates from 1795.

[94] *The Making of the Modern Self*, 276. Wahrman's interpretation of self in the eighteenth century is supported by the period's attitudes towards painted portraits, novels and theatrical performance. In each, people were regarded as types rather than as individuals. For more detail on spectator attitudes to these aspects of eighteenth-century culture see, for example, Shearer West, *Portraiture*, Oxford, 2004, Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture*, London, 1997, Louise Lippincott's essay 'Expanding on portraiture' in *The Consumption of Culture 1600-1800, Image, Object, Text*, Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (eds.), London, 1995, 75-89, Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England*, Yale, 1993, and Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760*, London, 1988.

[95] As Nigel Aston has argued in *Art and Religion in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, London, 2009, 43, 'state ideologies of obedience were primarily effective because of the extent to which they complied with Christian notions of good conduct'.

[96] For evidence of Fuseli's familiarity with Locke's work see Smith, *Religion, Morality and Pedagogic Methods in the Early Drawings of Henry Fuseli (1753-63)*, 2008, 114, footnote 146.

conventional thought. Locke's *Essay* effectively shattered the late seventeenth-century philosophical concept 'substantial self' which denoted that man possessed an indivisible and immortal essence, assuring 'his personal continuity and ontological permanence.'[97] Challenging this idea, Locke proposed three ways in which human identity could be regarded; as the same substance, as the same man, and as the same person. While the first two of these largely upheld orthodox theological views of the self – that man was a compound of substantial soul and substantial body – Locke's idea of the person was radical. Locke asserted that the only criterion of personal identity was identity-of-consciousness, not identity-of-substance, and it was this notion of consciousness that served as the proof of personal identity.[98] Therefore, the self, as Locke determined it, was 'that conscious thinking thing […] which is sensible or conscious of pleasure or pain, capable of happiness or misery, and is so concerned for *itself*, as far as that consciousness extends [Locke's emphasis].'[99] Man was not merely conscious. His consciousness was accompanied by concern, thus assisting him to establish moral accountability.[100]

The extent to which Fuseli seems to have absorbed Lockean ideas of self is illustrated by the recollections of Prince Hoare, an artist contemporary of Fuseli's in Rome.[101] Hoare noted that Fuseli's approach to art making was particular, for Fuseli

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[97] Christopher Fox, *Locke and the Scriblerians, Identity and Consciousness in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Berkeley, 1988, 15.
[98] For more detail on this idea see Locke's *Essay*, 180.
[99] *Ibid*., 186.
[100] Besides Fuseli's tutors Locke's new concept of self was also highly attractive to English intellectuals, for example, Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755), classified 'Self' using Locke's definition: 'that conscious thinking thing […] concerned for itself, as far as that consciousness extends'; Locke so defined 'self' in Book II of the *Essay* (see, for instance, 186 in the Everyman edition, John W. Yolton (ed.), 1998).
[101] English painter and dramatist (1755-1834). Hoare became known for his historical scenes and portraits.

did not ‘pursue the vulgar track of students, who confine themselves to the servile copying of the works of ancient masters’, rather he deemed his mind to be ‘exalted by reflection of their copious and enlightened labours, and retiring from intense contemplation of them to his study, while he endeavoured to lift his own ideas to the standard of their excellence, and assimilate his mind to theirs’.[102] Thus, as is evidenced by this reminiscence and Fuseli’s appreciation of Michelangelo’s artistry in the ‘Second Ode on Art’, Fuseli appears to pursue an alternate path to self-realisation. In both accounts Fuseli is portrayed as modelling his conception of artistic self on that he deduced to be exhibited by notable forebears. Yet, in scholarship, Fuseli’s purposes, in respect of his artistic influences, are not fully explored in relation to his art-making, an omission that is addressed, most particularly, in this thesis’s second, third and fourth chapters. According to Joseph Farington, Fuseli was apparently reinforcing his visual studies by considering his favoured artists in light of particular literary works, for example, those by Dante, Shakespeare and Milton.[103] As these writers had been identified in Fuseli’s schooling as potential bringers ‘of lost or hidden truths to man’, it is conceivable that Fuseli similarly considered his chosen visual sources.[104] Commensurate with Fuseli’s received appreciation of such creative individuals this thesis argues that he used his conception of self, and consequently his artwork, as devices for challenging and altering commonly held understandings of

[102] Prince Hoare, ‘Biographical Sketch of Henry Fuseli, Esq. RA’, *The Monthly Mirror*: *Reflecting Men and Manners*, Vol. XI, 7, 1801.
[103] See *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, Vol. V, August 1801-March 1803, entry for Friday 1 October, 1802, Kenneth Garlick and Angus Macintyre (eds.), Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1979. Farington notes that Fuseli was studying these literary works ‘with inclination’.
[104] Carol Hall, 1985, 115. Hall is identifying the particular characteristic of Homer’s – and by implication Shakespeare’s and Milton’s – artistic character, and purpose, as communicated to Fuseli by Johann Bodmer at the Zurich Carolinum.

the relationship between human identity and sensate experience. This interpretation of how Fuseli conceived of himself, and his art, has not been made previously.

Art, its status and functions

The claim that Fuseli employed his conception of self, and his art, to address his contemporary situation leads us to consider a second key theme in the thesis, the relationship of his artwork to the leading aesthetic and philosophical ideas of eighteenth-century European culture, and those predominant in eighteenth-century England in particular. This sub-section, in common with the above assessments of Fuseli's selfhood, appraises how Fuseli's contemporaries, and more recent scholars, have considered his artwork's status and its purposes. As indicated earlier in this *Introduction* eighteenth-century artistic protocol determined that visual art should be concerned with rhetorically and ethically affecting people's thought and social behaviours. This was achieved through a mode of artistry which appropriated and visually manipulated imagery originating in select examples of classical and Renaissance art; this process is examined in greater detail in the thesis's opening chapter. However, during the 1770s, Fuseli's friends, and his contemporaries in Italy and England, observed how his artwork, and artistic disposition, challenged this norm.

Johann Herder, for example, noted that Fuseli's images did not share academic art's concerns with ideals of visual beauty.[105] Rather, Herder stressed that Fuseli's artwork had the potential to unnerve. Contemporaneously, the amateur artist R.C. Whalley opined that Fuseli's art was superior to that of the celebrated academic painter Benjamin West.[106] Continuing this line of appraisal, Lavater, in letters to Herder, proclaimed that Fuseli's artistry was uncommonly powerful.[107] This opinion was reciprocated by Herder in his communications to Hamann.[108] Indeed, similar views were proffered by London's art critics on assessing Fuseli's drawing *The Death of Cardinal Beaufort*, one of a small number of more finished pictures that Fuseli sent for exhibition at the Royal Academy during the 1770s.[109] A critic in the *General Advertiser* considered Fuseli's drawing to portray 'extravagance', 'wildness' and 'violence', qualities that clashed with those anticipated of an Academy exhibit which was expected to promote classical ideals in accord with academic visual protocol, as outlined, for example, in Reynolds's *Discourses*.[110] The terminology employed by this critic, and indeed that used by Fuseli's friends to describe him and his artwork, matched those words being used increasingly commonly from the mid-eighteenth century to determine the sublime and its affect. The words 'wildness' and 'violence' appeared in Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry* (1757) as part of an assessment

[105] Herder recorded this view in letters to Hamann of May and November 1774, which included comparisons between Fuseli's work and Raphael Mengs's, see Mason 1951, 69.
[106] See Whalley's letter to his brother of 3 September 1773, in Weinglass, *The Collected English Letters of Henry Fuseli*, London, 1982, 15.
[107] See Lavater's letters of 4 and 16 November, 1774, cited Mason, 1951, 67; for example, Lavater exclaimed to Herder that Fuseli possessed an unusual mix of character traits, 'Nothing but energy, profusion and calm! The wildness of the warrior'.
[108] Herder felt that Fuseli's artistry was comparable to 'a mountain torrent', letter to Hamann, May 1774, cited Mason, 1951, 69. Similar opinion of Fuseli was exchanged between John Cartwright and Miss A.K. Dashwood on 12 May 1772, see Weinglass, 1982, 13.
[109] This picture, although made in 1772, was submitted to the 1774 exhibition.
[110] For more detail of this review see *Public Advertiser*, Tuesday 3 May, 1774, issue 13013.

of how the concept 'Power' was sublime.[111] This way of describing Fuseli's art, and its consideration in terms of an eighteenth-century understanding of the sublime, has underpinned recent scholarly assessments of Fuseli, and his artwork.

Martin Myrone argues that Fuseli used the sublime – as portrayed in Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry* – as inspiration for developing his artistic and personal characteristics, especially in order to enhance his professional reputation among the art gallery-going public.[112] Additionally, Myrone suggests that Fuseli's use of sublimity was determined by his interest in responding visually to changing conceptions of the artwork, and its perceived functions, in late eighteenth-century England.[113] While Myrone's arguments persuasively attribute purpose to Fuseli's art, they do not substantially take into account the influences of Fuseli's formative years, and how these might have affected his appreciation of art's function.

Myrone's emphasising of the sublime does address Fuseli's artwork via an important influence on Fuseli's artistic self-conception, on what he considered art's characteristics to be, and on that he understood art to be capable of doing. The sublime was a principal discourse promoted by Fuseli's Zurich tutors. However, they concentrated on Longinus's rather than Burke's theory of sublimity, as Marilyn

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[111] Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Part II, Section V.

[112] Here I refer, in particular, to those people attending exhibitions held at London's Royal Academy. For examples of Myrone's scholarship on this theme, see, for instance, *Sublime as Spectacle: The Transformation of Ideal Art at Somerset House*, in David H. Solkin (ed.), *Art on the Line, Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House 1780-1836*, New Haven, 2001, 77-91, and *Henry Fuseli*, London, 2001.

[113] Myrone presents this line of argument most notably in *Gothic Nightmares: Fuseli, Blake and the Romantic Imagination*, London, 2006. He forwards a comparable contention in his Tate paper of Spring, 2004: 'Gothic Romance and the Quixotic Hero: A Pageant for Henry Fuseli in 1783', and in *Bodybuilding*: *Reforming Masculinities in British Art 1750-1810*, New Haven and London, 2005, especially chapters 7 and 9.

Torbruegge convincingly argues.[114] She proposes that the Longinian sublime equally conditioned Fuseli's understanding of Homer, biblical narrative, Shakespeare and Milton. The Longinian sublime encouraged interpretation of these literary sources as counterparts, and as a vital means for improving human perception, and understandings. Longinus also considered the sublime to be a device capable of enhancing the soul's magnificence; the sublime's appropriate (artistic) construction and use was, apparently, ethically and spiritually motivated. Indeed, hints as to this characteristic of the sublime are present in more recent Fuseli scholarship; Christian Klemm provides a similar assessment of Fuseli's appreciation and use of sublimity.[115] Klemm and Torbruegge's characterisation of Fuseli's view of the sublime is adopted, and critically modified, in the second half of this thesis to construct a particular interpretation of him and his art, one which argues that Fuseli's image-making was motivated by his belief that visual art could initiate improvements to the human condition. Previously, scholars have suggested that Fuseli's Zurich education primed him with such an understanding of literary art's potential. Yet, this aspect of Fuseli's schooling has not persuasively been linked to his formulating of a particular visual style, or to this style's potential use for ethical, or spiritual, purposes; this thesis addresses this omission.

However, Fuseli scholars have reflected on his understanding of how the sublime might be evoked through a certain pictorial manner, one perceivable in the work of other artists, notably Michelangelo. Both Michael H. Duffy and Nancy L. Pressly have so appraised Fuseli's conception of art, although neither has effectively interpreted

[114] In *Bodmer and Füssli: 'Das Wunderbare' and the Sublime*, PhD. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1968.
[115] See *Fuseli – The Wild Swiss*, Lentzsch (ed.), Zurich, 2005, 90.

his image-making in this regard.[116] Nevertheless, Duffy and Pressly do identify that Fuseli was interested in how sublimity was portrayed within both classical and eighteenth-century theoretical discourses. For example, Duffy indicates that Fuseli's conception of sublimity reveals his awareness of Quintilian and Longinus's theories of the sublime, and its appraisal in Lord Kames's *Elements of Criticism* (1762).[117] Duffy subsequently references these source materials to Fuseli's *Lectures*, indicating that therein Fuseli merged classical and contemporary notions of sublimity with his opinions on Homer and Michelangelo's work. The aligning of Fuseli's ideas on literary and visual art with broader theoretical discourses, and the tying of all these notions to his officially stated theory of art, is unusual in Fuseli scholarship. This conceptual framework provides a precursor for my research, which regularly indicates connections between Fuseli's theoretical inspirations and his art practice. However, unlike previous scholars, I argue that a discursive relationship exists between Fuseli's practising of art and his theorising on art and artists, a contention which corresponds with the important point I made earlier in this *Introduction* concerning my interpretation of Fuseli's artistic modus operandi; that Fuseli's manipulation of visual source materials served to transform the codes and conventions underpinning visual art's standard ideas, and practices.

Conceiving of Fuseli, his art and his influences via such a visual/conceptual dialogue, has a precedent; Luisa Calè employed a comparable methodology when researching

[116] See Duffy's 'Michelangelo and the Sublime in Romantic Art Criticism', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 56:2, 1995, 217-238, and Pressly's *The Fuseli Circle in Rome – Early Romantic Art of the 1770s*, New Haven, 1979. Some attempt has been made to consider Fuseli's images in terms of discourses on the sublime by Karen Junod (see 'Henry Fuseli's Pragmatic use of Aesthetics: His Epic illustrations of Macbeth*'*, *Word & Image*, 19:3, 2003), although she focuses on Fuseli's art post-1780 and uses Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry* to frame her discussion.
[117] Fuseli read Kames's text in 1764.

Fuseli's Milton Gallery (1799).[118] Her study contends that how Fuseli conceived of this project provided the art he produced with a particular function. Calè proposes that Fuseli sought to present spectators with a novel, and affective, viewing experience one which altered their comprehension of Milton's epic. Fuseli achieved this by purposely offsetting a series of his paintings of select scenes from *Paradise Lost* with extracts from Milton's text. Moreover, Fuseli's making of pictures for this project effectively coincided with his giving of the first of his Royal Academy *Lectures on Painting* (1801). It is not unreasonable to assume that the ideas contributing to the Milton Gallery might have influenced Fuseli's official theory of art (earlier in the *Introduction* I indicated how aspects of these *Lectures* were rehearsed through ideas that Fuseli had communicated in, for example, the *Analytical Review*). Additionally, the concept which Calè notes underpinned Fuseli's Milton project reflects how his own schooling confirmed close associations between imaginative literary epics, and their readers. Thus, the conceptual foundations of the Milton Gallery, besides arguably colouring Fuseli's Academy addresses can, as this thesis contends, be traced back to his Zurich education in the late 1750s/early 1760s.[119]

Calè's appraisal of Fuseli's Milton Gallery implies that he possessed a particular sense of art's function, one formed from a conscious merging of different art forms with contrasting conceptions of creative practice. Such an appreciation of Fuseli's art was given in the 1770s. A critic in the *St. James's Chronicle*, commenting on Fuseli's now lost painting *A Scene from Macbeth* on show at the 1777 Royal Academy

[118] *Fuseli's Milton Gallery, 'Turning Readers into Spectators'*, Oxford, 2006.
[119] So considered, my acknowledgement of Fuseli's *Lectures* as a theoretical end-point at which he coalesced ideas he had absorbed previously and re-framed through art-making, appears justified.

exhibition,[120] reckoned that Fuseli's picture demonstrated 'too much poetry, and not enough painting'.[121] This critic considered that Fuseli had contravened the parameters normally governing painting practice, an evaluation of Fuseli's artistic procedures which is paralleled in this thesis. My argument asserts that one way in which Fuseli modified his images' expressive potentials was by re-working conventions usually associated with eighteenth-century theatrical performance; this contention is assessed in detail in chapters two and three.[122] This line of argument reinforces one of my key proposals; that Fuseli sought to enlarge the potential and power of images by contesting conventional understandings of the visual and its functions.

The claim that Fuseli found the theatrical particularly appealing has also been considered by Gert Schiff in the catalogue accompanying the Tate's 1975 Fuseli retrospective exhibition.[123] Therein Schiff quotes from an essay by Giulio Carlo Argan that, Schiff believes, 'sheds a good deal of light on Fuseli's attitude to Shakespeare'.[124] Argan, relating the affectivity of Shakespearean performance to the impassioned nature of Fuseli's artwork, suggests that the emotion portrayed through Fuseli's art is not pathetic or moving. Rather, it should be seen 'in a purely moral

[120] The exhibited work was identified as *A Scene from Macbeth* in the exhibition catalogue – painting 'No.127' – but it has also been connected with a small painting of *Macbeth and the Armed Head*, and the drawing *The Witches Show Macbeth Banquo's Descendants* (1773-79).
[121] *St. James's Chronicle*, 24-6 April, 1777, issue 2516.
[122] Fuseli's interest in contemporary theatre, especially the performances of David Garrick, is noted by Petra Maisak in 'Henry Fuseli – 'Shakespeare's Painter', *The Boydell Shakespeare Gallery*, Walter Pape and Frederick Burwick (eds.), Essen, 1996, 57-73. Maisak proposes that Fuseli's experience of Garrick's Shakespearean performances, in London during the 1760s, might have affected Fuseli's awareness of classical art when in Italy.
[123] *Henry Fuseli, 1741-1825*, London, 1975.
[124] Schiff, 1975, 11. Schiff quotes from G.C. Argan's, 'Fuseli, Shakespeare's Painter', in an edition of Shakespeare's Plays, C.V. Lodovici (ed.), Einaudi, 1960; quoted by Mario Praz in *Il patto col serpente*, Mondadori, 1971, 18-19, note 1 (trans).

light'.[125] Moreover, Argan observes that this emotion does 'not occur naturally in his [Fuseli's] works, but is to a certain extent artificial'.[126] Argan's proposals further reinforce my claims that Fuseli sought to work towards the improvement of humanity,[127] and that his image-making was conditioned by a drive to provide novel, even un-natural, viewing experiences. The particularity of Fuseli's creative methods was, I argue, a consequence of his synthesising of theoretical discourses, art forms and artists, and his questioning of their values and purposes. Although previous Fuseli scholars have (to an extent), noted that he so amalgamated artistic and conceptual conventions, my presentation of his artistry as a particular complex of visual and theoretical discourses is new.

Much of the scholarship discussed in this, and the previous sub-section, has argued that Fuseli's self-perception, and the nature of his artwork, were influenced by a variety of discourses. Yet, most of this research fails to address how such ideas contributed to the appearance of his art. Scholarship has not completely appraised how Fuseli converted his influences into images, or how certain of these inspirations came to shape his visual style. This style's characteristics have been discussed most prominently in the research of Frederick Antal and Nancy L. Pressly.[128] However, nowhere has Fuseli's artistic style been properly appraised in terms of the various stimuli that would have most urgently affected his self-perception and his creative

[125] *Ibid*.
[126] *Ibid*. Schiff contends that a similar conception underpinned Fuseli's visual interpretations of Milton.
[127] In a letter to Lavater of 30 July, 1770, Fuseli had stated how he sought 'the bettering of […] the world', while an anonymous letter from an Irish R.A. student to his father (dating possibly from 1809, see Weinglass, 1982, 375), noted how Fuseli worked 'for posterity'.
[128] See Antal's *Fuseli Studies* (1956), and Pressly's *The Fuseli Circle in Rome* (1979).

purposes, and subsequently led him to adopt certain graphic techniques and visual strategies.

Twentieth-century scholars have noted that Fuseli's drawings, rather than his paintings, exemplify his 'claims to greatness'.[129] Yet, these authorities have not analysed these images in ways that might, most effectively, interpret Fuseli's artistic aims. By contrast, early nineteenth-century observers of Fuseli's images appear to have detected that it was the characteristics of Fuseli's artworks which denoted how they should be perceived, and which belied his artistic ambitions. For example, Leigh Hunt contended that Fuseli's draughtsmanship was irregular, Fuseli was 'ostentatious with […] limbs and muscles […] as he could not draw them'.[130] Hunt also seemed to infer a motive behind Fuseli's, apparent, graphic ineptitude. Hunt noted that in Fuseli's art an 'arm or leg was to be thrust down one's throat, because he knew we should dispute the truth of it.'[131] Such an observation implies a suspicion that Fuseli's artistry hinted at underlying objectives, in this case the contestation of accepted aesthetic conventions. As will be recalled, this statement chimes with opinion voiced during the 1770s regarding Fuseli's visual challenging of dominant academic protocols, and associated discourses concerning visual art's functions. Furthermore, in 1829, Allan Cunningham opined that only via Fuseli's drawings might one 'feel his powers and know him truly.'[132] Moreover, Cunningham reckoned that Fuseli grappled 'with whatever he thought too weighty for others', and that 'A

[129] Eudo Mason, 1951, 14. A similar conception of Fuseli's drawings has been given by Gert Schiff, initially in an essay on Fuseli in 1959, and later in his 1973 *Text und Oeuvrekatalog*, and by Bernhard von Waldkirch, in his chapter 'Fuseli's Early Drawings: Transformations in Expression', in *Fuseli - The Wild Swiss*, Lentzsch (ed.), Zurich, 2005.
[130] From *Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries*, 1828, cited Mason, 1951, 73.
[131] *Ibid*.
[132] From *Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, 6 Vols., London, 1830-33, cited Mason, 1951, 76.

common mind, having no sympathy with his soaring' would too quickly perceive his work as defective.[133] So considered, Fuseli's images appear to have been designed to address only those persons who were intellectually capable of comprehending their suggestive implications.

Commensurate with these nineteenth-century observations, I identify Fuseli's drawings as pivotal for attaining a fuller understanding of the complexions of his artistic self, and of his conception of the visual's status and its purposes. I argue that Fuseli's artistic objectives are most appropriately conceived of by scrutinising these drawings' practical and conceptual underpinnings. Indeed, besides being a principal research method underpinning this thesis, my close and detailed visual analyses of Fuseli's drawings of the 1770s are original because of the ways in which I argue that these works engaged with the aesthetic, philosophical and theological discourses with which Fuseli became familiar pre-1770.

Thesis structure

Due to the diverse historical, theoretical and visual materials used, each of the four chapters is sub-sectioned to aid navigation of the argument. The thesis effectively divides into two. The opening two chapters ostensibly focus on how Fuseli negotiated relationships between drawing practice and subject matters which led him to, necessarily, re-frame dominant contemporary aesthetic discourses. The third and

[133] *Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, 1830-33, cited Mason, 1951, 71.

fourth chapters more closely assess the character of Fuseli's revised concept of art and how this was reflected in his drawing practice. In these two chapters, particular attention is given to how the notions 'sublime' and 'otherworldly' shaped Fuseli's awareness of his artistic purpose, how these ideas conditioned his conception of lived experience and, consequently, influenced his invention of a visual style capable of affecting audience's comprehensions of perceived phenomena. The chapters are structured around, and begin by appraising, fundamental conventions conditioning eighteenth-century academic art practice, namely invention, drawing, the sublime and imitation, and show how Fuseli's conception and practicing of art aligned with, or challenged, these creative protocols.

Chapter one (*Visual Re-invention*) begins by assessing eighteenth-century artistic invention focusing on dominant academic practice. It is noted how normative depictive modes aped the visual refinement and figurative sedateness perceived in classical art, appropriating these qualities into new images that were focused on modifying audiences' perceptions and actions. Motivation for such artistry is shown as having been provided by a range of aesthetic and philosophical discourses focused on securing visual art's ethical purpose. These artistic conventions are contrasted with Fuseli's imagery. It is indicated that while Fuseli's images appear visually different to academic art - for instance, he used Shakespearean subjects not endorsed classical narratives - his depictions feature visual sources like those used in dominant practice. It is argued that Fuseli reworked these sources, and that his art practice suggests that he strove to contest visual norms and challenge what was assumed to be knowable about oneself and sensate experience; these foci

characterised his Zurich education. The chapter concludes by stating that Fuseli's conception of art practice owed much to the pedagogic mediums employed by his Zurich mentors; Fuseli's drawings are noted to probe at what should be considered art's form and function, and determined the nature of its audience.

Chapter two (*Drawing Analogies*) more closely assesses how Fuseli conceptualised, and visually reframed, dominant art practice's source materials. Considering these activities I analyse the ways in which Fuseli transformed those visual and theoretical codes which conventionally constituted normative artistic practice. The chapter is divided into two parts focusing, in turn, on how Fuseli used drawing to reassess classical and Renaissance depictions of the human form. Fuseli's revision of art practice is also shown to connect with his particular conceptualisation of visual art and its purposes. Moreover, the chapter examines how Fuseli framed his concept of art and demonstrates his challenging, assimilating or discounting of academic theory. In sum, Fuseli is shown to disassemble dominant art practice/theory so as to prepare the ground for a revised concept of art and of its functions. This he notably achieved by depicting the human body as a variously expressive form in contradiction of academic protocols. Fuseli's particularly nuanced art practice – and the theory reinforcing it – is argued to have also taken account of the impassioned characterisations that he had viewed on the London theatre stage. The chapter concludes by suggesting that not only did Fuseli propose new conceptualisations/depictions of classical and Renaissance art but, in doing so, he effectively unhinged normative art theory and practice. He queried what should be classed as appropriate conceptions/representations of the human, whether art's

ethical ramifications/functions became modified by depicting certain subjects, and questioned to what degree choice of subject and depictive mode affected visual art's connotations.

The third chapter (*Transfiguring Terror*) considers the sublime in relation to Fuseli's art theory/practice. Initially, the chapter examines the sublime's role in academic art, how the concept was applied to the work and character of particular Renaissance artists, and how their works' perceived sublimity reinforced the academic ideal. This appreciation of the sublime is contrasted with how Fuseli came to understand it through his Zurich education. Therein, the sublime was presented as a means for elevating human intellect and spirit through its ability to shock the experiencing subject into new modes of comprehension. The sublime, commensurate with the emphases of Zwinglian theology, was considered as a means for attaining an increased appreciation of oneself and one's purposes. It is noted that Fuseli was instructed to appreciate how particular evocations of the sublime should be considered an ethical means for improving individuals and societies because these served as an enabling mechanism for improving greatness of mind and character/soul. The chapter also indicates that Fuseli's conception of the sublime contributed notably to his art theory. Consequently, my attention turns to Fuseli's *Lectures* wherein his assessments of sublime visual invention promoted the work of art as a surrogate for sensate experience; commensurately Fuseli's appreciation of the visual is again noted to reflect his perception of eighteenth-century theatre and acting. Subsequently, Fuseli's visual representations of the sublime are considered. Attention is given to how his pictorial designs referenced the sublime's

characterisation in his education – and Fuseli's subsequent conception of it – how his pictures differed from academic art's sublime subjects, and the ways in which Fuseli's depictions of sublime themes contrasted with those by artists in his 'Rome circle'. In conclusion, it is noted that Fuseli's appreciation of artistic purpose, and his visualisations of the sublime, were directed to that he perceived to be art's ultimate objective; the enhancement of human existence.

In order to clarify the interconnections being proposed between the theoretical and practical emphases of Fuseli's artistry, the final chapter (*Predetermined Mimesis*) is tri-partite, and considers the theme of artistic imitation. In particular, the chapter argues that Fuseli's construction of images reveals how his art practice effectively imitated the elevated creative manner he perceived to be a common feature of the work of Homer, Shakespeare and Michelangelo. Accordingly, further attention is paid to the differences between Fuseli's artwork and dominant academic practice, to his appreciation of the depicted human form, and to the way that he applied his comprehension of artistic imitation to compose and process images to effectively serve as sublime otherworldly experiences. It is proposed that Fuseli's artistic manipulation of the visual, to this end, reveals him as using drawing to picture a kind of 'meta-theatre', through which extra-ordinary experiences might be provided. So judged, Fuseli's art is noted to develop his appreciation of the sublime, reveal his debt to eighteenth-century theatre, and to reflect his conception of religious mystery, one derived from Zwinglian theology and his schooling in particular interpretations of 'the real'. Importantly, it is contended that Fuseli's conceptualisation and practising of art were wilful means for exposing the supposed certainties of dominant conceptual

systems, schemes he conceived as limiting for enhanced appreciations of self, and existence. In this respect Fuseli's artistry is again considered to be a discursive modification of normative visual discourses, a means of disputing existing knowledge of their regular employment in artistic practice – what Richard Clay would call 'discursive sign transformation' and the OED would say was the attacking of cherished beliefs. In conclusion, the chapter proposes that Fuseli's drawings were crafted to serve as affirmative, mysterious and perception-altering experiences. They can be considered as devices for instituting enhancements to audiences', and his own, comprehensions of their potentially exalted states.

My conclusion proposes that Fuseli's artistry (a unified scheme, comprising his artistic persona and his visual and theoretical works) was directed towards urging his contemporaries to break free from standard modes of perception and comprehension of lived experience. Rather, his artistic activities sought to encourage his peers to actively dispute how accepted conventions – of, for example, visual experience, aesthetic value and of self-conception – had delimited their comprehensions of sentient existence. I propose that as a result of his schooling, his subsequent experiences and his artistic endeavours during the 1770s, Fuseli had formed a highly developed self-appreciation (he considered himself to be an artist-preacher-teacher) and, via this persona, he attempted to persuade his contemporaries to live more imaginatively and expansively in order to elevate their own humanity. Through the perception-altering characteristics of his images from the 1770s (which I deem to have possessed features that are also identifiable in his art post-1780) and his philosophy of art, Fuseli markedly disputed the enlightening functions usually

attributed to eighteenth-century visual art – with these he problematised dominant epistemological and ontological principles. Fuseli's artistry was, I propose, concerned with promoting an unorthodox way of seeing/thinking which necessitated a person's striving to develop a particularly intense vision of the complexities and potentials of their being; consequently, they might become a 'sublime individual'.

CHAPTER 1
VISUAL RE-INVENTION

As indicated in the main *Introduction*, this chapter assesses Fuseli's mode of visual invention against dominant academic protocols. According to these standards artists were required to develop images showing idealised human beings based on those which featured in the examples of classical and Renaissance art that the eighteenth century considered most noteworthy. Focusing on these perfected human types academic artists sought to produce images that reinforced and promoted a range of, related, aesthetic and philosophical principles; these requirements are outlined during the opening section of this chapter. In sum, academic art was a depictive mode deemed capable of asserting particular socio-cultural virtues, and images produced according to its criteria were believed able to elevate spectators' perceptions and actions. Such images also inferred a distinct idea of the artist, as one possessed of highly refined aesthetic, ethical and intellectual convictions. So defined, academic visual artists were considered to have ostensibly moral concerns; their work, for those capable of its interpretation, served to determine and safeguard agreed standards of aesthetic taste, and reinforce desirable, social and cultural practices.[134] Largely, the conceptual, aesthetic, commercial and societal value of eighteenth-century visual art was determined by the extent to which it conformed to these tenets.

[134] As indicated further into this chapter, academic art, principally in the form of history paintings, was directed at the social elite, those who determined public virtues and helped to codify the genres of painting. John Barrell notes how these genres were ranked, 'according to [this elite's] tendency to promote them', *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt*, New Haven and London, 1986, 1.

This chapter first assesses the academic style's conceptual basis (*Eighteenth-century academic art practice and aesthetic theory*), acknowledging how a normative mode of visual representation was established through the interconnecting of particular scholarly and visual discourses. Attention is given to how English pictorial theory was developed out of ideas promoted by the French Royal Academy of Arts, and the way that this conceptualising of the visual guided production of a dominant, pan-European, style of contemporary art. Subsequently, Fuseli's artistic practice is analysed in the sub-sections *Academic principles of invention and Fuseli's art practice*, and *Fuseli's conception of artistic invention and its transfer into practice*. The chapter argues that although Fuseli's visual designs shared many features with academic art, his selection of themes, subjects and graphic techniques made them particular. This similarity, yet difference, is considered significant for it is contended it reveals that Fuseli understood the ramifications of the academic style but sought to challenge these. The foundation of this contestation is shown to be Fuseli's Zurich education, and the ideas promoted therein are argued to have shaped his perception and conception of visual art's form and function, and that conventionally determined as its audience. Initially, however, to establish Fuseli's appreciation of academic artistic protocols, there follows an overview of how he experienced these during the 1770s.

During that decade Fuseli largely resided in Rome. The city had long been acknowledged 'the cultural capital of Europe',[135] and many leading contemporary practitioners of British and European art had undertaken extended periods of study

[135] Martin Myrone, *Henry Fuseli*, London, 2001, 16.

there, or had settled to earn from their art.[136] By the mid-1770s Rome was a melting-pot of European artists and ideas; as many as forty British artists were there, the majority arriving during that decade.[137] In their attempts to cultivate potential patrons' attention, and attract commissions, artists executed works conforming to the prevailing – academic - taste of Grand Tourists, for example, they made images replicating the inventive practices of particularly noted past-masters, such as Raphael and Guido Reni. Fuseli was among those wishing to secure interest in his work and had some success in attracting a clientele.[138]

Rome provided plentiful opportunities for emergent artists like Fuseli to be instructed in the inventive precepts of the academic style. For instance, the French Academy (Villa Mancini) allowed day-students to use its life-drawing classes.[139] Artists of all nationalities could study at the Accademia del Nudo (founded 1754) under the direction of the Accademia di San Lucan, the official academy for Roman artists. Many British artists having no school of their own grasped these opportunities. Besides such academies the studios of leading painters – for example, Gavin Hamilton, Pompeo Batoni and Raphael Mengs[140] - offered informal training or, where such was unavailable, less established artists organised themselves into unofficial

[136] Examples of these artists are, Joshua Reynolds, Richard Wilson, Robert Adam, Gavin Hamilton, Benjamin West, Pompeo Batoni and Raphael Mengs.
[137] Further information on this matter is given by, for example, Martin Myrone in *Bodybuilding: Reforming Masculinities in British Art 1750-1810*, New Haven and London, 2005.
[138] Myrone, 2005,169, informs that at during his stay in Italy Fuseli seems to have courted Grand Tourists, and that he maintained contact with the influential dealer and antiquarian James Byres. Fuseli also lodged with notable British patrons during his Italian stay. See David H. Weinglass, *The Collected English Letters of Henry Fuseli*, London, 1982, 17, a letter to James Northcote, 29 September 1778, in which Fuseli recalled living with Sir Robert Smyth and his wife in Bologna while studying art works in the city and the surrounding area.
[139] Besides these day-students the Academy housed twelve resident students. Peter Tomory (1972) mentions that Fuseli made use of the life-drawing opportunities at the French Academy, as did 'most of the other artists in Rome', 83.
[140] Myrone, 2005, 163, informs that neither Batoni nor Mengs appear to have taken English-speaking painters into their studios after 1769.

groups.[141] Generally, therefore, it was as Nancy L. Pressly observes that 'various academies, both official and unofficial, allowed for fruitful exchange among artists of different nationalities'.[142] Studying among them Fuseli arguably developed knowledge of the principles governing academic artistic invention. Examining these standards and their attendant discourses provides criteria against which to assess Fuseli's artwork, and his adherence to academic conventions.

Artistic Invention: Eighteenth-century academic art practice and aesthetic theory

During the eighteenth century a series of principles were formulated to guide artistic invention; these also conditioned art objects' meanings. For example, Jonathan Richardson's *Essay on the Theory of Painting* (1715) recommended that artists' imagery should 'be easily legible'; meaning in art, as in writing, 'should be apparent'.[143] To ensure desirable levels of interpretative lucidity Richardson suggested that artists select only those resources most suitable to picture making. Consequently, he focused on particular reference materials declaring 'A Painter ought to converse with, and Observe all sorts of People, chiefly the Best, and to read the best books, and no other'.[144] Thus, only the most eloquent of forms and sources, those capable of relaying acceptable sense, should underpin the finest pictures. While Richardson's advice appears straightforward his emphasis upon 'the best'

[141] See Nancy L. Pressly, *The Fuseli Circle in Rome – Early Romantic Art of the 1770s*, New Haven, 1979, Introduction, for more detail of those artists participating in such art groups in Rome.
[142] Pressly, 1979, Introduction, v.
[143] Richardson, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting*, London, 1715, 75-6.
[144] *Ibid*., 82.

examples acknowledges interfaces existing between art theory and more general early eighteenth-century aesthetics.

1713 saw publication of the English edition of the Earl of Shaftesbury's *A Notion of the Historical Draft or Tablature of the Judgement of Hercules*, which proposed that visual art should be characterised by rhetorical and moral objectives.[145] Shaftesbury advised that art should communicate rhetorically to persuade true citizens to perform acts of public virtue, directed towards endorsing a political republic.[146] Art's success in performing this function was determined by the visual models which artists selected to convey meaning. Consequently, artists were advised to choose classical art, for it was acknowledged that classical forms were characterised by a particular combination of tranquillity, understated rhetorical gestures and the contemplation of virtuous acts.[147] Shaftesbury had identified Paolo de Matthaeis's *The Choice of Hercules* (1712) (Fig. 1) as a principal example of contemporary visual art employing these emphases. So considered, Richardson's recommendations concerning 'the best' inventive materials become clearer; the artist's task was to present superlative visual designs directed to reinforcing a sense of municipal duty, for those capable of understanding the principles of civic integrity.

[145] First published in French in 1712, and subsequently included in the second edition of Shaftesbury's *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, London, 1714. Shaftesbury, and his disciple George Turnbull, adopted their ideas on civic virtue from the writings of Plato, Xenophon, Cicero and Seneca.

[146] The 'true citizens' Shaftesbury had in mind were the ruling class. Reference is here being made to the discourse of civic humanism, a thorough account of which is given by John Barrell in the introduction to *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt*, New Haven and London, 1986.

[147] The qualities identified were a central feature of early theories of neo-classicism which underpinned Winckelmann's ideas in, for instance, the *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der alerei und Bilderkunst*, 1755.

To most effectively communicate the discourse of civic action artists should utilise an inventive method compatible with that believed to typify classical art, a practice characterised as 'poetic' in the Abbé Dubos's *Réflexions critiques sur la poësie et sur la peinture* (1719).[148] Dubos's analysis of the ancients' descriptions of Greek and Roman masterpieces noted how strength of purpose was evoked subtly through the faces, limbs and poses of sculpted figures; the formal restraint of these statues was believed indicative of moral worth. Such characteristics, when appreciated by educated spectators, were thought capable of producing empathy with the depicted subject. In turn, these spectators may be encouraged to appropriate the principles displayed to develop their own understandings and behaviours. Dubos's methodology largely underscored Johann Winckelmann's influential assessment of the antique, which portrayed the *Belvedere Laocoön* (Fig. 2) as a defining example of Stoic ideals, in this case the conquering of distress and pain through cultivated inner strength.[149] Eighteenth-century visual artists faced the challenge of constructing a method of pictorial invention capable of conveying commensurate values through depicted figures. To this end Anton Raphael Mengs – referring to Raphael's Vatican frescoes (Fig. 3) - advocated that artists should develop a 'visual language' comprised of a combination of shapes, expressions and suggested motions, designed to encapsulate the idea of grandeur. Coupled to these formal requirements Mengs also recommended that understated rhetorical gestures (emphasising increasing resolve), should be demonstrated particularly by a picture's principal

[148] See Michael H. Duffy, 'West's 'Agrippina, Wolfe' and the Expression of Restraint', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 58 Bd, H.2, 1995, 207-25, 208.
[149] Winckelmann's ideas were published in the *Gedanken über die Nachahmung,* Dresden, 1755, which was translated into English by Fuseli in 1765.

figure. A commensurate practicing of artistic invention was adopted by, among others, Benjamin West.

West, following conventions established by Gavin Hamilton's paintings, deployed a simplified compositional style comprising large, gracefully posed, figures set in a shallow pictorial space. West's *Agrippina Landing at Brundisium with the Ashes of Germanicus* (1768) (Fig. 4) is a notable, early example, of his use of pictorial conventions foregrounding personal restraint to allude to a heightened virtuous state.[150] These aspects are exemplified through this painting's centre (Fig. 4a) which shows Agrippina with her sons and attendants in a frieze-like arrangement, whose formal simplicity, which is suggested through understated postures, serves to recall (to learned spectators) the narrative style and gravitas of antique relief sculpture. Such classical sources provided contemporary artists' inventions with a highly legible template, for they were noted as both clearly unified and purposeful in their portrayal of events. In painting, these qualities were to be relayed by larger principal figures positioned in a composition's foreground. Any secondary figures used should be carefully arranged in supporting roles to avoid competing visually with the main characters. Deviating from this structuring principle could expose an artist's invention to censure, as happened when Gavin Hamilton's painting, *Achilles Lamenting the Death of Patroclus* (Fig. 5), was reviewed in the *Gazetteer* on 21 May 1765. It was expected that an image's design would convey clearly the tenets of civic integrity. However, the *Gazetteer* reviewer noted of Hamilton's painting, 'Achilles should undoubtedly be the principal figure […] but take the whole painting together, it is

[150] The subject for this work was chosen by West's patron Robert Drummond, Archbishop of York. The painting's topic is taken from Tacitus's *Annals of Rome,* 3, I, a text used in humanistic education to teach ethics to young gentlemen.

certainly not a capital performance. The figures are too many for the piece, and too much crowded'.[151] In these respects Hamilton's uses of invention and composition were considered unable to cultivate 'the nobler Provinces of the Art',[152] not withstanding that his picture was an appropriate subject, 'some eminent instance of heroick action or heroick suffering' and pictorial type, being a great event from 'Greek and Roman fable and history'.[153]

The period's art treatises also directed artists to consider how merging the specific and general characteristics of depicted figures might evoke qualities deemed worthy of spectators' emulation. Michael H. Duffy, assessing Benjamin West's use of these neo-classical principles, notes that West probably deduced them 'through conversation, observation and limited reading', a measure of their permeation of contemporary culture.[154] Among publications on representing human attributes available to West and his contemporaries were Charles Le Brun's *A Method to Learn to Design the Passions*, and Charles Du Fresnoy's *De Arte Graphica*,[155] treatises encouraging artists to select a limited number of anatomical features which, appropriately unified, provided 'that grave Majesty, that soft silence and repose' a quality thought to grant visual representation unity, beauty and moral substance.[156] Alongside this particular depiction of the human form facial expression was considered an additional focus through which to scrutinise a picture's principal

[151] *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, Tuesday 21 May, 1765, issue 11290.
[152] *St James's Chronicle* 7-9, May, 1765, issue 2516.
[153] Reynolds, Discourse IV, 55. Here Reynolds is discussing the most appropriate source materials for artistic invention.
[154] Duffy, 'West's 'Agrippina, Wolfe' and the Expression of Restraint', 1995, 214.
[155] Charles Le Brun, *A Method to learn to Design the Passions, Proposed in a Conference on their General and Particular Expression*, John Williams (trans.), London, 1734.
[156] Charles Du Fresnoy, *De Arte Graphica – The Art of Painting, with Remarks*, Vol. 20 of *The Works of John Dryden*, Berkeley 1989, 90: 29-30 (precept XV), cited in Duffy, 1995, 219.

figure(s). By contrast, secondary figures' countenances should only be employed to more readily engage spectators with the central figure(s) demonstration of (restrained) passion; so depicting facial features was believed to strengthen a painting's ethical connotations. Figures represented in these ways, when placed within considered compositional structures, further facilitated a rhetorical transmission of codes of appropriate behaviour, character formation, and intellectual cultivation, in keeping with a humanist discourse which originated in the ancient world.

The qualities outlined above, to which appropriate, historically focused visual inventions should conform, were reinforced by Joshua Reynolds's *Discourses on Art*. Reynolds's directives on invention show the continued relevance of Jonathan Richardson's advocacy of 'the best' source materials, and the tenets of the wider aesthetic culture. For example, Reynolds, echoing Richardson, noted how artists should 'Labour to invent on their [great masters] general principles and way of thinking'.[157] Furthermore, he observed 'it is by being conversant with the inventions of others that we learn to invent'.[158] Reynolds also indicated his belief in the value of the generalised forms and visual structures found in classical art, 'the general idea constitutes real excellence […] care must be taken that […] subordinate actions and lights [do not] come into competition with the principal'.[159] However, the *Discourses* should be noted as possessing a subtly different emphasis to earlier art treatises. From the mid-eighteenth century alterations were made to the notion of artistic invention, and important for this revised aesthetic was the Royal Academy's

[157] Reynolds, Discourse II, 34.
[158] Discourse VI, 89.
[159] Discourse IV, 56.

establishment in 1768.[160] However, since Shaftesbury's *Characteristick's*, the structure, and perceived function, of society had altered. As Alexander Gerard observed mid-century, painting, rather than promoting municipal virtues, should now indicate social virtues regardless whether these were public or private.[161] Consequently, how public spiritedness might be represented visually, other than through unambiguous depictions of civic integrity, had to be re-evaluated.

Reynolds, delivering the *Discourses* as the Academy's President, observed the need to structure these addresses (being presented to those who would define art's future characteristics), to emphasise how painting might, through generalised visual formulations, present fundamental truths rather than aim to motivate actions rhetorically. John Barrell argues this change of emphasis was a shift from 'a rhetorical aesthetic, which situates the function of painting within a civic *vita activa* [to] a philosophical aesthetic, which situates it within a *vita contemplativa*, but still a *civic* life [Barrell's emphases].'[162] Painting could still fulfil its public function, but indirectly. Rather than visually (rhetorically) demonstrating acts of virtue to be emulated, artistic invention was now considered to offer insights into relations between people, from which conceptions of virtue might be construed.

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[160] The Academy was a public institution foregrounding its royal patronage. By necessity it was required to promote painting as an art with definite public functions, for the Academy was considered 'in the highest degree interesting, not only to Artists, but to the whole Nation', 'Anthony Pasquin' (John Williams), *Memoirs of the Royal Academicians: being an attempt to improve the national taste*, London, 1796, 99n, 89, in John Barrell, 'Sir Joshua Reynolds and the Political Theory of Painting', *Oxford Art Journal*, 9:2, 1986, 36-41, 37.

[161] A relevant work of Gerard's dealing with this issue is the *Essay on Taste*, London, 1759.

[162] Barrell, 'Sir Joshua Reynolds and the Political Theory of Painting', 38. Further information on Reynolds's use of a philosophical perspective, especially the extent to which his thinking adopted aspects of empirical philosophy, can be found in David Morgan, 'The Rise and Fall of Abstraction in Eighteenth-Century Art Theory' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 27:3, 1994, 449-78, and in Reynolds's third Discourse, 50.

Reynolds's early *Discourses* articulated painting's new philosophical function through concepts such as 'central forms'[163] and via consideration of genre hierarchies.[164] Commensurately, his appreciation of artistic invention centred on depictions designed to encourage appreciation of common human characteristics. Referring to the central form Reynolds offered a vision of a shared humanity, a condition thought to most successfully connect audiences with painted subjects. It was anticipated that aware viewers, recognising how they 'were like' the people in paintings – Reynolds was addressing all capable of appreciating his conception of visual abstraction – would discern a common nature between themselves and that depicted. Such representations were considered (theoretically) to show humanity's public face, rather than be specific depictions of individuals. Thus, spectators, identifying with generalised human forms, might come to acknowledge that they too were members of a civic rather than privatised society and might be encouraged to act accordingly.

In the *Discourses* Reynolds tied this revised concept of civic art to the 'intellectual dignity' of the 'great style' of painting.[165] Yet, this mode of artistry was founded on historical subjects. Reynolds largely practiced as a portraitist.[166] Indeed, many of his portraits show noted society figures in informal poses, for instance, *Mrs Abington as 'Miss Prue'* (1771) (Fig. 6) and *Mrs Lloyd* (1776) (Fig. 7), or masquerading as mythological characters, like *Mrs Hale as 'Euphrosyne'* (1766) (Fig. 8); these were inappropriate examples of civic conduct. Such evidence challenges John Barrell's

[163] Reynolds introduces this concept - the general idea of an object having the common characteristics of the class of which it was a member - in Discourse III, 46.
[164] Reynolds discussed the relative merits of painting genres in Discourse IV, 55-6.
[165] Reynolds, Discourse III, 44, the style of art which 'The Moderns [were] not less convinced than the Ancients of [its] superior power; nor less sensible of its effects.'
[166] See Charles Mitchell, 'Three Phases of Reynolds's Method', *Burlington Magazine*, 80:467, 1942, 35-40, for some useful observations on the degree to which Reynolds adapted the conventions of portraiture to elide the differences between it and historical subjects.

sure assertion that Reynolds's art engaged completely with promoting civic ideals. However, Reynolds's artwork did imply these civic principles, as is substantiated by, for example, *Mrs Hartley as a Nymph with her son as the Infant Bacchus* (1773) (Fig. 9), and *Lady Bampflyde* (1776-7) (Fig. 10); both emphasise emotional restraint and are underpinned by refined poses derived from notable Renaissance and classical sources.[167] Additionally, as in earlier eighteenth-century academic art, both painting's protagonists are clearly positioned in the foreground to provide narrative clarity. Reynolds has arranged these figures in a condensed visual field, pressed close to the picture plane, to allow their comparison with antique relief sculpture, a quality these pictures share with Benjamin West's *Agrippina Landing at Brundisium*. Reynolds, by selecting source materials for these two paintings from prominent 'capital subjects of scripture history' and notable classical statues by renowned masters, alluded to the intellectual foundations upon which he believed the new public art should be based.[168]

By the mid-eighteenth century the aesthetic conventions determining the conception, and use, of artistic invention had undergone subtle change. While pictures were still used to encourage displays of public spiritedness, their characteristics were modified. In the early 1700s the civic duty of the minority ruling class had been encouraged through paintings with a clearly rhetorical emphasis. These usually employed visual tropes from classical art. Later in the century artists' inventions addressed a broader audience. In order to encourage social cohesion among, rather than the private interests of, this revised spectatorship, the Royal Academy tasked artistic invention

[167] Reynolds has re-worked the poses of Michelangelo's *Doni Madonna* and the antique *Venus de Medici* (seen in reverse).
[168] Reynolds, Discourse IV, 55-6.

with depicting those aspects of human nature that confirmed social values. Yet, art practice, throughout the century, was determined by conventions governing how paintings should be designed in order to most successfully communicate civic values. As noted, these principles ruled that an artist ought to consider how their inventions were, for example, arranged, the manner in which accepted visual precursors were deployed, and the degree to which depicted figures' actions and expressions conformed to accepted standards of pictorial restraint. Regarding the discourses surrounding historical painting in the early to mid-eighteenth century, such standards were mutually agreed. Having established the theoretical characteristics, and visual qualities, of academic visual invention we turn to Fuseli's art, and assess how it conformed to these criteria.

Academic principles of invention and Fuseli's art practice

Fundamental to an artist's success was the degree to which he adapted his practice to accommodate accepted discourses on visual invention. This was particularly relevant when appropriating acknowledged artist forebears' work. As noted, regarding the images of Gavin Hamilton, Benjamin West and Joshua Reynolds, it was crucial to choose the most appropriate historical source(s) to reinforce the potential of one's subject matter. To be considered most proficient an artist must, as Reynolds observed in Discourse VI, have 'a mind enriched by an assemblage of all the treasures of ancient and modern art', so that the visual memory 'will be more elevated and fruitful in resources in proportion to the number of ideas which have

been carefully collected and thoroughly digested'.[169] This section analyses Fuseli's practicing of visual invention. It argues that his selection and use of source materials, while apparently conforming to academic protocols, challenged how convention determined visual art's characteristics and functions.

Fuseli's *The Death of Cardinal Beaufort* (1772) (Fig. 11) is contemporary with Reynolds's history/portrait paintings examined previously. Certain parallels are apparent in both artists' awareness of invention as 'being conversant with the inventions of others'. For example, the principal figures of Fuseli's drawing are based on Giovanni da Bologna's sculpture of *Hercules and Nessus* (Fig. 12), a visual strategy similar to that used by Reynolds for his *Lady Bampflyde*. The extent to which Fuseli's use of invention conformed to academic conventions is ascertainable by considering his choices of subject, how he depicted the human form, deployed compositional structures, and through his use of particular graphic techniques.

Fuseli made two versions of *The Death of Cardinal Beaufort*. However, they are notably different. The larger version, sent for exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1774, is more resolved, befitting a picture designed for public display, while the smaller (earlier?) drawing less formally portrays the events surrounding Beaufort's demise (Fig. 13). Martin Myrone identifies Fuseli's figures as being reminiscent of the energised bodies found in the work of Michelangelo, and Mannerists such as Pellegrino Tibaldi.[170] Thus, while Fuseli's artistry, apparently, conforms to the inventive principles adopted by Reynolds and Mengs, notably in his Raphaelesque

[169] Reynolds, Discourse VI, 90.
[170] See Myrone, 2005, 170. Frederick Antal, in *Fuseli Studies*, London, 1956, also notes Fuseli's appreciation of Michelangelo and Mannerists such as Tibaldi.

Augustus and Cleopatra (1759) (Fig. 14), Fuseli's human forms are not commensurately restrained or sedate. Equally, although contemporary opinion considered Beaufort's death to be a highlight of Shakespeare's writing,[171] its depiction was thought 'beyond the norm';[172] Fuseli was clearly not depicting heroic action or suffering, or a great event from classical history, subject types approved of in dominant aesthetic discourses.

Both versions of *The Death of Beaufort* are composed to mimic a traditional classical deathbed scene. Eighteenth-century British painters favoured this subject type because the deathbed's direct emotional appeal was felt to compensate for the prospect that viewers might, otherwise, lack knowledge of the narrative selected.[173] Yet, Fuseli's pictures, which crowd with figures, effectively contest how a deathbed subject should be depicted; the *Gazetteer* critique, of May 1765, had derided Gavin Hamilton's deathbed scene *Achilles Lamenting the Death of Patroclus* for similar over-crowding.[174] Nevertheless, in the larger *Beaufort* drawing, Fuseli's offsetting of forms, effectively produced through contrasts of light and shade and use of both broad and particular applications of ink, succeeds, as protocol required, in isolating the principal subjects from the other figures. Yet, when this picture was exhibited at the Royal Academy (1774) Fuseli's mode of representation was noted to be

[171] Samuel Johnson so appreciated this scene, see, for example, *Johnson on Shakespeare*, Arthur Sherbo (ed.), New Haven and London, 1968, Vol. 2, 591. A similar appraisal can be found in *Bell's Edition of Shakespeare's Plays*, Francis Gentleman (ed.), London, 1774, Vol. 7, 237.
[172] Myrone, 2005, 173. Myrone notes that such unorthodoxy was also associated with Shakespeare's writing.
[173] For further detail on this matter see Myrone, 2001, 25-6.
[174] The critic observed Hamilton's picture was 'certainly not a capital performance. The figures are too many for the piece, and too much crowded'. In the smaller *Beaufort* Fuseli's compressed composition results in a diminution of the scene's apparent unity, and affects the figures' anatomical veracity. According to contemporary academic standards such distributions of light and shade, and abstraction of figure forms, made pictures less comprehensible, and less suitable for conveying ethical import.

unconventional. Most particularly, criticism focused on Fuseli's depiction of human bodies and their perceived connotations. One reviewer noted how 'this Sketch […] displays itself by Extravagance in the ideas, Wildness in the Expression, and Violence in the Actions of his Figures'.[175] This emphasising of a lack of restraint, evident in Fuseli's expressively agitated figures, acknowledges his practice as contradicting the academic conventions anticipated of publicly exhibited artworks.[176]

Fuseli's use of overt levels of expression in *The Death of Beaufort* are far removed from the understated rhetorical gestures, linked to stoic resolve, central to academic discourses on the civic function of painting. Fuseli's chosen subject, the last moments of a Shakespearean villain who refused to repent, is also notably at odds with dominant aesthetic principles. However, Fuseli's more restrained drawing technique in the larger *Beaufort* implies that he was aware of how academic artists used representation (of figures especially) to encourage viewers to scrutinise their pictures and to seek out allusions that might inform their self-improvement. In the larger *Beaufort* Fuseli, in contrast to the majority of his drawings investigated in this thesis, uses his graphic media to show subtleties in the figures' costumes, gestures and physiognomies, as befitted an appropriately realised academic visual invention.[177] Fuseli's attention to such characterisation invites fuller study of the larger ***Beaufort's*** constituent parts.

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[175] *Public Advertiser*, Tuesday 3 May, 1774, issue 13013.
[176] According to academic conventions subjects of this type should be arranged to echo the visual restraint of antique friezes as, for example, do Gavin Hamilton's *Andromache Bewailing the Death of Hector* (c.1759) and its probable source Poussin's *Death of Germanicus* (1627), a picture available for Fuseli's reference in the Palazzo Barberini. Myrone, 2005, 170, suggests Poussin's painting may have influenced Fuseli's composition. The possible influence on Fuseli of Poussin's picture is also noted, and questioned, by Tomory, 1972, 77.
[177] Myrone, 2005, 171-2, notes that the large *Death of Beaufort* 'was uncharacteristic of Fuseli's work of the 1770s and was clearly intended as a showpiece in its own right'.

Assessing the larger *Beaufort* drawing Peter Tomory has convincingly claimed that the figure groups Fuseli used originated in Raphael's *The Expulsion of Heliodorus from the Temple* (Fig. 15).[178] Appropriations of this kind show that Fuseli's inventiveness can again be compared with Reynolds's perception of the activity. As noted, *The Death of Beaufort's* principal figure pairing is derived from da Bologna's *Hercules and Nessus*, although Fuseli has turned these figures around to make their heads occupy the same visual plane. While this motif is present in both *Beaufort* drawings, in the larger Fuseli has re-emphasised how the figures' arms interlock so as to increase visual tension. Such magnification of a subject's capacity to raise viewers' apprehension clearly contradicts normative visual conventions. While Fuseli's use of da Bologna's statue is clear, Tomory alludes to another source relevant to the *Beaufort* drawings. He suggests that Fuseli's depiction of a central light source recalls Joseph Wright's depiction of the powerfully lit sculpture *The Nymph with a Shell*, which Wright placed centrally in his painting *An Academy by Lamplight* (1768-9) (Fig. 16). Tomory contends that Fuseli saw this picture at the Society of Artists prior to leaving for Italy.[179] However, Tomory suggests that besides Wright's painting, and da Bologna's statue, Fuseli might have been influenced by other conceptions of sculpture.

Tomory's interpretation of Fuseli's *Death of Beaufort* encompasses poetic reflections on classical sculpture found in eighteenth-century verse. These focused on the re-animation of life and feelings imagined trapped in stone, a conceit Tomory describes

[178] Tomory, 1972, 77-8. Tomory has in mind those figures to the left of the altar, whose number Fuseli increases, and the group of three women at the foot of the steps, reversed in *The Death of Beaufort*, and added to the right of the composition.
[179] *Ibid*., 78. Tomory refers to the Society of Artists' exhibition of 1769.

as ‘the marble-izing of the passions’.[180] A similar creative strategy was, Tomory highlights, also applied to observations of actual statues, a fact confirmed by Daniel Webb’s *An Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting* (1760).[181] For example, Webb noted of the *Laocoön*, ‘I have often thought […] that […] had the foot only been discovered, the swelled veins, the strained sinews, and the irregular motion of the muscles, might have led us into a conception of those tortures […] marked throughout the whole body’.[182] Thus, antique sculpture, besides providing painters with stoic figure types as in dominant art practice, could also serve as a means to more imaginatively ponder the inventiveness of classical artists. Tomory’s assessment of Fuseli’s inventive procedure suggests that Fuseli was looking beyond prevailing artistic routines for inspiration. This view appears corroborated by other of Fuseli’s drawings that, like *Beaufort*, appropriate classical sculpture.

Lady Macbeth Sleepwalking (c.1775-6) (Fig. 17) and *The Death of Brutus* (c.1775) (Fig. 18) reference the antique *Gladiator* (Fig. 19), but show the statue put to differing purposes. In the Richardson’s *Account* (1722) the *Gladiator* was perceived to demonstrate enthusiasm in facing its destiny - ‘such activity, and Elasticity, that all his Muscles seem to tremble with Eagerness’.[183] According to academic convention this quality, if shown positively, could signify inner resolve, a worthy attribute in appropriate circumstances. Contrastingly, Fuseli’s reuse of the *Gladiator’s* pose for his *Lady Macbeth* sees the statue’s heroic lunge halted, straightened, and converted

[180] See Tomory, 78, for examples of couplets from eighteenth-century translations of *Ulysses*, *Cleomenes* and *Cato* that illustrate his point.
[181] Daniel Webb, *An Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting; and into the Merits of the Most Celebrated Painters, Ancient and Modern*, London, 1760.
[182] *Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting*, 157-8.
[183] Jonathan Richardson, Sr. and Jr., *An Account of Some of the Statues, Bas Reliefs, Drawings and Pictures of Italy* &c, London, 1722, 298.

into the less appealing actions of a somnambulant; Fuseli here re-frames recognised gallant attributes to suggest alternate human qualities. Similarly, in the *Brutus* the *Gladiator's* pose is also devitalised, its poise being lessened by Fuseli's pitching the figure forward. Fuseli appears to concentrate on how the represented human form could provide various expressive potential, rather than showing its capacity for encapsulating self-command, as was valued by convention. Thus, Fuseli's adaptations of academically valued source materials subvert the significance granted them in dominant art practice. Examining Fuseli's use of drawing and media in *Lady Macbeth Sleepwalking* and *The Death of Brutus* reveals further discrepancies between these works and accepted standards of artistic invention.

The horizontal format of *Lady Macbeth Sleepwalking* resembles the larger of the *Beaufort* drawings; both might be compared to the compositional structure of an antique frieze.[184] However, Fuseli, rather than accepting this visual analogy and designing his image so as to show a coherent horizontal space, has divided its background into two distinct parts. To the left, positioned before a light ground, is Lady Macbeth, while on the right, set against dark ink wash, two shadowy figures witness her actions. These three figures appear to conform to how dominant art theory recommended the placing, illumination and relationship of primary and secondary figures. Yet, conventions governing artistic invention required that these figures' positioning, or expressions, should not cause them to compete for audience attention. Whereas, it might appear that the strong illumination and outlining Fuseli uses on Lady Macbeth indicates that she, like Beaufort (or Gavin Hamilton's

[184] Such a correspondence is noted by Myrone (2005, 170), who states that the composition of the large *Beaufort* 'bears an obvious resemblance to Gavin Hamilton's *Andromache Bewailing the Death of Hector*', a deathbed scene modelled on antique precursors and the work of Poussin.

Andromache and Hector in *Andromache Bewailing the Death of Hector* (Fig. 20)), should be noted as principal, Fuseli's setting of the two witnesses to her actions against such a dark ground arguably divides viewers' attention. Furthermore, these witnesses' comparatively diminutive scale, and unresolved appearance, increases the drawing's formal tension. This conflicts with how designs presumed able to inspire viewers' reflective engagement were believed to require refined and calm atmospheres. Further barriers to appropriate spectator involvement are presented by the passions depicted in Fuseli's picture.

According to accepted aesthetic tenets the passions displayed in visual art should be restrained, and should allow clear perception of the resolve of the figures demonstrating them. So presented, the passions provided a template against which a spectator might judge their own character. As with *The Death of Cardinal Beaufort* the type of passion which Fuseli depicts in *Lady Macbeth Sleepwalking* contravenes these precepts, for Fuseli chooses to focus attention on a troubled mind verging on collapse.[185] Reinforcing the conceptual mismatch between this drawing's subject and accepted aesthetic decorum, Lady Macbeth's two witnesses emote in a more obvious fashion than her, meaning that a viewer, interpreting the picture through academic aesthetic conventions, would have some difficulty ascertaining which of the figures should be identified with most.

Returning to the figure of Lady Macbeth, Fuseli's representation provides no clearer indication as to how she should be thought able to rouse a spectator's sympathetic

[185] Fuseli's inspiration for this image is *Macbeth* Act V, scene i.

response. As noted, the antique *Gladiator* serves as the model for this figure. The period's guides to notable artworks considered this statue to be sprightly and ostensibly valiant of action. Fuseli's reframing of its musculature in Lady Macbeth provides a contrary depiction. This is particularly noticeable in her arms and hands. While her left arm does suggest vitality, it trails behind, rather than leading an action. The arm's lack of positive potential seems reinforced by the - quite precise - articulation of its hand that, instead of providing an affirmative gesture, appears to paw anxiously at the void behind. By contrast, the leading arm and hand which might be expected to signal a character's resolve (as it does in the *Gladiator*) seems even less eloquent due to Fuseli's use of heavy black outlining. The absence of affirming motifs detectable in the figure is carried through to her dress; its strong diagonal figuratively fastens Lady Macbeth's position in the dark side of the picture. Fuseli's Lady Macbeth, apparently trapped between the inky void of the picture's right-hand side, and the black border to the drawing's left, provides little to engage the empathy of a spectator familiar with the discourses of civic humanism. According to these expositions Fuseli's design seems an inappropriate application of the principles of pictorial invention.

Turning to *The Death of Brutus* certain of the inventive strategies identified in *Lady Macbeth Sleepwalking* are again present, for example, the inappropriate (by academic standards) uses of representation. Such anomalies are particularly noticeable with Fuseli's media use. Fuseli's *Brutus*, rather than according with convention and providing a refined, stilled motif for contemplation, features a network of agitated lines and emphatic outlining which alternate in thickness and spatial

relationships. In this regard *The Death of Brutus* is an even less suitable example of academic practice than the *Lady Macbeth*, whose ink wash at least enabled something of the *Gladiator's* character to be inferred. So considered, Fuseli's use of drawing media appears a conscious decision, one arguably motivated by a wish to produce an image of the human form substantially disputing dominant visual conventions. However, Fuseli's referencing of antique source materials in the *Brutus*, and his emphasising of the musculature of all the figures in this composition, could be said to connote the physical perfection and associated elegance connected with classical sculpture. Yet, the bodies acting out this scenario are uncomfortably hard, compared with, for instance, the more graceful forms found in the visual histories of Hamilton or Mengs. Moreover, Fuseli's figures' pronounced physicality and fervent actions were not conducive to encouraging thoughts on acceptable social mores as would have been anticipated of images according with academic protocols. Although the human form was a key communicative device in the period's visual art, the characteristics of the bodies Fuseli portrays, when considered against commonplace aesthetic standards, seem to rebuff rather than engage interpretation.[186]

Considering three examples of Fuseli's inventions against standards established for the activity reveals not only quite pronounced visual contrasts, but also suggests that Fuseli conceived of the endeavour differently. While dominant aesthetics promoted the need for history subjects to be selected, and presented, in ways designed to elicit spectator's sympathetic engagement, Fuseli's chosen subjects appear to prioritise

[186] This point is confirmed by correspondence between Gavin Hamilton and his customer for *Achilles Lamenting the Death of Patroclus*, Sir James Grant. In his letter Hamilton emphasised how the image was conceived as a means to rhetorically evoke sentiments commensurate with the subject matter, and to provoke Grant's emotional response. Hamilton wrote, 'When I painted Patroclus I thought as much of pleasing you as greaving Achilles, that compassion gives an inward satisfaction you can better feel than I describe, if you are touched with this sentiment on looking at the picture the painter has succeeded & I am happy.' Gavin Hamilton to Sir James Grant, 9 January 1765, National Archives of Scotland, GD 248/178/2/51., cited Myrone, 2005, 62.

alternate criteria. Although Fuseli references source materials commensurate with academic practice, most notably examples of the antique, his coupling of these to unorthodox themes undercuts the significance classical art ought to relay to the learned spectator. Fuseli's selecting of the actions of villainous characters and tragic episodes, connected to his choice of unconventional history subjects, in particular, Shakespearean, was in keeping with his referencing of particular textual materials.

Rather than concentrating on commonly valued classical myths and legends, or uplifting religious themes, Fuseli's Italian drawings were more typically derived from intense scenes found in the work of Dante, Shakespeare and Milton.[187] When Fuseli did focus on classical subjects he favoured what Nancy L. Pressly describes as 'The recurring image of the pensive and melancholy hero overwhelmed […] with intense states of feeling […] extreme emotions'.[188] This emphasis can be seen in drawings such as *Teiresias Drinks the Sacrificial Blood* (1774-8) (Fig. 21), and *Odysseus before Teiresias in Hades* (c.1776-77) (Fig. 22). Although classical authors may have emphasised their characters' emotional outpourings it was the eighteenth-century artist's task to re-frame these into images of self-possession. This was by no means straightforward, but its achievement was a measure of the artist's skill in moulding materials to the requirements of accepted aesthetic standards. As Gavin Hamilton reflected when adapting Homer for his painting *The Anger of Achilles for the Loss of Briseis* (1769) (Fig. 23), 'What puzzles me most is the Achilles, to preserve dignity

[187] Examples of Fuseli's Dante images are, *The Thieves' Punishment* (1772) and *Ugolino and his Sons Starving to Death in the Tower* (1774-78), and of his Miltonic subjects, *Satan and Death Separated by Sin*, and *Satan Starting at the Touch of Ithuriel's Lance* (both 1776).
[188] Pressly, 1979, Introduction, xi.

without extravagance in this character is no easy task.'[189] Fuseli's neglecting of these visual requisites again suggests a wish to address other concerns.

So far no reference has been made to Fuseli's own thinking on pictorial invention. This was a purposeful decision because, first of all, it was necessary to situate Fuseli's drawings in respect of contemporary academic discourses on the nature of visual arts practice. Having established a distinct mis-match between these discourses and the appearance of Fuseli's work, particularly with regard to his use of form, manipulations of drawing mediums and emphasising of alternate modes of visual address, it is now appropriate to examine how he theoretically extrapolated artistic invention, most particularly through his Royal Academy *Lectures on Painting*.[190]

Fuseli's conception of artistic invention and its transfer into practice

This, the chapter's final section, considers Fuseli's theory of artistic invention. Herein, additional assessments are made of Fuseli's drawings, in respect of his theorising, to further strengthen the contention that his images were shaped by principles notably different to those governing academic art practices.

[189] *Ibid*., Introduction, x, David Irwin, 'Gavin Hamilton, Archaeologist, Painter, and Dealer', *The Art Bulletin*, 44:2, 1962, 95.
[190] This thesis's *Introduction* argued my interpretation and particular uses of Fuseli's *Lectures*, in respect of his artwork and associated ideas on art and artists.

Two of Fuseli's *Lectures on Painting* dealt with invention indicating the important position the subject occupied in his appreciation of art making. At the beginning of the first of these, Lecture III, Fuseli attended briefly to the principle that had underpinned theories of artistic imitation and invention since antiquity, that painting was 'mute poesy, and poetry speaking painting'.[191] However, Fuseli indicated that, for him, this idea formed 'no part of the technic systems of antiquity', for as he pointed out poetry and painting 'differ as essentially in their *materials* and their *modes* of application [Fuseli's emphasis].'[192] Furthermore, he noted that the 'distinct representation of continued action is refused to an art which cannot express even in a series of subjects, but by a supposed mental effort in the spectator's mind, the regular succession of their moments'.[193] Therefore, by Fuseli's estimate, poetry's reliance on the human mind's ability to picture its themes and interpret their meanings compromised poetry's ability to relay import. Thus, Fuseli concluded it was of little use painting, 'attempting to impress us by the indiscriminate usurpation of a principle out of its reach' (that of poetry), for more appropriate communicative means were open to painting by relying 'for its effect on its great characteristics, space and

[191] Fuseli, Lecture III, 407. The formulation ut pictura poesis originates in Horace's *Epistle to the Pisos*, but perhaps the best known assessment of this unity of the arts is Simonides's, who was quoted by Plutarch in *De Gloria Atheniensium* as saying, 'Painting is mute poetry and poetry a speaking picture.' Simonides's unification of poetry and painting was most widely disseminated by Dufresnoy in *De Arte Graphica* (Paris, 1667). Ut pictura poesis was used by western art theorists from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries to justify their claim that painting, like poetry, should be considered a liberal art rather than a mechanical trade. The history of ut pictura poesis in western culture can be found in, amongst others, William G. Howard, *Ut Pictura Poesis*, PMLA, 24, 1909; Rensselaer W. Lee, *Ut Pictura Poesis, The Art Bulletin*, 22:4 1940 (also published as *Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting*, New York, 1967); Jean H. Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts*, Chicago, 1958; Meyer H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*, Oxford, 1965; John Graham, *Ut Pictura Poesis, Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, 1973; and William J.T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*, Chicago,1987. A comprehensive overview of the relationship of ut picture poesis in eighteenth-century literature and visual art can be found in Cicely Davies, 'Ut Pictura Poesis', *The Modern Language Review*, 30:2, 1935, 159-69.
[192] Fuseli, Lecture III, 407.
[193] *Ibid*.

form, singly or in apposition.'[194] It was Fuseli's belief that painting was the superior art because it employed form as the vehicle of representation and communication. Expressing this conviction he pronounced 'in forms alone the idea of existence can be rendered permanent […] by application to their standard alone, description becomes intelligible and distinct'.[195] Moreover, Fuseli developed his assessment of the relationship between form and invention through a statement that further illuminates his emphatic depictions of corporeality, which were noted in the above discussions of his drawings; 'the representation of form in figure is the *physical* element of the art [Fuseli's emphasis]'.[196]

In respect of those drawings, examined in comparison to images by Gavin Hamilton and Raphael Mengs, it was noted that whereas their pictures featured stilled subjects Fuseli's concentrated on the active figure. On this matter Fuseli noted that the depiction of 'inert and unemployed form' would be 'a mistake of the medium for the end', for interest in art could only be attained through representations of 'character or action'.[197] These features, by Fuseli's estimate, should also be allotted high accolade by being understood as 'the *moral* element of the art [Fuseli's emphasis]'.[198] Art, therefore, was based on two key aspects, use of form, and the depiction of distinctive exploits, its 'physical' and 'moral' elements. Fuseli's co-joining of the physical and the moral to typify the principal attributes of the art he valued most highly, conflicted with how dominant aesthetic conventions promoted the effectively de-characterised human body as a means to connote positive social attitudes. Indeed, as was noted

[194] *Ibid*.
[195] *Ibid*.
[196] Fuseli, Lecture III, 408.
[197] *Ibid*.
[198] *Ibid*.

towards the close of this chapter's previous section, in respect of Fuseli's drawing *The Death of Brutus* (c.1775), he had evoked visually an equivalent of the concept of art he forwarded in the *Lectures*; he depicted human forms which challenged normative conceptions of visual art's characteristics and associated purposes.

Later in his *Lectures* Fuseli returned to these notions of art's physical and moral qualities, this time in respect of pictorial arrangement. Fuseli's discussion of this theme allows insight into the extremes of illumination seen in his drawings – especially in the (small) *Death of Beaufort* and *Lady Macbeth Sleepwalking*. The address in question, Lecture V, was concerned with composition and expression. Composition, Fuseli noted, like invention had 'physical and moral elements'.[199] The physical was identified as 'perspective and light, with shade [for] destitute of light and shade [composition] misses the effect'.[200] Use of chiaroscuro (that is to say, of light and shade) was not simply a way of setting a picture; without it the actual focus of a picture would be lost and the picture would become unintelligible. Moreover, the artist, by depicting illumination appropriately, might endow his subjects with additional articulacy. Properly governed respective qualities of light and shade prevented a picture being a mere collection of forms. Light and shade allowed a picture's features to be conveyed forcefully, and how those features were arranged allowed them to evoke effects suggested by the chosen subject or theme. Additionally, how visual elements were modelled through use of light and shade allotted them particular significance, both within the pictorial field and in respect of each other. Lighting, therefore, served as a principal means of articulating forms in space and greatly

[199] Fuseli, Lecture V, 460.
[200] *Ibid*.

contributed to defining the nature of that space. Lighting, as Fuseli suggested, largely affected the perspective given to, and gained on, the represented subject. Consequently, the smaller *Death of Beaufort*, and *Lady Macbeth Sleepwalking*, can be thought not simply to be contrary to academic inventive standards, but to also be explorations into how alternative types of expressive artistic effect might be utilised.

Composition also had its moral elements and these Fuseli identified as 'unity, propriety, and perspicuity'.[201] Bereft of these features any composition would be defective, or as Fuseli described the matter 'Without unity [composition] cannot span its subject; without propriety it cannot tell the story; without perspicuity it clouds the fact with confusion.'[202] The qualities composition was believed to possess were thus intimately connected to the success, or otherwise, of invention, for as Fuseli observed 'Composition, in its stricter sense, is the dresser of Invention; it superintends the disposition of its materials'.[203]

The import accorded composition in respect of invention, in these extracts from Fuseli's *Lectures*, provides opportunity to reconsider the arranged elements in his drawings assessed in the previous section. As indicated, these pictures' compositions did not conform to accepted aesthetic standards. They either failed to evoke the distribution of forms seen in classical art, or when mimicking the conventions of recognisable subject matter - for instance, the deathbed genre with *The Death of Cardinal Beaufort* - the drawings somewhat subverted them. However, even though seemingly flawed in these respects, Fuseli's drawings are still articulate

[201] *Ibid*.
[202] *Ibid*.
[203] *Ibid*.

in terms of how he later determined ‘unity’, ‘propriety’, and ‘perspicuity’. For example, the choice and distribution of elements in the *Beaufort* drawings convey an interpretable scene, although one not according with narratives commonly associated with normative art practice. Therefore, considered in respect of Fuseli’s theorising about composition’s moral elements, arguably informed by his actual art-making, the arrangement of the component parts of *The Death of Cardinal Beaufort*, *Lady Macbeth Sleepwalking*, and *The Death of Brutus* suggests their distribution was integral to the sense these pictures did provide. In other words, the appearance of these pictures indicates meaning of some kind, even if this was not that anticipated by a viewer familiar with more conventional uses of the compositional cues which Fuseli employed.

Another, noteworthy, example of how Fuseli synthesised reference to academic conventions with alternate investigations into the visual’s possibilities, is *The Witches Show Macbeth Banquo’s Descendants* (1773/1779) (Fig. 24).[204] In this picture Macbeth is shown being presented with a vision of the future consisting of a procession of eight kings destined to descend from his rival Banquo. Macbeth’s form, in keeping with the general tents of academic visual conventions, is derived from the antique. Fuseli’s chosen source is his favourite classical form, the *Horse-tamers* of Monte Cavallo (Fig. 25), and in apparent accord with academic principles Fuseli has adjusted the statue’s articulation to imply a noble Macbeth resisting the infernal spectacle before him. Further apparent allusions to academic visual standards are observable in this picture; its principal compositional devices are derived from Pietro

[204] The drawing in question was ostensibly completed in 1773 and later reworked ‘perhaps only with the addition of wash’ during Fuseli’s brief visit to Zurich in 1779. See Myrone (ed.), 2006, 76.

Testa's study for *The Suicide of Dido* (c.1648-50) (Fig. 26). Fuseli seems to have noted particularly Testa's airborne figures, the turn of Dido's head, and the procession of mourners opposite her funeral pyre. Furthermore, Fuseli appears to have appropriated Testa's use of a colonnade, a diagonal feature in his picture's background, which directs attention to the principal figure. All these elements are reprised in Fuseli's drawing, the airborne figures becoming the witches presenting the vision, Dido's directed gaze being repeated as Macbeth's, while the mourners are transmuted into the vision of the kings. Fuseli lessens the diagonal severity of Testa's colonnade, and reverses it, so as to form the line of the leading witch's arm that indicates the vision. This aspect is doubled through Fuseli's use of two extra compositional devices, the notational projection of light from the mirror held to reflect Macbeth's face, and the line of a spear jutting from the foreground to the picture's edge. Fuseli, by modifying Testa's composition, and reinforcing his choice of elements from this source with a controlled distribution of tonal wash, indicates that Macbeth is the picture's primary figure.

In terms of parallels between Fuseli's composition and standards of academic pictorial invention, *The Witches Show Macbeth Banquo's Descendants* appears relatively conventional, for instance, Fuseli has used antique and sixteenth-century precursors, and has clearly situated the principal figure. However, closer attention reveals Fuseli's design as less orthodox. In *De Arte Graphica* Charles Du Fresnoy suggested that a composition should be constructed from a limited number of elements and these should be carefully combined so as to provide 'grave Majesty,

that soft silence and repose'.[205] This advice was designed to encourage the production of beautiful and unified images. Fuseli's image, while synthesised compositionally, certainly does not show silence and repose. Complementing Du Fresnoy's advice on composition Raphael Mengs believed that a principal figure should be placed in a picture's middle distance – Fuseli's Macbeth is not really so situated – and be surrounded by groups of other figures in a circular arrangement. Further, both Mengs and Du Fresnoy discussed blending a picture's deepest shadow, and the strongest light, in the same place so as to 'lead the eye from great tension to repose'.[206]

Whereas Fuseli seems, in part, to adhere to Mengs's advice on placing figures so as to follow a curve, his use of chiaroscuro does not allow the eye to traverse between areas of contrasting atmosphere; in Fuseli's picture Macbeth is confined between animate witches and parading kings. Additionally, Macbeth's entrapment amid the actions of these figure groups is reinforced by the reflective mirror surface held above the ghostly procession. Therefore, although Fuseli's drawing superficially suggests verified standards of pictorial invention, he seems to have re-employed these to serve unorthodox ends. Yet, however unconventional, Fuseli's image demonstrates his concern to ensure that his chosen pictorial elements accord with how he later determined the characteristics of an appropriately formed composition – the drawing has unity, propriety and perspicuity.[207] So considered, this drawing is a further instance of Fuseli's art practice of the 1770s plausibly contributing to his mature

[205] *De Arte Graphica*, Vol. 20 of *The Works of John Dryden*, 90: 29-30 (precept XV), cited Michael H. Duffy, 1995, 218-19.
[206] Mengs, *Gedanken über die Schönheit* (note 17), 82-3; Du Fresnoy, *De Arte Graphica* (note 25), 96:15 (precept XXXI), 98:2 (precept XXXIII), 165:9-29, cited Michael H. Duffy, 1995, 219.
[207] See Lecture V, 460.

theorising on art's attributes. Significantly, Fuseli noted that emphasising a composition's unity, propriety and perspicuity signified the artist's ethical objectives; these were composition's moral elements. Such a conception of the visual's ethical potential was not that promoted by academic art theory, or practice.[208]

Fuseli's use of shadow in this *Macbeth* image further indicates the degree to which his work contravened conventional visual standards. Academic principles dictated that total shadow, of the type Fuseli uses to fill the right-hand side of this drawing (the same type of shadowed area can be seen in *Lady Macbeth Sleepwalking*, and dominating the small *Death of Cardinal Beaufort*), should be used to produce a quiet and respectful atmosphere between a picture's foremost figures. This calming effect was achieved by depicting a certain degree of darkness which effectively countered any represented actions. Moreover, this pacifying dimness made it difficult to comprehend an image's details. Consequently, a spectator when viewing such a picture would need longer to examine the design. Forced to contemplate the picture over an extended time period it was anticipated that the viewer would more likely be affected by the combination of graceful subject and subdued execution. This visual strategy can be seen employed by Benjamin West, in *Agrippina Landing at Brundisium with the Ashes of Germanicus* (1768) (Fig. 4) where the device is further strengthened by the calming gestures of the secondary figures, and in *The Departure of Regulus* (1769) (Fig. 27). Fuseli's *The Witches Show Macbeth Banquo's Descendants* does not suggest a similar concern. Fuseli's use of black ink wash, at the right of this composition, provides an arc of darkness better allowing the witches

[208] Further analysis of Fuseli's understanding of art's ethical function is made later in this thesis, most notably in chapters three and four.

to be seen menacing Macbeth rather than inviting an anticipated meditation into the viewing experience. Equally, such emphasising of supernatural activity challenges Macbeth's principality, thereby corrupting the compositional significance academic practice determined for secondary figures.

The drawing *The Witches Show Macbeth Banquo's Descendants* is considered to be a study for a large painting – now lost – shown at the Royal Academy in 1777.[209] Although the exhibited picture gained generally favourable press reviews, concerns were noted over the degree to which it departed from academic visual conventions. London press critics felt that Fuseli had over-exercised his imagination, and exceeded accepted standards of aesthetic taste established previously by, for example, Hamilton and West. Furthermore, Fuseli's picture was considered to have muddied conventions used to differentiate painting from poetry. As the critics observed, 'Mr Fusole's scene of Macbeth shows a fine poetical imagination […] such a scene never existed in nature than to give coinage to the brain currency'; 'it may be said there is too much Poetry and not enough Painting in this Piece'.[210] Assuming that the drawn and painted versions of this subject were similar compositionally critical concern over their poetic, rather than painterly, nature may be attributable to what Martin Myrone terms their design's 'deliberately illogical and disconcerting effect', produced by Fuseli's failure to organise 'his composition into a stable and unified pictorial space'.[211] When Fuseli's conception of invention was examined previously the principal difference he noted between poetry and painting was how the

[209] Discussion of this lost painting's characteristics can be found in Myrone, 2001, 30.
[210] *Morning Chronicle*, 28 April, 1777, issue 2477 and *St James's Chronicle*, 24-6 April, 1777, issue 2516.
[211] Myrone, 2005, 173-4.

art forms relayed subject matter; painters depicted forms stilled in action – the frozen moment – while poets presented a series of imagined events freed from such temporal or spatial restrictions. Considering Fuseli's design for *The Witches Show Macbeth Banquo's Descendants* against these standards, it is conceivable that the *St. James's Chronicle's* critic confronted with an image that was both pictorially unstable and 'disconcerting', perceived it to be a more poetic, rather than painterly, as a representation. Arguably, Fuseli's choice of communicative mode enlarged visual forms' capacities for stimulating their viewers' imaginations more than was typical for visual art at that time. Consequently, Fuseli's artistic strategy challenged the connotative scope more commonly associated with academic art.

Fuseli's inventive strategies in *The Witches Show Macbeth Banquo's Descendants* were not the only potential concern for the London critics of 1777. It should be acknowledged that Fuseli's use of Shakespeare as inspiration for large scale pictures, independent of the traditions of illustration, was both novel and contentious.[212] Fuseli, in *The Witches Show Macbeth Banquo's Descendants* - as in other of his Shakespearean subjects - appears to refuse that Myrone identifies as, 'the theatrical, perspectival space conventional […] in representations of Shakespearean scenes'.[213] Thus, not only did Fuseli's mode of pictorial invention contravene academic standards established for history subjects, it also challenged

[212] For more information on the period's attitude to imagery derived from Shakespeare see, for instance, T.S.R. Boase, 'Illustrations of Shakespeare's Plays in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 10,1947, 83-108, W. Moelwyn Merchant, *Shakespeare and the Artist*, London, 1959, and Jane Martineau (et al), *Shakespeare in Art*, London and New York, 2003.

[213] Myrone, 2005, 173. The differences between Fuseli's depictions of Shakespearean scenes and those of his contemporaries has been noted by, for example, Stephen Leo Carr in, 'Verbal-Visual Relationships: Zoffany and Fuseli's Illustrations of *Macbeth*', *Art History*, 3:4, 1980, 375-387.

that customary for the depiction of Shakespearean themes. Yet, Fuseli's choice of Shakespeare as source material is unsurprising.

Shakespeare had occupied an important place in Fuseli's Zurich education and, contemporary with this tuition, he had demonstrated a commitment to Shakespeare by translating his plays.[214] Fuseli had also seen Shakespeare performed in London during the 1760s (notably Garrick's productions), events forming the inspiration for drawings such as *Garrick and Mrs Pritchard as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth after the Murder of Duncan* (1768) (Fig. 28). Fuseli's interest in depicting Shakespearean subjects continued after he settled in Rome.[215] Attention should also be given to how Fuseli appraised Shakespeare in his *Lectures*, for therein are a series of observations concerning Shakespeare's particular mode of artistic invention; these remarks help to develop our appreciation of Fuseli's perception of the activity.

Fuseli considered Shakespeare's artistry in Lecture III while assessing the relative merits of artistic inventions derived from source materials which Fuseli defined as the 'possible', the 'probable' and the 'known'.[216] Fuseli's focus on these categories appears an attempt to differentiate how invention, as a process, differed from creation. Whereas he identified the concept of creation with the fairly restricted province of 'our notions of limited being […] and admissible only when we mention Omnipotence', Fuseli considered invention as meaning 'to find'.[217] The suggested

[214] For example, Fuseli had translated *Macbeth* into German in 1760. For more information on Fuseli's appreciation of Shakespeare see, for instance, Hall, 1985, 12-13.
[215] For more information on Fuseli's attachment to Shakespeare while in Italy see letters between his Swiss and German acquaintances in, for example, Mason, 1951, 69 and Tomory, 1972, 26.
[216] See Lecture III, 409.
[217] *Ibid*.

unearthing, implied by this interpretation of invention, presupposed that forms suitable for artists' uses might be found 'somewhere, implicitly or explicitly, scattered or in a mass'.[218] Reference to this appreciation of invention has been made earlier in this chapter regarding Fuseli's use of existing art as source materials. There, it was contended that Fuseli selected his visual references only from those artworks he understood as commensurate with the degree of expressive potential which he identified with the themes he chose for his pictures. This way of working conflicted with how academic artists selected visual references. They were more concerned for their images to be unequivocal rhetorical statements connoting clearly defined aesthetic and moral standards. Key to this endeavour was the representation of suitable serene examples of idealised humanity, rather than the production of expressively charged or agitated figures and compositions. Academic artists, unlike Fuseli, avoided themes and subjects likely to confound associations commonly established between mode of representation and the resulting imagery's agreed purpose.

Consequently, Fuseli's drawings examined in this chapter, can be acknowledged to be the results of a method of selection and offsetting of visual materials, and themes, synthesised through his particular assessment of the artistic process. Equally, the types of theme and subject Fuseli depicted may plausibly, as Christian Klemm argues, show his attachment to a vision of 'human nature […] not reflected in social culture, but in the primeval, untamed passions of earlier generations, captured by

[218] *Ibid*., 408-9.

original geniuses in their writings'.[219] Considered via Klemm's analysis the way that Fuseli's art addressed ethical concerns becomes clearer. Certainly, Fuseli's artwork, unlike academic practitioners', did not feature obvious depictions of human decency to indicate a principled outlook. Whereas academic aesthetics presumed that visual art was capable rhetorically of altering thought and deed, and thereby positively affecting social relationships, Fuseli apparently did not share this perception of imagery, or indeed, conventionalised understandings of human nature. For him a more pertinent comprehension of human thought and action could be found in the work of, for example, Shakespeare (and as will be seen, Homer, Michelangelo and Milton), whose art presented challenging interpretations of lived experience. Fuseli's appreciation of these men's questioning visions of the human condition can be traced to his formal education in Zurich.

At the Zurich Carolinum Fuseli's tuition was heavily influenced by the non-conformism of Zwinglian theology. In particular, Zwinglian doctrine combined the tenets of Presupposition (the evidence of God in nature) with those of Descartian Dualism (the body-soul dialectic).[220] Camilla Smith contends that in relating these strands of thought the Zurich intellectuals educating Fuseli, 'emphasised the revelation of theological truth into reasoned form using evidence from the supernatural truths represented in Holy Scripture [arguing that] belief in God must be

[219] Lentszch (ed.), 2005, 99. There are similarities between this observation and the influence on Fuseli credited to Rousseau's writings. For more information see, for example, Mason, 1951, Introduction and 121-137, Antal, 1956, 15-18, and Hall, 1985, especially 12-48.
[220] For more information on this aspect of Fuseli's education see Camilla Smith, *Religion, Morality and Pedagogic Methods in the Early Drawings of Henry Fuseli (1753-63)*, unpublished PhD. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2008.

presupposed by man on two levels'.[221] It is the second of these that merits particular attention, 'The fact that God is/exists is enough to suggest […] why miracles and supernatural occurrences can exist without man's comprehension of them'.[222] It was, Smith contends, the 'factual' basis of this reasoning that influenced the aesthetics of Johann Bodmer, Fuseli's principal mentor, and accounted for Bodmer's interest in Milton's use of the supernatural in *Paradise Lost*,[223] in the elemental powers of Dante,[224] in Homer, in the *Nibelungenlied* and in Shakespeare. Smith exemplifies Bodmer's concerns by referencing extracts from the contents page of his *Christiche Abhandlung von dem Wunderbaren*, which illustrates the matter-of-factness Bodmer applied to the existence of the supernatural; 'Part II: On the existence of angels in the real world, Part III: On the probable character and action of angels'.[225] With such interpretations of phenomena in mind Bodmer, and his colleague Johann Breitinger, encouraged their students to develop distinctive individual identities by filtering their understanding of the divine through a probabilistic conception of human nature and action. A legacy of Fuseli's mentors' influence on his thinking about art and artists can be found in his third *Lecture on Painting*.

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[221] Smith, 2008, 73.
[222] *Ibid*.
[223] Bodmer registered this interest by authoring *Christiche Abhandlung von dem Wunderbaren in der Poesie und dessen Verbindung mit dem Wahrscheinlichen in einer Vertheidigung des Gedichts John Milton's von dem verlohrnen Paradiese* (1740). Bodmer's fascination with Milton's writing is also examined by Marilyn Torbruegge, in *Bodmer and Füssli: 'Das Wunderbare' and the Sublime*, PhD. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1968, and Hall, 1985, 15-17.
[224] Frederick Antal informs us that Bodmer had been studying Dante since 1730, see Antal, 1956, 7. Antal also refers to Bodmer's translation of Thomas Blackwell's *Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (1735), an activity through which he subsequently became interested in the literature of the German Middle Ages. Reference to Bodmer's knowledge of Blackwell is also made by Junod, 2003, 140.
[225] Smith, 2008, 74, footnote 25.

Here, Fuseli considered to how depictions of the otherworldly, from various epochs and cultures, should be acknowledged as sharing common foundations; he suggested a number of such connections should be noted between classical literature, and Renaissance visual and literary art. This aligning of sources also conditioned Fuseli's acceptance of interfaces he proposed to exist between, in particular, the work of Homer and Michelangelo.[226] Fuseli informed his Academy audience that the classical 'Scylla and the [Miltonic] Portress of Hell, their daemons and our spectres, the shade of Patroclus and the ghost of Hamlet, their naiads, nymphs, and oreads, and our sylphs, gnomes and fairies, their furies and our witches, differ less in essence than in local, temporal, social modifications.'[227] The shared origin of all these forms Fuseli proposed was 'fancy, operating on the materials of nature', a process which he saw potentially connected to Quintilian's concept of 'Visiones',[228] a means of offering ''unpremeditated conceptions', the reproduction of associated ideas'.[229] Most particularly, Fuseli proposed this conception of artistic invention allowed the selection of subjects from 'within the limits of art and the combinations of nature: though [they] should have escaped observation.'[230] Fuseli, by suggesting that materials for invention might be derived

[226] 'Through the stormy page of Homer we see his heroines and heroes but by the light that blasts them […] This is the principle of that divine series of frescoes with which […] Michelangelo adorned the lofty compartments of the *Capella Sistina* [Fuseli's emphasis]', Fuseli Lecture III, 420.
[227] *Ibid*., 410.
[228] 'Visiones' - an aspect of rhetorical communication demanding that an orator should convey their meanings with *clare et distincte* (clarity and distinctiveness), while seeking to forward equivalents of rhetorical *elocutio* (exposition) and *ornatus* (adornment). There is evidence to suggest that Fuseli's awareness of Quintilian, and indeed of the rhetorical conventions attributed to Longinus, were due to Bodmer's influence; see, for instance, Scenna, 1937, 18, where mention is made of Bodmer's use of Quintilian's ideas in support of his own theory, and Pape and Burwick (eds.), 1996, 60, where Petra Maisak makes direct reference to Bodmer's use of Longinus's *Peri hypsos* in his teaching. Here also, Fuseli is noted as referring to Bodmer as 'Bodmer-Longinus'. Additionally, strong evidence can be found of Bodmer's influence on Fuseli, in respect of Longinus, in Marilyn Torbruegge, *Bodmer and Füssli: 'Das Wunderbare' and the Sublime*, 1968.
[229] Fuseli, Lecture III, 412.
[230] *Ibid*., 411.

from such resources, was indicating a conception of visual arts practice unsanctioned by conventional understandings of the activity. His ideas were arguably influenced by Bodmer's emphasising of the unearthly, and also by the vivid evocations of the supernatural which Fuseli had seen as part of Garrick's Shakespearean productions in London during the 1760s.[231] Additionally, when applied practically, Fuseli's appreciation of artistic invention allowed for a referencing of subjects, and for a depiction of forms, opposing accepted narrative coherence; this has been demonstrated earlier in this chapter by my analyses of Fuseli's drawings. Therefore, so considered, his conception of visual invention queried the conventional relationship acknowledged to exist between artwork and spectator. Furthermore, Fuseli's ideas questioned a major attribute of academic art, how spectators should gain an elevated sense of themselves through their responses to visual forms.

Fuseli's observations in Lecture III ostensibly conform to the mode of artistic invention, and the suggested interface of source materials, presented by his Zurich education. For example, the degree of lucidity which Fuseli demanded from an imaginative transformation of source materials parallels Bodmer's verifying of Milton's otherworldly agents. In this respect, Fuseli's appreciation of artistic invention effectively challenged the relationship of artist and artwork forwarded by Reynolds's *Discourses*. Therein Reynolds, critiquing any tendency to prefer fantastic source materials to the visual forms to be found in sanctioned artistic predecessors' work stated, 'A student unacquainted with the attempts of former adventurers, is always

[231] Garrick's *Macbeth* preserved the impressive stage mechanics of Davenant's operatic version of the play, which had accompanied the witches' appearance and had exaggerated their importance.

apt to […] mistake the most trifling excursions for discoveries of moment'.[232] Fuseli, however, believed his own proposals were not unsanctioned conjecture. They were, he advised, endorsed by – his interpretation of – the antique, a contention he defended in his third Lecture. There Fuseli referred to the works of Homer and the classical painter Theon the Samian, Homer because he 'contrived to connect his imaginary creation with the realities of nature and human passions', and Theon due to his 'unpremeditated conception that […] seemed to embody the terrible graces and the enthusiastic furor of the god of war'.[233]

Lecture III was not the first time that Fuseli had presented his views on Homer's inventions, and his appreciation of the qualities he associated with Theon's artistry. In March 1775 Fuseli wrote to Lavater. His letter contained the following statement, 'Homer the Father of all poetry, Homer and also the Song of Solomon and the Book of Job; they it is that authenticate the value of emotions. A genuine, universal, vital emotion streams through the medium of an appropriate image'.[234] The observation made here, that fundamental passion can be made to radiate through use of an apposite image, identifies a thread connecting concepts of artistic invention leading from Bodmer's tuition, through Fuseli's time in Italy to his *Lectures*. Central to Fuseli's comprehension of this model of invention, one associated with the Bible, the classical poets, the work of Dante, Shakespeare and Milton, were scenarios constructed to depict particularly intense experiences, in ways suited best to evoking the

[232] Reynolds, Discourse II, 31.
[233] Fuseli, Lecture III, 411 and 413.
[234] Cited in Mason, 1951, 93. Fuseli's valuing of the *Book of Job* can also be judged by the use he made of extracts from it in private letters, see, for example, Weinglass, 1982, 6. Furthermore, Fuseli's relating of Homer's art to biblical sources can be traced to his Zurich education, as noted in Chapter Three of this thesis, and in Marilyn Torbruegge's, *Bodmer and Füssli: 'Das Wunderbare' and the Sublime*, 1968.

complexities of the passions involved. This, as has been indicated throughout this chapter, was a conception of pictorial invention contrary to the more restrained and direct representation of passion prescribed by academic principles. The above analyses of Fuseli's drawings and art theory, in comparison to the academic model of artistic invention, have revealed a degree of disparity. A further, more detailed assessment of the way that Fuseli used drawing to realise his particular vision of art practice, is given in the next chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter has established that Fuseli's conception and use of artistic invention was in many ways particular. While it must be acknowledged that his manner of constructing images bore similarity to some academic strategies of visual invention it should be noted how, and why, Fuseli's modes of representation differed. Fuseli did not accept the dominant aesthetic which required that visual art should be characterised by the use of mutually agreed source materials, and depictive strategies. Nor was he concerned with conventionalised concepts of moral purpose. Fuseli's drawings considered above – notably *The Death of Cardinal Beaufort* and *The Witches show Macbeth Banquo's Descendants* – fail to address audiences through obviously ethical subjects, or a clear use of established rhetorical visual formulas. Rather, it has been argued, Fuseli sought to contest the idea that visual art should be plainly principled and uplifting. Even though he may have used, even directly appropriated, the period's dominant visual conventions, Fuseli sought to

reframe these in keeping with his perception that art should aim to challenge what might be known about oneself or experience. Fuseli's visual re-phrasing of normative depictive strategies should, therefore, be noted as indicative of a move to parallel his art-making with that he considered to be the highest mode of artistry, for instance, as practiced by Homer and Shakespeare. Indeed, Fuseli's interest in this creative method can be detected in his attempt to match his own inventiveness to that his Zurich education identified with the greatest (literary) artists. Thus, Fuseli's conception of art's characteristics and purposes can be traced to his formal education. His appreciation of the artwork, and its perceived (ethical) functions, was subsequently shown in his *Lectures* where, for example, attention was directed to the ways in which invention and composition could be deemed to possess moral qualities. This chapter has identified connections between Fuseli's formative educational experiences, his art making and the art theories he presented formally years later. Therefore, Fuseli's art theory and practice can be determined as mutually reinforcing.

Fuseli's own art, in keeping with that of his favoured artistic mentors, features a mixing of depictive strategies and creative modes. While this challenged accepted differences between unlike forms of artistry, for instance, painting and poetry, Fuseli appeared keen to grant such art practices particular relationships. This appreciation that Fuseli had of artistic invention can be noted to underpin his tendency to overlook what was distinctive about the work of, for example, Homer and Michelangelo;[235] instead Fuseli concentrated on identifying those aspects which might be able to

[235] Fuseli noted the parallels between Homer and Michelangelo's artistic practices in his third Lecture on Painting especially.

connect such (superficially) dissimilar artistic procedures. In so doing, Fuseli effectively constructed a conceptual/visual means to compound materials conventionally believed 'heterogeneous and incompatible among themselves', so as to imply 'no absurdity, no contradiction'.[236] This strategy's purpose was to present the eye, and mind, with highly plausible images.

The effective palpability which Fuseli determined such representations to possess was mirrored in his theoretical assertion that the most appropriate artistic practice was characterised by depictions of pronounced physicality, 'of form in figure'.[237] It was this means of representation, in combination with – what Fuseli considered - the morally affective aspects of 'character or action' and pictorial unity and correctness, which facilitated images that were capable of (as Fuseli saw it) completely engaging spectators, even disturbing their expectations.[238] This re-conceptualisation of visual art's forms and functions not only contested the verity of those source materials and depictive strategies that Fuseli utilised, often the academically authenticated, it also challenged the conventional idea of art's audience.[239] The next chapter indicates that Fuseli's conceptual assessments of academically validated source materials – including the antique and certain examples of Renaissance art - and his manipulation of drawing practice in response to the human forms found in these visual resources, further particularises his appreciation of the purposes of the artist and their work. With this in mind, and as was outlined in this thesis's *Introduction*, the following

[236] Fuseli, Lecture III, 409 and 413.
[237] *Ibid*., 408.
[238] *Ibid*.
[239] Further arguing of these issues is presented especially in the third and fourth chapters of this thesis.

chapter indicates the extent to which Fuseli questioned those visual codes which underpinned conventional artistic practices.

CHAPTER 2
DRAWING ANALOGIES

The previous chapter examined Fuseli's attitude to and conception of artistic invention. It noted that the particularity of his artistry as seen, for example, by his choices of unconventional subject matters and emphasising of unorthodox visual relationships, distinctly marked both his artwork and art theory. It argued that Fuseli visually/theoretically challenged normative aesthetic conventions and produced images that, although apparently idiosyncratic, owed much to his awareness of academic art theory/practice.

This chapter further assesses Fuseli's inventive methods in respect of accepted artistic procedures. Importantly, the chapter consistently emphasises the degree to which Fuseli theoretically and creatively sought to discursively modify those criteria which underpinned normative eighteenth-century art practices. When discussing Fuseli's artistry in this chapter, I argue that his ideas about art-making and his actual uses of mark-making in his drawings challenged, and transformed, knowledge concerning how visual forms should be perceived and interpreted. In so doing, I examine Fuseli's drawings of the 1770s using an original mode of visual analysis which emphasises how these images originated from Fuseli's particular syntheses of diverse ideas, source materials and drawing practices. Specifically, this chapter addresses how Fuseli manipulated drawing in response to the human form. As will be recalled, the previous chapter established that the depicted human body was one component of Fuseli's striving after unified and intense visual representations.

Therefore, although this chapter focuses on Fuseli's depictions of the human form, these must be appreciated correctly; these figures should be considered in respect of Fuseli's compositions as a whole, a point that is reinforced throughout this thesis.

The current chapter argues that Fuseli's figure drawings evidence his attempts to gain an intense comprehension of his selected source materials. It contends that for Fuseli the human form served as a vehicle of plastic expression, one which permitted the aligning of the observable and extra-ordinary aspects of human existence. In this respect, during the course of the chapter, Fuseli's drawings of the human form are interpreted as being of types rather than as being depictions of particular characters. Accordingly, when these figure images are assessed, the term 'typological' is used to indicate their generalised and effectively archetypal natures. This chapter proposes that Fuseli's inventive imaging of the human figure, while over-spilling academic aesthetic boundaries, was a graphically-based mode of testing what it was possible, even desirable, to know. Correspondingly, as Ann Bermingham suggests in *Learning to Draw*, drawing so considered can provide 'a representational practice [producing] an encounter between self and the object of representation, and as an aesthetic practice it proposes how this encounter might be best managed.'[240] Accordingly, this chapter contends that Fuseli's art-making queried the supposed appropriateness, certainties and purposes attributed to art practice. In sum, it shows how Fuseli effectively dismantled dominant aesthetic concepts, preparing the ground for an alternate understanding of visual art and artists.

[240] *Learning to Draw*, *Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art*, New Haven, 2000, Introduction, ix.

The chapter is divided into two. The first part has four sub-sections: *Drawing and eighteenth-century academic art practice*, *Fuseli's theoretical responses to normative appreciations of classical and Renaissance art*, *Fuseli's drawings after the Horse-tamers and of associated subjects*, and *The human form: a medium of plastic expression*. The second part focuses on Fuseli's studies after Michelangelo, in particular the drawings he made from Michelangelo's Prophets, Sibyls and Ancestors (the sub-sections *Michelangelo's art: As perceived in academic theory and by Fuseli*, and *The human form re-appraised - Fuseli's drawings after Michelangelo*). Throughout, Fuseli's drawings are considered in light of the theoretical and visual discourses informing eighteenth-century art practice. For example, French and English academic art theory is assessed, as are debates concerning uses of graphic media in respect of particular subjects. Additionally, references are regularly made to how Fuseli's art practice/theory was shaped by his Zurich education. Also introduced, in the chapter's first part, is discussion of how eighteenth-century theatrical performance might have affected Fuseli's perception of the human body. Considering Fuseli's drawing practice in these ways acknowledges his work's particularity. Equally, this range of contextual materials allows appraisals of the degree to which Fuseli's perception of art-making and his practice aligned with normative visual conventions. Drawing practice contributed particular meanings to eighteenth-century visual art. These are considered in the chapter's opening section and subsequently underpin discussion of Fuseli's drawings.

Part 1

Drawing and eighteenth-century academic art practice

This section will assess the theoretical conventions governing eighteenth-century academic drawing practice. I identify the nature of such drawing and its purposes. Additionally, the section reveals the underlying theoretical conventions which directed artists' attention to particular subjects. Fuseli also theoretically considered drawing and its uses, and his opinion is evaluated against contemporary academic standards. Fuseli's conception of drawing practice influenced his perception and depiction of the antique which, in turn, affected his understanding and visual re-presentation of Renaissance art which is discussed in this chapter's second part.

Jonathan Richardson's *An Essay on the Theory of Painting* substantially influenced how drawing practice was conceived of by English academic artists.[241] Richardson, in a section of his treatise entitled *Design or Drawing*, identified drawing as a particular sort of activity. Rather than being 'sometimes understood [as] expressing our thoughts on paper', Richardson determined drawing as 'more commonly, The giving the just Form and Dimension of Visible Objects, according as they appear to the Eye.'[242] Further, Richardson stated that 'Drawing or Designing signifies only the

[241] John Barrell, in *The Political Theory of Painting*, 1986, 341, indicates that Reynolds's *Discourses* shared the principal aim of Richardson's *Essay on the Theory of Painting*, namely the raising of painting from a mechanical practice to a truly liberal art. All quotations from Richardson's *Essay* are taken from the second, revised, edition published London, 1725. Richardson's treatise was originally published in England in 1715.
[242] Richardson, *Essay on the Theory of Painting*, 143.

giving those Things their true Form.'[243] This advice contains two separate strands. Drawing should be used to record from direct observation 'as [things] appear to the Eye', while also giving these subjects 'their true Form'. The character of these 'true forms' Richardson addressed in Section V of the *Essay* when discussing painting. There, he outlined how the artist should endeavour 'To represent Nature, or rather the Best of Nature; and where it can be done, to Raise and Improve it', an allusion to a customary artistic procedure, the modification of direct observation through reference to an idealised version of that being observed, a subject's 'true form'. Richardson's advice harmonised with that of late seventeenth-century French art theorists; his description of drawing is comparable to Roger de Piles' who defined drawing as knowing, 'the purity of nature'.[244] Both men acknowledged how using certain graphic protocols enabled nature to be presented as refined, or improved.

Direct observation of nature was evidently an important component of drawing practice.[245] However, pictures based solely on observed nature were unacceptable for 'Common Nature is no more fit for a Picture than plain Narration is for a poem.'[246] Rather, Jonathan Richardson recommended that the artist should endeavour to 'raise his Ideas beyond what he sees, and form a Model of Perfection in his Own Mind which is not to found in Reality.'[247] Richardson believed that this was necessary because artists' pictures should employ themes from 'History, or a Fable', resulting in 'Good Pictures [wherein] we always see Nature Improv'd, or at least the best choice

[243] *Ibid*.
[244] De Piles, the *Art of Painting*, first published Paris, 1699. The quotation is from the second edition, published London, 1744, 17.
[245] Such artistic procedure is noted in Richardson's *Essay*, 149-50, and in Reynolds's first Discourse, 23.
[246] Richardson, *Essay*, 172.
[247] *Ibid*.

of it.'[248] An artist improving common nature by emulating the ideal was thought capable of providing 'nobler and finer Ideas of Men […] &c.'[249] This depictive strategy had a dignified heritage; it was recognised as the modus operandi of 'the Italians, and Their Masters the Ancients.'[250]

Richardson's ideas were reprised in, and underpinned, Reynolds's *Discourses on Art*. Like Richardson, Reynolds's theoretical starting point was 'the old academic problem of how to 'correct nature herself, her imperfect state by her more perfect''.[251] Both men concurred that appropriate pictorial themes should originate from eminent sources, 'Greek and Roman fable and history [and] the capital subjects of scripture history'.[252] Indeed, Reynolds identified such subjects as being the highest type, those characterising the 'Great Style'.[253] According to this prescription only the most refined of forms provided artists with suitable source materials - Reynolds noted how 'the whole beauty and grandeur of the art consists, in my opinion, in being able to get above singular forms, local customs, particularities, and details of every kind.'[254]

Similarly to Richardson, Reynolds proposed that artists should undertake close comparisons of natural forms to identify their standard characteristics and isolate these from others believed deviations or deformities. It was understood that artists should refer only to forms identified as regular ignoring any departing from this

[248] Richardson, *Essay*, Section V, 7.
[249] *Ibid*.
[250] *Essay*, 171.
[251] Charles Mitchell, 'The Three Phases of Reynolds's Method', *Burlington Magazine*, 80:467, 1942, 35. Mitchell is quoting from Reynolds's third Discourse.
[252] Reynolds, Discourse IV, 55-6.
[253] Reynolds first coined this term in Discourse III, 44, when discussing the ways in which different languages had adopted similar terminology to express excellence.
[254] Discourse III, 45.

paradigm. Reynolds termed these habitual features the 'central form' for they appeared 'to be possessed of the will and intention of the Creator, as far as they regard the external form of living beings.'[255] Reynolds, writing earlier for the *Idler* (1761), had argued that source materials conforming to this 'universal rule' provided invariable or general forms.[256] These, he contended, revealed more concise ideas of beauty to the artist, for in 'all creatures of the same species […] beauty is the medium or centre of all its various forms.'[257] Determining the characteristics of general or central forms required arduous practice necessitating considerable observation, and drawn study, of subjects. This was most necessary when studying the human form, a principal connotative feature of the highest type of art; although both Reynolds and Richardson conceded that the refined natures of inanimate objects, landscapes and animals could also be so represented.[258] In Fuseli's *Lectures on Painting* these views were queried.

Written in 1802 Fuseli's seventh Lecture, *On Design*, asserted 'It is perhaps unnecessary to premise, that by the word Design I mean not what that word denotes in a general sense […] but what it implies in its narrowest and most specific sense – the *drawing* of the figures and component parts of the subject [Fuseli's emphasis]'.[259] Fuseli restricts his appraisal of suitable subjects to human forms and only those other elements crucial to the depiction of a chosen theme. Moreover, Fuseli amplified how

[255] *Ibid*., 46. Charles Mitchell has indicted how Reynolds's theory and practice was motivated by 'the persistent impulse to 'generalise his ideas'', see *Burlington Magazine*, 80:467, 1942, 35. Also see this essay by Mitchell, and Ernst Gombrich's, in the *Burlington Magazine*, 80:467, 1942, for discussion of Reynolds's use of the antique when producing images conforming to his idea of the central form.
[256] *Idler*, no.82, 10 November, 1761, 172.
[257] *Ibid*.
[258] See Discourse I, 23, where Reynolds refers to the refined character of 'pieces of drapery', and Richardson's *Essay*, 1725, 7, where he notes 'Animals, Landscapes' could also be so depicted.
[259] Fuseli, Lecture VII, 490.

drawing should be understood in respect of form whose depiction served a certain purpose; he argued that 'In forms alone the idea of existence can be rendered intuitive and permanent'.[260] Furthermore, Fuseli observed that enhanced conceptions of phenomena were best evidenced through use of line because, 'lines alone can neither be obliterated nor misconstrued; by application of their standard alone, discrimination takes place, and description becomes intelligible.' [261]

Fuseli's attribution of a particular function to line – it could indicate subjects directly, indelibly and lucidly - superficially reflects Reynolds's opinion that, 'A firm and determined outline is one of the characteristics of the great style in painting.'[262] Yet, considering Fuseli's actual use of drawn line (in, for example, *The Death of Brutus* (Fig. 18), considered in the previous chapter) his practice does not demonstrate the particularity of line work that Reynolds implied. Generally, however, Fuseli's assessment of how the drawn line should characterise nature appears similar to Richardson and Reynolds's, for Fuseli stated 'Nature is a collective idea [it] can never *in its perfection* inhabit *a single* object [Fuseli's emphasis]'.[263] Indeed, in Lecture VII, Fuseli used the term 'central forms', apparently concurring with Reynolds's attribution in the *Discourses*. Yet, engaging with how Reynolds's and Richardson's theories emphasised a need to eschew commonplace forms in favour of 'nobler and finer ideas' reflective of 'Nature Improv'd',[264] does not confirm that

[260] *Ibid*., 491.
[261] *Ibid*.
[262] Reynolds, Discourse III, 52.
[263] Fuseli, Lecture VII, 495.
[264] Richardson, *Essay*, 7.

Fuseli concurred with the Platonic emphases of academic thinking.[265] As is argued throughout this chapter, Fuseli's re-use of his academic peers and forebears' critical terminology can equally be interpreted as a considered rhetorical strategy through which contentious ideas might be counter-argued – even ostensibly unpicked – by appropriating their analytical vocabulary.

Acknowledging how academic aesthetics contextualised drawing practice - its uses and underlying conceptual principles - in terms of classical art especially, it is unsurprising that academic artists chose to visit Italy to enhance their visual and conceptual abilities. Rome, for example, noted for its art academies, also provided opportunities to examine Renaissance masterpieces in comparison to numerous collections of antique artefacts. Furthermore, Italy, as a primary destination for Grand Tourists, offered eighteenth-century artists an established art market and an opportunity to make their professional reputations.[266] Fuseli was among entrants into Rome in May 1770. As the following section indicates, the challenges (identified above) that Fuseli presented to academic drawing practice's conceptual principles seem informed by his direct experience of classical art particularly.

[265] For an in-depth analysis of how the functions of observation and artistic representation changed during the course of the eighteenth century see, David Morgan, 'The Rise and Fall of Abstraction in Eighteenth-Century Art Theory', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 27:3,1994, 449-78. Richardson's and Reynolds's appreciations of how nature should be improved according to Platonic ideas can be found in the *Essay*, 171, and Discourse III, 46, respectively.

[266] For accounts of the Grand Tour experience see, for example, Edward Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour: Anglo-Italian Cultural Relations since the Renaissance*, London, 1998, and Jeremy Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour*, New Haven, 2003.

Fuseli's theoretical responses to normative appreciations of classical and Renaissance art

This section more fully establishes the visual and conceptual discourses informing eighteenth-century art practice. The types of subjects that artists selected, and the theoretical conventions they applied to them, significantly conditioned how their work was perceived and interpreted. Identifying these contexts provides necessary foundations for later discussions of Fuseli's and academic artists' drawings. In particular, the visual frameworks identified in this section reveal that Fuseli's perception and selections of source materials effectively contested the principles underpinning academic art and, subsequently, allowed him to graphically transform the tenets of dominant art-making.

Until 1770, Fuseli ostensibly agreed with the neo-classical theory articulated through his 1765 translation of Winckelmann's *Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture*.[267] Yet, when in Rome and observing classical artefacts firsthand - and other artworks familiar to him from reproductions – Fuseli apparently doubted Winckelmann's critical authority.[268] His reservations regarding Winckelmann surfaced soon after arriving in Italy. Writing to Lavater, July 30 1770, Fuseli questioned Raphael Mengs's reputation as an academic painter, yet, Mengs was rated highly by Winckelmann. Fuseli wrote, Mengs 'who was praised by the truly great Winckelmann was not worthy of the name he gave him; he is not worthy now,

[267] Published London, 1765. Mason, 1951, 23, argues that it was Fuseli's experiences in Rome that led him to challenge 'the dominant taste of the age'.
[268] In Zurich Fuseli had had access to his father's illustrated art historical manuscripts and his 'large collection of old drawings and engravings [and] many casts and engravings after antique statues', Antal, 1956, 8.

and posterity, which can judge impartially, will be amazed that a man could have written so respectably on art who included a mediocre artist along with Phidias and Apelles'.[269] Fuseli's written challenge to Mengs's artistic credibility is an early attempt to distance himself from conventional art theory, and the practice it buttressed. As the above section noted, such disagreement found voice in Fuseli's later theoretical stance towards Reynolds and Richardson. Equally, Fuseli's letter to Lavater suggests a reframing of his views on Winckelmann which, as is indicated below, underwent profound change following Fuseli's direct experience of classical art and Michelangelo's work.

In Rome the range of ancient and Renaissance art available to artists and connoisseurs was considerable. Attempts to direct appreciation of this material had resulted in numerous guides to sites of artistic merit and to artefacts believed significant. Among these was the Richardsons' *An Account of Some of the Statues, Bas Reliefs, Drawings and Pictures of Italy &c* (1722).[270] Both this and Joseph Addison's guidebook *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy &c* (1705) emphasised how direct experience of classical artefacts influenced artistic practice. Addison commented 'There is […] so much to be observed […] of Antiquities, that it is almost impossible to survey them without taking new hints, and raising different Reflexions'.[271] Additionally, available to readers of German was the Zurich edition of

[269] Cited Schiff, 1975, 40.
[270] *An Account of Some of the Statues, Bas Reliefs, Drawings and Pictures of Italy &*c, London, 1722. A French edition was published in 1728. The text was co-authored by Jonathan Richardson, Sr. and Jr.
[271] Addison, *Remarks*, 1773 edition (Dublin), 177.

Daniel Webb's *An Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting*.[272] This text's introduction, written by Fuseli's namesake H.H. Füssli, discussed ancient art alongside Füssli's choice of Renaissance masterpieces, for example, positive accounts were given of Raphael, Correggio (Fig. 29) and Annibale Carracci's works (Fig. 30). Foreshadowing what was to become accepted aesthetic taste the Richardsons' *Account* similarly emphasised Raphael, Correggio and Titian's (Fig. 31) creative merits, artists who also featured prominently in Mengs's *Thoughts on Beauty and Taste in Painting* (1762).[273]

Regarding the antique the period's art guides presented a role-call of artefacts believed to be the finest examples. For instance, the Richardsons' *Account* listed the *Meleager*, the *Venus*, the *Apollo*, *Hercules*, *Gladiator*, the *Laocoön*, and the *Antinous* (Fig. 32a-e). Selected from the many accessible ancient artefacts these statues were deemed foremost due to their concise portrayals of idealised human beauty.[274] In *Thoughts on Beauty and Taste in Painting* Mengs attempted to quantify his understanding of the aesthetic ideals perceived in such classical sculptures. He compared the ancients' representations of beauty with what he deemed to be the less significant tendency of modern artists, the imitation of nature.[275] Mengs

[272] Published in 1766, second edition 1771. Webb's work was bound along with Mengs's *Gedanken Über die Schönheit und über den Geschmack in der Mahlerei* (*Thoughts on Beauty and Taste in Painting*), the source from which Webb plagiarised most of his ideas.
[273] Mengs described Raphael, Correggio and Titian as 'the three great luminaries of painting', while Reynolds, in Discourse V, claimed that Raphael should be considered 'in general the foremost of the first painters', 74.
[274] These artefacts represented the aesthetic standards by which the antique was appraised later in the century. Also see, for example, Reynolds, Discourse III, 47, where he discussed how different types of antique statue reflected particular aspects of the central form, and also considered how the characteristics of these classical sources might be applied to depictions of different types of human figure.
[275] See *The Works of Anthony Raphael Mengs first painter to his Catholic Majesty Charles III*, translated from the Italian, published by the Chevr. Don Joseph Nicholas d'Azara (2 Vols.), Vol I., London, 1796, 76.

catalogued the antique into three degrees of beauty of which only the two uppermost were believed artistically valuable. Mengs considered that the *Laocoön* and the *Torso* should occupy the highest class of antique form, that demonstrating perfect beauty, while on the second rank he placed the *Apollo* and *Gladiator*.[276] The notion of ideal beauty, and its relationship to classical art, was one with which Fuseli was familiar. In 1765 he had translated into English Johann Winckelmann's *Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture*.[277]

Winckelmann's appreciation of Greek art was 'drawn from intuition and vast reading, rather than direct observation' and possessed 'the intensity of a daydream'.[278] Considering Winckelmann's textual interpretation of the antique in his book – especially his appraisal of the *Laocoön* (Fig. 2) - provides a basis from which to consider Fuseli's own opinions of classical art and its representation. Alex Potts has observed that in the eighteenth century the *Laocoön* was thought to be a significant classical sculpture because it 'played a key role in [period] discussions of visual art as a model of how a terrifying subject could be presented so as to offer the spectator an uplifting aesthetic experience.'[279] The form of uplift Potts indicates reflects the academic visual conventions assessed in this thesis's opening chapter. In Fuseli's

[276] Mengs's three classes of beauty, in ascending order are, that which could be seen only in the essential parts of statues; that where beauty was present in the useful parts as well; and the highest type, those forms considered to possess beauty in all parts, those believed perfectly beautiful.
[277] Originally published in Dresden, 1755 under the title *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in Malerei und Bildhauerkunst*. Hereafter, Winckelmann's text will be referred to simply as the *Gedanken*. Winckelmann had written the book in Dresden before he had observed any example of Greek art, other than those coins, gems and vases collected by Augustus III, King of Poland and Elector of Saxony. Fuseli's translation, published in London in 1765, appeared under the title *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks*, and was dedicated to Fuseli's friend and patron, Lord Scarsdale. For the particular significance of Winckelmann for Fuseli see, for example, Hall, 1985.
[278] Lorenz Eitner, *Neoclassicism and Romanticism*, *1750-1850*, Vol.I, London, 1971, 5.
[279] Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal*, New Haven, 1994, 136.

translation of Winckelmann the *Laocoön* was considered in a section headed 'Expression'. Fuseli's titling provides an interpretative gloss on Winckelmann's text, for Winckelmann had not employed such categorisations.[280] Classified under Fuseli's heading 'Expression' the description of Greek sculpture began, 'The last and most eminent characteristic of the Greek works is a noble simplicity and sedate grandeur in Gesture and Expression […] a great soul lies sedate beneath the strife of the passions in Greek figures'.[281]

Winckelmann had followed this opening with reference to the *Laocoön*, 'T'is in the face of the *Laocoön* this soul shines with full lustre, not confined however to the face, amidst the violent sufferings.'[282] Winckelmann had a certain conception of this statue's communicative potential. For him, the *Laocoön's* central figure (the priest of Apollo) while suffering almost palpably, his agonies did not exert 'themselves with violence, either in the face or gesture'[283] because 'the struggling body and the supporting mind exert themselves with equal strength, nay balance all the frame.'[284] Winckelmann focused his appraisal of the *Laocoön* on the priest's face because therein he perceived 'The expression of so great a soul [one] beyond the force of mere nature'.[285] The *Laocoön's* sculptor had been able to depict this characteristic because he had searched his mind 'for the strength of spirit with which [to mark] his marble'.[286] Ostensibly, this face provided Winckelmann with an all-inclusive symbol

[280] Fuseli's translation was ordered through seven subject headings: Nature, Contour, Drapery, Expression, Workmanship in Sculpture, Painting and Allegory.
[281] Fuseli's Winckelmann, London, 1765, 30.
[282] *Ibid*.
[283] *Ibid*.
[284] *Ibid*., 31.
[285] *Ibid*.
[286] *Ibid*. After actually viewing the statue in 1755 Winckelmann provided an analysis of it in the *History of the Art of Antiquity* (published 1764). For a fuller description of Winckelmann's changed

of the antique's greatness. Carol Hall, analysing Winckelmann's appreciation of the *Laocoön*, suggests that his emphasising of how this face served as a principal communicative device rendered it, 'Like most such all-encompassing symbols […] the expression on the face of the *Laocoön* [is] vague enough to be open to a wide range of interpretation.'[287] In his *Lectures* Fuseli reconsidered the potential mis-reading of connotations presumed evident in classical art. These *Lectures* contain ideas opposing Winckelmann's, especially regarding the purpose of expression in ancient art. Fuseli also gave his opinions on idealising (human) nature, notably in respect of the notion of 'sedate grandeur'. Considering how Winckelmann's ideas on classical art had conditioned eighteenth-century academic aesthetics Fuseli's contestation questioned the cultural certainties these discourses presumed.

Fuseli's first Lecture (1801) assessed ancient art. Within this address he analysed the *Laocoön*. Establishing his theoretical frameworks Fuseli indicated that expression in antique art should be understood as purposeful and singular, rather than multiple. Classical art ought to be conceived as a manifestation of 'the primary expression of every great idea'.[288] Fuseli deemed that any dissolution of expressive unity was detrimental to this art's communicative prospect, and that false critical appraisals of

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understanding of the *Laocoön* in this later text, and how his perception of the antique relates to eighteenth-century aesthetics more generally, see Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal*, 1994.

[287] Hall, 1985, 72-3. The idea that a fragment of an antique sculpture might exemplify the expressive charge of the whole is referenced in Daniel Webb's appraisal of the *Laocoön* in his *An Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting* (1760), a text familiar to Fuseli. Fuseli's translation of the *Gedanken's* companion essay the *Erläuterung der Gedanken*, assessed the vagueness characterising Winckelmann's appreciation of the face of the *Laocoön's* central figure; Fuseli highlighted that the *Laocoön's* expression 'hath seldom met with general approbation, and never pronounced without hazard of being misunderstood', see Hall, 1985, 73.

[288] Fuseli, Lecture I, 376.

classical artists' creative motivations had been given by 'the frigid ecstacies of German criticism'.[289]

Fuseli had previously challenged German art criticism in the introduction to his *Lectures*. In particular, it was Winckelmann's art theory which he had denounced, 'To him Germany owes the shackles of her artists, and the narrow limits of their aim'.[290] Fuseli believed that artists attempting to adapt their practice to accommodate Winckelmann's aesthetic concepts lost, 'what alone can make beauty interesting; - expression and mind', for 'in a hopeless chase after what they call beauty' they had 'learnt to substitute the means for the end.'[291] Apparently seeking to right this imbalance, Fuseli contrasted his own appraisal of the *Laocoön* to that of the German critics'; he was especially disparaging of how their ideas had dissipated the expressive potential of the statue's central figure.[292]

Fuseli clarified how he believed the *Laocoön* should be understood. To him its central figure was a victim of '*one* great expression', perceivable in his facial features, elements that were 'united seats of convulsion […] struggling within the jaws of death [Fuseli's emphasis].'[293] This assessment demonstrates the extent to which Fuseli had revised his opinion of Winckelmann's ideas on the antique. After all, as Eudo Mason indicates, Winckelmann 'the chief prophet of later eighteenth-century

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[289] *Ibid*.
[290] Fuseli, Introduction to the *Lectures on Painting*.
[291] *Ibid*.
[292] Fuseli noted these critics had talked of a 'pity, like a vapour', which they perceived to be 'swimming in the father's eyes', Lecture I, 376. On the existence of such an apparent surfeit of artistic merit Fuseli ironically commented that, 'To the miraculous organisation of such expression, Agesander, the sculptor of the Laocoön, was too wise to lay claim.'
[293] Fuseli, Lecture I, 376.

classicism' was a figure Fuseli 'had formerly […] idolised'.[294] Yet, in his *Lectures*, Fuseli presented views that were characterised by 'non-classical elements [and] un-classical gestures and accents.'[295] For instance, his foregrounding of how the *Laocoön's* forms should be interpreted as a concise demonstration of expression offers an alternate comprehension of the statue's potential significance and function. Later, this chapter assesses how Fuseli's first-hand experience of the antique, during the 1770s, contributed substantially to his amending of its conceptual significance.

Fuseli's conception of appropriate expression in the *Laocoön*, although markedly different to the emphases of Winckelmann's scholarship, is notable otherwise. Rather than stressing the degree to which the sculpture's central figure apparently suppressed 'in the groan for his children the shriek for himself', Fuseli emphasised how this figure's physical characteristics suggested that his fate should be interpreted more intensely.[296] The moment Fuseli emphasised when interpreting the *Laocoön*, and the expressive power he deemed it to articulate, was not deferred, but palpable, immediate and ostensibly human; again, Fuseli's opinion contrasts with academic ideas on how visual art should show impassive endurance.[297] Consequently, the *Laocoön's* central figure should not to be thought to demonstrate exemplary conduct. It should be considered an evocation of how interrelated human characteristics, and passions, might be judged as what Fuseli determined to be 'a

[294] Mason, 1951, 37.
[295] *Ibid*.
[296] Fuseli, Lecture I, 376.
[297] The first chapter of this thesis indicated how the visual demonstration of stoicism, in the work of academic painters, was related to ideas concerning the ethical motivations believed necessary to inform contemporary social conduct.

class'; the *Laocoön's* central figure encompassed, 'the prince, the priest, the father, […] visible, but, absorbed in the man.'[298]

So considered, the ***Laocoön's*** evoked passion potentially allowed a more complete engagement with what Fuseli perceived as being the subject's underlying significance. With the *Laocoön* this meant converting its established reputation as a depiction of suffering born stoically into a typological form with additional connotations. Fuseli's distancing of himself from Winckelmann's aesthetic concepts is significant for the characteristics of Fuseli's art theory. At his *Lectures* outset Fuseli made it plain that he was not grounding his conceptions of historic visual artefacts, or by extension their makers' presumed motivations, on the neo-classicist's concern with undisputed ideals of beauty and their depiction.

For Fuseli, antique source materials were ostensibly expressive devices rather than markers of human beauty. His conceptual reframing of the antique, while beyond Winckelmann's aesthetic system, equally conflicted with Reynolds's. The latter stated that, 'If you mean to preserve the most perfect beauty *in its most perfect state*, you cannot express the passions [Reynolds's emphasis].'[299] Considering Fuseli's statements on beauty, especially through his *Lectures* and *Aphorisms*, it appears that he had little belief in visual form's capacity to connote beauty without expression's support. Furthermore, Fuseli apparently suggests that imbuing subjects with expressive potential provided a superior gauge through which to accurately

[298] Fuseli, Lecture I, 376. Fuseli also assessed the ***Laocoön's*** prospect for connoting alternate aesthetic conventions in Lecture III, 411.
[299] Reynolds, Discourse V, 72. The distinction between expression, or character, and beauty was also given wide currency by Lessing who, in the *Laokoön,* 1766, pointed out that in the plastic arts expression should always be sacrificed to beauty.

ascertain what constituted the beautiful. In the Corollary to his 41st Aphorism Fuseli described beauty as presiding over an empire that was despotic.[300] He sought to challenge this aesthetic tyranny, which he associated with conventional interpretations of beauty, by questioning whether a subject might gain a greater beauty from an artist's manipulation of an expressive 'visual language'. Such expressive means, Fuseli believed, had the potential to produce a more suggestively potent representation of human splendour than a literal depiction of that which was commonly presumed to be beautiful. Developing his argument, Fuseli turned to Homer's account of Helen from the *Iliad*, which Fuseli considered to be a most suitable example of such artistry in action.[301] Fuseli observed, 'Homer's Helen is the finest woman we have read of, merely because he has left her to be made up of the Dulcineas of his readers.'[302] Fuseli's reference to Dulcineas, the peasant girl whom Don Quixote had seen only fleetingly and never met, but who he recalled as the most beautiful of women, is significant.[303] Through allusion to Cervantes, Fuseli was making a stinging attack on those who, for example, presumed certain classical forms were unequivocal examples of human beauty even though their thinking was based on others' conceptions of the beautiful rather than being formed from their own assessment of the subject. Alternatively, Fuseli suggested that notions of beauty were significantly determined by artistic manipulations of aesthetic conventions, and much that was believed beautiful owed its status to expressive or imaginative

[300] Beauty ruled an empire 'subject to the anarchies of despotism, enthroned to-day, dethroned to-morrow', cited Mason, 1951, 299.
[301] This description was also commented on in the same context by Edmund Burke in the *Philosophical Enquiry*, V, Section V, 171-2, where Burke quotes from Alexander Pope's translation of the *Iliad*, III, 205-8, published serially 1715-20.
[302] Fuseli, Corollary to Aphorism 41, cited Mason, 1951, 299.
[303] Don Quixote recalled Dulcineas's beauty in Ch. XIII of the first part of Cervantes' book, published Madrid, 1605

creative interventions. Incontestable absolutes of beauty were, to Fuseli, as chimerical as Don Quixote's true love.

Fuseli's aphoristic attribution of beauty's realm as despotic was reprised in his first Lecture where beauty figured as 'a despotic princess'.[304] Here, Fuseli also further distanced himself from Winckelmann's and Mengs's aesthetics, especially Mengs's quoting of Platonic theory in the opening chapter of his *Thoughts on Beauty and Taste in Painting* (1762), where beauty was associated with an absolute perfected state. Fuseli informed his Academy audience that his assessment of beauty would not 'perplex you or myself with abstract ideas, and the romantic reveries of Platonic philosophy'.[305] This negative reference to Plato's notion of ideal forms locates Fuseli's conceptual standpoint as distinct from that underpinning academic conventions. Actually, by recourse to anti-Platonic discourse, Fuseli was undermining the veracity of terminology familiar from Richardson's and Reynolds's art theories which celebrated use of 'true', or 'central', forms. Fuseli, by critically re-using vocabulary associated with established academic art theory can, as was suggested in this chapter's opening section, be judged to have attacked the principles underlying it and, by association, the art practice it informed. In sum, Fuseli's words demonstrate his wish to dismantle a mode of thinking about art and its making he disagreed with, through a rubbishing of its underlying critical conventions.

[304] Fuseli, Lecture I, 347. Here, as fore-mentioned in this thesis's *Introduction*, is an example of how Fuseli's *Lectures* were informed by his previous experiences and ideas.
[305] *Ibid*.

Opposing Platonic ideals Fuseli's concept of beauty emphasised, 'that harmonious whole of the human frame, that unison of parts to one end',[306] the ability to captivate through expressive characteristics; 'Expression alone can invest beauty with supreme and lasting command over the eye […] beauty unsupported by vigour and expression […] dwells less than on active deformity.'[307] Fuseli, emphasising expression's potential, considered the possibility that the depicted human body might enthral viewers rather than merely reflect established visual formulas. So considered, it is arguable that Fuseli's observations provided his students with a modus operandi. He advised them that the most viable depictions of the human form ought to be those which were expressively charged and attention-grabbing, not serene, as would be the case if they accepted commonplace aesthetic conventions. Following Fuseli's advice might allow for a pointed visual fusing of the human form's constituent parts into a synthesised configuration of elements which, while not conventionally beautiful, did possess qualities capable of re-framing the body's characteristics and connotations. As Fuseli had explained through reference to the *Laocoön*, so re-making the figure encouraged an alternative mode of seeing and thinking about the human subject.

In truth, Fuseli considered that the ancients' had sought to exhibit expressive potential in every aspect of the human body. No part of the human form should be overlooked as a potentially expressive element. He observed that, 'The expression of the ancients [searched] every nook of the human breast […] The expression of the

[306] *Ibid*.
[307] Fuseli, Aphorism 99 and Corollary, cited Mason, 1951, 301.

ancients explored nature even in the mute recesses'.[308] In sum, rather than beauty being a fickle, abstract notion, on which it was difficult to achieve consensus, even 'The Apollo and Medicean Venus are not by all received as canons of male and female beauty',[309] Fuseli thought beauty's impact to be closely associated with evocations of passion and suffering. He re-addressed this idea in his second Lecture.

Commenting on Raphael's work in Lecture II, Fuseli noted that, 'Perfect beauty he has not represented'.[310] Rather, Fuseli indicated that Raphael's art was not governed by abstract aesthetic principles, the forms he depicted were 'a vehicle of character or pathos […] His expression, in strict unison with and decided by character, whether calm, animated, agitated, convulsed, or absorbed by the inspiring passion'.[311] Fuseli perceived such expression as being 'the vivid image of the passion that affects the mind […] It animates the features, attitudes, and gestures'.[312] Additionally, Fuseli considered this passion's depiction to be variable, determined by the nature of the artist's subject matter, arguing that 'Expression has its classes […] The tremulous emotion of Hector's breast when he approaches Ajax [was not the same as] the palpitation of Paris when he discovers Menelaus […] the fear of Marius cannot sink to the panic of the Cimber who drops the dagger at entering his prison, nor the astonishment of Hamlet degenerate into the fright of vulgar fear.'[313] It will be recalled that Fuseli employed a similar classification of impassioned types when assessing

[308] Fuseli, Corollary to Aphorism 92, cited Mason, 1951, 303.
[309] Fuseli, Corollary to Aphorism 41, cited Mason, 1951, 299.
[310] Fuseli, Lecture II, 384.
[311] *Ibid*. Again, by so determining the nature of Raphael's art, Fuseli challenged academic convention which asserted Raphael's incontrovertible excellence, and nominated his art to possess aesthetic qualities which served to fore-shadow eighteenth-century artistic values.
[312] Fuseli, Lecture V, 468.
[313] *Ibid*., 469.

the *Laocoön*, whose central figure he determined to be 'a class; it characterises […] the prince, the priest, the father […] absorbed in the man'.[314] Indeed, when the passion to be expressed reached an extreme pitch, as it did in the *Laocoön*, the depictive mode necessary to its portrayal must alter accordingly; 'For every being seized by an enormous passion, be it joy or grief, or fear sunk to despair, loses the character of its own individual expression, and is absorbed by the power of the feature that attracts it.'[315] In place of purely abstract notions of the beautiful Fuseli intimates that the artist should seek means to provide a more palpable sense of their subject by adopting a particular form of characterisation, the 'type', which depended on the artist depicting impassioned states through the most pertinent expressive forms and characteristics.

Fuseli's interest in blending expressive forms and impassioned states into commanding, interpretively rich, typological images led him to consider Achilles, a figure he perceived as the ancients' most successful heroic depiction. Whereas other classical heroes had singular traits - Ajax, Fuseli noted, possessed 'height, strength, the giant-stride and supercilious air', while Ulysses had a 'powerful agility' – he characterised Achilles as a composite of such qualities.[316] Fuseli noted that Homer's depiction of Achilles mixed ideal powers - the superhuman - with recognisable human characteristics, 'Achilles […] clad in celestial armour, is a splendid being […] Achilles the fool of passions, is the real man'.[317]

[314] Fuseli, Lecture I, 376.
[315] Fuseli, Lecture V, 470.
[316] Fuseli, Corollary to Aphorism 102, cited Mason, 1951, 232.
[317] *Ibid*.

Fuseli's interest in Achilles focused especially on his excessive actions and forceful nature. He noted that Achilles was capable of dispersing 'all but the gods' and was so powerful a man that 'a miracle alone can save those that oppose him singly'.[318] Nancy L. Pressly considers that the qualities which Fuseli notes mark a shift away from representing the stoicism favoured by the most academic artists.[319] Fuseli's interest in Achilles was also shared by several of his peers in Rome; Achilles featured in works by Alexander Runciman, Tobias Sergel and Thomas Banks.[320] Pressly argues that Fuseli and these artists were interested in the potential of this character type to serve as a 'recurring image of the pensive and melancholy hero overwhelmed with despair or absorbed in deep thought'.[321] Equally, the 'Achilles type' 'reflects [these artists'] concern with intense states of feeling'.[322] Furthermore, Pressly notes even when Fuseli and his Roman contemporaries dealt with conventional subjects they tended to apply the emphases of the Achilles theme, focusing on 'scenes concerned with extreme emotions' that were centred on 'defiant and tragic' figures.[323]

Such depictions challenged more academic artists' representations of classical source materials. When they depicted Achilles their tendency was to overlook Homer's impassioned depiction of him in favour of granting Achilles a calm demeanour – Gavin Hamilton had mused on the problem of how to 'preserve

[318] Fuseli, Corollary to Aphorism 102, cited Mason, 1951, 233.
[319] Pressly, *The Fuseli Circle in Rome – Early Romantic Art of the 1770s*, New Haven, 1979, Introduction, xi.
[320] For example, Runciman's *Achilles and the River Scamander* (1770-72), Sergel's *Achilles Comforted by a Young Woman* (c.1775-76), and Banks's *Thetis and her Nymphs Rising from the Sea to Console Achilles for the Loss of Patroclus* (1777-78).
[321] Pressly, 1979, Introduction, xi.
[322] *Ibid*.
[323] *Ibid*.

[Achilles'] dignity without extravagance in this character'.[324] Pressly's observations on how the 'Achilles type' served Fuseli and his peers find parallels in Camilla Smith's research.[325] Smith proposes that Fuseli was concerned with themes of heightened drama – seen in a number of his drawings of the late-1750s/early-1760s – and he also demonstrated an interest in exploring often questionable notions of virtue as evident in, for example, his drawings for *Till Eulenspiegel* (1758-60) (Fig. 33a-b). Fuseli used the qualities which he perceived in the 'Achilles type' as inspiration when assessing the source materials he observed and drew from in Rome. The criteria that Fuseli had used to establish Achilles as superior to other Greek heroes he also applied to certain examples of classical visual art, implying that these should be seen as a compendium of features found singly in other – lesser - antique statues. Fuseli wrote that 'What Achilles is to his confederates, the Apollo, the Torso, the statues of the Quirinal, are to all other known figures of gods, demigods and heroes.'[326] So considered, Fuseli's estimation of the antique is rather different to academic artists/theorists'; Raphael Mengs, for example, had classified classical statues according to the degree to which they evoked perfected human beauty.[327]

The dual aspects of expression and passion underpinned Fuseli's notion of classical art, and it was only within their context - not that of conventionalised beauty - that he thought the ideal might be realisable. This concept of ideality relates to knowledge that Fuseli gained through his Zurich education. As part of this schooling he had

[324] David Irwin, 'Gavin Hamilton, Archaeologist, Painter, and Dealer.' *The Art Bulletin*, 44:2, 1962, 95, cited Pressly, 1979, Introduction, x.
[325] See Camilla Smith, *Religion, Morality and Pedagogic Methods in the Early Drawings of Henry Fuseli (1753-63)*, unpublished PhD. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2008, 33.
[326] Fuseli, Corollary to Aphorism 102, cited Mason, 1951, 233.
[327] Mengs had used this criterion to rank-order statues such as the *Laocoön*, the *Torso*, the *Apollo* and *Gladiator* for artistic reference in his *Thoughts on Beauty and Taste in Painting* (1762).

been made aware of Longinus's notion of 'Nobility of Soul' which, Longinus explained, focused on how 'the mind should be trained towards the formation of grand ideas or elevated thoughts'.[328] Comparably, Fuseli's perception of the antique, and his theorising of it, can be understood to indicate his wish to demonstrate such intellectual magnificence, and his own superlative nature. Fuseli's selection of particular classical subjects – Achilles, for instance – and his celebration of these through unconventional interpretations, intimated his capacity for elevated thought and asserted his exceptional qualities, while signalling his awareness of how to re-frame standard aesthetic conventions. This type of thinking was necessary if one was to realise their full potential because, as Longinus had also observed, 'those who cultivate mean or servile thinking in life are not capable of striking out into the realm of the remarkable'.[329] Homer had used his heightened human powers to depict Achilles who, in turn, was an outstanding individual. Fuseli, by recognising Homer/Achilles as august company worth joining, implied he too should be noted as similarly capable. If this capability was necessarily displayed through non-conformist acts or thought, then the latter – by recourse to Longinian thinking – was a more potent mark of one's exceptional nature.[330] Fuseli's suggestion that antique sculptures such as the *Horse-tamers*, *Apollo* and *Torso* were imbued with commensurately elevated qualities, indicates that he was thinking about how employing particular visual sources could help proclaim his artistic splendour.

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[328] Longinus's idea was part of his estimation of the sublime, and appeared in Chapter IX of his *On the Sublime*. See Marilyn Torbruegge, *Bodmer and Füssli: 'Das Wunderbare' and the Sublime*, PhD. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1968, 94. A more detailed assessment of Fuseli's understanding of the sublime is given in the next chapter of this thesis.

[329] *Ibid*.

[330] Letters exchanged between Lavater, Herder and Goethe during the 1770s suggests that while in Italy Fuseli was cultivating an exceptional self-identity. See, for example, letters from Lavater to Herder of 4 and 16 November 1774, cited Mason, 1951, 67.

Fuseli's comprehension of the potential of the *Horse-tamer* statue especially reflects these concerns.

Fuseli's drawings after the *Horse-tamers* and of associated subjects

This section concentrates on Fuseli's drawings of the *Horse-tamer* statue. His studies of this sculpture's human forms are noteworthy because they served as templates for many of his later images of the human body. While these *Horse-tamer* images occupy the section's 'centre stage' attention is given to other of Fuseli's drawings after classical sources. In each of these Fuseli's depictions of the antique oppose prevailing aesthetic decorum. Additionally, Fuseli's *Horse-tamer* studies are considered against his figure drawings of the 1750s and 1760s to demonstrate how Fuseli's youthful interests related to his artistic pursuits during the 1770s. Furthermore, Fuseli's drawings are assessed in respect of his Zurich studentship under Bodmer, revealing how the emphases of his formal education and his drawings combine to produce a coherent creative/intellectual trajectory. As in the previous section, these influences and artworks are offset against Fuseli's observations on art's theory and practice from his Academy *Lectures*. Relating of the various facets of Fuseli's artistic activities again acknowledges that his *Lectures on Painting* were part of an ongoing process of thinking about and making art.

Largely, Fuseli chose to draw classical artefacts different from those identified as pre-eminent in contemporary art treatises.[331] Usually his attention was taken by other types of classical art, for instance, a sculpture group of a *Satyr and Nymph* (Fig. 34), the statue of *The Wounded Gladiator* (Fig. 35), a *Satyr and Boy* (Fig. 36) after a mural in Herculaneum, and the *Dioscuri of Montecavallo* (Fig. 25). Equally, Fuseli's selected classical subjects fail to convey a sense of 'sedate grandeur', a quality noted as important for any eighteenth-century artist seeking, as per academic principles, to represent ideal beauty. Numerous examples of contemporary art referenced this ideal, for instance, Nathaniel Dance's *The Meeting of Dido and Aeneas* (1766) (Fig. 37), Raphael Mengs's *Augustus and Cleopatra* (1759) (Fig. 14), and Benjamin West's *Orestes and Pylades* (1766) (Fig. 38).[332] The differences between these artists' choices of the antique and Fuseli's are relatable to his theoretical and visual experiences pre-1770.

Johann Bodmer, Fuseli's principal tutor in the late 1750s, was especially interested in the role given to characterisation in ancient Greek historical chronicles.[333] In particular, Bodmer favoured how classical authors had emphasised character types

[331] As indicated previously, these included the *Gladiator*, the *Apollo*, *Hercules*, the *Laocoön*, and the *Torso*. Fuseli did visually paraphrase the *Borghese Gladiator* in the drawings *The Death of Brutus* (c.1775), and *Lady Macbeth Sleepwalking* (c.1775-6), but he apparently made no direct study of this statue. Between 1801 and 1805 Fuseli did use a close transcription of the *Laocoön* in a series of drawings, for example, *A Woman before the Laocoön II*.

[332] In West's painting Orestes was closely modelled on a figure from the *Orestes Sarcophagus* a source selected for its suitably idealised human forms. Fuseli was highly critical of West's *Orestes and Pylades* in a letter to Lavater of 14 June, 1777. He could well have seen the painting at the Society of Artists' exhibition, London, 1766.

[333] Bodmer's understandings of the relationship between characterisation and history underpinned his teaching. The system of poetics Bodmer taught at the Carolinum was, to a large extent, founded on the relationship he understood to exist between the poetic image and its expression. For more information see, for example, Smith 2008, Junod 2003, and Scenna 1937.

as the means for judging the underlying nature of historical figures and nations.[334] It was Bodmer's belief that the ancients' interest in characterisation made their stories more affecting, for they selected only those portrayals believed to captivate the reader. Bodmer acknowledged that these depictions had the capacity to enthral audiences, this being due to the ancients' favouring of 'gigantic or […] violent' narratives.[335] So viewed, such stories stirred readers with the trials faced by a tale's heroes and with the character traits roused in these persons in response to the adversities they encountered. As in Fuseli's interpretation of classical visual art, Bodmer's appreciation of classical literature was infused with allusions to expression, typological representation and intense experience. Evidence suggests that Bodmer's ideas deeply affected Fuseli's thinking for a considerable number of years, and also influenced the drawings that Fuseli made pre-1770.[336]

A recurring feature of Fuseli's drawings between 1760 and 1770 was figures confronting challenging or dangerous situations (as in the classical tales that Bodmer had recommended), for example, *David feigns madness before King Achish of Gath* (1762-4) (Fig. 39), *Polydeuces defeats Amycus in a Boxing Match* (1762-4) (Fig. 40), and *Garrick and Mrs Pritchard as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth after the Murder of*

[334] Bodmer recorded these ideas in *Der Mahler der Sitten*, 1746. Specifically, he believed that certain characterisations could serve to directly express motivations fundamental to particular historical situations.
[335] Anthony Scenna, *The Treatment of Ancient Legend and History in Bodmer*, New York, 1937, 20. The phrase is a quotation from Bodmer's *Critische Betrachtungen über die poetischen Gemählde der Dichter*, Zurich, 1741.
[336] Again see Torbruegge, 1968. Also see, for example, Mason, 1951, 87, where Bodmer is noted as, 'a man […] who whether he be considered as a politician, historian, philosopher, critic or poet, deserved the most eager attention, and generally commended the concourse of all whom emulation, taste or curiosity prompted to go in quest of excellence'. Fuseli also considered Bodmer in retrospect in the *Analytical Review*, February 1790, a review of *Coxe's Travels in Switzerland*, signed R. R. – VI, 254. On this subject Antal, 1956, 7, notes, 'Most of Fuseli's […] views and propensities which he held for large parts of his life and which determined his art were already present in Bodmer and his circle', while Hall, 1985, 14, states, 'Neither Fuseli nor Lavater was ever to break completely with the attitudes they learned at the Carolinum'.

Duncan (1768) (Fig. 28). In each, attention is attracted to the picture's protagonists posed expressively, in exaggerated contra-posto attitudes, to convey the heightened atmosphere which Fuseli conceived as appropriate to each chosen subject. A similar, although less emphatic, posing of the body appears in other of Fuseli's drawings from this period, for instance, *Garrick as Duke of Gloucester* from *Henry VI* (1766) (Fig. 41). Actually, figures akin in type can be found in Fuseli's drawings of the 1750s, examples being the looming *Full-Armoured Field Marshall with a Feathered Helmet* (Fig. 42) and *Officer Candidate* (Fig. 43) (both 1752).[337] All of these images share a marrying of form to expression, the figure types represented being designed to attract and hold viewers' attention. Indeed, according with Bodmer's perception of the ancients as having emphasised the trials of key historical figures, Fuseli, especially during the 1760s, selected particular narrative themes to provide opportunities for utilising figure types commensurate with those featured in classical texts.[338] Fuseli's early drawings stress 'gigantic and violent' incidents which Bodmer had noted to be a defining characteristic of classical literature.[339] An interest in using art – literature for Bodmer, visual art for Fuseli – as a critical medium for considering human dispositions can be detected in Fuseli's Italian drawings, perhaps most

[337] Antal, 1956, 9, suggests that many of the figures Fuseli used in his early drawings were derived from Swiss mannerist, Baroque mannerist and German and Flemish drawings and engravings, sources contained in Fuseli's father's collection of art historical materials. For further detail on the visual materials owned by Fuseli's father, also see Lentzsch (ed.), 2005, 50. Antal's proposition regarding the sources of Fuseli's early figure studies is supported by Nicholas Powell in *The Nightmare*, 1973.

[338] Bodmer, in his *Discourse der Mahlern* (1721-23) had maintained that studying character differences was the surest way for the historian to determine the motivations of historical figures. For further detail on this matter see Anthony Scenna, *The Treatment of Ancient Legend and History in Bodmer*, 1937. Fuseli would also have been familiar with the concept of figures being evocations of various virtues and vices from Bodmer's colleague at the Zurich Carolinum, Johann Breitinger, via the *Critische Dichtkunst* (Zurich, 1740).

[339] Antal, 1956, 18, notes the existence of this feature in Fuseli's work, observing that he favoured subjects in which there was a 'display of terrible passions'.

notably in those he made from the *Dioscuri of Montecavallo*, or *Horse-tamers* (Fig. 44a-d).[340]

Although Fuseli was not unique in drawing from the *Horse-tamers*, his interest in its figures, rather than with the accompanying horses, was unusual.[341] Fuseli, in common with Reynolds, celebrated the artistic abilities of Phidias, this statue's sculptor.[342] Fuseli, in his first Academy Lecture, related how Phidias had modelled a *Jupiter* using a specific depictive method in order to express this figure's dignified magnificence. In particular, Fuseli had noted how Phidias had conveyed the *Jupiter's* distinctive character traits through almost imperceptible details.[343] Consequently, Phidias had diligently presented forms most appropriate for conveying the expression sought. The forms Phidias had chosen with which to construct this figure were designed to directly influence its interpretation. Something of Fuseli's comprehension of Phidias's artistry is reflected in his own drawings of the *Horse-tamers*.

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[340] The *Horse-tamers* sculpture Fuseli studied was a copy after a 4th - 5th century original, although tradition attributed the sculpture's figures to the classical artists Phidias and Praxiteles, who were believed to be responsible for the left and right-hand tamers respectively. The two colossal horsemen were often considered to represent the gods *Castor* and *Pollux* (the Dioscuri). An alternative interpretation of the figures was that both pairs of figures and horses represented one subject, Alexander and his horse Bucephalus.

[341] Drawings of the statue's equine subjects can be found in the sketchbooks of Fuseli's contemporary in Rome, George Romney. The drawings can be found in Romney's *Roman Sketchbook*, 1773-4 (pages 19, 39, 41, 48, and 49), where they served as studies for the picture *The Descent of Odin*. The *Horse-tamer* group also influenced Goethe, Flaxman and Canova. Romney's friend Nathaniel Marchant carved the heads of the horseman as gems. For more information on how the *Horse-tamers* was used by artists of the period see Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, New Haven, 1981, 136-41.

[342] See, for example, Discourse III, 44, where Reynolds referred his audience to the way that Phidias's artistic imitation influenced Renaissance artists.

[343] Fuseli noted that Phidias 'had discovered in the nod of the Homeric Jupiter the characteristic of majesty', and that Phidias had amplified his *Jupiter's* expressive potential by modifying other features affected by the head's positioning, '*inclination of the head*: this hinted to him a higher elevation of the neck behind, a bolder protrusion of the front, and the increased perpendicular in profile [Fuseli's emphasis]', Fuseli, Lecture I, 360.

Fuseli's *Horse-tamers* studies show a figure from three different angles. Through these various viewpoints his drawings suggest three definite figure types, each possessing distinct qualities. Fuseli's choice of viewing angle is in each case matched to particular, and uncommon, choices and manipulations of drawing media. He uses hard graphic media for his *Horse-tamer* studies, two drawings are in black crayon (Figs. 44a and c), the other in pen and ink (Fig. 44d). More conventionally a soft drawing medium would be employed to allow for the reproduction of antique marble's characteristic nuances of texture and tone, a graphic strategy that allowed a sculpted subject's graceful character to be inferred in keeping with, for instance, Winckelmann's aesthetics.[344] Fuseli's choice of drawing media was arguably connected to how he perceived the *Horse-tamer* figure. Considering its demonstrative posturing it is feasible that Fuseli comprehended its form and potential depiction to be commensurate with the emphases of Bodmer's teaching on the heroes of classical literary narratives, rather than with the tenets of academic art practice. Alongside Bodmer's tuition, Fuseli might also have been influenced in his perception of the *Horse-tamers* through his work assisting Johann Sulzer in the preparation of the *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste* in 1763.[345] Part of the *Allgemeine Theorie* had reframed Bodmer's identification of Milton's Satan as a superior example of majestic defiance, and thus working with Sulzer would have reminded Fuseli of the likenesses between Bodmer's appraisals of Satan and

[344] Myrone, 2001, 26, expands on this connection between graphic media and the physical properties of classical source materials.

[345] Fuseli's association with Sulzer on the *Allgemeine Theorie* began in October 1763, after Fuseli was summoned by Sulzer (with whom he had previously stayed) to Berlin to assist in the treatise's preparation. Fuseli was in Germany with Lavater and Felix Hess, following Fuseli's and Lavater's protests against the magistrate Grebel in 1762, which necessitated their leaving Switzerland. The *Allgemeine Theorie*, Leipzig, 1771-74 (General theory of the fine arts), was originally planned as a revision of Jacques Lacombe's *Dictionnaire portatif des beaux-arts* (1752) – 'Portable Dictionary of the Fine Arts'. However, Sulzer's project developed into an original encyclopaedia covering general aesthetics and the theory, and history, of each of the arts, and of literature.

classical heroes.[346] Fuseli's choice of the imposing and bold *Horse-tamer* as subject, his selection of hard drawing media, and the particular linearity of each of his studies of this figure can, therefore, be thought appropriate to the depiction of magnificent non-compliance. Furthermore, Fuseli's selection of unconventional drawing tools feasibly indicates a wish to proclaim his own artistic defiance against visual/theoretical protocols. This act, in accord with Longinian thinking, would also mark Fuseli's creative activities as elevated above the norm.[347]

Each of Fuseli's *Horse-tamer* drawings possesses a different quality. The two crayon studies appear to be separate assessments of the figure's disposition, showing, in turn, Fuseli's condensing of separate bodily forms into a physiognomic whole, and his emphasising of bodily motion. Meanwhile, the pen drawing's firmer outlining, and Fuseli's choice of viewing position, suggests the statue's monumentality. In keeping with his appreciation of the centrality of expression to art practice Fuseli's recording of Phidias's statue demonstrates how he conceived the figure's bodily forms as a series of telling anatomical episodes. *Horse-tamer* drawing (Fig. 44a) possesses the most various line work. Fuseli has used crayon subtly to record differences between the body's edge and the surfaces of its interior forms. His use of strong outlining reflects his and Reynolds's assessments of the most elevated art. In Lecture I, Fuseli

[346] See Torbruegge, *Bodmer and Füssli: 'Das Wunderbare' and the Sublime*, 1968, 187. Torbruegge refers to Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*, Leipzig, 1771-74, 343. The insubordination of Milton's Satan appealed to Fuseli, serving to underscore his numerous depictions of the character. Fuseli made his first drawing of the character of Satan from *Paradise Lost* in Rome in 1776 as part of the composition, Satan *and Death Separated by Sin*. Contemporaneously he also produced a *Head of* Satan for Lavater's treatise on physiognomy. The majority of Fuseli's images of Milton's Satan were made during the 1790s in connection with his *Milton Gallery* project. These are assessed by Luisa Calè in chapters 4 and 5 of *Fuseli's Milton Gallery, Turning readers into Spectators*, Oxford, 2006. Further, Carol Hall, 1985, 117-124, suggests that Fuseli's *Remarks on Rousseau* (1767) characterised the Swiss philosopher as a comparable, splendid 'blaspheming devil'.

[347] Reference was made to this idea in this chapter's last section regarding Fuseli's interest in the 'Achilles type'.

indicated that classical art was characterised by a particular linearity which Winckelmann appeared to overlook, noting 'that *linear method* which, though passed nearly unnoticed by Winckelmann, seems to have continued as the basis of execution [Fuseli's emphasis]'.[348] Reprising this theme in Lecture VII Fuseli announced, 'lines alone can neither be obliterated or misconstrued; by application to their standard alone discrimination takes place, and description becomes intelligible'.[349] Reynolds concluded his third Discourse with similar sentiments, writing that 'A firm and determined outline is one of the characteristics of the great style'.[350] Each of Fuseli's *Horse-tamer* drawings features such resolute outlining, especially his pen study. Yet, considering the conventions guiding academic uses of drawing (outlined in this chapter's opening section), Fuseli's line work in each *Horse-tamer* study is more various than Reynolds perhaps envisioned when discussing drawing practice in Discourse III.[351] Fuseli's adoption of this graphic technique challenges the dominant reciprocal relationship established between mark-making and the conceptual parameters that usually determined visual form's connotations. His production of an image whose constituent linearity was both pronounced and various provides a visual precursor to observations he made in his seventh Lecture (noted above). There, the drawn line was identified as a means of querying the nature of observed phenomena. Graphic linearity permitted distinctions to be made between forms – those possessing both shared and divergent characteristics – and,

[348] Fuseli, Lecture I, 349.
[349] Fuseli, Lecture VII, 491.
[350] Reynolds, Discourse III, 52.
[351] Support for this proposal is provided by Reynolds's own drawings after historic sources where the use of line is much more consistent in each case. See Giovanna Perini, 'Sir Joshua Reynolds and Italian Art and Art Literature: A Study of the Sketchbooks in the British Museum and in Sir John Soane's Museum', *Journal of the Warburg & Courtauld Institutes*, 51, 1988, 141-168

simultaneously, it served as a medium of comprehension, a device for attaining knowledge.[352]

Fuseli, in his most linearly diverse *Horse-tamer* study, also observed how the statue's various body parts contributed to its articulation. For example, while Fuseli's drawing shows the figure's legs as slightly elongated, his careful emphasising of their muscle structures, sinews, and tendons suggests vitality and purpose.[353] Besides the legs, Fuseli has concentrated on the torso, depicting it as a wall of muscle groups moving upwards and to the right, emphasising how the figure strains against outside influences. This exertion is enhanced by Fuseli's attention to the figure's arms; the right is shown pulling upward, while the left moves downwards, the limbs suggested movements emphasising how the upper body labours and twists.

Fuseli's representation of the figure's physical form is a faithful translation of Phidias's powerful portrayal of the human body experiencing challenging circumstances. In this respect Fuseli's drawing corresponds to his earlier images of David (Fig. 39) and Polydeuces (Fig. 40). This *Horse-tamer* study also exhibits bodily articulation as reciprocal, an action/reaction, cause and effect motion, akin to that which Fuseli often employed in his drawings of the 1760s, notably in *Macbeth and Lady Macbeth after the Murder of Duncan* (1768) (Fig. 28). Fuseli's stressing of the

[352] This observation meshes with Ann Bermingham's assessment of drawing practice, drawing is 'a representational practice [producing] an encounter between self and the object of representation, and as an aesthetic practice it proposes how this encounter might be best managed', in *Learning to Draw*, *Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art*, New Haven, 2000, Introduction.
[353] Similar qualities are evident both in Fuseli's appropriations of this *Horse-tamer* figure into his art, and in other drawings which Fuseli made of the male body during the 1770s, for example, *Figure Study with various Sketches*, from the *Roman Album*, 1770-1778. Commensurate concentration on separate bodily parts - hands, arms and legs - can be found in other sheets in the same collection of drawings.

Horse-tamer's dynamic articulation shows his awareness of how actual observation allowed for a reassessment of those anatomical configurations he had, in the *Macbeth* study, constructed from recollection of Shakespeare performed.[354] Moreover, Fuseli's use of an insistent outline, throughout this *Horse-tamer* drawing, helps to convey the sense that the figure acts in a boldly insubordinate fashion, emphases that did not accord with contemporary normative art practice.

To one side of this *Horse-tamer* figure, Fuseli has explored in a detailed drawing the forms of a particular muscle group from the figure's chest (Fig. 44b).[355] In light of how Fuseli typified the ancients' desire to explore expressive possibilities, 'from the heights and depths of the sublime, [they] descended and emerged to search every nook of the human breast', it is arguable that this detail re-emphasises in microcosm the corporeal eloquence of the figure's major forms.[356] In contrast to this level of scrutiny, the figure's head and face receive little attention and it is in effect the body, rather than the face, that serves as this figure's physiognomic indicator. Fuseli's interest in the body's capacity for conveying such meaning might shed light on his initial reluctance to illustrate Lavater's physiognomic treatise.[357] On this matter, in a letter to Lavater of 1773, Fuseli stated, 'I find myself neither suited nor disposed (and that is the truth) to draw physiognomic portraits, nine to a quarto sheet'.[358]

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[354] It is generally assumed that Fuseli made his drawings after Shakespeare's plays, for instance, *Garrick and Mrs Pritchard as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth after the Murder of Duncan* (1768), on seeing them performed on the London stage.
[355] Evidence from the *Roman Album* suggests that Fuseli's use of the drawing sheet in this fashion was not uncommon; the *Album* features several studies of whole, or largely complete, figures accompanied by closely worked details of their anatomy.
[356] Fuseli, Corollary to Aphorism 92, cited Mason, 1951, 303.
[357] Lavater's treatise was originally published in Germany as the *Physiognomische Fragmente, zur Befoerdung der Menschenkenntniss und Menschenliebe*, 4 Vols., Leipzig & Winterthur, 1775-1778.
[358] Cited Tomory, 1972, 26. In a further letter to Lavater, 'Letter dated at St. Petersburg', Fuseli elucidated his views on the body's, rather than the face's, role as a physiognomic device, see Johann

In his seventh Lecture, Fuseli reflected on how the human body's apparently least significant parts should be considered valuable guides to physiognomic attributes. However, he conceded that not everyone was willing to accept this possibility, noting that some art teachers recognised 'physiognomy in the mass [but refused] to acknowledge it in the detail'.[359] Fuseli believed such conceptions to be inaccurate, because in his opinion 'the harmony of every proportionate object [consists] in the correspondence of singly imperceptible, or seemingly insignificant, elements, and would become a deformed mass without them.'[360] Fuseli's conception of the physiognomic possibilities of the body - the synthesis of all its parts, including those which were difficult to discern - finds parallel in Bodmer's appreciation of historical characters. In *Discourse der Mahlern* Bodmer had observed that the most successfully depicted historical characters were those composed of 'the subtle and orderly descriptions of all those qualities by means of which a whole nation or a person can be distinguished.'[361] The potential connections between Fuseli's *Lectures* and his tutor's own ideas suggest that Bodmer's theories contributed to Fuseli's perception of drawing as an activity in the 1770s.

While Fuseli's *Lectures* post-date the *Horse-tamer* drawings being assessed here it is plausible that in studies such as these Fuseli was laying the foundations, through art-making, for his official theoretical insights into art practice. Consequently, Fuseli's conceptualising of the expressive possibilities of certain forms was closely tied to his solving of the practical challenges of translating that which he observed into cogent

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C. Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy* (1775-78), Thomas Holcroft (trans.), London, c.1844, 353, cited Myrone (ed.), 2006, 26.
[359] Fuseli, Lecture VII, 500.
[360] *Ibid*.
[361] Bodmer *Discourse der Mahlern*, Zurich, 1721-23, 26, cited in Scenna, 1937, 13.

representations. Additionally, while Fuseli's drawings indicate the extent to which his perception of art practice conformed to, and departed from, convention, they also arguably served him as a medium through which he was able to re-conceptualise art making. In turn, new practically inspired insights led Fuseli to further challenge his own conception of what it meant to make art and be an artist. Through this reciprocity of practice and theory Fuseli established a firmer notion of his artistic character. This, in turn, shaped the nuances and complexions of his Academy *Lectures*. These theoretical perspectives on art and its practice, when combined with Fuseli's acceptance of other established concepts of art making, grant his *Lectures on Painting* their distinctive character. So considered, in his *Lectures* Fuseli can be noted to have theorised and taught his particularity – and provided guidance on how such a status might be attained – while communicating his understanding of art and artists.

While the *Horse-tamer* study considered above might seem Fuseli's most complete drawing of the subject, his two other depictions of the statue match the quality of observation invested therein. In his second crayon study (Fig. 44c) – drawn almost face on - a network of interweaving lines is employed apparently suggesting movement. Fuseli's line work also effectively infers an agitated state, a quality that, as was suggested above, implies his looking can be matched to Bodmer and Sulzer's aesthetic theories. Additionally, considering antique sculpture's prospect for movement was a trope of Grand Tour travel writing. Goethe, for example, indicated how a sense of animation might be given to the *Laocoön*, 'To seize well the attention of the *Laocoön*, let us place ourselves before the group with our eyes shut, and at the

necessary distance; let us open and shut them alternately, and we shall see all the marble in motion'.[362] Similarly, Fuseli's drawn line implies a simultaneous movement of the figure's form both forward and upwards, an effect emphasised by its raised arm and the general rotation of its body. Fuseli's communication of vitality and animation through his manipulation of the drawn line shows him exploring an aspect of the antique's appreciation familiar to Grand Tourists, but overlooked by academic artists. Thus, Fuseli's drawing technique can be considered to function experimentally; his visual transcription of the *Horse-tamer* figure effectively explores its potential as an experiential medium. Fuseli's drawing, therefore, serves as a device that probes at a more various, imaginative, engagement between artefact and spectator. Consequently, Fuseli's graphic methods effectively query, and potentially unsettle, how the period's visual art more commonly attributed purpose to depictions of the human form.

Judging from Fuseli's first Lecture he understood that the ancients' depicted figures were 'emanations of energy' which might be most profitably tapped by coalescing these figure's respective energies into a singular 'quality of heroic power'.[363] As highlighted previously, Fuseli celebrated Homer's description of Achilles as the 'one splendid centre' at which such powers were fixed.[364] He had also commended the *Horse-tamers* as a visual equivalent of this potential.[365] Fuseli's studying of the *Horse-tamers*, and visually translating its forms, was a means of achieving insight

[362] Goethe, *Observations on the Laocoön*, *MM* 7, 351, June, 1799. As Luisa Calè points out in, *Fuseli's Milton Gallery, 'Turning Readers into Spectators'*, Oxford, 2006, 134, a similar visual effect, 'had already been perceived and recommended by Shaftesbury, Hogarth […] whereas Lessing had used the same sort of reading to animate Vergil's verbal description of the *Laocoön* statue.'
[363] Fuseli, Lecture I, 359.
[364] *Ibid*.
[365] See Fuseli, Corollary to Aphorism 102, cited Mason, 1951, 233.

into the complexities of condensing a range of human qualities - usually depicted separately – into 'a class', characterisation or type.[366] Analysing how Phidias had achieved such a visual concentration – via the *Horse-tamers* - revealed to Fuseli a range of forms most suitable for appropriation into his own images; as Fuseli suggested in his first Lecture the contemporary artist's work could be invigorated by, 'the contemplation of the works of Phidias transferred to his own art.'[367]

Fuseli's third *Horse-tamers* study, a pen drawing (Fig. 44d), is more schematic than the others. Here Fuseli seems interested in emphasising the figure's monumentality. Fuseli appears to have noted how Phidias conveyed the figure's power and enormity by establishing particular relationships between certain body parts. To reflect this Fuseli uses pen strokes to trace a line through the figure's left arm, by way of the muscles of its upper back and loins, to the back of its right leg. This graphic strategy provides a sense of solidity that is enhanced by Fuseli's use of diagonal hatching to more fully convey the structure of the figure's robe whose powerful verticality further emphasises the figure's firm stance. Fuseli's graphic technique grants this relatively small image a sense of immensity. Moreover, his use of a particular graphic strategy apparently foreshadows the opinion he gave of Phidias in Lecture X where he indicated that 'the real character of Phidias', as 'pronounced by Pliny', was as 'the architect of the gods, fitter to frame divinities than men'.[368] This quotation, trading on the authority of a noted classical author, particularly frames Fuseli's perception of the human form's potential in visual art. Fuseli appears to reclassify the human body

[366] See Fuseli, Lecture I, 359, where he noted these qualities included, 'impetuosity', 'magnitude', 'velocity', 'perseverance', and 'intrepidity'.
[367] *Ibid*.
[368] Fuseli, Lecture X, 528.

through standards usually associated with the extraordinary and the otherworldly, rather than suggesting that depictions of the human figure should rhetorically communicate values associated with conventionally appropriate social conduct. Fuseli's contextualising of human beings does not accord with commonly understood experience. Rather, he figuratively projects human possibility into a timeless sphere, connecting human potential with the mythopoeic domain characterising Homer's work, a realm which Fuseli also conceived to be evident in Michelangelo's visual scheme for the Sistine Chapel.[369]

Ostensibly, Fuseli's drawings from the *Horse-tamers* show him manipulating graphic media to explore a range of solutions for the depicted human form. His drawings also question the conventions associated with the conception and representation of the human body in visual art. Although Fuseli and his academic contemporaries studied classical subjects, the conclusions he derived from observing and visually recording the antique show him to be concerned with alternative conceptual interests. For example, on one hand, Fuseli's drawn responses to the *Horse-tamer* statue reveal his concern to show defiant human actions. On the other, by implying such exploits were comparable to the feats of divinities, Fuseli magnified their potential and implications. Therefore, contrasting with more academic artists, Fuseli's graphic over-emphasising of bodily structures focused attention on how the human form could serve variously as an indicator of greatness. However, attaining this greatness apparently necessitated a measure of non-conformity, and the challenging of normative values. Consequently Fuseli, by making these drawings in this manner,

[369] For more information on Fuseli's conception of the mythic in the work of Homer and Michelangelo see, for instance, *Lectures* III and IV. Marilyn Torbruegge, 1968, proposes that Bodmer introduced Fuseli to the idea that Homer was a significant example of artistic power.

provided himself with a range of visual terms foundational to his developing sense of art's function, and his conception of being an artist. As the following section indicates, academic artists' studies after the antique reinforced their somewhat different concerns.

The human form: a medium of plastic expression (Fuseli's drawings from the antique and those of his more academic contemporaries)

As argued during this chapter, Fuseli did not share his academic peer's acceptance of the aesthetic superiority of prescribed ideals of human beauty. Furthering this debate the current section compares Fuseli's drawings of the human body after the antique to those of academic artists. It is contended that Fuseli's drawings of the body should not merely be thought of as being different to the human forms featuring in his academic contemporaries' images. Rather, this section proposes that the human forms Fuseli developed out of classical art should be considered as having been designed to challenge those concepts of enlightened taste, or social manners that were favoured in conventional aesthetics. It is maintained that Fuseli's human figures addressed other standards. Their physical properties indicate his distinct conception of what the human form betokened and, by extension, Fuseli's depictions of such forms asserted his particular notion of artistry.

In this section Fuseli's drawings after the antique are also considered in respect of eighteenth-century theatrical performance. Fuseli was keenly interested in the theatre

attending it frequently, especially in later life.[370] However, his first experiences of theatre in London during the 1760s can be thought of as being highly significant for his appreciation of the connotative possibilities of acting, especially the degree to which the acting styles he saw impacted upon his comprehension of the human form's expressive potential. Attention is given particularly to Fuseli's familiarity with David Garrick's performances on the London stage. Garrick's acting mannerisms and their relationship to contemporary visual discourses are argued to have markedly influenced Fuseli's perception of the human body's articulacy. Indeed, Garrick's use of posture and characterisation are contended to have sat comfortably with Fuseli's understanding of how certain physical forms could be used to magnify visual art's import. As noted already in this thesis convention dictated that artists should avoid making overly expressive depictions of the human body. Benjamin West's drawing after a figure from the *Orestes Sarcophagus* (c.1760-3) (Fig. 45) provides a more typical example of how artists dealt with the human form; West's study is a visual realisation of academic conceptions of the ideal and generalised human figure.[371]

West's choice of a particular visual source – a sculptural relief – has aided his representation of a dignified and majestic form, one suggestive of sedate grandeur in keeping with Winckelmann's advice in the *Gedaken*.[372] Being a relief carving the antique *Sarcophagus* figure is substantially de-characterised; the process by which it

[370] There are numerous examples of correspondence between Fuseli and his acquaintances concerning visits to London theatres. Fuseli often accompanied Robert Balmanno on these occasions, making use of seats Fuseli had access to as a result of the social circles in which he moved. For information on Fuseli's theatre visits see Weinglass, 1982, for example, 390, 403, 408-9, 469.
[371] The figure being considered here was subsequently used by West as the model for one of the nudes in the foreground of his painting *Orestes and Pylades* (1766). Similar qualities can be observed to inform other of West's drawings of the human body, for example, *Samson Bound*, (1788).
[372] For example, 'The most eminent characteristic of the Greek works is a noble simplicity and sedate grandeur in Gesture and Expression', Fuseli's Winckelmann, 1765, 30.

was modelled has effectively flattened the body's forms. Consequently, usual human three-dimensionality has been converted into an aggregate of undulate and ostensibly abstracted low-level shapes. Transcribing the figure, West has decided to retain the relief's lack of absolute roundedness. Additionally, he has used a soft graphic medium for his *Orestes* figure which has assisted him in portraying the subtle tones and textures that he perceived on the relief's surface, a strategy which agreed with accepted artistic procedure when depicting the antique. A similar visual quality characterises, for example, Louis-Philippe Boitard's engraving of the *Apollo Belvedere* (1747) (Fig. 46).[373] Moreover, these artists' representations demonstrate how dominant aesthetic discourses communicated the antique's significance for eighteenth-century visual art. As Alex Potts relates, 'For the eighteenth-century art world, the image that functioned as the epitome of [the] ideal [was] the very sculpture singled out by Winckelmann as […] ideal […] and sensuously beautiful, namely the *Apollo Belvedere*.'[374] As was indicated in the previous chapter, such a depiction of human perfection was thought to be a notable means of influencing audience's perceptions and possibly actions. By making such images artists were viewed as potentially able to determine the nature of society and culture.

As has been noted, Fuseli's choices of classical subjects departed from convention. Indeed, more evidence of his non-conformist choices from, and drawn responses to, the antique can be found in his own studies of ancient sarcophagi, for example, those which he observed in the garden of Rome's Villa Pamphili (1770) (Fig. 47). Here Fuseli has selected sources showing comparatively un-idealised bodies whose

[373] An illustration for Joseph Spence's *Polymetis*, London, 1747.
[374] Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal*, 1994, 118.

corporeality he then increases in his drawing (he has intensified the physicality of the male figures especially). He also records this subject using a hard drawing medium. Comparable body types also feature in his drawings after a frieze in the Villa Albani (Rome, 1770) (Fig. 48) and of a *Drunken Silenus and Satyr* (after a relief in the Vatican Museum, 1770-78) (Fig. 49). This last study is most notable for the way in which Fuseli has modelled the figures with linear hatching marks, a characteristic of his chosen pen and ink. Consequently, Fuseli's visual re-interpretation of this Vatican relief converts its comparative lack of three-dimensionality into a pronounced sculptural presence, in marked contrast to West's transcription of the *Orestes* figure and, arguably, also to the principles guiding West's looking. Again, Fuseli's drawings from antique sources insistently foreground almost palpable bodies. While this is conditioned partly by his choice of subject and manipulation of drawing materials, it also directly challenged the aesthetic distance that academic theory required. Perhaps the most pronounced instance of this – especially in terms of the tactility suggested - is Fuseli's drawing of a *Satyr and Boy* after a mural in Herculaneum (1775) (Fig. 36). These types of human form and the immediacy of their depiction would be thought unsuitable as devices for influencing positively spectators' thoughts and deeds; Fuseli's artistry thus departs from those standards argued as appropriate in dominant art theory and practice.

Fuseli, unlike his more academic contemporaries, repeatedly selected classical subjects featuring active human forms, for instance the *Horse-tamers*, or those that through additional appropriate graphic emphasis could infer varying degrees of activity, for example, the *Satyr and Boy*, or *Satyr and Nymph* (Fig. 34). He was

uninterested in showing the languid serenity that his academic peers stressed in their drawings of the antique.[375] Furthermore, when drawing from classical sources, Fuseli emphasised how anatomical features might increase the body's eloquence, for example, through his attention to muscular articulation. This strategy again contravened academic guidance. In *De Arte Graphica*, for instance, Charles Du Fresnoy had stipulated that drawings of the human form should not accentuate muscle structures because excessively emphasised corporeality was believed detrimental to the transcription of features considered ideal.[376]

In contrast, Fuseli's stressing of the antique's physicality can be judged instrumental for his own understanding of how bodily structures could be used advantageously in an artwork. Evidence for this can be found in his *Lectures*. In Lecture VII Fuseli stated that the artist, 'must make himself master of the muscles, tendons and ligaments [….] their antagonismus of action and reaction […] the variety of shapes they assume [for they] furnish the character of the passions, and […] become the echoes of every impression.'[377] Developing his point, Fuseli related how the body so depicted provided a more powerful expressive medium, one manifest through the diverse forms produced by flexing musculature.[378] Unlike the restrained human types found in West's, and indeed Reynolds's studies after the antique, the bodies Fuseli

[375] Gert Schiff has suggested that, in contrast to Fuseli's studies, academic artists' drawn figures might be likened to 'tame, expressionless, uncharacteristic marionettes', Schiff, 1973, I, 83, cited in Lentzsch (ed.), 2005, 63.
[376] For artists of the period Du Fresnoy was a noted reference on this matter. The first English edition of his book was Dryden's translation, published London, 1695. On this theme Martin Myrone (2005, 184) also makes us aware that, 'According to Albertian conceptions of the body, the delineation of every muscle of a figure was meant to contribute to its purpose within the narrative of the whole image.'
[377] Fuseli, Lecture VII, 500.
[378] *Ibid*.

depicted become indicators of impassioned response.[379] Moreover, according to the above excerpt from Fuseli's seventh Lecture, such passion served to indicate spirit or temperament; it was an imprint of disposition. The prominence of anatomical details in Fuseli's studies after the antique enable these drawings to be related to his depictions of the male nude from the 1770s (Fig. 50a). These nudes' consistently emphatic musculature suggests that Fuseli did not draw from live models. Rather, his sources were more likely the flayed forms of *écorché* figures (Fig. 50b) which were often to be found in the life-drawing academies of the period, where they served particularly to inform artists' studies of human anatomy.[380]

The attention which Fuseli placed on physicality in his drawings after the antique, and in his depictions of the human form more generally, has been critiqued by Martin Myrone. Myrone interprets Fuseli's forceful studies of the body as revealing his 'ostentatious effort to distinguish and delineate every muscle', and he argues that Fuseli's graphic technique results in 'the disintegration of the body as a whole.'[381] As argued previously, through analysis of Fuseli's *Horse-tamer* figures especially, Fuseli purposely attracts attention to individual anatomical structures. This was not, as Myrone infers, a by-product of his drawing style. Fuseli's studies of the antique,

[379] For discussion and examples of Reynolds's studies after classical art see, for example, Giovanna Perini, 'Sir Joshua Reynolds and Italian Art and Art Literature: A Study of the Sketchbooks in the British Museum and in Sir John Soane's Museum', *Journal of the Warburg & Courtauld Institutes*, 51, 1988, 141-168.
[380] Tomory (1972, 83) makes reference to this attribution and the possibility that Fuseli had seen such figures in London before leaving for Italy. Tomory also alludes to the fact that the type of musculature provided by these figures equates to Hogarth's discussion of the serpentine-line in the *Analysis of Beauty* (1753). The pose of one of the figures Fuseli drew in profile suggests it was derived from an *écorché* by Jean-Antoine Houdon, one of a series of figures made by Houdon under the supervision of the surgeon Ségnier. Similar figures, cast by the anatomist Cowper, were available for study in London.
[381] Myrone, 2005, 184. A similar opinion is forwarded in Myrone, 2001, 29. In this earlier publication Myrone also proposed that the way Fuseli drew these forms leads to uncertainty as to 'the narrative coherence of the bodies he represented'.

unlike those of his more academic contemporaries, challenged regular associations established between discourses concerning ideals of human beauty and aesthetic taste more generally. He also contested the common practice of re-presenting such aesthetic standards via de-characterised human forms. Fuseli's manner of drawing serves to re-frame conceptualisations of the human body. For Fuseli, drawing enabled the body to be effectively re-positioned beyond academic conventions. Yet, Fuseli's studies do reference these conventions enough to imply that they might still be used to assist interpretation of his images. In other words, Fuseli's drawings, although referencing a subject closely associated with normative art practice - the antique – effectively questioned how this subject matter should be thought to function visually/conceptually; key to this mode of questioning are the ways in which Fuseli's images suggestively complicate how these subjects might signify. Consequently, Myrone's arguments that Fuseli's drawing practice was somehow pretentious, and that his emphasising of particular areas of the body compromised its formal integrity, can be questioned.[382]

Contrasting with Myrone's contentions, Peter Tomory proposes that Fuseli's graphic methods had a purpose beyond his demonstration of artistic capabilities. Tomory suggests that Fuseli's depicted bodies possess archetypal connotations, and he describes Fuseli's stark human anatomies as being suggestive of a 'man of destiny', one whose forms are 'timeless and physiognomically marked in no *ordinary* manner [Tomory's emphasis].'[383] That Fuseli likewise conceived of the subjects that he drew

[382] Criticism of the extent to which Fuseli's human forms conflated the significance anticipated in eighteenth-century figure-based art was commonplace, especially after his return to London in 1779. For examples of these critiques see Myrone (ed.), 2006, 38.
[383] Tomory, 1972, 83.

is confirmed by the above analyses of his *Horse-tamer* studies and by his Academy interpretation of ancient art. There he made repeated references to, for example, Homer's celebrated heroes and Phidias's depictions of archetypal and mythological figures.[384] In his later *Lectures*, Fuseli interpreted the figures contained in and the general form of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel designs using corresponding terminology.[385] The parallels that Fuseli established between his interpretations of classical art and literature, and Michelangelo's imagery suggest how Fuseli endeavoured to determine a coherent theoretical ground for the co-existence of these references. Indeed, as Eudo Mason indicates on this issue, Fuseli required that 'a work of art, plastic or poetic [should have] a monumental structural principle operating in it centripetally […] These qualities he found in Michelangelo and in certain antique statues, in Homer, Milton […] in Shakespeare.'[386] Considered in this light, it appears that Fuseli's graphic responses to his favoured visual and literary sources were determined by the particular complexion of an overarching conceptual system.[387] Consequently, his various drawn studies are characterised by a 'graphic language' that unites them visually, one that coherently suggests Fuseli's theoretical proclivities. In sum, Fuseli appears to seek after a 'visual language' that was capable of unifying a range of usually distinct source materials, a language which equally

[384] For instance, Lecture I, 359-60, where Fuseli described how Homer's writing expressed 'one quality of heroic power', and how Phidias had shown the characteristic celestial majesty of his *Jupiter*; Fuseli was indicating that Phidias was working in the Homeric tradition of representation.
[385] See, for instance Lecture III, 423, where Fuseli concentrated on Michelangelo's depiction of the *Last Judgement*.
[386] Mason, 1951, 61.
[387] Fuseli's *Lectures* further confirm this drive to produce a coherent theoretical system from materials normally deemed historically exclusive. In Lecture III, for instance, Fuseli directed attention to how otherworldly aspects, featured in classical narratives, ought to be considered an equivalent for 'our spectres', 410. For more detail on these connections and what they can be considered to mean to Fuseli, see Mason, 1951, 321-22.

permitted them to co-exist and function like archetypes. Indeed, Fuseli also coined a comparable theoretical means of interpreting these sources.[388]

The figure types which Fuseli drew suggest the possibility of exploring broader facets of human experience rather than focusing on the rationalising of human nature which was the aim of conventional art theory/practice. His reinterpretations of the human form imply that these bodies connote passions, temperaments and dispositions not attended to in normative art practice. Fuseli focuses on the possibility of exploring alternate aspects of human experience by liberating the human figure from connections academic theory/practice claimed to exist between source materials, and means of re-presentation. His graphic strategies ostensibly disputed any anticipation that artists would select from a bounded range of source materials and record specific physical qualities so as to present their works' audiences with commonly agreed models of human conduct.

Fuseli's interest in expanding the human form's connotative possibilities beyond those determined by normative art theory/practice is further evidenced by the drawings he made of everyday Italian events, for example, *Il Giuoco del Pallone* (1771) (Fig. 51), a study of the ball games played in Roman public squares. Here, as with his studies after the *Horse-tamers*, Fuseli shows a particular human type, 'the man of destiny'.[389] Notably, this type, besides appearing in a range of Fuseli's Italian drawings, also features in studies he produced in Zurich and London pre-1770. This

[388] Considered in this light, Asia Haut's view that the form of Fuseli's *Lectures* 'replicates his aesthetic style' gains additional impact. See *'Visions Bred on Sense by Fancy': The Transvaluation of Science, Sexuality and Polemics in the Work of Henry Fuseli and His Contemporaries*, unpublished PhD. thesis, University of Manchester, 2002, 182.
[389] Tomory, 1972, 83.

implies his underlying concern to depict human forms through a (relatively) consistent 'visual language', one emphasising the body's capacity for plastic expression and again, in this respect, Fuseli's perception of his role as artist, and his conception of viable artistic activity, is distinctive.

Fuseli's interest in the possibility of magnifying the human form's connotative potential is further revealed in his first Lecture. There, he pondered how the expressiveness of antique sculpture might be amplified by recognising that it possessed particularly amalgamated characteristics. Fuseli wondered, 'But may not dignity, elegance, and valour, or any other not irreconcilable qualities, be visible at once in a figure without destroying the primary feature of its character, or impairing its expression?'[390] To exemplify this possibility Fuseli considered the *Apollo* and asked whether it would 'imply mediocrity of conception or confusion of character, if we were to say that his countenance, attitude, and form combine divine majesty, enchanting grace, and lofty indignation?'[391]

Fuseli's belief in the possibility of magnifying the antique's significance, and hence its expressive charge, conflicted with Reynolds's thinking. For Reynolds, the characteristics Fuseli noted in the *Apollo* (Fig. 32c) ought to be used to deduce 'a clear and distinct idea of beauty and symmetry', qualities which Reynolds believed 'invariable' because they were derived from knowledge of 'one common idea and central form which is the abstract of the various individual forms belonging to [a]

[390] Fuseli, Lecture I, 374.
[391] *Ibid*.

class.'[392] Contrasting with Reynolds's opinion, Fuseli thought the *Apollo*, and indeed other antique sculptures, like Euphanor's statue of *Paris* and the *Laocoön*, to be demonstrations of the greatest classical artists' principal creative attribute, the ability to synthesise several aspects of character into a singular expressive representation. Fuseli noted that, 'not […] three, [but] one ideal whole irradiated the mind of the artist who conceived of the [*Apollo's*] divine semblance.'[393] The qualities that Fuseli connected with classical visual art were commensurate with those his Zurich mentors believed deducible from the Homeric and Miltonic epics. Fuseli's tutors noted how Achilles and Satan were comparable examples of singular impassioned majesty, a magnificence compiled from several unorthodox character traits.[394]

Fuseli's theoretical assessment of the *Apollo's* expressiveness emphasised how the statue portrayed the related aspects of countenance, attitude and form. Considered separately, or together, these qualities provided means to assess the *Apollo's* connotative scope. Interestingly, Fuseli's choice of these expressive aspects meant that he was considering an example of the antique using criteria also employed to judge eighteenth-century theatrical performance. For example, Georg Christoph Lichtenberg appraised David Garrick's *Hamlet* in London in 1774 by using corresponding standards, writing that 'Garrick stands […] stock still, his left hand spread again […] His face expresses astonishment and horror'.[395] The dramatic posturing which Lichtenberg recalled has been noted to be a feature of Fuseli's studies after the antique. Similar qualities were present in his drawings of the 1750s

[392] Reynolds, Discourse III, 47-48.
[393] Fuseli, Lecture I, 374.
[394] More information on this point can be found in this thesis's next chapter.
[395] Lichtenberg's *London Diary*, Hans Ludwig Gumbert (ed.), Hildsheim, 1979, 64, cited in Lentzsch (ed.), 2005, 210-11.

and 1760s. In Fuseli's *Aphorisms*, and his first Lecture especially, he had interpreted the antique as composed of a blend of idealised and human characteristics, traits similar to those perceived in Garrick's performances.[396] It thus seems justifiable to infer connections between Fuseli's pre-1770 experiences of Garrick's acting, Fuseli's Italian studies after the antique, and his re-presentation of classical art in his art theory.[397]

Fuseli's familiarity with Garrick's acting (during the 1760s) is indicated by two drawings that he made after Garrick's Shakespearean performances: *Garrick as Duke of Gloucester waiting for Lady Anne at the Funeral Procession of her father-in-law, King Henry VI* (1766) (Fig. 41), and *Garrick and Mrs Pritchard as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth after the Murder of Duncan* (1768) (Fig. 28). Most particularly, the later study shows Fuseli's awareness of Garrick's theatrical characterisations which emphasised Macbeth's countenance, attitude and form. While this drawing was probably made after the event it nonetheless suggests the impact which Garrick's performances had on contemporary audiences - as Shearer West has observed, 'actors know how to conflate art and life'.[398] West has also noted that actors, by so intertwining these realities, effectively translated human experience merging that considered as 'real life' with the fiction of the play-text.[399] When this was achieved most pronouncedly, as in Garrick's characterisations, an actor's mode of staging

[396] See Fuseli, Lecture I, 374-76, and, for example, the Corollary to his 93rd Aphorism, on Homer's characters – 'Achilles is a splendid being, created by himself [and as] the fool of passions, […] the real man' – cited Mason, 1951, 232.
[397] In this thesis's next chapter the theatre is also noted as having influenced Fuseli's interpretation of the sublime.
[398] West, *The Image of the Actor (Verbal and Visual Representation in the Age of Garrick and Kemble)*, New York, 1991, 13.
[399] West proposes the actor 'became a translator, with his own experience serving as the raw material for his diverse roles', *The Image of the Actor*, 60.

enhanced their performance's power, allowing 'the beholder, as well as the actor, to lose him – or herself in the role.'[400] The immediacy of Fuseli's study after Garrick's *Macbeth* indicates that he was captivated by Garrick's performance. Indeed, Fuseli's *Lectures* evidence that his direct experience of live theatre informed his perception of how human forms might be depicted most affectingly. In Lecture IV, while assessing Macbeth's potential as an object of terror, Fuseli alluded to how viewing Macbeth from a particular vantage point intensified the character's significance; he suggested that Macbeth should be seen from below, so that 'his down dashed eye [could be] absorbed by the murky abyss'.[401] This viewing angle is generally considered to be comparable to the vista a spectator would have when positioned directly before the theatre stage.[402] Fuseli's 1768 *Macbeth* drawing has such a viewpoint and this perspective also features in many of Fuseli's later drawings.

Garrick's acting technique has been acknowledged as instrumental in revolutionising the way thespians considered their staging of a role. Principally, he is deemed to have broken 'down the old conventions largely surviving from the Restoration stage [while he] endowed [the] visual imagination with a whole repertory of new gestures, half borrowed from the grand manner of continental style, half spontaneous naturalistic invention.'[403] Central to Garrick's performances was his understanding and portrayal of the passions, a key concept for actors of the period. His comprehension of how the passions should be performed was framed by

[400] *The Image of the Actor*, 62.
[401] Fuseli, Lecture IV, 454.
[402] For example, Petra Maisak, in *The Boydell Shakespeare Gallery*, Pape and Burwick (eds.), 1996, 61, suggests that the perspective shown in Fuseli's drawings 'usually corresponds to the view-point of a spectator sitting in the parterre, whence the action seems to have a greater impact than if viewed from a common level'.
[403] T.S.R. Boase, 'Illustrations of Shakespeare's Plays in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 9-10, 1946-7 (Kraus re-print, 1968), 92.

observations of how emotion was expressible through outward gestures. To complement his noting of these gesticulations, Garrick, like many actors, consulted physiognomic treatises, such as Charles Le Brun's – a source also popular with visual artists – which illustrated various emotional states.[404] By combining such source materials Garrick would ostensibly – and somewhat contradictorily - recreate impassioned states by rationally synthesising those aspects most pertinent to their display.[405] Georg Christoph Lichtenberg's above account of Garrick's *Hamlet* records this process in action. As an actor Garrick was considered to exert particular cultural influence. This was largely due to the arts of acting and painting being perceived as related,[406] a view reinforced by critics. Writing in 1755, John Shebbeare suggested that Garrick should be thought to be the Raphael of acting, for ''the genius of the player is more analogous to the Painter and Musician that the Poet', because it concerns attitudes, tone of voice and expression.'[407]

Such appreciations of Garrick's performances were possible because they were presented through a series of isolated moments; his acting was conceptually grounded on the notion of the 'set-piece'. Effectively, actors focused on devising

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[404] Garrick's pupil, John Bannister, confirmed Garrick made use of such visual indexes, for he remembered his master making 'faces in imitation of those by Le Brun', see J. Martineau (et al), *Shakespeare in Art*, London and New York, 2003, 116. As Shearer West commensurately observes, in *The Image of the Actor*, 1991, 109, 'in the eighteenth century […] Actors were sometimes exhorted to study painting in order to perfect graceful attitudes'.

[405] In his *An Essay on Acting*, Garrick noted such a process resulted in an 'entertainment of the stage, which by calling in the aid and assistance of articulation, corporeal motions and ocular expression, imitates, assumes, or puts on the various mental and bodily emotions arising from the various humours, virtues and vices, incident to human nature', *An Essay on Acting*, London, 1744, 5.

[406] Evidence for this comes not only from actors' uses of treatises such as Le Brun's. Shearer West has written about 'how thoroughly the rhetoric of art theory pervaded acting theory throughout the eighteenth century', see *The Image of the Actor*, 111.

[407] Martineau (et al), 2003, 115. For other eighteenth-century appraisals of Garrick's acting, especially in terms of the connoisseurship of the visual arts see, for instance, Thomas Davies, *Dramatic Miscellanies*, 3 Vols., London, 1783-84, Vol.2, 280 and Arthur Murphy's *The Life of David Garrick Esq.*, Dublin, 1801, 54.

'individual points of passion, which would be recognised by an audience', emphasis was placed on capturing a particular passion and conveying it 'as though a 'stroke of nature''.[408] Garrick apparently 'first looked for the passion, and only then considered a method of expression suitable to the character and the genre of the play.'[409] Passion was conveyed through particular bodily attitudes consisting of, for instance, 'The setting of eyes, lips, head and knees'.[410] Garrick, commenting on his own characterisation of Macbeth, noted 'he should be *a moving statue* […] his eyes must speak […] his attitudes must be *quick and permanent* [Garrick's emphases]'.[411] Judging from these descriptions of theatrical attitudes and set-pieces of particular passions, Garrick's mode of performance can be thought akin to mime. However, he recognised that arrested bodily movements, especially, could decisively captivate audiences' attention.[412] A commensurate consideration of the potential of stilled movement is deducible from Fuseli's studies after the antique from the 1770s. Additionally, the figures in Fuseli's drawings of the 1760s comparably emphasise the potential of dumb show to serve as the principal communicative device, for example, *David feigns Madness before King Achish of Gath* (1762-64) (Fig. 39). Thus, there is a connection observable between Fuseli's drawings of the 1760s, and the types of emphasis he later witnessed within theatrical productions. Furthermore, having his perceptions of the potentials of the human form reinforced and extended by his

[408] Kenneth Richards, Peter Thompson (eds.), *The Eighteenth-Century English Stage*, London, 1972, 60.
[409] *Ibid*., 61.
[410] Cecil Price, *Theatre in the Age of Garrick*, Oxford, 1973, 17.
[411] *Ibid*.
[412] Actually, Garrick was accused of practising a 'pantomimical manner of acting', an expression used by Colley Cibber to deride Garrick's acting style, see Price, *Theatre in the Age of Garrick*, 18. In *The Theatrical Examiner*, 1757, 24, Garrick's acting was critiqued for its 'starts, jumps and distortions'. However, Garrick's performances would have been 'accepted as signs of real emotional experience [which] would have been believed as such', West, *The Image of the Actor*, 1991, 68.

experiences of the London theatre, Fuseli can be judged to have used these events to inform his observation and visual recording of artworks in Italy during the 1770s.

Contemporary aesthetic treatises would also have complemented Fuseli's experiences of theatre actors. A number of these texts featured suggestively theatrical descriptions of classical sculptures, which focused on these artefacts' imagined movements and effectively converted them into performers. The Richardsons' *Account*, for instance, gave such an emphasis to appraisals of a *Dancing Faun* (Fig. 52) in the Tribunal and the *Gladiator* (Fig.19) in the Villa Borghese. The *Faun* was considered 'so light, 'tis leaping off its pedestal', while the *Gladiator* was seen to provide an image of 'such activity, and Elasticity, that all his Muscles seem to tremble with Eagerness'.[413] These dramatic interpretations of the antique would arguably have resonated with Fuseli, considering his prior viewing of theatrical performance and his attachment to using a comparable depictive mode in his drawings – of both theatrical and non-theatrical subjects – during the 1760s.

Further contributing to the cross-pollination of the theatrical and fine arts was the vogue for using strong side-lighting to embellish stage plays, as Fuseli's depictions of performance attest.[414] Similar illumination features in many of Fuseli's images from the 1770s.[415] While this suggests the London stage's influence, dramatic lighting effects also contributed to Fuseli's appreciation of classical sculptures which were

[413] The *Account*, 57 and 298.
[414] Commensurate illumination can be discerned in, for example, Johann Zoffany's depictions of theatrical performance on the London stage.
[415] For example in *Lady Macbeth Sleepwalking* (c.1775-76) and *The Witches Show Macbeth Banquo's Descendants* (1773/1779).

often viewed under low or dramatic light conditions.[416] Fuseli had, for example, engaged in the fashionable activity of viewing the antique statues of the Museo Clementino by torchlight.[417] His experiences of classical art were thus tinged with a discernible theatricality.

This chapter's first part has noted that, according to academic conventions, 'to draw' meant reinforcing connections between particular perceptions of source materials, and the extent to which these were believed to reflect certain aesthetic concepts. Yet, as argued, in Fuseli's case, drawing becomes a more experimental even exploratory activity. Fuseli's drawings ostensibly functioned to aid re-consideration of the perceived classical subject and served as a means to enquire after its significance. So considered, Fuseli's drawing strategies queried the antique's distinctive characteristics, as these were commonly perceived, while also challenging dominant interpretations of the depicted human body. In effect, Fuseli, by making such drawings after classical art, signals a questioning of the nature of these artefacts. In contrast to academic artists who acknowledged that the antique prescribed limits to the human form's representation, Fuseli's conception of classical art effectively removed these theoretical constraints. Fuseli questioned the significance given to the human body in visual art, he queried how new interpretations of the body impacted on its depiction and, furthermore, he probed at the discourses to which artists conventionally turned to reinforce their image-making. Moreover, by so questioning established art theory and practice, Fuseli also disputed the artist's function and their relationship to society and culture.

[416] In the Richardson's *Account* (London, 1722), the Sistine Chapel was also noted as dimly lit. It was described as having 'not over much Light; the Vault especially, the Windows being underneath', 267.
[417] For more information see Martineau (et al), 2003, 63.

So far, this chapter has focused on Fuseli's responses to classical art as framed by a range of visual and theoretical discourses. Yet, as Fuseli's Academy *Lectures* on 'Invention' indicate, Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel frescoes were at least as influential for his conception of art and of its function.[418] The chapter's second part considers the impact on Fuseli of Michelangelo's Sistine cycle, and the way in which this further conditioned his understanding and depiction of the human form.

Part 2

This chapter's first part focused on how Fuseli's drawn/theoretical responses to the antique simultaneously echoed and challenged dominant contemporary aesthetic standards. Notably, his appreciations of classical art were based on his belief that it was principally concerned with expression, not, as his more academic peers' presumed, the idealised and serenely beautiful human body. Yet, Fuseli's drawings of the 1770s reveal that he did consider the stilled human form. However, he more usually derived these forms from Michelangelo's art (most particularly his Sistine Chapel frescoes), rather than from the antique; it is Fuseli's studies after Michelangelo which are considered in this part of the chapter.

Fuseli's more academic peers did not favour Michelangelo's art. His work was felt to be too challenging due to its perceived expressive and potentially subjective nature and it was regularly overlooked as a suitable source for painters in favour of, for

[418] Fuseli paid particular attention to Michelangelo's Sistine works in his third and fourth *Lectures on Painting*.

example, the pictures of Raphael and Titian. Initially, this part of the chapter assesses Michelangelo's art in terms of eighteenth-century British academic art theory and practice (*Michelangelo's art: As perceived in academic theory and by Fuseli*). Following this, examination is made of Fuseli's drawings after Michelangelo's *Prophets*, *Sibyls* and *Ancestors of Christ* (*The human form re-appraised - Fuseli's drawings after Michelangelo*). Also considered are the visual frameworks through which Fuseli comprehended Michelangelo's work. Additionally, attention is given to the degree to which Fuseli's studies after Michelangelo's art can be aligned with the theoretical and visual discourses noted, earlier in this chapter, as having been important for his comprehension and depiction of the human form. This second part of *Drawing Analogies* argues that the human types that Fuseli depicted allowed him to explore, through reference to Michelangelo's figures, a mode of representation opposite to that he had experimented with when studying the antique. Whereas Fuseli's drawings after classical figures were overtly animate, and sometimes documented the expressive potential of isolated anatomical details, his studies of Michelangelo's human forms emphasised how the constituent parts of immobile bodies could be coalesced into powerful, yet subtle, static forms. So considered, Fuseli's appreciation of Michelangelo's art was contrary to conventional interpretations, and Fuseli's use of drawing in response to Michelangelo's work can be thought of as having been further erudite means of questioning what types of knowledge might be generated through the depicted human body. This second part of *Drawing Analogies* ends with a conclusion for the chapter as a whole.

Michelangelo's art: As perceived in academic theory and by Fuseli

While in Italy, alongside his studies after the antique Fuseli made a number of drawings from other works of art. The majority of these were images after Michelangelo's work. It might, therefore, be assumed that Fuseli paid little attention to other artists, such as Raphael, who were celebrated in the period. Fuseli did study Raphael's images. However, from these Fuseli chose those features that were stylistically closest to Michelangelo's art.[419] Thus, Fuseli's drawings after Raphael appear to confirm his particular favouring of Michelangelo's visual style.[420] Nevertheless, Fuseli's *Lectures* reveal his regard for Michelangelo was balanced by opinions on a range of artists, some of whom Fuseli thought were worthy of emulation, notably certain Mannerist artists, while others, for example, Dürer and the Venetians he critiqued.[421] Fuseli's respective ranking of these artists in the *Lectures* reinforces the relationship between his later art theory and his art practice of the 1770s.

Fuseli's favouring of Michelangelo, rather than other Renaissance artists, was contrary to his artistic peers' opinions. Earlier, this thesis alluded to academic appraisals of Renaissance artists. Mengs, for instance, in his *Thoughts on Beauty and Taste in Painting*, stated that Raphael, Correggio and Titian were the three great luminaries of painting; their work was considered to indicate the point at which

[419] In Fuseli's Roman sketchbook are drawings from 1777 after Raphael's *School of Athens* where the figures chosen, and mode of depiction used, are reminiscent of Fuseli's drawings after Michelangelo's Sistine *Prophets*. For discussion of Fuseli's drawings from Raphael see Antal 1956, for example, 49 and 79.
[420] It will be recalled that academic artists – for the most part – considered Raphael, not Michelangelo, the principal artist able to convey the beauty of the idealised human form.
[421] For an indication of Fuseli's opinions on a variety of modern artists see, for example, Lectures II, IV, VII and XI.

'painting was finally raised to the level of discrimination'.[422] Reynolds concurred with Mengs's opinion, observing in his eleventh Discourse that 'Raffaelle and Titian are two names which stand the highest in our art; one for Drawing, the other for Painting.'[423] Proffered some twenty years apart, Mengs's and Reynolds's views reveal an enduring interest in the artistry of particular past-masters, whose appeal was more than theoretical. In Reynolds's Parma sketchbook there is a drawing (dated July 1752) after Correggio's Altarpiece *Il Giorno*, showing the head and shoulders of an angel turning a book's pages for the delight of the Christ-Child (Fig. 53a-b).[424] Notably, Reynolds focused on the angel's androgynous grace, a characteristic emphasised by other academic artists (Benjamin West had shown a similar interest in his figure study after the *Orestes Sarcophagus* (Fig. 45)). Commenting on Reynolds's study after Correggio, Nicholas Penny notes that this type of art had a long-lived attraction for Reynolds, 'the melting contours of Correggio', Penny observes, 'were from this time onwards always admired by [him].'[425]

Judging from Mengs's and Reynolds's theoretical appreciations of Michelangelo it is apparent that they believed his art to be of more use to the sculptor than the painter. In a sub-section of Mengs's *Thoughts on Beauty and Taste in Painting*, entitled *The History of Taste*, he suggested that Michelangelo had ennobled three-dimensional art

[422] Mengs, *Thoughts on Beauty and Taste in Painting* ('The History of Taste') 1762, 37.
[423] Reynolds, Discourse XI, 1782, 172.
[424] Reynolds's pocket sketchbook used during his studies in Rome (c.1750-52), includes a study of the right-hand side of Raphael's fresco *Repulse of Attila* from the *Stanza d'Eliodoro* in the Vatican; Reynolds was especially interested in Raphael's depiction of the army of Huns. Besides the work of Raphael and Correggio, Reynolds favoured that of Bernini, Tintoretto, Reni, Giulio Romano and Ludovico Carracci. For examples of Reynolds's studies after these artists see his sketchbooks in the British and the Sir John Soane's Museums.
[425] Nicholas Penny (ed.), *Reynolds*, London, 1986, 334.

commensurate with how Raphael, Correggio and Titian had dignified painting. Reynolds's fifth Discourse, an address contemporary with Fuseli's viewing and drawing from Michelangelo's work in Rome, replicated Mengs's opinion of Michelangelo. Of Michelangelo Reynolds noted 'He did not possess so many excellencies as Raffaelle, […] he considered the art as consisting of little more than what might be attained by Sculpture; correctness of form, and energy of character.'[426] As will be seen, the qualities that Reynolds identifies with Michelangelo's sculpture correspond with those Fuseli deduced from Michelangelo's paintings.

Before going to Rome Fuseli was, Mason notes, 'almost certainly under the influence of Mengs's *Thoughts on Beauty and Taste in Painting*, he had been inclined to give the preference to Raphael'.[427] Commensurate with prevailing contemporary taste Fuseli apparently 'admired Michelangelo's rugged integrity of character', but considered him an artist who ''bloated expression to grimace', and 'wasted his great talents''.[428] However, it is worth noting that in 1741, when Johann Bodmer had appraised which artists' works most suitably enriched the imagination, the only visual artist he mentioned was Michelangelo.[429] It is, therefore, conceivable that prior to 1770 Fuseli had encountered Michelangelo's artistry as part of Bodmer's pedagogic programme. Once in Rome, and especially after viewing Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel frescoes, Fuseli's opinion of Michelangelo changed. He was seemingly

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[426] Reynolds, Discourse V, 1772, 75. Reynolds's opinion of Michelangelo had undergone a change by Discourse XV, see for instance, 247. Fuseli noted Reynolds's changed estimation of Michelangelo when writing for the *Analytical Review*, May, 1791, where he reviewed this Discourse.

[427] Mason, 1951, 237.

[428] *Ibid*., 23. However, Mason, 1951, 187, notes how Fuseli's *Remarks on Rousseau* – in a footnote entitled 'for painters only' - considered whether Michelangelo's work might be an exception to commonly accepted aesthetic principles.

[429] See Torbruegge, *Bodmer und Füssli: 'Das Wunderbare' and the Sublime*, 1968, 161. The same point is made in Scenna, *Ancient Legend and History in Bodmer*, 1937, 17. The source both these scholars identify is Bodmer's *Critische Betrachtungen*, Zurich, 1741, 36.

overcome by ‘a species of intoxication’,[430] and allegedly called out ‘when some strange thought struck him, ‘Michelangelo!’’[431] Apparently, besides Fuseli’s possible earlier theoretical familiarity with Michelangelo’s art, the actual experience of his work had a profound effect both on Fuseli’s perception of Michelangelo as an artist, and on Fuseli’s understanding of the nature of art-making.

Earlier this chapter noted that Fuseli’s drawings after the antique were characterised by his selection of energised subjects. These provided him with opportunities to focus on how the demonstrative human form might serve variously as a vehicle of expression. Such art-making has been established as contrary to accepted art practice. Contrasting with these expressive classical figures those attracting Fuseli’s interest in Michelangelo’s Sistine ceiling were quite different. This difference has been described in recent scholarship as ‘the whole gamut of introverted passion’ [432] - rather than depictions of overt emotion - an assessment matched by Fuseli’s recollection of the Chapel in his third Lecture. Included in this remembrance is a lengthy description of Michelangelo’s *Prophets*, the subject of many of Fuseli’s drawings from the Sistine. A plausible reason for Fuseli’s attraction to these particular subjects might have been his training as a Zwinglian preacher (ordained in 1761). According to Zwinglian theology the preacher was considered as a prophet who alongside interpreting Scripture should serve as the ‘mouth and finger of God’.[433] These preacher/prophets should bear witness in the historical moment ‘to the

[430] Mason, 1951, 23.
[431] The words of Allan Cunningham from his *Life of Fuseli*, in *Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters and Sculptors*, London, 1831, cited in Mason, 1951, 23. Edward Dayes, in the *Professional Sketches of Modern Artists*, 1805, criticised Fuseli’s allegiance to Michelangelo on his return to England.
[432] Lentzsch (ed.), 2005, 73.
[433] Gottfried W. Locher, *Zwingli’s Thought, New Perspectives, Studies in the History of Christian Thought*, Vol. XXV, Leiden, 1981, 98.

absolute nature of a message that transcends history […] bringing the present age under the judgement and the promise of eternity'.[434] Moreover, as noted by Carol L. Hall, Johann Bodmer had encouraged his students at the Carolinum to act as bringers 'of lost or hidden truths to man'.[435] As such, Fuseli and his peers were charged with becoming agents for instituting changes to human comprehension. Thus, contemplation of Michelangelo's *Prophets* arguably reinforced Fuseli's received sense of purpose.

The human form re-appraised - Fuseli's drawings after Michelangelo

Fuseli's Academy Lecture account of Michelangelo's *Prophets* noted that although these figures possessed 'expression and attitude', such qualities were demonstrated through 'inspired contemplation'.[436] In each case, while the *Prophets* were occupied in 'the present moment' their attitudes belied Michelangelo's appreciation of their visionary capacities; the *Prophets* revealed 'traces of the past and hints of the future.'[437] Assessing Fuseli's perception of these figures it is interesting to note certain parallels between his opinion of them and his descriptions of the antique. For instance, the *Prophets* are noted to possess both expression and attitude - Fuseli gave specific examples of these, Isaiah was considered to have an 'attitude expressive of the sacred trance in which meditation on the Messiah had immersed

[434] *Ibid*.,106.
[435] Hall, 1985, 115. Hall refers to Bodmer's consideration of his teaching in light of those literary artists (for example, Homer and Milton), he used as exemplars of imaginative/philosophical interpretations of the human condition.
[436] Fuseli, Lecture III, 422. Fuseli further observed that the single figures of the prophets were 'organs of embodied sentiment'.
[437] *Ibid*.

him.'[438] In Lecture I Fuseli had emphasised the ancients' ability to convey expression on several levels, notably through countenance, attitude and form. These qualities were also intimated in his appraisals of the *Prophets*.[439] For example, regarding countenance, Fuseli stated that Zachariah 'personifies consideration', while Ezekiel was noted to possess 'the fervid feature of fancy'.[440] Considering the *Prophets'* formal characteristics, Fuseli judged Jeremiah's body to be sunk 'in silent woe'.[441] Mason, appraising Fuseli's analogous appreciations of Michelangelo's art and the antique, notes that Fuseli 'instead of treating Michelangelo as an exceptional figure […] outside the main channel of art, which most of his contemporaries did, [made] him the central criterion by which all his predecessors and successors should be judged'.[442] As indicated in this chapter's first part, we can perceive that Fuseli constructed a unified and overarching theoretical system through which he synthesised his representations of varied subjects. During the analyses of Fuseli's drawings after Michelangelo (made in the pages below) correspondences are noted between Fuseli's conception of the antique, of Michelangelo's art and of other visual discourses with which Fuseli was familiar. This conceptual framework was also informed by the mode of drawing that Fuseli used to study Michelangelo's *Prophets* and *Ancestors*.

Comparing Fuseli's comprehension of Michelangelo's art and of the antique also reinforces the extent to which his attention was focused on how expression might

[438] *Ibid*.
[439] See, for example, Lecture I, 374-77.
[440] Fuseli, Lecture III, 422.
[441] *Ibid*.
[442] Mason, 1951, 61.

function as the dominant communicative medium.[443] These subjects might differ in appearance and in their particular conveyance of expression, but Fuseli apparently recognised the potential of both ancient and Renaissance art to be archives from which human forms could be selected to serve as compelling expressive vehicles. Winckelmann's *Gedanken*, a work which Fuseli knew well, had actually provided a precedent for such a catalogue of visual forms. Winckelmann had alluded to the need for artists to assemble an encyclopaedic register of reference materials derived from a number of sources and various historic periods. Such an index, consisting of 'the best poets of all the ages, the mysterious philosophy of different nations, the monuments of the ancients' should, Winckelmann advised, assist the contemporary artist 'lost in a [creative] desart'.[444] A commensurately rich selection of sources has been noted to have informed Fuseli's theoretical and practical responses to ancient art especially.

Regarding Fuseli's studies after Michelangelo's art attention should be given to how Fuseli interpreted Michelangelo's work. Frederick Antal argues that Fuseli's Michelangelo studies must be considered in light of how an eighteenth-century audience viewed Michelangelo in respect of Mannerism. Antal indicates how during that period Mannerist art was commonly, incorrectly, attributed to Michelangelo, as in C.M. Metz's *Imitations of Ancient and Modern Drawings* (1798) where Mannerist drawings were identified as Michelangelo's. [445] Thus, Antal concludes, 'English

[443] These observations are supported by Antal, 1956, 36.
[444] Fuseli's Winckelmann, 1765, 58 and 60
[445] Antal, 1956, 35-6. Antal also notes that in William Young Ottley's *The Italian School of Design*, London,1823, Mannerist drawings were again attributed to Michelangelo – today, Antal contends, these drawings are 'considered copies by the mannerists after [Michelangelo] or in some cases originals of Franco.' The artist referred to is Giovanni-Battista Franco. Ottley was an intimate friend of

collectors and artists of the time read more mannerist features into Michelangelo than we are accustomed to do today.'[446] Antal's analysis of Fuseli's drawings is valuable because his research suggests it was likely that Fuseli perceived Michelangelo's Sistine imagery as akin to Mannerism, an art noted in the eighteenth century for its 'anti-realist' qualities, its 'schematising and stylising tendencies'.[447] Neither of these characteristics was attractive to Fuseli's more academic contemporaries. Reynolds, for example, made critical reference to the Mannerist 'Parmegiano' (*sic*), noting that although Parmigianino had 'dignified the genteelness of modern effeminacy, by uniting it with the simplicity of the ancients and the grandeur and severity of Michelangelo', the manner of working producing this result had necessitated Parmigianino's falling 'into the most hateful of all hateful qualities, affectation.'[448] Antal considers Parmigianino (Fig. 54a), Bandinelli (Fig. 54b), and Rosso (Fig. 54c) as the most likely influences on Fuseli's Mannerist 'viewing frame'.[449] Such artists are believed significant because their work apparently sought to expressively harmonise the human body with costume, a feature of Fuseli's drawings after Michelangelo.[450]

Fuseli's studies of the *Prophets* are considered by Antal to be forms 'almost frozen into blocks'.[451] Antal suggests this effect was produced by Fuseli's representing of

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Fuseli, and had studied art under John Brown, an imitator of Fuseli's work. Ottley's taste in art is noted as almost identical to Fuseli's. He also shared Fuseli's admiration for Michelangelo.

[446] *Ibid*., 36. Powell, 1951, suggests that Fuseli may have understood Michelangelo's work in the same way.

[447] Antal, 1956, 45. Antal, 8-9 notes that Fuseli had often drawn from Northern European Mannerist art in his youth. Fuseli's second Lecture, 403, describes these artists as 'mines of invention'.

[448] Reynolds, Discourse IV, 68. Parmigianino was an artist that Fuseli had made direct studies from, for example, his drawing after Parmigianino's *Dead Christ*.

[449] Besides Antal, Tomory, 1972, and Myrone, 2001 both make this attribution.

[450] Such combinations of body and clothing can be found especially in Rosso and Bandinelli's seated and standing figures, studies comparable to Fuseli's drawings of Michelangelo's *Prophets*.

[451] Antal, 1956, 36. The figures of the lunettes are similarly described, at length, in Schiff 1973, I, 87. George Romney's *Third Barrow Sketchbook*, used in Rome during 1773, contains a written note on Michelangelo's draperies referring to his treatment of ground colours and highlights, 45.

the *Prophets'* garments as apparently lifeless structures, completely concealing the underlying bodily forms. Antal's observation accounts for the superficial appearance of Fuseli's *Prophets*, but he fails to consider that such a combination of body and garments might equally function expressively. This potential is clearest in Fuseli's pencil drawing the *Prophet Zachariah* (Fig 55). Combining hard outlining with layered tone Fuseli has intensified the folds and shadows of Zachariah's robe. Consequently, attention is directed to the lower rather than the upper half of his body which contrasts with Michelangelo's painting of the figure in which the tight folds of Zachariah's right sleeve and beard directs interest to the head. Fuseli's study, although recalling these aspects, focuses on Zachariah's body, Fuseli's pencil-work more forcefully suggesting the prophet's folded garment.

In his third Lecture Fuseli identified Zachariah as personifying 'consideration', an attribute more commonly associated with facial features.[452] Fuseli also observed that Michelangelo had chosen to depict the moment when this prophet 'has read, and ponders what he reads'.[453] Fuseli, noting the way in which Zachariah mulls over his text, interpreted this action as betokening reflection. Michelangelo, in Fuseli's opinion, was choosing to show the moment at which thought most encumbered the prophet. It is arguable that Fuseli graphically increased the weighty and immobile properties of Zachariah's robe to intensify the communication of this mental burden;

[452] Fuseli, Lecture III, 422. Fuseli makes reference to personifications in respect of Michelangelo's work a number of times in his *Lectures*. Examples can be found in Lecture II, 382, in relation to Michelangelo's *Cartoon of Pisa*, in Lecture III, 423, a description of the *Sibyls*, and in Lecture IV, 439.
[453] *Ibid*.

Fuseli's portrayal of the robe effectively demonstrates the extent to which the prophet was weighed down by meditating on the divine.[454]

The emphasis given to folding in Fuseli's drawing *Zachariah* can be related to his experience of David Garrick's acting in the late 1760s; notably Garrick's enhancing of his performances' dramatic intensities through the purposeful selection of particular costumes to meet specific theatrical requirements. Garrick was successful in this strategy, as George Christoph Lichtenberg notes. Lichtenberg saw Garrick perform *Hamlet* in 1754 and records being captivated by the actor's choice of a closely cut 'French suit'. This tight-fitting outfit, Lichtenberg observed, assumed particular crease patterns when Garrick posed in key attitudes necessary to his performance. Lichtenberg noticed that when Garrick was viewed from the back, a certain crease was observable running from one of his shoulders to the opposite hip which Lichtenberg determined to strengthen 'the play of [Garrick's] features'.[455] 'In truth', Lichtenberg admitted, this crease 'was worth the play of facial expression twice over.'[456] It will be recalled that Fuseli had noted similar relationships between parts of the *Horse-tamer* figure's body and robe (Fig. 44d). It is plausible that memory of Garrick's acting informed this study, and Fuseli's observation of Michelangelo's figures' garments. Moreover, the creasing that Lichtenberg observed in Garrick's suit bears comparison to Fuseli's studies of *écorché* figures made in Roman drawing academies (Fig. 50a). These *écorchés* are sinuous, their pronounced muscles,

[454] A similar graphic strategy is detectable in Fuseli's crayon drawing of Michelangelo's *Leda and the Swan* (1770-78).
[455] Margaret L. Mare (ed.) and William H. Quarrell (tr.), *Lichtenberg's Visits to England, as Described in his Letters and Diaries*, Oxford, 1938, 23.
[456] *Ibid*.

tendons and ligaments effectively making them more expressively eloquent.[457] Arguably, Fuseli's appreciation of Michelangelo's figures was conditioned by a perceptive reframing of diverse visual stimuli with an emphasis placed on the pre-eminence of form.[458]

Fuseli's re-framing of Michelangelo's *Zachariah*, through an ostensibly sculptural visual language, corresponds with Antal's notion that Fuseli's studies after the *Prophets* are 'block-like'. Equally, Fuseli's use of drawing reinforces the palpable presence of these figures. Fuseli's concentration on the forms of the prophet's robes - rather than his face - not only suggests Zachariah's bodily attitude but can also be said to promote this garment as a surrogate for the figure's countenance. Adopting this visual strategy enabled Fuseli to emphasise how Michelangelo's figure might be thought 'a type'. This sort of representation resulted from the overlooking of separate, but related, details – for example, the prophet's face and book, aspects which might more readily contribute to the figure's particular characterisation – in favour of concentrating on the figure's overall form in order to produce 'one great expression'.[459] Consequently, this visual strategy reframes the particularity of Michelangelo's *Prophet Zachariah* to create 'a class' of figure. Fuseli's attending to the communicative prospect of other than this prophet's face – his clothing – can be judged to reflect his own opinion on visual design referred to in this chapter's opening section, one which was contended to mark Fuseli's conception of drawing practice as

[457] A commensurate quality can be observed in Fuseli's representation of the *Horse-tamer's* anatomy.
[458] Fuseli's promotion of the importance of form, for artistic invention, was a prominent feature of his *Lectures*, for example, Lecture III, 407-08.
[459] Fuseli used the phrase 'one great expression' when interpreting the *Laocoön* in Lecture I, 376. He also maintained that such singular expression should be noted as the principal feature of all classical art.

distinct from academic visual protocols: 'It is perhaps unnecessary to premise, that by the word Design I mean not what that word denotes in a general sense […] but what it implies in its narrowest and most specific sense – the drawing of the *figures and component parts of the subject* [my emphasis]'.[460]

Fuseli's development of his *Zachariah* drawing's visual potential, by considering costume's ability to augment the figure's implications, finds parallel with his opinion of the *Laocoön* from his first Lecture. That artefact was also thought to be 'a class' by dint of Fuseli's interpretation of the features from which it was composed, above all those found in the central figure's head.[461] These features Fuseli understood to produce a singular expression representative of a man consumed by profound suffering, a conceit comparable to his depiction of Zachariah as an evocation of spiritual dilemma. Therefore, Fuseli's visual response to Michelangelo's *Prophet Zachariah* can be noted as conceptually akin to conventions he used to interpret the antique in his *Lectures*. So acknowledged, Fuseli's drawing and art theory served a commensurate purpose. They both analysed visual forms to identify an interpretative mode best suited to relaying these forms' most affecting connotations.

The connections observable between Fuseli's studies after Michelangelo and his perception of the antique are also evident in his other drawings responding to Michelangelo's *Prophets*. For example, in Fuseli's study the *Prophet Isaiah* (Fig. 56)

[460] Fuseli, Lecture VII, 490. Joshua Reynolds, and Jonathan Richardson, had conceded that it was possible to represent the refined natures of inanimate objects, landscapes and animals in keeping with the concept of the 'central form' which they believed characterised the 'Great Style' of art. See, for example, Discourse I, 23, where Reynolds refers to the refined character of 'pieces of drapery', and Richardson's *Essay*, 1725, 7, where he notes 'Animals, Landscapes' could also be so depicted.
[461] Fuseli, Lecture I, 376.

the figure's garments arguably serve a similar function to those in the drawing *Zachariah*. Fuseli depicts Isaiah's robe as agitated which suggests the import of Fuseli's description of him in Lecture III in which Fuseli noted that Isaiah recoiled 'at the voice of attendant genius, who seems to pronounce the words 'to us a child is born, to us a son is given''.[462] Again, Fuseli's expressive emphasising of the clothing – shown through sinuous shape and form - assists in translating the specific into the general. However, other contemporary artists' drawings show that it was acceptable to generalise Renaissance art's appearance. Reynolds, for instance, produced such drawings after paintings by Ludovico Carracci and Guido Reni (Fig. 57). Yet, Reynolds's studies seem to show his concern with capturing initial impressions of the poses of these artists' figures, a characteristic useful to him as compositional scaffolding for portrait images.[463] Such representations contrast with Fuseli's drawings which emphasise more intensely the fundamental characteristics of Michelangelo's forms.

Considering Fuseli's drawings after two of Michelangelo's *Prophets* it appears that his observations, and recording, were directed towards achieving the most concise visual approximations to what might be termed the underlying syntactic forms he perceived in Michelangelo's imagery. In effect, Fuseli's prolonged studies of the Sistine ceiling resulted in a set of drawings which, through their individual forms, conveyed the insistent rhythm of that which he described in Lecture III as, 'imagery of

[462] Fuseli, Lecture III, 422.
[463] See Reynolds's sketchbooks in the Sir John Soane's Museum, folios 34v and 60v. Giovanna Perini discusses Reynolds's use of drawing to aid his portraiture in this respect in, 'Sir Joshua Reynolds and Italian Art and Art Literature, A Study of the Sketchbooks in the British Museum and Sir John Soane's Museum', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 51, 1988, 141-168.

primeval simplicity [wherein there was] only God with man.'[464] This powerful exposition, alluding to the '*theocracy* or the empire of religion [Fuseli's emphasis]' via particular drawn shape and form, was reprised in other of Fuseli's drawings after Michelangelo.[465]

In his drawing *A Sibyl* (Fig. 58), identified as 'a conflation of the Erythrean and Delphic Sibyls', Fuseli has condensed the figure into a contracted egg-like shape.[466] The resulting formulation, a suggestive foetal nucleus developed from a merging of animate body and inanimate clothing, is as powerfully sculpturally still as Fuseli's *Prophets* and comparably provides an eloquent evocation of intense thought. While it must be acknowledged that the Sibyl's form bears some relationship to the visual conciseness of emblem book designs, which were used by the period's artists, Fuseli's drawing can again be considered in light of theatrical representation.[467] The Sibyl's body and garment are merged to articulate a deeply felt passion. This bears similarity with how the mid-eighteenth-century actor conceived 'the movements of the soul as expressing themselves through the actions of the body.'[468] Fuseli's drawings of Garrick in performance from the late-1760s, especially the actor as a stupefied Macbeth following Duncan's murder (Fig. 28), equate to his drawing *A Sibyl*; in both

[464] Fuseli, Lecture III, 420.
[465] *Ibid*.
[466] Lentzsch (ed.), 2005, 74. In Lecture III Fuseli noted that the Sibyls were female equivalents of the Prophets, see 422-23.
[467] Foremost among such emblem books was the *Iconologia* of Cesare Ripa, a book Tomory (1972, 81) describes as 'the most important emblem book of he seventeenth century, […] brought to the attention of the mid-eighteenth by an edition by Orlandi (1764-66).'
[468] Shearer West, *The Image of the Actor,* 1991, 3. West considers the interest both actors and their critics showed in relating bodily deportment to the representation of particular passions as, 'related directly to the last vestiges of Cartesian theory' (3). West refers to Descartes's *Passions de l'âme* (1649), the forerunner of Charles Le Brun's *Conférence sur l'expression* on the depiction of the passions.

Fuseli presents the human form as a compounded evocation of emotion.[469] Commensurately, Bernhard von Waldkirch has observed that Fuseli's *Sibyl* provides an 'archetypal image of absorption'.[470] Comparable emphases can be observed in other studies that Fuseli made after Michelangelo's Sistine frescoes, those of the *Prophet Jonah* (Fig. 59), and those of the *Ancestors of Christ* from the *Asa* and *Josaphat Lunettes*. In the study *Josaphat* (Fig. 60), for example, Fuseli shows the figure's entire body focused down on the writing he produces. This impression is enhanced by the attention that Fuseli gives to the figure's arched back which he has intensified into a sweeping curve extending through the shoulders and neck down into the page written upon. Additional accent is given to the figure's concentrated state through a separate study, on the same sheet, of Josaphat's right hand holding the pen with which he writes. This hand's form, suggestive of that given to Josaphat's body, powerfully reinforces the extent to which Josaphat's occupation is determined by otherworldly motivations.[471] Fuseli's decision to ignore the background of Michelangelo's *Josaphat Lunette* and concentrate on the sentinel-like figure, greatly assists in enhancing its potential to suggest characteristics other than those conveyed by its literal appearance. In this case the singular form of Fuseli's *Josaphat* might allude to the all-consuming, protracted, vigil on the Messiah's arrival in which Michelangelo's *Ancestors*, *Prophets* and *Sibyls* collectively engaged.

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[469] Fuseli made two drawings of Garrick in performance in the late 1760s after seeing him on stage: Garrick as *Duke of Gloucester waiting for Lady Anne at the Funeral of her Father-in-Law*, from *Henry VI* (1766), and *Garrick and Mrs Pritchard as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth after the Murder of Duncan* (1768).

[470] Lentzsch (ed.), 2005, 74. A corresponding synthesis of human forms and drapery can be observed in Fuseli's pen drawing after Michelangelo's *The Holy Family*.

[471] Fuseli's re-phrasing and re-emphasising of the overall form, and potential significance, of the drawing by paying attention to key details, mirrors his approach to studying the antique – Fuseli had, for example, used this visual strategy when observing the *Horse-tamers*.

At the beginning of this part of the chapter it was indicated that academic convention generally steered artists' attention away from Michelangelo's work. Instead, for instance, Raphael and Titian's art was thought to provide more suitable visual citations. Yet, the Sistine ceiling did attract the attention of Fuseli's more academic contemporaries.[472] Shortly before Fuseli studied Michelangelo's work, James Barry was in Rome doing the same thing.[473] From his observations Barry made the drawing *Adam* (c.1767-70) (Fig. 61) after Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*, a study markedly different to Fuseli's images after Michelangelo. Whereas Fuseli used a combination of line and tone to delineate the characteristic structures of Michelangelo's figures, Barry used a single outline for his *Adam*.[474]

Martin Myrone contends that Barry's particular line use had a purpose beyond, for example, displaying his control of drawing media. It was, he suggests, designed to provide an 'appropriate […] vehicle for pure and 'neutral' (and hence 'masculine') representations.'[475] Barry chose this depictive mode because, Myrone argues, he sought to closely follow theoretical guidelines associated with Winckelmann. Winckelmann had proposed that study of classical art should focus on the ancients' use of contour, a principal visual characteristic that he believed was capable of uniting and circumscribing 'every part of the most perfect Nature, and the ideal beauties in the figures of the Greeks; or rather, contains them both.'[476] Notably, Barry, in his *Adam*, emphasises the languid contours of its source; this quality also

[472] See Weinglass, 1982, 15, for evidence that amateur artists, as well as professionals, were drawing from Michelangelo's Sistine designs.
[473] In 1769 Reynolds had sent a letter to Barry advising him to study the Sistine Chapel while in Rome. For more detail see Martineau (et al), 2003, 62.
[474] Martin Myrone, reflecting on Barry's line use, proposes his economical rendering of the figure seems a demonstration of graphic discipline, see Myrone, 2005, 84.
[475] Myrone, 2005, 84.
[476] Fuseli's Winckelmann, 1765, 22.

characterises his depictions of classical artefacts, for example, his drawing of the *Meleager* (c.1767-70) (Fig. 62).[477] To most appropriately artistically respond to Winckelmann's advice it was established protocol to use a refined graphic outline, a technique nominated as most suitable for the depiction of classical sculptural remains.[478] While Barry's *Adam* reinforces this connection between drawing technique and academic discourses on classical art (something that Fuseli's drawings do not) it has also been argued that Barry understood how Michelangelo's work could be used to establish a further visual dialogue with the antique.

John Barrell has proposed that Barry selected Michelangelo's work because it was ''most remarkable' for 'precision and […] attention to detail or smaller parts of his figures''.[479] So considered, Barry's interest contradicted Reynolds's belief that paying attention to particular details compromised the Grand Manner's formal and conceptual integrity.[480] Barrell suggests that Barry had noted how the sculptors of the *Apollo Belvedere* and *Laocoön* had shown concerns similar to those Barry perceived in Michelangelo's work.[481] On face value Barry was, therefore, connecting the methods of classical artists and Michelangelo based on their shared attention to particularity.

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[477] The *Meleager* drawing was made during Barry's studies in Rome beginning in October 1766. Comparable visual qualities can be seen in his drawing of a bust of *Pericles* (1767-70).
[478] See Myrone, 2005, 84. Barry's contemporary, the English painter Ozias Humphry, noted that Barry recommended that when drawing one should 'avoid a multiplicity of lines, [and] get everything as correctly as possible with one', notebook of Ozias Humphry, British Library, Add.MSS. 22, 949, cited Myrone, 2005, 85.
[479] Barrell, *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt: The Body of the Public*, New Haven and London, 1986, 172. Barrell quotes from Barry's *Inquiry into the Real and Imaginary Obstructions to the Acquisition of the Arts in England*, 1775, 2, 249-51.
[480] See, for example, Reynolds's fourth Discourse.
[481] Barrell, 1986, 172.

Barrell also indicates that Barry's interest in visual exactness shows that he was concerned to establish another parallel between the antique and Michelangelo. Barrell contends that Barry perceived Michelangelo's work as being like the antique because Barry believed that representations of the human body should emphasise moral purpose; he had a pronounced sense of ancient Greek artists' creative superiority, evidenced in their ability to depict civic ideals through representations of superlative citizens.[482] To Barry's mind the human body – as in classical art - should be viewed as a means for reinforcing the notion of civic character. Barry also believed that the most appropriate way to achieve such an aim was to depict the human form engaged in particular, positive, intellectual or physical tasks. Barry perceived the undertaking of such activities as the most appropriate way for an individual to demonstrate their acceptance of, and affiliation to, the social good. In effect, Barry interpreted the performance of affirmative acts to indicate a conviction in the moral necessity of a civic society.[483] To visually represent such acts in a suitably precise manner was, therefore, to make an ethical statement through one's art. Barry's choosing of Michelangelo's *Adam* can thus be interpreted as indicating his desire to depict a human form at the moment when its potential for goodness was most pronounced, the instant of creation. In Michelangelo's *Adam*, Barry had an example of a 'new-minted' human being untainted by corruption. As such Barry conceived of *Adam* as an image which could allude to the possibility of a civilised future.

[482] For more detail on this issue see Barrell, 1986, 163-222.
[483] *Ibid*.,175.

That Michelangelo depicted *Adam* naked equally suited Barry's aims for, as Barrell indicates, the human form's moral potential was best exhibited through the unclothed body.[484] Whereas Fuseli had drawn unclothed examples of the antique his visual interpretations of Michelangelo's figures regularly showed clothing as decisive expressive elements. Furthermore, the close parallels which Barry established between the moral imperatives of classical art (as he interpreted them), Michelangelo's imagery and the objectives of the contemporary artist, appear quite different to Fuseli's perception of art and its purposes.

In contrast to Barry's work, Fuseli's drawings after Michelangelo - the clothed *Prophets*, *Sibyls* and *Ancestors*, the nude *Prophet Jonah* and a series of nude male bodies with emphatic musculature derived from the *Ignudi* – although generalised, eschew the stark formality of the academic visual style. Rather, in these studies Fuseli appears to use drawing to question whether generality might operate more fluidly. Unlike Barry, Fuseli's comprehension of Michelangelo's art did not reflect established notions of what the classical betokened. Instead, Fuseli apparently perceived Michelangelo's work as a device through which it was possible to re-interpret formal properties, especially those he considered to have most connotative potential. This was achieved through a process of visually excavating and graphically re-presenting phenomena. In this regard, Fuseli's drawings after Michelangelo are commensurate to those he made after the antique. In both, his considered use of drawing media/tools produces a kind of graphic autopsy. Therein, Fuseli used

[484] According to Barry if the body were dressed it would 'differ little from any other [body]', leading to an unwanted generalisation and a dilution of the potential of that figure's (civic) character, Barrell, 1986, 172. Barrell quotes from Barry's *Inquiry into the Real and Imaginary Obstructions to the Acquisition of the Arts in England*, London, 1775, Ch.2, 249-51.

drawing mediums to explore interconnections between form and allusion, articulating what in respect of the *Creation* scenes of the Sistine ceiling he termed 'The immortal spark […] the astonishment of life'.[485]

Eudo Mason has also acknowledged the prospect that Fuseli investigated relationships between visual forms and their potential allusiveness. He focuses attention on Fuseli's treatment of a range of sources, including Shakespeare and Milton, alongside ancient and Renaissance visual art. Mason suggests that Fuseli conceived of these wide-ranging materials as united and ostensibly alike. In effect, Mason indicates that Fuseli chose to overlook, for instance, what made these points of reference visually, thematically or historically distinct.[486] Consequently, Fuseli was able to devise a means for determining his favoured – and diverse – sources as potentially inter-changeable; each was a component part of an interconnected conceptual universe. Fuseli's addressing of parallels he understood to exist between classical and Renaissance art – both visual and literary – was, for example, noted in the previous chapter concerning depictions of the supernatural.[487]

In Fuseli's opinion Michelangelo's mode of representation – reliant upon magnificent and articulate form - was highly suited to depicting intense, mystical subjects; Fuseli had been attracted to such subjects since the early 1760s. In the Sistine ceiling Michelangelo had employed a crafted 'visual language' to produce designs that

[485] Fuseli, Lecture III, 421.
[486] Mason, 1951, 322. Also see Torbruegge, 1968, 136-45, regarding Bodmer's profound belief that literary art from different historical epochs should be acknowledged to have commensurate qualities.
[487] See Fuseli, Lecture III, 410, their 'Scylla and the [Miltonic] Portress of Hell, their daemons and our spectres, the shade of Patroclus and the ghost of Hamlet, their naiads, nymphs, and oreads, and our sylphs, gnomes and fairies, their furies and our witches, differ less in essence than in local, temporal, social modifications.' Such a parallel is also reinforced in this thesis's next chapter regarding the artistic exemplars which Bodmer introduced to Fuseli.

amalgamated particularly posed and expressive figures, 'those organs of embodied sentiment', into otherworldly scenes of a 'primeval nature'.[488] Within these panoramas the specifics of time and place were conflated as 'the veil of eternity is rent', thereby producing a realm determined by unearthly emphases, the 'empire of religion'.[489] In effect, the visual style Fuseli celebrated was predicated on extracting only those forms considered to be most allusively significant from the range of possible subject matters. Unlike the examples of classical and Renaissance art favoured by his more academic peers, the artefacts Fuseli preferred denied easy alignment between notions of the ideal and their translation into visual form. For Fuseli, classical and Renaissance art provided visual forms through which it might be possible to discern how visual representation could be re-evaluated, thereby providing a depictive mode contesting what it was possible to know. To Fuseli, the act of drawing was a means of thinking through the nature of phenomena. Drawing also enabled a reappraisal of what constituted the significance, and distinctiveness, of visual art practice.

Conclusion

This chapter's two parts have considered Fuseli's drawn responses to ancient and Renaissance art. It is apparent that Fuseli's conceptions of and reactions to these sources contrasted with the theoretical and practical interpretations of such source materials developed by his more academic contemporaries. In sum, academic artists'

[488] *Ibid*., 420-422. Such a relationship, between Fuseli's depicted figures and drawn backgrounds, is explored in this thesis's final chapter.
[489] *Ibid*.

images were underpinned by a system of aesthetics that emphasised how idealised representations of the human body could connote moral superiority through visual beauty. It was the human form's beauty, as opposed to its expressive potential, which concerned academic artists and theorists, an emphasis which resulted from a particular interpretation of classical art. Classical artists' depictions of the human body were believed to most succinctly convey human perfection, an aesthetic which academic theorists/artists also understood to denote moral substance; in turn these physically/morally refined human forms were used as a means to gauge the value of Renaissance art. Accordingly, academic theory effectively rank-ordered Renaissance artists so as to indicate those whose depictions of the human form most clearly communicated the ethical and aesthetic values associated with antique artefacts. Academic artists, when visually appropriating these valued examples of Renaissance and classical art, adapted their use of media and materials commensurate with the visual elegance they perceived in these sources. Consequently, academic artists' drawn studies from Renaissance, and especially classical art, had a languid and graceful appearance and were characterised by a definite, unwavering, outline. These features were those that were thought to indicate best the visual and ethical refinement that academic artists associated with their source materials.

By contrast, Fuseli selected pronouncedly physical antique forms and chose to enhance this corporeality through his use of drawing media. Furthermore, Fuseli chose active, impassioned classical figures rather than the passive subjects favoured by academic artists. Fuseli has been shown to have been interested in the theme of expression – and how this might equate with notions of beauty – rather than ideals of

beauty alone. Moreover, Fuseli's interpretation of the antique apparently accommodated critical discriminations that were potentially more suitable to theatrical performance; in particular, Fuseli focused on how the characteristics of countenance, attitude and form might serve as analytical modes.

In Fuseli's drawings after Renaissance art he again chose to reinforce the corporeality of his sources, both through choice of subject and selection of drawing materials. As with the antique, Fuseli sought to interpret his selected Renaissance artworks by concentrating on how drawing might suggest certain impassioned conditions, and how drawing manner might effectively either emphasise, or re-frame, certain of his subject's characteristics. This artistic strategy can be seen in Fuseli's depictions of Michelangelo's *Prophets*, *Sibyls* and *Ancestors*. In respect of Michelangelo's *Prophets*, Fuseli again resorted to critical terminology equally applicable to theatrical criticism. Fuseli, by choosing to work from Michelangelo's imagery (a resource mostly overlooked by academic artists due to its perceived expressive excesses), and by re-evaluating highly respected masters such as Raphael through reference to Michelangelo's visual style, effectively contested academic practitioners' visual reinterpretations of Renaissance art according to prescribed classical ideals.

Academic artists and Fuseli chose to draw from similar if not the same types of source materials. As argued, Fuseli's use of accepted visual references can be seen as a strategy which, while allowing him to appropriate such into his own work, also facilitated his challenging of these source materials' connotative significances. By

working in this way, Fuseli was able to contest the conceptual sureties associated with academic practice by commandeering his artistic rivals' theoretical ground in order to dispute the aesthetic certainties promoted through academic conventions. However, this assertion does not alter the fact that for Fuseli and his more stringently academic contemporaries drawing practice was a means to become familiar with chosen subject matter. Yet, how Fuseli manipulated the act of drawing suggests the knowledge he sought was of a different order to that required by his more academic peers. Whereas they sought to use drawing to make images that conformed to theoretically-agreed depictive standards, Fuseli's drawings seem to question the way in which both classical and Renaissance art should be understood. In this respect, Fuseli's construal of these art forms appeared – in contrast to academic practice - concerned with deducing a more potent type of visual expression. Consequently, the marks constituting his drawings indicate a shift in regular artistic discourse.

In effect, the drawings Fuseli produced, from his chosen source materials, disrupted the relationships established between particular concepts of the human and their depiction through a pre-determined 'visual vocabulary'. By questioning the visual formulations underpinning normative art practice, Fuseli can be judged to have disputed, rather than worked in complete opposition to, the distinctive character academic theory/practice attributed to art-making. Fuseli's drawings, when considered through the contexts established by this chapter, should be appreciated as relating to and opposing conventional eighteenth-century art practice. Effectively, through the drawing process, Fuseli challenged the artistic conventions which regulated how, in the eighteenth century, visual signs should be utilised.

Consequently, Fuseli's artwork queried the validity of these visual conventions and probed at the foundations of eighteenth-century visual art with a series of challenging and potentially disquieting questions: 'what constitutes the most appropriate conception/representation of the human?'; 'are art's ethical ramifications/functions modified by depicting certain subjects over others?'; and 'to what degree does choice of subject, and depictive mode, affect art's connotations?' These queries drive the argument in the remainder of the thesis. In the next chapter the distinct nature of Fuseli's conception of art practice is further scrutinised. In particular, Fuseli's perceptions of visual art's attributes are discussed in relation to that aspect of visual invention he favoured above all others, the sublime.[490] The sublime, as we shall see, Fuseli believed to be a powerful creative phenomenon one capable of impressing 'one great quality or mode of society, some great maxim [which forces] *one* irresistible idea upon the mind and fancy [Fuseli's emphasis]'.[491]

[490] Fuseli determined the sublime mode of invention to be the equivalent of the epic; he saw them as effectively interchangeable, the 'epic or sublime' (Lecture III, 419). These were foremost in his hierarchy of inventive methods, which also comprised, in descending order, the dramatic and historic. Fuseli's classification of inventive genres was inspired by Johann Heinrich Meyer's treatise *Űber die Gegenständer der bildenden Kunst* (On the Objects of the Plastic Arts), 1797.
[491] Fuseli, Lecture III, 419.

CHAPTER 3
TRANSFIGURING TERROR

The previous chapters of this thesis have emphasised how ethical concerns underpinned the inventive practices of eighteenth-century academic visual artists. Academic aesthetics deemed that certain forms and themes were capable of encouraging individuals to reflect on their sense of self and, consequently, academic artists conceived of their chosen visual references as means for instigating modifications to human thought and behaviour in line with a perceived common good. Although between the early 1700s and the 1770s adjustments were made to how appropriate social behaviour was appreciated and depicted visually, the function of academic art remained relatively consistent; it aimed to identify, and subsequently regulate, those subjects and depictive modes believed most likely to affect aesthetic conceptions, human virtue and ethical actions.

However, it has been demonstrated that Fuseli's drawings of the 1770s contrasted with this academic norm. Comparison of Fuseli's and academic artists' images has revealed that although Fuseli comprehended the rules governing academic art practice, he appropriated them for differing ends. For instance, Fuseli's particular artistry was evidenced in his re-working of sanctioned examples of the antique, and of pictorial types. The thesis's opening chapters have also assessed Fuseli's theoretical appreciation of artistic invention. Consequently, it is clear that the factors conditioning Fuseli's understanding of art making produced a mindset markedly

different to that demonstrated by, for instance, Gavin Hamilton, Benjamin West, or Joshua Reynolds. The influence of this particular outlook on Fuseli's artistry suggests that he did not completely share his contemporaries' appreciation of, or their belief in, the functions of visual art. At the close of the previous chapter a series of questions were posed concerning Fuseli's appreciation of art's purpose; these centred on the choice, depiction and inferred connotations of artistic subject matters.[492] As established, dominant art theory/practice instituted connections between the depicted human body and narrative contexts so as to sanction visual forms believed capable of exemplifying particular philosophical and ethical rationales. As the period's image-making was governed by such concepts it would be reasonable to presume that Fuseli was similarly concerned for his images to have import, for them to be more than 'signs of artistic excess'.[493] While accepting that Fuseli's imagery was different to academic artists' the thesis, thus far, has established that such difference is attributable to the particularity of the aesthetic principles which Fuseli favoured rather than due to his disregard for creative restraint. Yet, there remains a need to investigate the possible function of Fuseli's art, especially the extent to which the theoretical structures shaping it defined its purpose. To this end the current chapter further analyses Fuseli's concept of artistic invention by assessing the sublime, an aesthetic convention he valued highly.

The chapter is divided into three parts. The first (*The sublime and academic art practice*) particularises Fuseli's notion of the sublime by examining how dominant art

[492] The questions posed were, 'what constitutes the most appropriate conception/representation of the human?'; 'are art's ethical ramifications/functions modified by depicting certain subjects over others?', and 'to what degree does choice of subject, and depictive mode, affect art's connotations?'
[493] Martin Myrone on Fuseli's images in *Henry Fuseli*, London, 2001, 19.

theory interpreted this concept. Academic conceptions of the sublime are shown as commensurate with academic visual invention, both sought to emphasise art's ethical aspect by referencing the work of sanctioned artists.[494] The chapter's second part (*Fuseli's understandings of the sublime and his appreciation of art*) assesses Fuseli's knowledge of the sublime, most particularly how his comprehension was informed by his formal education. Although Fuseli's schooling appears to characterise the sublime in ways which reflect the ethical bias of academic theory, it is shown that the Zurich Carolinum's teaching of this subject was particular. The chapter's final part (*Fuseli's processing of ideas on the sublime into imagery*) examines how Fuseli's conception of the sublime affected his image making. Included here are assessments of the differences between Fuseli's mode of visual representation, devised in respect of the sublime, and the depictive strategies that were used by his closest contemporaries in Italy during the 1770s, the 'Fuseli circle'. Overall, the chapter argues that Fuseli was taught that the sublime was a powerful instrument which allowed great thoughts to be realised. In turn, use of the sublime (as Fuseli was led to conceive of it) was believed to indicate an elevated intellect. Consequently, exhibiting high-mindedness, through sublime thought, intimated an individual's nobility of soul, their elevated - prospectively divine - nature. The concept of sublimity which Fuseli came to favour deeply influenced his awareness of the power and potential of visual art. What Fuseli comprehended the sublime to connote developed his belief in art's particular functionality. For him, art provided a means for determining sublimity of self.

[494] For more information on these sanctioned artists see Chapter One above.

Part 1: The sublime and academic art practice

This part of the chapter focuses attention on the perceptions of the sublime which helped to characterise academic art practice, especially in England, during the mid-to-late eighteenth century.[495] These insights were derived from aesthetic concepts formulated during the previous two centuries which, in turn, were presumed to reflect ideas valued by sixteenth-century Italian artists; eighteenth-century theoreticians believed that these notions underpinned, for example, the work of Raphael, and Poussin who was considered to have re-prised Raphael's mode of artistry. The aesthetic/conceptual value of Raphael's and Poussin's art was communicated to eighteenth-century thinkers through the theories of Charles Alphonse Du Fresnoy, Charles Le Brun and the *Conférences* of the French Academie Royale. The academic art practice derived from this theoretical inheritance aimed, according to Louis Hourticq, 'to put on canvas a certain number of personages who express passions'.[496] However, as we have seen, artists were advised to restrict their works' emotive content and focus on depicting 'a conventional type of humanity, inspired by antique sculpture and the painting of Raphael [and] to rectify anatomy by memories of the Antinous or of the Laocoön'.[497] This concept of art practice also provided frameworks for understanding the sublime's function in visual art.

In his *Art of Painting* Roger de Piles had identified specific qualities that allowed Raphael to be classed as a sublime artist. It was Raphael's 'fine choice of the

[495] This assessment complements Chapter One's analyses of the ideas underpinning English academic art theory.
[496] Louis Hourticq, *De Poussin à Watteau*, Paris, 1921, 78, cited in Samuel H. Monk, *The Sublime, A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII – Century England*, Michigan, 1960, 167.
[497] *Ibid*.

Attitudes, [and] the delicacy of the *Expressions*' which indicated that his art was in the '*sublime Stile*' [de Piles' emphasis].[498] Acknowledging Raphael's work provided the prospect of aligning his art with the 'simple, sublime, and natural' forms that were celebrated as the principal features of classical art.[499] De Piles' promotion of the superiority of Raphael's visual style contrasted with the opinion presented in Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Painters*, a treatise traditionally serving to guide eighteenth-century artists' ideas on aesthetic taste as much as their appreciation of Italian Renaissance painters.[500] Vasari's text presented Raphael as a lesser artist than Michelangelo. However, to late seventeenth/early eighteenth-century minds Michelangelo's art was troubling. He was considered to depict phenomena impulsively and extravagantly. According to academic creative principles these qualities were unlikely to recommend Michelangelo as a sublime artist.[501]

In contrast to Michelangelo, Raphael, and indeed Poussin, was considered to generalise and idealise natural forms in emulation of classical sculpture. Consequently, Raphael's art was rated most highly by academic critics, it was sublime. He was understood to use a 'Great and Extraordinary' mode of representation, his images were believed to 'Surprise, Please and Instruct, [by] what we call the grand Gusto […] by this […] ordinary things are made Beautiful, and the Beautiful, Sublime and Wonderful […] the grand Gusto, the Sublime and the

[498] *Ibid*., 169, Roger de Piles, from *Art of Painting, and the Lives of the Painters, etc.*, London, 1706, 128 and 393.
[499] *Ibid*., Monk on Raphael.
[500] Giorgio Vasari's *Le Vite delle più eccellenti pittori, scultori, ed architettori* (*Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*), was originally published in 1550, dedicated to Cosimo I, de' Medici. It was partly rewritten and enlarged in 1568 with additional woodcut portraits of artists.
[501] For information on this opinion of Michelangelo see Monk, 1960, 168-9.

Marvellous are one and the same thing'.[502] Raphael and Poussin's style notably influenced eighteenth-century academic art as can be judged from the classically inspired figures depicted in, for example, Gavin Hamilton's *Andromache Bewailing the Death of Hector* (c.1759) (Fig. 20) and Raphael Mengs's *Augustus and Cleopatra* (1759) (Fig. 14).

Raphael's art was also thought to display 'grace', a feature having special significance within eighteenth-century aesthetics. According to de Piles, paintings deemed to be graceful were considered to be able to surprise the viewer 'who feels the effect without penetrating into the true cause of it.'[503] De Piles identified grace as one of a pair of characteristics giving Raphael's work its particular quality; the other aspect he noted was 'greatness'.[504] Indeed, early eighteenth-century academic art theorists thought that grace and greatness combined best conveyed sublimity. As Samuel H. Monk relates, grace and greatness were believed by these theorists to be 'the wonderful, the surprising, the marvellous [they were] those indefinable beauties that lie beyond the rules.'[505] Consequently, Raphael, through his mastery of these qualities, was considered to be the most appropriate Renaissance exemplar for any eighteenth-century artist who wished to align their practice with the aesthetic principles associated with classical views on art, and ethical action. At root, Raphael's pictures, as with all images similarly displaying generosity in sentiment and action, were believed to be sublime because they familiarised spectators with

[502] *Ibid*., 171, de Piles, *Art of Painting*, 19. Jonathan Richardson discussed invention and the sublime in his *An Essay on the Theory of Painting*, in ways comparable with the arguments of de Piles. See Richardson's *Essay*, second edition, London, 1725, 227 and 248.
[503] *Ibid*., de Piles, *Art of Painting*, 8 and 129.
[504] 'Grace' and 'greatness' were recognised to possess aesthetic significance by Jonathan Richardson. For example, Richardson used these terms in his *Essay*, 37 (second edition, London, 1725), alongside the qualities he believed formed 'The whole Art of Painting'.
[505] Monk, 1960, 171.

appropriate models of virtue.[506] Commensurate principles led to Raphael, as both man and artist, being identified as sublime in Winckelmann's *Gedanken*;[507] he thought that Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* (Fig. 63) should be considered sublime because it demonstrated, 'This noble simplicity and sedate grandeur [which] is also the true characteristical mark of the best and maturest Greek writings […] by these qualities Raphael became eminently great, and he owed them to the ancients.'[508] As noted in Chapter One, eighteenth-century academic artists considered that ancient art connoted human behaviours best suited to appropriate social conduct.

By comparison, academic practitioners esteemed Michelangelo less highly. Michelangelo had a reputation for displaying creative individuality, rather than for emulating the ancients' generalised visual representations (this interpretation of Michelangelo had been communicated by Vasari). This led to Michelangelo being viewed with suspicion by eighteenth-century academic artists and critics. Michelangelo's apparent artistic unpredictability meant that his work was thought, as de Piles claimed, 'for the most part disagreeable, the *Airs* of his *Heads* fierce […] and his *Expressions* not very natural [de Piles' emphasis].'[509] However, during the course of the eighteenth century perceptions altered regarding how the individual was

[506] These opinions were forwarded by, amongst others, George Turnbull in his *A Treatise on Ancient Painting*, London, 1740.
[507] In the *Gedanken* Raphael is portrayed as 'the Apollo of painters' ('Apollo der maler'), Fuseli's Winckelmann translation, London, 1765, 134. Carol Hall notes Raphael's god-like nature in the *Gedanken* in her *Blake and Fuseli – A Study in the Transmission of Ideas*, New York and London, 1985, 73.
[508] Fuseli's Winckelmann, 1765, 34-5. For more information on Raphael's significance for Winckelmann see Hall, 1985, 72-3. Winckelmann had studied the *Sistine Madonna* in the *Gemäldegallerie* of Augustus III in Dresden.
[509] Monk, 1960, 172. The quotation is from de Piles' *Art of Painting*, 160-61. Jonathan Richardson's *Essay on the Theory of Painting* largely reiterated this view, yet his opinions of Michelangelo's art practice suggest that he was less sure in his estimate; Richardson stated, '[Michelangelo's] Style is his Own, not Antique, but he had a sort of Greatness in his utmost degree, which sometimes ran to the Extream of Terrible; [yet] in many Instances he has a fine seasoning of Grace', Richardson, *Essay on the Theory of Painting*, London, 1725, 204.

understood in respect of society and this change also affected how Michelangelo's, and Raphael's, art was perceived. Contributing significantly to this situation was what Samuel H. Monk notes as being, 'the beginning of a preference for individuality, for the concrete, rather than for generalisation […] for strong emotion rather than for the placid composition of Raphael.'[510] The sublime valued by academic theorists was challenged by a taste for 'a distinct brand of pictorialisation that broke with the shackles of emulation and imitation'.[511] This alternative view of representation, and of perceptions of self, was also influenced by contemporary treatises, for instance, Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry* (1757), and literature, for example, James Macpherson's *The Poems of Ossian* (1765).[512] Such new works also affected how the sublime was appreciated in the visual arts, as is illustrated by Matthew Pilkington's and Dr. John Armstrong's contemporary estimates of the respective aesthetic merits of Raphael's and Michelangelo's art.[513]

In 1770 Pilkington wrote that Raphael was a 'Sublime genius'.[514] By contrast, he believed that Michelangelo's work, although displaying sublimity of thought, did not provide the spectator with pleasure. Armstrong, viewing Michelangelo's images in the Sistine Chapel the following year, had a different view of his work. He stated that Michelangelo demonstrated 'a prodigious display of the sublime, melancholy, and

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[510] Monk, 1960, 182.
[511] Myrone, 2005, 130.
[512] Burke's treatise was but one of a number, published around the mid-eighteenth century, responding to the trend for an increasingly emotive art. Others include, Joseph Warton's *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope* (1756), Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition*, Gerard's *Essay on Taste* (both 1759), and Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762). For specimen critique of Macpherson's representation of the sublime see James Barry, *Works*, London, 1809, I, 263-67.
[513] Pilkington expressed his views in his *Gentleman's and Connoisseur's Dictionary of Painters*, London, 1770, 499, while those of Armstrong appear in his *A Short Ramble through Some Parts of France and Italy*, London, 1771, 23-25.
[514] Pilkington *Dictionary of Painters*, London, 1770, 498.

dreadful Imagination'.[515] In particular, Armstrong thought that Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* (Fig. 64) was 'magnificently terrible'.[516] Armstrong's use of the terms 'dreadful', 'magnificently' and 'terrible', clearly indicates the degree to which his judgements were influenced by newer theories of the sublime, for instance, Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry*.[517] Criteria similar to those used by Armstrong also served to identify Shakespeare's sublime qualities. For example, in the first edition of Bishop Hurd's *Letters of Chivalry and Romance* (1762) *The Tempest* was characterised as evoking a 'terrible sublime', while Samuel Felton in *Shakespeare and the Artist* (1787) talked of the Bard's wild and terrible imagination.[518] The purpose of the sublime had changed. Rather than indicating the grace, greatness and enduring character of the classical world, and the associated constancy of the (perfectible) human condition, the sublime had become a medium for communicating creative energy, excess and difference.

In this changed aesthetic climate while Raphael's art was still noted for its perfected representations, his evocations of the sublime were considered less satisfactory. Contemporary aesthetics, focusing attention away from the perceived grace of Raphael's work, instead emphasised Michelangelo's forceful inventiveness. Michelangelo's imagery was particularly valued because it was deemed to visualise sublime qualities, like those popularised by Burke, most successfully.[519] In particular,

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[515] Armstrong, *A Short Ramble through Some Parts of France and of Italy*, London, 1771, 23.
[516] *Ibid*., 24.
[517] Burke devoted individual sections of his treatise to 'Terror' – Part II, Section III – and 'Magnificence' – Part II, Section XIII.
[518] Hurd, *Letters of Chivalry and Romance*, London, 1762, Felton, *Shakespeare and the Artist*, London, 1787. Similar qualities are ascribed to Shakespeare's work in the anonymously authored (indicated as 'T.W.'), 'Observations upon the Tragedy of Macbeth', *British Magazine* 8, 1767, 514-16, and William Duff's *An Essay on Original Genius*, London, 1767.
[519] For more detail on this point see Samuel H. Monk, 1960, 189.

Michelangelo's work was connected to the notion of terror underpinning Burke's theory – 'Whatever therefore is terrible, with regard to sight, is sublime'[520] – and Michelangelo's depicted human forms were especially celebrated in this respect. These altered perceptions of the relative merits of Michelangelo's and Raphael's artworks were reflected in Joshua Reynolds's art theory.

Reynolds's *Discourses on Art* substantially echoed the theoretical principles of Jonathan Richardson. However, Reynolds, in his private estimation of how the sublime might be most suitably conveyed visually, did not fully share his forebear's appreciation of Raphael as a master of sublime representation. In October 1759 Reynolds contributed a series of papers on painting to the *Idler*. Among these were assessments of how the sublime functioned in painting. Reynolds, rather than following Richardson in celebrating the ultimate sublimity of Raphael's figures (in his *Cartoons* and frescoes) turned attention to Michelangelo's work. Reynolds was especially interested in the degree to which Michelangelo's art suggested depth of feeling and powerful emotions.[521]

Yet Reynolds, when delivering his public *Discourses on Art*, indicated that Raphael should be considered principal among painters meriting emulation; Reynolds presented Raphael as 'in general the foremost of the first painters'.[522] He thought that

[520] Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, Part II, Section II.
[521] For more information on this matter see Michael H. Duffy, 'Michelangelo and the Sublime in Romantic Art Criticism', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1995, 217-238, 219. Reynolds's defence of Michelangelo's artistic spirit and extravagance reveal his awareness of the Earl of Shaftesbury's *A Letter Concerning Enthusiasm* (1711), which Reynolds had read around the time of his first Italian tour in 1752.
[522] Reynolds, Discourse V, 74.

Raphael was an artist possessed of 'Taste and Fancy', who 'excelled in beauty'.[523] By contrast, Reynolds observed, Michelangelo's art possessed less conservative characteristics, 'more Genius and Imagination', more energy.[524] In Reynolds's opinion Michelangelo's ideas were 'vast and sublime'.[525] While Reynolds considered that Raphael was the superior painter, an artist whose strengths were to be found in 'the propriety, beauty, and majesty of his characters, the judicious contrivance of his Composition, his correctness of Drawing, [and] purity of Taste', he was unsure that such qualities secured Raphael as the preferred model to imitate.[526] If it were 'a greater combination of the higher qualities of the art' that determined whether Raphael or Michelangelo were more aesthetically viable, then Raphael was ascendant.[527] Yet, Reynolds conjectured, 'if, as Longinus thinks, the sublime, being the highest excellence that human composition can attain to, abundantly compensates for all other deficiencies, then Michel Angelo demands the preference.'[528] Although Reynolds considered that Michelangelo's work was the ultimate expression of the painter's art, bound as he was by his pedagogic responsibilities he suggested that Raphael was a more secure artistic resource.[529]

[523] *Ibid*., 76.
[524] *Ibid*.
[525] *Ibid*.
[526] *Ibid*., 76-7.
[527] *Ibid*., 77.
[528] *Ibid*.
[529] Reynolds's fifth Discourse draws a clear distinction between the relative merits of Raphael and Michelangelo see, for example, 76-7. However, his final Discourse more fully acknowledged Michelangelo's artistic superiority.

Reynolds's mention of Longinus, in the *Discourses*, referenced the Greek philosopher's portrayal of the sublime in Chapter IX of his *On the Sublime*.[530] There, Longinus had argued that sublimity was a force capable of providing a sense of the elevated consciousness of literary authors. Reynolds, alluding to this idea through reference to the 'effect of the capital works of Michelangelo', turned attention to how Michelangelo's art 'perfectly corresponds to what Bouchardon said he felt from reading Homer; his whole frame appeared to himself to be enlarged, and all nature around him, diminished to atoms.'[531] Bouchardon's reading of Homer had lifted him 'out of himself', it had given Bouchardon a feeling of elevation. This sensation was comparable with how Raphael's art had been perceived to be sublime, his work was believed to similarly offer spectators the prospect of increased self-esteem. However, Michael H. Duffy argues that Reynolds deviated from the account of Bouchardon's experience to more concisely convey Longinus's reasoning. 'According to Reynolds', Duffy contends, 'not only did Homer's heroes take on the physical stature of gods, but the reader himself takes on the god-like stature of Homer, sharing the elevated consciousness of the author.'[532] A person, by choosing stimuli most likely to magnify their (perceived) personal worth, here Homer and Michelangelo are the examples, could enhance their claim to nobility.

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[530] Longinus's ideas of the sublime – also know as *Peri Hupsous* – were, in the eighteenth century, considered the origin of theories on the subject. Until mid-century the standard translation of Longinus was William Smith's *Dionysius Longinus on the Sublime*, London, 1739.

[531] Reynolds, Discourse V, 76. According to Michael H. Duffy ('Michelangelo and the Sublime in Romantic Art Criticism', 1995, 222), Reynolds was making use of Francesco Algarotti's account of Edmé Bouchardon's 'celebrated experience' of feeling an increased self-esteem on reading Homer. Similarly, Reynolds had claimed that his experience of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel frescoes had inspired him to feel 'the greatest self-importance', Charles Leslie and Tom Taylor, *The Life and Times of Sir Joshua Reynolds: With Notices of Some of His Contemporaries*, 2 Vols., London, 1865, I, 41, cited Duffy, 'Michelangelo and the Sublime in Romantic Art Criticism', 1995, 222.

[532] Duffy, 1995, 223. Reynolds's theoretical assessment of the sublime in respect of Longinus and Michelangelo was given in Discourse V, 77, and in the preparation Reynolds made for the *Discourses*. For more detail on this last point see Duffy, 1995, 222.

The version of the sublime which Reynolds presented was not so different to that promoted by his predecessors who had celebrated Raphael's work as most sublime. Both parties considered that the sublime in painting should reflect favourably on the general human condition and on the self in particular. The principal difference between Reynolds and his forebears was that Reynolds, taking into account increased contemporary interest in the affectivity of aesthetic experiences and in ideas of artistic force and individuality, found that Michelangelo's art more suitably supported his theoretical stance. In this context Michelangelo's work was considered to be the epitome of sublime genius.[533] Therefore, Reynolds's favouring of Michelangelo, by recourse to Longinus, can, as Monk argues, be seen as 'an effort to gloze over the obvious faults of Michelangelo and to emphasise the value of his energy and individual genius [which was a characteristic] of an age that habitually turned to *Peri Hupsous* for authority when its tastes were heterodox.'[534] Reynolds used Longinus's *On the Sublime* as a device to accommodate contemporary aesthetic concepts into a comparatively long-standing academic theory. For Reynolds, *On the Sublime* served as a means to side-step the theoretical challenge presented by new ideas. Apart from this modification to dominant art theory, the idea of the sublime which Reynolds forwarded closely equated to that presented by earlier eighteenth-century academic theorists. However, as the next part of the chapter indicates, this concept of the sublime was markedly different to that which Fuseli encountered during his formative years.

[533] A further example of Michelangelo being so celebrated can be found in James Edward Smith's, *A Sketch of a Tour on the Continent*, London, 1793, excerpts from which are cited in Monk, 1960, 183.
[534] Monk, 1960, 188.

Part 2: Fuseli's early understandings of the sublime and his appreciation of art

This part of the chapter assesses how the sublime was introduced to Fuseli. Most importantly emphasis is placed on Longinus's ideas on sublimity for these underscored the educational programme that Fuseli experienced at the Zurich Carolinum. As a concept the sublime was highly important for Fuseli's mentors. However, Fuseli's teachers' understanding of sublimity, and the way that they believed it conditioned human perception and experience, is most different from how, for example, Joshua Reynolds conceived of the relationship between the sublime and human understanding. Overall, this part of the chapter indicates that following his formal education Fuseli came to associate the sublime with the enhancement of individual, social and cultural understandings. While these foci appear to relate to how the sublime was interpreted by academic theorists, Fuseli's teachers offered a distinct vision of how sublimity operated. Fuseli was directed to understand that the sublime was evoked through deeply affecting incidents, and it was via these that the sublime's value, its ability to alter human perception in principled ways, was communicated. Fuseli was also made aware that it was the artist's task to forcefully re-present such moving incidents through their works' characteristics and structure.

Significantly, Fuseli's appreciation of sublimity was informed by Longinus's proposition that the sublime should be 'the means by which we may be enabled to raise our faculties to the proper pitch of grandeur.'[535] Longinus's call for an uplifting of

[535] Marilyn Torbruegge, *Bodmer and Füssli: 'Das Wunderbare' and the Sublime*, PhD. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1968, 90. Torbruegge quotes from Longinus, *On the Sublime*, *Classical Literary Criticism (Aristotle: On the Art of Poetry; Horace: On the Art of Poetry; Longinus: On the Sublime)*, T.S. Dorsch (trans. and ed.) Middlesex, 1965, 99.

human potential distinctly marked Fuseli's conception of the sublime. Longinus viewed sublimity as 'a certain excellence and distinction' through which the greatest writers had achieved fame, rather than envisaging it as a means to indulge a person's self-conception.[536] The creative practice which Longinus referenced indicated the sublime through use of an elevated language, one that entranced audiences. This language Longinus understood 'transports us with wonder', it was a superior means of affecting an audience than the more subdued concepts of 'grace and greatness' which characterised sublimity in academic aesthetics.[537] According to Longinus, whereas conventional artistic inventions displayed their merits through how their constituent parts were distributed, those inventions he had in mind could magnify their affect over audiences through 'a well-timed stroke of sublimity'.[538] This stroke 'scatters everything before it like a thunderbolt, and in a flash reveals the full power of the [artist].'[539] Fuseli's principal mentor at the Carolinum, Johann Bodmer, was particularly enthralled by Longinus's conception of the sublime. In keeping with Longinus, Bodmer characterised the sublime as that which 'surprises even the noblest souls [it] put human beings in a state of awe'.[540]

Notably, Longinus's ideas on the sublime, and Bodmer's teaching, had a shared purpose, the acquisition of critical insights.[541] Common to both was a drive to attain

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[536] *Ibid*., 91. Torbruegge quotes from Dorsch, 1965, 100.
[537] *Ibid*.
[538] *Ibid*. Torbruegge quotes from Dorsch, 1965, 100-101.
[539] *Ibid*.
[540] Bodmer, *Critische Briefe* (1746), the fourth letter, 104, and the third letter, 98, cited Karen Junod, 'Henry Fuseli's Pragmatic use of Aesthetics: His Epic Illustrations of Macbeth', *Word & Image*, 19:3, 2003, 138-150, notes 15 and 16, 140.
[541] This aspect of Bodmer's teaching is frequently noted by Camilla Smith – in *Religion, Morality and Pedagogic Methods in the Early Drawings of Henry Fuseli (1753-63)*, PhD. thesis, University of Birmingham 2008, for example, 30, 35 and 265. For more information on this issue see, for instance,

heightened perceptions by paralleling the high-mindedness associated with demonstrations of virtue in life with the uplift given to the soul by 'the true sublime'.[542] Most particularly, both men thought that the sublime was revealed in great thinking, which should be expressed through powerful emotions. The aim of such thought was intellectual elevation; this was in contradistinction to the menial thinking most regularly required by everyday life's circumstances. Freed from this lesser, common, thought the individual might be capable of 'striking out into the realm of the remarkable or wondrous.'[543] By exhibiting sublimity of conception in this way the individual was noted to be demonstrating their nobleness of mind. In turn, Longinus considered this to be a reflection of a nobleness of soul. The judiciousness of thought requisite of Longinus's concept of the sublime ought to be developed by training the mind to form grand ideas. It was to this end that Fuseli's tuition was directed. Significantly, this appreciation of the sublime concurred with the Zwinglian notion of predestination, a concept that Fuseli knew from his theological studies. Common to both was a drive to alter perception of self through affecting situations. Within Zwinglianism it was the recognition and acceptance of one's spiritual deficiency before God which consequently provided one's life with a sense of crisis that was powerful enough, Zwinglianism pronounced, to encourage one to reconsider selfhood and the purpose of existence.[544]

Anthony Scenna, *The Treatment of Ancient Legend and History in Bodmer*, New York, 1937, for example, 13, 37, 51, 75-83.

[542] Torbruegge, 1968, 93. Torbruegge quotes from Dorsch, 1965, 107. In *On the Sublime* Longinus enumerated five qualities he associated with the 'true sublime': ability to form grand conceptions, powerful emotions, certain kinds of figures of thought and speech, noble diction including choice of words and certain imagery, and elevated composition in general.

[543] *Ibid*., 94.

[544] Gottfried W. Locher notes that in such circumstances 'we face a wholly personal question' (*Zwingli's Thought, New Perspectives, Studies in the History of Christian Thought*, Vol. XXV, Leiden, 1981, 35), resulting in an individual and terrifying dilemma. This dread was considered a key incentive

Important for Bodmer's teaching, and paralleling the literary examples through which Longinus had communicated his ideas on sublimity, was the awe-inspiring dynamism of the Homeric and biblical narratives.[545] Bodmer believed that these sources were important because their forcefulness owed much to their authors' foregrounding of terrifying and mysterious situations. These writers' elevated sublime thought is substantially different to that Reynolds and his predecessors attributed to visual artists. Whereas academic theorists suggested that Raphael's and Michelangelo's work inferred a sense of admiration connected to wonderment, Bodmer emphasised how sublime experience was characterised by shock and obscurity. In terms of artistic production these disturbing and ambiguous qualities could be most successfully expounded through consistent selection, and combination, of the most terrifying incidents to form an affecting unified whole. On this issue Longinus had noted that when Homer described a storm in Book XV of the *Odyssey* he had achieved great success by continually maximising, rather than limiting, the episode's terror. Longinus thought that Homer's artistry was particularly important because his writing's recurring dread atmosphere was perceived as a way of engaging the reader's imagination so as to prevent them slipping into small-mindedness. Homer's continual literary barrage of potent images and evocations of strong feelings was acknowledged to so fully engage the imagination that the episodes he portrayed could almost 'be experienced'. So engaged, Homer's readership effectively partook of his invention's grandeur. Elevated by this experience their minds were freed from

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for gaining a fuller sense of self, 'the key to all knowledge' as Camilla Smith notes of Zwingli's thought, see Smith, 2008, 26, footnote 66.

[545] According to Marilyn Torbruegge (95) Longinus's paralleling of passages from the *Iliad* with examples chosen from the Bible, 'gave rise to consideration of the Bible as a subject of literary criticism'. Torbruegge references her point to Donald Andrew Russell, *Longinus: On the Sublime*, Oxford, 1964, xlvi and 92.

frivolous distractions, thus providing a platform from which their souls might ascend. Longinus's interpretation of the ostensibly ethical purposes potential in the Homeric sublime's terror was reflected in Bodmer's mature thinking, and in his youthful autobiographical notes.[546]

Bodmer's interest in the imaginative and sublime properties of poetry was enhanced by his reading of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Inspired by Milton, and in partnership with Johann Breitinger, Bodmer published *The Treatise on Einbildungskraft* (1727)[547] in which the scholars articulated their belief that Milton's writing was a significant instrument for the improvement of aesthetic and personal awareness. Equally, Milton's work served to focus their conceptualisation of Longinus's notion of the sublime. Most particularly, Milton's writing and Longinus's theory were connectable through their common celebration of imaginative intensity, which was revealed especially in how the astonishment produced by the greatest sublime art was believed to affect a person's perceptions. To illustrate this proposal *The Treatise on Einbildungskraft* quoted from Chapter XV of Longinus's *On the Sublime* where it was emphasised how forceful imagery could predominate over factual reasoning. Notably, the Zurich intellectuals connected the imaginative transport provided by such compelling imagery to the state of divine frenzy achieved by ancient prophets.[548]

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[546] See Torbruegge, 1968, 102. Torbruegge refers to Bodmer's 'Persönliche Anekdoten', Theodor Vetter (ed.), *Zürcher Taschenbuch auf das Jahr 1892*, 102. Bodmer's early and later writings reveal a consistent interest in using poetry's sublime properties – as Longinus identified them – for improving aesthetic taste, and personal prospect. For further information see Torbruegge, 1968, 101-103. Bodmer's theoretical relating of poetry and painting owed much to his awareness of Addison's 'Pleasures of the Imagination', from *Spectator* 411-421.

[547] The treatises' full title is *Von dem Einfluss und Gebrauche der Einbildungs-Krafft*, Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1727.

[548] In the *The Treatise on Einbildungskraft* the idea of poetic frenzy was illustrated by paralleling it with the inspiration of Longinus's Pythian priestess, *Treatise on Einbildungskraft*, 238-239, see

Here we can observe another potential influence on Fuseli's later interest in Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel *Prophets*. The intense imaginative engagement Bodmer and Breitinger associated with the sublime was only possible if the mind was trained in its achievement. Consequently, both men favoured the study of art, for art most completely engaged and developed the imagination. *The Treatise on Einbildungskraft*, while maintaining the alignment of poetry and painting Bodmer had earlier proposed in the *Discourse der Mahlern* (1721-23),[549] also emphasised how both arts employed images as means to challenge the verity of actual experience.

Considering the above overview of Bodmer and Breitinger's theory of the sublime, as it pertained to art and life, it is clear that their views clashed with academic thinking on the subject. Chiefly, the Zurich intellectuals considered that the most potent art – for them, poetry – could so powerfully, imaginatively engage a person, that it effectively replicated the characteristics of lived experience. Moreover, Bodmer and Breitinger, following Longinus's lead, understood that the imagination should be trained to identify and profitably interact with the most troubling creative works. Indeed, their tuition aimed to show how commanding, imaginatively conceived events could induce trance-like states. Such powerful situations could elevate one's thinking and, in turn, might prospectively enhance one's character. In combination elevated mind and character/soul led to personal betterment and, hopefully, social improvement. Thus, Bodmer and Breitinger's thinking was driven by particular ethical imperatives that focused on personal development, a factor also characterising the

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Torbruegge, 1968, 111-112. Locher, 1981, notes that such visionary qualities can also be equated with the Zwinglian interpretation of the preacher's persona, see 98 and 106.

[549] For more detail on Fuseli's awareness of the attitudes expressed in the *Discourse der Mahlern*, see Camilla Smith, 'Between Fantasy and Angst: Assessing the Subject and Meaning of Henry Fuseli's Late Pornographic Drawings, 1800-25', *Art History*, 33:3, 2010, 420-447, 431.

Carolinum's theological teachings. Contrasting with how academic aesthetics portrayed the sublime, the Zurich scholars thought that it was most clearly manifest in episodes characterised by wondrousness, darkness and terror. Consequently, Fuseli's schooling in the sublime insisted that art should stimulate intensely the imagination through its portrayal of disquieting phenomena, or situations. This emphasis helps to explain Fuseli's later predilection for uncommon, or otherworldly, themes and subjects.

According to Bodmer's *Critische Betrachtungen* (1741) the imagination's main purpose was 'the re-evoking of feelings and concepts which at one time arose from […] sense impressions'.[550] Bodmer's treatise noted how the imagination's dominion 'embraces not only the perceptible world, but also many other possible worlds which may be presented […] in living pictures.'[551] However, the artist's successful production of such imaginative possibilities relied on their careful selection, and integration, of chosen source materials and narrative episodes. Bodmer believed that Homer best exemplified this mode of artistry. Consequently, Bodmer thought that those artists whose work best conformed to the Homeric model should be considered as highly valued members of society because, through their work, they were promoting individual and cultural improvements.

Ostensibly, Bodmer conceived that his 'best artists' bequeathed works – touchstones - for the gradual improvement of their descendants rather than as a means of

[550] Torbruegge, 1968, 158. Torbruegge is paraphrasing the ideas contained in Bodmer's *Critische Betrachtungen über die poetischen Gemählde der Dichter*, Zurich, 1741.
[551] *Ibid*.

providing immediate aesthetic gratification for their contemporaries.[552] Art, as Bodmer understood it, ought to demonstrate the most elevated thinking of which humans were capable. Such thought took time to be best appreciated, and most profitably engaged with, for it was of a higher order than was conventional. Contemporary minds, Bodmer maintained, beyond those of a few notable individuals, were not so capable. Thus, Bodmer's conception of art can be acknowledged as being largely beyond the comprehension of the majority. However, he hoped that over time more people would aspire to intellectual enhancement and so be able to comprehend the qualities of the art he celebrated. Ultimately he felt that it was the duty of each subsequent generation to ensure that increasing numbers of people were capable of appreciating the thinking underpinning the greatest art. Those responsible for this development of perception, and mind, which was concerned with the comprehension of the most sublime art and of the uplifting vision of existence it provided, should be those persons having the greatest intellects and greatest souls. Sublime art was the key instrument for modifying human potential. It was in this context that Bodmer understood his pedagogic mission and within it the work of Homer and Milton. It is against this framework that Fuseli's creative thinking, and its realisation through his art, should be understood.

Bodmer, following Longinus's observations concerning how artists should select and compose their sources, also recommended the use of those 'mores, actions and objects that appear most strange, new and wondrous'.[553] These subjects should be selected only from 'the most splendid aspects', of perceivable 'objects, emotions,

[552] According to Torbruegge (160) Bodmer felt that German poets should be condemned for, 'depreciating the dignity of their art in following the corrupt taste of their times'.
[553] Torbruegge, 1968, 161.

inclinations and ideas'.[554] An artist working in this fashion effectively stripped their creative process of any unnecessary features and presented only those aspects most likely to evoke 'one vivid impression or effect on the mind'.[555] Bodmer's observations had direct effect on Fuseli's art theory. His words were ostensibly rekindled in Fuseli's third Academy Lecture when Fuseli assessed the sublime inventions of Homer and Michelangelo, for instance, he perceived that Homer's 'one forcible idea' was akin to, 'the principle of that divine series of frescoes [with which] Michelangelo adorned the […] Capella Sistina'.[556] In Bodmer's and Fuseli's thinking on art's characteristics sublimity was equated with the imaginative wonder believed to be evoked by intense and terrifying experiences, inspirations associated with the astonishment of the Longinian sublime.

Alongside Longinus's ideas on the sublime, Fuseli's education introduced associated concepts. Bodmer, 'a fervent admirer of English culture', also familiarised Fuseli with Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry*.[557] Besides Burke's treatise, Fuseli gained further insight into the sublime while working with Johann Sulzer on his *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste* in 1763, to which Fuseli contributed an article on the topic. This article, Petra Maisak informs us, again owed much to Longinus's ideas - it 'clearly followed the text of Pseudo-Longinus' - but it equally 'analysed the arguments of Quintilian, Shaftesbury and Burke'.[558] Therefore, by the early 1760s, Fuseli had

[554] *Ibid*., 162.
[555] *Ibid*.
[556] Lecture III, 420.
[557] Junod, 2003, 139. Besides Burke, Bodmer was also familiar with the Earl of Shaftesbury's work on aesthetics, a fact attested by, for example, Lawrence Marsden Price in *The Reception of English Literature in Germany*, New York and London, 1968.
[558] Pape and Burwick (eds.), *The Boydell Shakespeare Gallery*, Essen, 1996, 60.

absorbed wide-ranging conceptions of sublimity, and its attributes, which he could synthesise convincingly.

Many Fuseli scholars acknowledge that Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry* was the principal influence on Fuseli's conception of the sublime.[559] However, while Fuseli was aware of Burke's theory, it is more accurate to state (as have the above paragraphs) that Fuseli's conception of the sublime was largely conditioned by Longinus's ideas, as communicated by Bodmer. Contrasting with Longinus's understandings of the sublime, which emphasised how the mind was raised by unsettling experiences – 'For the mind is naturally elevated by the true sublime'[560] – Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry* sought 'a physiological explanation for our passions […] in the experience of the sublime'.[561] Effectively, Burke's treatise was a 'survey of the properties of things which we find by experience to influence those passions and […] by which those properties are capable of affecting the body and thus of exciting our passions'.[562] Moreover, unlike Longinus's theory of sublimity, the *Philosophical Enquiry* chiefly focused on how the sublime was manifest through natural phenomena rather than through artworks. Besides Longinus's concept of the sublime Fuseli was directly aware of another, more contemporary, treatise which emphasised the sublimity of the artistically fabricated. This was Lord Kames's *Elements of Criticism* which Fuseli read in 1764.[563] The influence of Kames's treatise on Fuseli,

[559] This view of Fuseli's art is commonplace and can be noted to affect more recent interpretations of Fuseli's art in, for example, David H. Solkin (ed.), *Art on the Line, R.A. Exhibitions at Somerset House 1780-1836*, New Haven, 2001, Chapter Six, Junod, 2003 and Myrone (ed.), 2006.
[560] Longinus, *On the Sublime*, 21, cited in Monk, 1960, 12.
[561] Vanessa L. Ryan, 'The Physiological Sublime: Burke's Critique of Reason', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 62:2, 2001, 265-79, 269.
[562] Edmund Burke, Preface to the first edition of the *Philosophical Enquiry*, London, 1757, 1.
[563] Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, 3 Vols., Edinburgh, 1762. Fuseli recorded his admiration for Kames's text in 1764, soon after its German publication.

and how its emphases intersected with those of Fuseli's Zurich education, has not been assessed previously.

Reference to *Elements of Criticism* can be found in Fuseli's third Academy Lecture (Invention) in a section where he appraised Quintilian's ideas, notably Quintilian's thinking on 'intuition into the sudden movements of nature [that are circumscribed] by the phrase of 'unpremeditated conceptions,' the reproduction of associated ideas'.[564] Fuseli's assessment of Quintilian's thinking related to the inventive process attributed to Homer especially, that 'power by which [Homer] contrived to connect his imaginary creation with the realities of nature and human passions' [565] – a further indication of Bodmer's influence on Fuseli's aesthetic interests. Fuseli was particularly attracted to Quintilian's explanation of 'what the Greeks call phantasies', which Fuseli proposed should be considered as 'that power by which the images of absent things are represented by the mind with the energy of objects moving before our eyes.'[566] Fuseli suggested that any artist basing their practice on this principle 'will be a master of the passions', for such imaginings 'so pursue us when our minds are in a state of rest […] or in a kind of waking dream' that they effectively became a surrogate of actual experience.[567] So powerful were this altered state's properties that, Fuseli noted, under its effect 'we seem to travel, to sail, to fight, to harangue in public […] with an air of reality.'[568] Fuseli interpreted the condition he was describing as a 'waking dream', a state which had strong parallels with Bodmer's appreciation of the most

[564] Fuseli, Lecture III, 412.
[565] *Ibid*., 410-11.
[566] *Ibid*., 412.
[567] *Ibid*.
[568] *Ibid*.

sublime art. The concept of 'waking dream', while associated with Quintilian, also featured prominently in Kames's *Elements of Criticism*.[569]

In Kames's treatise the 'waking dream' was connected to the related concept 'ideal presence' which Kames defined as 'like a dream, it vanisheth upon the first reflection of our present situation.'[570] Kames contrasted ideal presence with real presence stating that, 'real presence, on the contrary, vouched by eye-sight, commands our belief, not only during the direct perception, but in reflecting afterward upon the object'.[571] Kames's interpretation of ideal presence mirrors Bodmer and Breitinger's assessment of how the most sublime art, when appropriately imaginatively engaged with, effectively challenged the veracity of sentient experience and what it might impart. Common to both theoretical perspectives was a belief that artistic inventions assuming the properties of waking dreams could seduce audiences through their crafted artificiality. Reflecting this idea Kames proposed that 'ideal presence supplies the want of real presence; and in idea we perceive persons acting and suffering, precisely as in an original survey.'[572]

Additionally, Kames reinforced the degree to which ideal presence could challenge the verity of actual experience observing that, 'the distinctness of ideal presence […] approacheth sometimes to the distinctness of real presence'.[573] Key to the ideal

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[569] Kames's treatise was an eighteenth-century re-codification of a long-standing tradition concerning the role of the imagination in the interpretation of that which was deemed to be reality, and reality's relationship to reverie or dream. For example, the concept of 'waking dreams' had featured earlier in Plutarch's *Amatorius*, II, c.A.D.120. The term 'waking dream' appears a number of times in Kames's treatise, for example, 108, 124 (Edinburgh, first edition, 1762).
[570] Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, Edinburgh, Vol.I, first edition, 1762, 108.
[571] *Ibid*.
[572] *Ibid*., 111.
[573] *Ibid*., 112.

presence's function was the extent to which it engaged the experiencing subject's passions. Success on this count depended on the depth of illusion provided by the situations being artistically fabricated, for instance, the degree of imaginative transport which they induced. Kames, summarising this relationship between the human passions and the characteristics of the invented experience addressed to them, stated that the 'passions are never sensibly moved, till [the subject] be thrown into a kind of reverie; in which state, loosing consciousness of self […] he conceives every incident as passing in his presence, precisely as if he were an eye-witness.'[574] Again, the principles which Kames outlined are comparable with the Zurich scholars' interpretation of how sublime art allowed for experiences commensurate with the elevated insight attending the frenzy of prophetic utterance. Such visionary agitation is similar to that anticipated of the Zwinglian preacher who was believed to serve as the 'mouth and finger of God', something that Fuseli would have acknowledged being so ordained in 1761.[575]

Considered together Bodmer, Breitinger and Kames's views on sublime artistic invention would have provided Fuseli with a set of persuasive and mutually reinforcing principles, through which to inform his appreciations of art, the sublime, of himself, and their purposes. Indeed, the situations that Kames argued initiated waking dreams, and ideal presences, echo those artistic inventions which Fuseli celebrated. Examples of those circumstances that Kames believed met this criterion were 'the meeting of Hector and Andromache in the sixth book of the Iliad, or some

[574] *Ibid*.
[575] G. Locher, *Zwingli's Thought, New Perspectives*, 1981, 98. According to Michael H. Duffy ('Michelangelo and the Sublime in Romantic Art Criticism', 1995, 229), Fuseli also conceived of Michelangelo as comparably inspired, akin to the Hebrew prophets of the Old Testament (see also Fuseli, Lecture III, for example, 420-21).

of the passionate scenes in King Lear' situations which he contended provided conditions most likely to facilitate impassioned, imaginative engagements.[576] Actually, Kames argued that such fictive episodes provided 'an impression of reality not less distinct than that given by the death of Otho in the beautiful description of Tacitus'.[577] Therefore, for Kames, it made little difference 'whether the story [behind such inventions] be true or feigned', he proposed that invented incidents had the potential to match the intensity of absorption conventionally associated with comprehension of the actual.[578] Fuseli, in his third Academy Lecture, observed that Shakespeare's work commensurately evoked events. Fuseli considered that the Bard was 'the supreme master of the passions', a status enabling him to imbue his characters with particular 'power'.[579] Later in the same Lecture Fuseli associated Shakespeare's inventiveness with that of Michelangelo and Homer, further evidence of how the theories marking Fuseli's formal and informal educations, of the late 1750s and early 1760s, influenced his mature conceptualising of art.[580]

Kames, by comparing recorded historical events to those invented by notable writers, exposed how the two differed little as mediums capable of deeply engaging an audience. In truth Kames was interested in completely dissolving distinctions between the actual and the artistically fabricated. Again, his observations chime with the emphases of Fuseli's tuition. Bodmer was particularly attracted by Homer's use of a barrage of terrifying images and by his evocations of strong emotions; he felt that Homer's stories were capable of challenging the impact of actual events. In *Elements*

[576] Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, 114.
[577] *Ibid*.
[578] *Ibid*.
[579] Fuseli, Lecture III, 413.
[580] See Lecture III, 416-420.

of Criticism Kames appeared intent on similarly emphasising the superiority of the invented over the factual. Broaching this matter he asserted,

> To support the foregoing theory [that actual history and its creative re-presentation are alike] I add what I reckon a decisive argument. Upon examination it will be found, that with respect to this effect, genuine history commands our passions by means of ideal presence only; and therefore that with respect to this effect, genuine history stands upon the same footing with fable.[581]

As to whether the invented should have precedence over the actual Kames suggested, 'What effect either of them may have to raise our sympathy, depends on the vivacity of the ideas they raise; and with respect to that circumstance, fable is generally more successful than history.'[582] Kames, like Bodmer, clearly preferred fabulous representations because, in contrast to recorded history, they presented possibilities for magnified imaginative engagement through their more intensely compelling properties. In Bodmer's theory, the *Critische Abhandlung* and the *Critische Betrachtungen*, associating fabulous imagery with the great biblical and classical mythological narratives (in accord with Longinus's appraisals of the Homeric and Miltonic epics) served as the basis for connecting the wonderful (*das Wunderbare*) and the sublime.[583]

[581] Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, Part I, 115.
[582] *Ibid*., 116.
[583] For further information on this issue see Torbruegge, 1968, 163-167.

Kames and Bodmer's favouring of the affective conditions provided by fabulous artistic inventions was paralleled in Fuseli's art theory. Central to Fuseli's theoretical appraisal of the most appropriate artistic inventions was the stimulation of the passions, which were most suitably triggered by relating 'imaginary creation [to] the realities of nature and human passions'.[584] The 'imaginary creation' which Fuseli alluded to was best achieved by compounding 'materials heterogeneous and incompatible among themselves, but rendered plausible to our senses', an observation again echoing Kames's and Bodmer's appraisals of the most sublime inventions.[585]

Considering the examples of art through which Fuseli reinforced his *Lectures* it is again apparent that the form of affective reverie he highlighted was commensurate with that promoted by Bodmer and Kames. In Lecture III Fuseli appraised how the remarkable features characterising classical, and some more modern poetry, permitted the 'analogy which we discover between them and ourselves.'[586] Fuseli's assessment sheds interesting light on his view of 'artistic sensibility', while also revealing his debt to Bodmer's tuition. Fuseli infers that the pull of fabulous and affective subjects somehow addressed an innate human need, the wish to investigate and immerse the self in wondrous happenings so as to facilitate imaginative and intimate experiences. This relating of oneself and incident is reminiscent of how Zwinglianism characterised one's relationship to God.

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[584] Fuseli, Lecture III, 411.
[585] *Ibid*., 409.
[586] *Ibid*., 410. Developing this theme Fuseli announced, 'Their Scylla and the Portress of Hell, their daemons and our spectres, the shade of Patroclus and the ghost of Hamlet, their naiads, nymphs, and oreads, and our sylphs, gnomes, and fairies, their furies and our witches […] Their common origin was fancy, operating on the materials of nature, assisted by legendary tradition and the curiosity implanted in us of diving into the invisible.'

Zwinglianism proposed that a person's spiritual development depended on the extent to which they perceived God's mystery to be revealed through uncommon, yet troubling, situations. Fuseli, further considering such ideas in his third Lecture, focused on invented phenomena from classical and more modern traditions to imply that the innate need he had alluded to encompassed the chronicle of human existence. Moreover, Fuseli appears to suggest that the 'diving into the invisible' he highlighted allowed for the joining of oneself with the ineffable aspects of existence, the purpose of which was to achieve a heightened awareness. Fuseli's theorising, which considers the prospect of conjoining the self with the mysteries of life, reflects his Zwinglian background and recalls Bodmer's promotion of the most elevated, sublime artistic individuals. These, in the Homeric mould, were those individuals that Bodmer conceived of as the greatest minds and souls, those best placed to drive forward social/cultural developments through their discerning of connections between the past and present, the otherworldly and the actual. Arguably, Fuseli, by dealing with this matter in his *Lectures*, was reinforcing how he similarly conceived of himself, and was implying that others should aim to so appreciate themselves, as a sublime visionary individual, one concerned with the elevation of humankind. Significantly, as was revealed by this thesis's previous chapters, Fuseli's own finalised compositions and figure studies emphasised a blending of the earthly and supernatural in keeping with Bodmer's, and Zwingli's, perceptions of the relationship of oneself to the world. Alongside the evident esteem in which Fuseli, Bodmer, and indeed Kames, held inventions reliant on unusual constituents, there was a further theoretical strand that arguably attracted Fuseli to Kames's ideas, his assessment of theatrical representation.

Kames considered that theatricality was the 'most powerful' means of producing vibrant imaginative experiences - ideal presences.[587] He believed that theatrical depictions' strength resided in their ability to produce greater affective power than was possible through words alone. This potential was especially evident in the portrayal of action; as Kames observed 'words independent of action have the same power in a less degree'.[588] In particular, Kames thought that tragedy was the most affecting theatrical genre, especially when it was experienced in performance rather than read as a text.[589] The affective potential associated with directly experienced theatrical performance appears to have notably influenced Fuseli's interpretations of Shakespeare especially.[590] This was particularly so regarding tragedy.[591]

It is generally agreed that Fuseli's comprehension of Shakespeare performed was largely conditioned by David Garrick's acting style.[592] Specifically, scholars consider Fuseli to have been most interested in how Garrick evoked emotion and in how his characterisations imaginatively engaged theatre audiences. Garrick was deemed to

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[587] Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, Chapter II, 116.
[588] *Ibid*., 116-117.
[589] *Ibid*., 117; 'A good tragedy', Kames proposed, 'will extort tears in private, though not so forcibly as upon the stage.' Fuseli's comprehension of tragedy is examined in some detail by Andrei Pop in 'Henry Fuseli: Greek Tragedy and Cultural Pluralism', *The Art Bulletin*, 94:1, 2012, 78-99.
[590] This suggestion is reinforced by Petra Maisak's assessment of Fuseli's Shakespearean subjects, see 'Henry Fuseli - Shakespeare's Painter', in *The Boydell Shakespeare Gallery*, Pape and Burwick (eds.), Essen, 1996.
[591] Although Fuseli was acquainted with the text of Shakespeare's plays prior to his arrival in England in 1763 his experience of Shakespeare performed - as this thesis's previous chapter noted - originated in London's theatres. Unlike in England, Zurich's Cantonal authorities suppressed the performing arts. Plays most likely to be permitted in Switzerland had a strong religious focus. In London, in 1763, there were two official theatres, Covent Garden and Drury Lane, which besides providing visual spectacles, also served as a forum within which to consider, and possibly debate, socially relevant issues such as morality and justice.
[592] This opinion has been reinforced most recently by Andrei Pop in his article for *The Art Bulletin* (94:1, 2012, 78-99). It has also been forwarded by many other Fuseli scholars, for example, Antal, 1956, Tomory, 1972, Maisak, 1996, and Lentzsch (ed.), 2005. For more information on Garrick's acting style see, for instance, Cecil Price, *Theatre in the Age of Garrick*, Oxford, 1973, and Shearer West, *The Image of the Actor: Verbal and Visual Representation in the Age of Garrick and Kemble*, New York, 1991. The nature of the influence of Garrick's acting upon Fuseli's visual art was considered in this thesis's previous chapter.

be the 'master of the passions' and he was especially celebrated for his revitalisation of tragic acting, notably in roles such as Macbeth.[593] Fuseli's direct experience of Garrick's acting revealed to him new possibilities for the imaginative transformation of life into art which, to that point, Fuseli had conceived of mainly through poetry and the visual art with which he was familiar.[594] Yet, Bernhard von Waldkirch argues, Fuseli's experience of theatrical performance was significant otherwise.

Von Waldkirch emphases changes in the relationship between theatre audiences and staged scenes that took place post-1750.[595] He references Michael Fried's scholarship particularly what Fried terms the 'fiction of the non-existence of the beholder', which Fried illustrates with the example of an imagined theatrical scene performed as though behind a closed curtain.[596] In such circumstances actors would not address their audience, being fully absorbed in their own actions and interactions. Yet, Fried notes, this situation was paradoxical. The more the scene being performed appeared less theatrical, less acted, stronger was the imaginative effect produced. This observation can be linked to Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry*, and most particularly to the language Burke used when considering the relationship between tragedy and the sublime. Burke noted, 'The nearer [tragedy] approaches the reality, and the further it removes us from all idea of fiction, the more perfect is its power.'[597] As Kames had also proposed, a well conceived tragedy was most potent and sublime when re-presented theatrically. Considered together these assertions

[593] Lentzsch (ed.), 2005, 58. It was after viewing Garrick in this role that Fuseli produced one of his earliest drawings of a Shakespearean subject, *Garrick and Mrs Pritchard as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth after the Murder of Duncan* (1768).
[594] Fuseli's father, an artist and art historian, would have owned many such reproductions. For more information see Antal, 1956, 8, and Smith, 2008.
[595] See Lentzsch (ed.), 2005, 58-9. The change being referred to also influenced the relationship between beholder and two-dimensional visual art.
[596] Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality. Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot*, Los Angeles and London, 1980, Introduction.
[597] James T. Boulton, *Edmund Burke, A Philosophical Enquiry*, London, 1956, Section XV, 47.

arguably coloured substantially Fuseli's perceptions of the potential power and the necessary characteristics of the visual. Most particularly, he valued how the greatest aesthetic affect could be achieved through situations that were crafted to produce the highest degree of artifice, wherein eloquent human forms focused audience interest. Indeed, as the previous chapter revealed, Fuseli's Italian drawings featured such persuasive figures.

Garrick crafted his stage portrayals by synthesising natural and fictional qualities and this chimed with Longinus's appraisal of those characteristics that best exemplified sublimity. Moreover, Garrick's acting style was comparable to those depictive modes which Kames believed characterised his concept of ideal presence. The actual and fictional, when appropriately combined by actors, were capable of providing sublimely affective situations. This was a technique 'most significant [for the] metamorphosis of life into art'.[598] Fuseli noted such a quality on viewing Mary Anne Yates's performing Hermoine in London, in 1765. Writing to Salomon Dälliker, between 12 and 15 November of that year, Fuseli observed of Yates's acting how she made 'no insignificant leap, as from Nature into a portrait.'[599] The mode of artistry which Fuseli was noting implies that he recognised how theatrical depictions were able to conflate the familiar and the artistically fabricated. Comparably, as Kames had indicated through his notion of waking dream, and as Longinus had also maintained with regard to Homer's writing, making the improbable appear plausible was crucial for evoking sublimity. According to Kames, insufficient parity between an artwork's plausible and implausible features resulted in its more incredible aspects preventing

[598] Tomory, 1972, 15.
[599] *Ibid*.

the experiencing subject's most complete imaginative engagement. When this occurred, Kames contended, the representation's irregularities puzzled 'the judgement [consequently] Doubtful of its reality we immediately enter upon reflection, and discovering the cheat, lose all relish and concern.'[600] Kames's insistence on a unity between effect and purpose within artistic representations conformed to the directives concerning sublime artistry that Bodmer had presented to Fuseli; in turn, these Bodmer had derived from Longinus's assessment of Homer's inventiveness.

Each of these references made Fuseli aware that sublime and imaginatively affective situations served to transport audience comprehension beyond the everyday. To be most successful these affective incidents should be characterised by a wonderful and terrifying ambience, one communicated via a unified depictive mode. Fuseli had been instructed that this characteristic typified Homer's and Milton's writings, but it could also serve visual art if such objects were constructed to relay a commensurate 'poetic truth'. As indicated in this thesis's first chapter, Fuseli had noted how the effectiveness of pictorial composition relied on it having a correctness of purpose. Fuseli believed this quality to be comprised of three aspects, 'unity', 'propriety' and 'perspicuity'.[601] Notably, he identified these as art's 'moral elements', an observation attesting to connections between his art theory/practice, Bodmer's insistence that the highest art forms should function ethically, and the moral principles underlying Zwinglian theology.[602]

[600] Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, 1762, Vol. I, Chapter II, 124.
[601] See Fuseli's fifth Lecture, 460.
[602] For more on Fuseli's appraisal of composition's moral elements, see Lecture V. He also referred to the moral aspects of artistic invention in his third Lecture.

Fuseli's Zurich mentors believed that Homer, Shakespeare and Milton's impassioned depictions of sublime wonderment, especially as evoked by their supernatural themes, were highly principled, for these gave licence to employ terror as a device for instituting personal revelation. The Zurich scholars understood that this form of individual enhancement was produced by elevated perceptions which were induced by the astonishment and shock of sublime phenomena. Consequently, such profoundly affecting experiences could potentially enhance one's psychic faculties and assist the soul's advancement, an emphasis mirrored by Zwingli's concept of predestination.

Paralleling this thinking Kames had posited that the aesthetic experience provided by ideal presences – waking dreams – so agitated the passions that they, rather than one's reason, became the primary perceptive mode. These aroused passions effectively removed the experiencing subject outside of conventional awareness into a condition of reverie. Kames's waking dreams, commensurate with the types of artistry which Bodmer had presented to Fuseli, with Garrick's acting, and with the Zwinglian appreciation of the route to divinity, were best induced through the most affecting experiences, those which were terrifying, distressing, tragic, obscure, or astonishing. Consequently, Fuseli's perception of himself, and his artistic purpose, were indebted to a collection of ideas and influences which strongly contested academic discourses concerning artists and the visual. The affect of these received concepts on Fuseli were shown, in the previous chapter, to have shaped his understandings and visual re-makings of the human form. This chapter's final part

further considers Fuseli's drawings, noting how he crafted a particular depictive mode to relay the characteristics he associated with the sublime.

Part 3: Fuseli's processing of ideas on the sublime into imagery

This chapter's opening two parts have established a series of clear differences between how the sublime was conceived of by academic artists and by Fuseli. The most striking discrepancy between these ideas concerns the manner in which the sublime was associated with ethical action. In academic art theory the sublime was identified with images emphasising restraint, grace and greatness. These features were understood to indicate moral imperatives, and were believed to be identifiable as such by a, learned, contemporary audience. Such emphases conceptually aligned eighteenth-century visual art with the work of select classical and Renaissance artists through particular shared stylistic, formalistic and conceptual standards.

The following pages assess how Fuseli visually represented his perception of the sublime. While these appraisals make it apparent that Fuseli's sublime images are unlike academic artists', they also consider how his depictions of sublimity are particular in respect of those artists with whom he associated in Rome in the 1770s, the 'Fuseli circle'. These practitioners' graphic works are compared to Fuseli's drawings later in this part of the chapter.[603] These evaluations indicate that although

[603] A concise overview of the creative relationship Fuseli had with his fellow artists in the 1770s is given by Nancy L. Pressly in the introduction to her, *The Fuseli Circle in Rome – Early Romantic Art of the 1770s*, New Haven, 1979. A commensurate appraisal is given by a number of other scholars, perhaps most notably by Tomory (1972), and Myrone (2005).

neither Fuseli, nor his close contemporaries, subscribed to dominant conventions governing the sublime's representation, Fuseli's depiction of the sublime marks his work as distinct from his closest artistic peers. The particularity attributed to Fuseli's artistry here is significant for interpretations made of his drawings in the remainder of this thesis.

The themes and subjects that Fuseli chose for his work differ from those of academic art. Whereas academic artists were directed to seek out that which Reynolds's fourth Discourse identified as, 'some eminent instance of heroick action, or heroic suffering […] in which men are universally concerned [and sympathetic to]', Fuseli referred to tumultuous episodes found in, for example, the work of Homer, Shakespeare and Milton.[604] As indicated in this chapter's previous part these subjects were commensurate with those themes that Fuseli's Zurich education had identified as fitting mediums through which to evoke the sublime and its ethical potential. Fuseli's favouring of such powerfully evocative, yet disquieting representations (in the context of dominant art practice), is confirmed by the prevailing otherworldly strangeness characterising, for instance, *Teiresias Drinks the Sacrificial Blood* (1774-78) (Fig. 21), *The Witches Show Macbeth Banquo's Descendants* (1773-79) (Fig. 24), and *Satan Starts from the Touch of Ithuriel's Lance* (1776) (Fig. 65). Moreover, Fuseli emphasised the same foci when using other source materials, for example, Dante for *The Thieves' Punishment* (1772) (Fig. 66) and *The Soul of Buonconte da Montefeltro Is Carried up to Heaven by an Angel, his Body is Cast into Hell by a Devil* (c.1774) (Fig. 67), in which, respectively, Fuseli has striven to articulate the corporeal and

[604] Reynolds, Discourse IV, 55-56.

temporal oddness of ‘being in’ hell, and has crafted a depiction of space to connote the theme of spiritual conflict. He also referenced the Bible for *Samuel Appears to Saul in the Presence of the Witch of Endor* (1777) (Fig. 68) which is another example of his concern with visually colliding depictions of the earthly and unearthly. In all these images Fuseli portrays figure types and episodes that might, as Longinus had inferred, encourage one to strike out imaginatively ‘into the realm of the remarkable or wondrous.’[605]

Regardless of their themes Fuseli’s images possess common features. All have compressed, irregular compositions in which dramatic figures are placed close to each other, and/or buffeting the picture’s extremities. These figures derive from Fuseli’s visual experiments into the possibilities of expressive human forms assessed in the previous chapter. Fuseli’s pictures oppose dominant art practice which, as the thesis’s opening chapter made clear, decreed that an image’s import should be manifested via concisely legible compositions which conformed to accepted spatial and depictive conventions. In each of his drawings Fuseli has communicated his chosen themes’ potent atmospheres through powerful extremes of light and shade. This ambience is most frequently realised with ink wash, a medium largely overlooked by academic artists. Fuseli’s use of harsh illumination, often suggesting night rather than day, chimes with Bodmer’s advice to follow Longinus’s precept that the greatest degrees of sublimity, and terror, were best achieved by relaying wondrous subjects through the mysterious properties of darkness. Besides Longinus, Edmund Burke had noted a similar connection between darkness, sublimity and

[605] Torbruegge, 1968, 94.

terror; Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry* devoted several sections to the ways in which darkness was terrifying.[606]

Fuseli's reinforcing of his drawings' potent illumination affects the relative positioning, and the visual relationships, of the elements that each contains. It is notable how he has used pen to outline and reinforce the contours of the forms he has depicted, thereby producing flowing unified arrangements. Assisting this design strategy Fuseli has chosen certain figure types to emphasise each image's particular ambience. For instance, in *The Thieves' Punishment* (Fig. 66), a subject requiring an evocation of passion best conveyed through distinctive animate and contemplative figure types, Fuseli has combined the more introspective forms of Michelangelo's *Prophets* (for example, Fig. 56), especially for Dante's recoiling body, with corporeal, writhing figures, reminiscent of those he selected from the antique artefacts available to him.[607] Such a purposeful colliding of contrasting expressive visual registers provides Fuseli's compositions with a greater pictorial tension and, consequently, an enhanced prospect for connoting the sublime.

Moreover, Fuseli, in his drawings, does not use perspective, in his images separate elements apparently compete for visual prominence. Consequently, the perceivable pictorial space within his drawings is diminished. Often, Fuseli's distributions of light and shade coupled with his differentiating between figures by size rather than by

[606] See, for example, Part IV, Sections XV-XIX. As Andrew Ashfield and Peter de Bolla note, the 'Longinian tradition repeatedly informs the [British, eighteenth-century] discourse on the sublime', *The Sublime, A Reader in British Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theory*, Cambridge, 1996, 11.
[607] This visual strategy can be discerned in other of the above listed pictures. A similar mixing of contrasting figure types features in many of Fuseli's compositions. In *The Thieves' Punishment* Fuseli depicts the events Dante describes taking place in the seventh pit of the eighth circle of Hell, the thieves' loss of identity; their physical selves are transformed ('stolen') by a multitude of snake bites.

scale signal these figures' relative importance.[608] Thus, powerful lighting effects, combined with disconcerting visual arrangements, results in unorthodox, unsettling images. Fuseli's use of particular graphic strategies means that his drawings' forms seem to advance towards the viewer, rather than these being contained within a completely stable compositional framework. Consequently, one's viewing of these images, according to conventional standards, becomes less comfortable. In effect, Fuseli's artistry produces a subject/object relationship in which pre-eminence is given to the bombardment of disquieting elements characterising the drawn object.

Fuseli's Zurich education had presented a theoretical context paralleling his image construction. He had been made aware of Longinus's appraisal of Homer's literary sublimity, especially the degree to which Homer was noted to have used carefully conceived poetic strategies to magnify his work's affectivity. Bodmer had noted for Fuseli, and his fellow students, that Homer's poetry was successful and most sublime because it evoked one vivid effect or impression for the mind through the barrage of disconcerting imagery which Homer deployed. Fuseli had encountered a similar argument when reading Kames's *Elements of Criticism*.[609]

As noted in this chapter's previous part, Fuseli absorbed Bodmer's and Longinus's scholarship, rephrasing their observations in his Academy *Lectures*. In Lecture III, Fuseli indicated how, besides Homer, Michelangelo had employed a similarly

[608] Fuseli's use of size, rather than scale, to show the relative importance of figures within a composition, was an age-old method largely discarded by his academic contemporaries.
[609] Kames's notion of the waking dream/ideal presence, induced by the assiduously crafted artwork, was commensurate with the emphases of Bodmer's teaching.

sublime inventive method in his Sistine Chapel frescoes.[610] In Lecture V, Fuseli observed how an image's visual breadth, 'makes a whole so predominate over the parts as to excite the idea of uninterrupted unity [for by this] the artist puts us into immediate possession of the whole'.[611] Fuseli recognised that an image's rhythmic energies and tensions should be considered carefully in order to produce an elemental and sublime experience. Above, this creative strategy was identified in the way that Fuseli peopled his compositions with contrasting figure types. Further visual demonstrations of Fuseli's appreciation of this creative process are numerous, but are perhaps most convincingly conveyed in, for example, *The Witches Show Macbeth Banquo's Descendants* (1773-79) (Fig. 24) and *Macbeth and the Armed Head* (c.1774) (Fig. 69), which both show Fuseli's skilled uses of visual design, figure types and tonal effects in order to explore these subjects' connotative potentials. Meanwhile, *Dante and Virgil on the Ice of Cocytus* (1774) (Fig. 70), and *Satan Starts from the Touch of Ithuriel's Lance* (1776) (Fig. 65) both show Fuseli's interest in maximising these themes' unsettling properties, through his use of visually intense compositions.

Fuseli's applications of ink wash and use of pen outlining in his drawings can also be conceived as commensurate with ideas on sublimity originating at the Carolinum. Compared to the academic visual style Fuseli's drawings apparently lack linear refinement. This can be seen in, for example, *Ugolino and his Sons Starving in the Tower* (1774-78) (Fig. 71), *Odysseus before Teiresias in Hades* (c.1776-77) (Fig. 22) and *Satan and Death Separated by Sin* (1776) (Fig. 72). Such graphic inelegance,

[610] See Fuseli, Lecture III, 420-421.
[611] See Lecture III, 420 and Lecture V, 465-66.

when considered in terms of dominant visual conventions, could confirm a drawing's extreme nature.[612] Matthew Pilkington, writing on drawing in the *Gentleman's and Connoisseur's Dictionary of Painters*, observed how unorthodox draughtsmanship, as in Fuseli's work, could 'signify any thing that exceeds'.[613] Commensurately, Fuseli, through his education, arguably knew that such imperfection could actually signify sublimity. Longinus, in Chapter XXXIII of *On the Sublime*, had observed that 'the Sublime with some Faults is better than what is correct and faultless without being Sublime'.[614]

The extra-ordinary nature of Fuseli's graphic methods is further revealed in those drawings of the human form which he made in Italy in collaboration with Thomas Banks. These 'five-point' drawings (Fig. 73), in which figures were constructed from a starting point of five arbitrarily placed dots on a sheet of paper, to show the possible positions of feet, hands and head, are interpretable as another means which Fuseli employed to visually reinforce his idea of the sublime. Contrary to academic advice on drawing the human body, which directed the artist to carefully study nature and then to idealise their observations, the five-point drawings feature invented forms substantially divorced from the constraints of actuality. Moreover, each of these drawn figures appears pinned to the page, either by suggested bonds or through additions that Fuseli made to certain of these drawings to reinforce the figure's entrapment. In one study Fuseli has chained the figure and drawn an eagle's head to suggest the terrible experience of Prometheus. Thus, this drawing, and the five-point

[612] Evidence that contemporary critics thought Fuseli's work to be visually extreme is provided by a press review of his drawing, *The Death of Cardinal Beaufort*, submitted to the 1774 R.A. Exhibition. See Myrone, 2005, 171, for details.
[613] Pilkington, *Gentleman's and Connoisseur's Dictionary of Painters*, London, 1770, xv.
[614] William Smith, *Dionysius Longinus On the Sublime*, London, 1739, 79.

activity per se, foregrounds a 'dialectical relationship'[615] between themes of freedom and constraint, an emphasis which is relatable to Bodmer's presentation of the sublime as an experience both attractive, and (by conventional standards) repellent.

Fuseli's five-point drawings of the constrained, yet prospectively releasable human body, also remind of Bodmer's optimism regarding how the sublime could lead to the unshackling and development of human perceptions and understandings. As noted, a commensurate emphasis characterised Fuseli's ecclesiastical studies. The figure types resulting from the five-point process, and arguably Bodmer's hope for humankind, also appear in/underscore a number of Fuseli's more finalised works which suggests that his art functioned to reflect on the human condition through conventions that he understood to be connected with the sublime. A number of Fuseli's drawings feature such figures, as opposed to those appropriated from classical or Renaissance art, suggesting that he aimed to magnify these works' connotative potentials beyond those achievable through use of a more standard 'visual language'. Examples of such unorthodox figures can be found in *The Thieves' Punishment* (1772) (Fig. 66), *The Mad House* (1772) (Fig. 74), *The Captured Duke of York is Crowned by Queen Margaret with a Paper Crown* (1772) (Fig. 75), *The Soul of Buonconte da Montefeltro Is Carried up to Heaven by an Angel, his Body Is Cast into Hell by a Devil* (c.1774) (Fig. 67), and *Teiresias Drinks the Sacrificial Blood* (1774-78) (Fig. 21).[616]

[615] Werner Hofmann, on the five-point drawings, in *Henry Fuseli*, London, 1975, 32.
[616] Such contorted figures also feature in a number of images Fuseli made after leaving Italy, for example, *Thetis Mourning the Body of Achilles* (1780), *Queen Catherine's Dream* (1781-83), *Satan Bursts from Chaos* (1794-96), *Achilles Grasps the Shade of Patroclus* (1803 and c.1810), *Siegfried Overcomes Alberich* (1805), and *Dante and Virgil Mounting Geryon* (1811).

Considered together the various aspects of Fuseli's drawings, his use of extreme illumination, his choice of drawing media and graphic strategies, his emphasising of an image's rhythmic energies and tensions over compositional straightforwardness, and his expressive figures, demonstrate how his art practice differed from that employed conventionally. Moreover, when viewed together, the constituent parts of Fuseli's drawings present a unified and consistent visual effect. Indeed, considered collectively, these separate elements function as a compelling device for relaying Fuseli's conception of art's purpose. During this, and the previous chapters of this thesis, attention has been given to how Fuseli's practice deviated from academic art making. Yet, his graphic processing of the sublime also differed from the way his (largely) un-academic contemporaries depicted the concept. The remainder of this chapter indicates Fuseli's artistic difference (in this respect) to these contemporaries, his 'Roman circle', by assessing examples of Alexander Runciman's, Tobias Sergel's, James Jefferys' and George Romney's drawings.[617]

Arriving in Rome, by May 1770 Fuseli became acquainted with the painter Alexander Runciman and the sculptor Tobias Sergel who apparently already knew each other.[618] While Sergel has been credited as a contemporary artistic influence on Fuseli during the 1770s,[619] Fuseli referenced aspects of both Sergel's and Runciman's artworks early in his Italian period. For instance, Fuseli refined his use of

[617] Besides these artists there were a number of others with whom Fuseli is noted to have been in contact. Most prominent among them were Nicolai Abildgaard, John Brown, James Durno, Prince Hoare, Ozias Humphry, James Northcote and Henry Tresham.
[618] For discussion of this relationship see, for example, Nancy L. Pressly, 1979, 7. Fuseli was much less experienced as an artist, or in the art world, than either Runciman or Sergel; in 1771 he indicated his lesser artistic status by noting that he believed Runciman to be 'the best painter of us in Rome', Fuseli, letter to Mary Moser, April 27, 1771, in Knowles, *The Life and Writings of Henry Fuseli*, London, 1831, Vol. I, 37-38.
[619] Nancy L. Pressly (1979, viii), notes that it was Sergel who 'helped to structure Fuseli's first months of study [in Italy]'.

ink wash in the manner of Sergel's drawings, and based two of his compositions around Sergel's depictions of the human form. The figure of St. Paul, in Fuseli's *The Conversion of St. Paul* (1770), (Fig. 76 Top), is derived from Sergel's clay model of a *Faun* (1769) (Fig. 76 Bottom), while Fuseli's drawing *The Death of Ophelia* (1770-78) (Fig. 77) owes much to the pose and the graphic style of Sergel's drawing *Water Nymph* (Fig. 78). Additionally, Sergel's sculptural appreciation of composition apparently influenced Fuseli's figure arrangements.[620]

As for Runciman, Fuseli is acknowledged to have appreciated his overstated drawing style and interest in chiaroscuro.[621] Fuseli's drawing *Antigone and Polynices* (1770) (Fig. 79) shows him mimicking Runciman's favoured intricate pen and ink hatching technique. Moreover, both artists shared an interest in wide-ranging subject matters, Homer, the Bible, Shakespeare and Spencer, especially these sources' disturbing aspects. Yet, although Fuseli begun his Italian sojourn as 'artistically junior' to both Runciman and Sergel, by 1773 he was acknowledged as foremost among the Rome circle; in July of that year Thomas Banks announced that 'Fuseli cuts the greatest figure.'[622] Banks's observation was largely founded on Fuseli's growing reputation for choice of affecting subject matter and his dramatically charged graphic style. Although both Runciman and Sergel used similar themes and visual modes, as did many younger artists in Italy at that time, it was Fuseli's representations of tumultuous and terrifying scenes, the sublime made visual, which were recognised as

[620] Evidence for this claim can be detected in Fuseli's later Roman drawing style, for example, in *Satan Starts from the Touch of Ithuriel's Spear* (1776).
[621] The influence of Runciman's visual style on Fuseli's art is indicated by both Tomory and Nancy L. Pressly.
[622] Letter to Nathaniel Smith, July 31, 1773, published in C.F. Bell (ed.), *Annals of Thomas Banks*, Cambridge, 1938, 16.

being the most potent. Fuseli's appreciation of the sublime was arguably decisive for his and his art's elevated status.

In comparison to Alexander Runciman's art Fuseli's depictions of the sublime were particularly intense. Whereas Fuseli had been schooled in Longinian sublimity, notably as manifest in the writings of Homer, Shakespeare and Milton, Runciman's interest in the sublime centred on the poems of the legendary Gaelic poet Ossian.[623] It was Ossian that Runciman selected as the subject for his commission to decorate Sir James Clerk's new house on his family's estate at Penicuik, south of Edinburgh.[624] Runciman's images after the Ossianic legends, for example, *Cormar Attacking the Spirit of the Waters* (c.1773) (Fig. 80) and *Fingal finding Con-ban-Carglâ* (c.1773) (Fig. 81), feature what Martin Myrone describes as a tendency for 'an almost brutal deployment of heavy hatching and cross-hatching [and] rather abrupt outline'.[625] Such graphic mannerisms recall Salvator Rosa's art which, in the period, was noted for its 'savage and uncultivated nature'.[626] Myrone's assessment of Runciman's artistry parallels Edmund Burke's evocations of sublimity in his *Philosophical Enquiry*. Burke, for instance, noted that the sublime was best produced by 'the effects of a rugged and broken surface', rather than by things 'smooth and polished.'[627] Hugh Blair's *A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian* (1763) noted

[623] The translations of Ossian's work had been circulated by aspiring Scottish poet James Macpherson in 1759, and were published under the title *Fragments of Ancient Poetry Collected in the Highlands of Scotland and Translated from the Gaelic and Erse Languages*, in 1760. Two subsequent collections of this material followed, *Fingal: An ancient Epic in Six Books* (1761) and *Temora: an Ancient Epic in Eight Books* (1763). A collected *Works of Ossian* appeared in 1765. The various editions of these poems were immensely popular in Britain and abroad.
[624] Clerk commissioned Runciman, and his younger brother John, to undertake this work. Initially, the Penicuik project was to have been a mural scheme, with images derived from the *Iliad*.
[625] Myrone, 2005, 149.
[626] *Ibid*.
[627] James T. Boulton (ed.), *The Philosophical Enquiry*, 1958, Section VII, 72.

correspondences between a Burkean interpretation of the sublime and Ossian's poetry. In particular, Blair emphasised how Ossian's verse was characterised by 'thunder and lightening [and was] perfectly consistent with a certain noble disorder.'[628]

Yet, although commentators on Ossian's poetry, and Runciman's drawn responses to it, emphasised the appropriateness of both men's representations of the sublime, Walter Ross, for example, noted how Runciman's images had a 'wildness' and 'blaze of light […] conceived in the very spirit of the bard himself', there was a suspicion that theirs' was a bogus sublimity.[629] In 1783 James Barry received an anonymous letter deploring the developed aesthetic taste for the false sublime. This unknown correspondent claimed that such fascination with false sublimity weakened aesthetic standards, a deterioration that was attributed to 'those miserable rhapsodies by Macpherson under the name of Ossian', which had come to be perceived to represent 'true taste and sublimity' due to the 'interested prejudices [and] credulous ignorance' of the public.[630] Barry's correspondent, in common with Fuseli's appreciation of the most sublime subjects, for example, the Homeric and Miltonic epics, proposed that a more correct conception of the sublime, as portrayed by Homer, would reform taste, for this 'true sublime is always easy [it] consists more in the manner than the subject'.[631] As this thesis has noted previously, Fuseli's comprehension of the human form, and of the power of visual arrangements, was grounded in a commensurate acknowledgement that certain graphic

[628] Blair, *A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian, the Son of Fingal*, London, 1763, 394-396.
[629] Walter Ross, *A Description of the Paintings in the Hall of Ossian at Pennycuik near Edinburgh*, Edinburgh, 1773, 8-10, cited Myrone, 2005, 156.
[630] Letter contained in James Barry, *Works*, London, 1809, I. 263-267, cited Monk, 1960, 189.
[631] *Ibid*.

media/techniques could produce stirring depictions, rather than such visual stimulation being reliant upon one's choices of unconventional subject matters.[632] So considered, Fuseli was using various drawing processes to convey the latent affective possibilities – the sublimity - of his (wide-ranging) subjects. Conversely, Runciman's Ossian images featured an 'almost brutal'[633] application of media which, when combined with his curiously articulated figures, suggests that he attempted to represent the sublime through a markedly aggressive graphic technique and, significantly, via an unusually depicted and particular subject.

Although Runciman, like Fuseli, used marked applications of light and shade to emphasise his images' turbulence, Runciman did not most forcefully increase his figures' impact through use of compositional features. Although the backgrounds of Fuseli's drawings were often minimal, each served to develop the sublime nuances of the depicted scene. For example, although both *Ugolino and his Sons Starving to Death in the Tower* (1774) (Fig. 71) and *Lady Macbeth Sleepwalking* (c.1775-76) (Fig. 17), two notable examples of Fuseli's use of relatively empty backgrounds, possess few recognisable background features, in these pictures he uses the space around the depicted figures to strengthen each image's sublimity. Fuseli, setting his figures against heavily darkened or oddly divided picture spaces, employs media and composition to emphasise the silent torment, and psychological anxiety, which he conceived these subjects to require. These themes were commensurate with how the sublime had been communicated to Fuseli during his schooling in Longinus, epic

[632] In this thesis's previous chapter, especially, many references were made to how Fuseli selected source materials which reflected academic artists' choices of visual references. However, Fuseli's use of drawing and media emphasise alternate aspects of these sources and suggests their increased connotative potentials.
[633] Myrone, 2005, 149.

literature and theology. Thus, these drawings, although derived from different sources, are made to conform to a consistent idea of the sublime (as Fuseli conceived of it), through his judicious use of a corresponding visual manner.

By contrast, Runciman's Ossian subjects, *The Death of Oscar* (c.1772) (Fig. 82) and *Cormar Attacking the Spirit of the Waters* (c.1773) (Fig. 80), seem focused on the subject being depicted rather than on the manner of the depiction. As noted above, Runciman conceived of Ossian in terms of the physical properties that Burke had associated with the sublime in nature.[634] When drawing for his Ossian project, Runciman maintained this Burkean connection. Runciman's drawings restrict attention to the charged physicality of his figures. Where he uses background features these correspond to Burke's notion of sublime nature, an example being the foaming cataract in *Cormar Attacking the Spirit of the Waters*. Therefore, Runciman's depiction of the sublime was principally concerned with communicating sublimity as a direct visual experience predicated on the representation of physical properties. Walter Ross noted this intensified materiality in Runciman's Ossian imagery observing how, in *Cairbar Murders Cormac* (c.1772), the figure of Cairbar was thought to be terrifying because of 'The bold contour and high swelling muscles [which were] wonderfully heightened'.[635] This assessment of the physicality of Runciman's figures might be applied to those Fuseli depicted. Yet, Ross's observation resonates strongly with how Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry* assessed the sublime. Burke's treatise, Vanessa L. Ryan observes, was 'remarkable for its emphasis on the physiological aspects of experience', rather than its stressing of how

[634] Burke, in contrast to Longinus, understood sublimity as largely manifest in pronouncedly irregular, or gross, nature rather than in art.
[635] Ross, *Description*, 1773, 39, cited Myrone, 2005, 158.

the sublime affected the mind, the emphasis of Longinus's concept of sublimity, through which Fuseli was schooled in particular.[636]

Vanessa L. Ryan also contends that Burke's theoretical standpoint led 'him to minimise mental activity [which breaks with] a well established assumption that the sublime is allied with an elevation of the mind'; thus, Burke's ideas departed from Longinus's appreciation of sublimity.[637] Indeed, Burke indicated this departure stating how 'the nature of my subject […] leads me out of the common track of discourse', a discourse through which Fuseli had been taught that the sublime provided key experiences intended to heighten human perceptions and understandings .[638] The differences between Fuseli's and Runciman's conceptions of the sublime are further revealed by connecting Burke's stated aim for his treatise with the visual qualities that Walter Ross deduced critically from Runciman's Ossian pictures.

Ross noted how Runciman's Ossian images centred on physiognomically pronounced, and corporeally charged, bodies. For example, Ross, assessing Runciman's *Death of Oscar* (c.1772), observed how the character of Fingal was 'distinguished by the grandeur of his deportment [his] expression is noble', while a Culdee (the name given to the original Scottish Christians) viewed Oscar 'with a mixture of pity and horror'.[639] Ross's appraisals signal the degree to which Runciman's mode of representation, while unusually (Burkeanly) physical, could be

[636] Vanessa L. Ryan, 'The Physiological Sublime: Burke's Critique of Reason', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 62:2, 2001, 265-279, 269.
[637] *Ibid.,* 270.
[638] James T. Boulton (ed.), *A Philosophical Enquiry*, 36. Vanessa L. Ryan, 2001, 272, notes how Burke's theory ostensibly rejected the 'long tradition in which the sublime had been allied with mental elevation'.
[639] Ross, *Description*, 28-29, cited Myrone, 2005, 158.

interpreted through relatively straightforward, and commonly understood visual conventions, for example, how physiognomic traits aided the comprehension of narrative sense.[640] In this respect, Runciman's picture encouraged viewers to adopt recognised ways of seeing and thinking.

The emphases of Ross's interpretation contrasted with those of a London critic who saw Fuseli's drawing *The Death of Cardinal Beaufort* (1772) (Fig. 11) at the Royal Academy.[641] Fuseli's picture was noted to possess a range of associated qualities, the 'Extravagance of the Ideas, Wildness in the Expression […] the Violence in the Actions of his Figures; the Light and Shadow […] disposed in broad Masses'.[642] Additionally, this critic indicated that Fuseli had produced a '*tout ensemble* [critic's emphasis]' from his excessive, as they were perceived, visual elements; Fuseli's chosen visual components were judged to coalesce his drawing was 'well composed'.[643] This critical appraisal confirms that while Fuseli was perceived as re-working certain accepted visual principles (for instance, how a pictorial composition might be conceived of), it reinforced the fact that Fuseli's image, as a whole, was seen as a turbulent – sublime - visual experience; it was wild, violent, expressively charged, and lit dramatically. These qualities conflicted with both viewers' expectations of exhibited art and associated modes of visual interpretation.[644] Notably, the London critic emphasised the total visual effect of Fuseli's drawing

[640] In *Portraiture* (London,1997, 38) Richard Brilliant notes how 'Physiognomics', while a pseudo-science derived from the Aristotelian tradition, was promoted during the later eighteenth century as a verifiable means for assessing human disposition by, among others, Fuseli's close friend Johann Lavater in his *Physiognomische Fragmente* (1775-8).
[641] Fuseli submitted this drawing to the 1774 R.A. Exhibition.
[642] *Public Advertiser*, Tuesday 3 May, 1774, issue 13013.
[643] *Ibid*.
[644] For more detail on this interpretation of conventional visual forms, see this thesis's opening chapter.

rather than focusing on how its meaning could be deduced via particular, and understood, depictive schema. Thus, *The Death of Cardinal Beaufort* was noted to conflict with commonplace understandings of art. This assertion seems to reinforce the likelihood that Fuseli's art-making was conditioned by an unorthodox conception of art's characteristics and function. Arguably, he conceived of visual art as a means for expanding the mind by challenging what was believed known about human experience in keeping with how the sublime had been defined in his schooling.[645] Therefore, Fuseli's depiction of the sublime was distinct from Runciman's Burkean, physiologically focused, understanding and representation of the concept. The differences between Fuseli's and Runciman's portrayals of the sublime are also evident in the work of other members of Fuseli's Roman circle, that of Tobias Sergel, James Jefferys and George Romney.

Like Runciman, each of these artists focuses attention on the depicted human body rather than on developing the totality of visual effect noted in Fuseli's work. Sergel, being a sculptor, understandably concentrates on the human body's physicality, for example, in the statues *Mars and Venus* (1770) (Fig. 83) and *Othryades the Spartan Dying* (c.1778) (Fig. 84). Yet, Sergel's drawings of the body recall Runciman's. Sergel's *An Abduction* (1772-76) (Fig. 85) and *Achilles Comforted by a Young Woman* (1775-76) (Fig. 86), besides being powerfully evocative subjects, are also forcefully and violently drawn. Like Runciman's *Cormar Attacking the Spirit of the Waters* and *Fingal finding Con-ban-Carglâ*, Sergel has drawn in an insistent and

[645] The perception altering, sublime experience, inferred through Fuseli's pictures, should be noted as dependent on his interrelating of all parts of a design, reliant on his combined deployment of extremes of illumination, choice of graphic strategies, emphasis on an image's compositional energies, and depiction of figures.

agitated manner which maximises his themes' alarming aspects. The immediacy of Sergel's and Runciman's depictions chimes with Burke's appraisal of how sudden, or unexpected, occurrences intensified the sublime's affect. Burke observed that such happenings caused 'The attention [to be] roused […] and the faculties driven forward [as if] on their guard.'[646]

By comparison, Fuseli's drawings of the body are notably less aggressively realised. His mark-making shows the human form's articulations while also indicating how these allowed the body to fit into his pictorial design's compositional structures. Examples of this process can be seen in *The Witches Show Macbeth Banquo's Descendants* (1773-79) (Fig. 24), *Macbeth and Lady Macbeth* (1774) (Fig. 87) and *Oedipus Cursing his son Polynices* (1777) (Fig. 88). Moreover, when drawing single or paired figures, Fuseli demonstrates an awareness of how the body could function as a resolved composed form in its own right, examples being *Nude Study in Reverse after the Statue of the Wounded Gladiator* (1770-78) (Fig. 35), *A Sibyl* (1771) (Fig. 58) and *Satyr and Boy* (1775) (Fig. 36). Further differences between Fuseli's representations of the body, especially how he used it in order to connote sublimity, and those of his Roman circle are evident in James Jefferys' and George Romney's artworks.

Both of these artists show an interest in the exaggerated human form.[647] Yet they, as had Runciman, largely chose to overlook how compositional context might enhance the depicted figure. This is most clear with Jefferys' work in which the bodies

[646] James T. Boulton (ed.), 1958, 83.
[647] See Nancy L. Pressly, 1979, Introduction, for more information regarding Fuseli's influence on these artists.

depicted, usually gigantic in form and contorted in nature, almost completely fill the available picture space, for instance, those in *Figures in a Rocky Landscape* (Fig. 89) and *Drawing of a Prison Scene* (Fig. 90) (both c.1779). While both of these subjects suggest terrible themes, if not through depicted episode then through Jefferys' unnaturally articulated figures, Jefferys' frequently crude and exaggerated draughtsmanship can be interpreted as pertaining to Burke's view of how physical imperfection could evoke the sublime. Burke had proposed that ugliness was 'consistent enough with an idea of the sublime', especially when, as in Jefferys' pictures, it was 'united with such qualities as excite a strong terror.'[648] As with Runciman's and Sergel's art, Jefferys' mode of representation appears predicated on evoking physical responses to phenomena. Jefferys, in common with these artists, chooses subject matter to achieve immediacy of effect mainly through horrific images calculated to impress ideas of pain and danger. These themes Burke had presented as 'the most powerful of all passions', for they frequently 'concern self-preservation'.[649] The horror caused by sensations of pain and danger were particularly sublime because, Burke noted, they were 'productive of the strongest emotion' that was capable of being felt.[650]

George Romney's depictions of terrible themes, for example, *The Ghost of Darius Appearing to Atossa* (c.1777-79) (Fig. 91) and *Prometheus Bound* (two versions c.1779-80) (Fig. 92a-b), reveal something of Fuseli's influence on his appreciation of the figure within a composition. However, Romney's comprehension of sublime

[648] James T. Boulton (ed.), 1958, 119.
[649] *Ibid*., 38.
[650] *Ibid*., 39.

subjects tallies with that of his other Roman contemporaries.[651] Notably, Romney considered both *The Ghost of Darius Appearing to Atossa* and *Prometheus Bound* to be part of his concerted efforts, 'to create a body of work that would represent him as a sublime artist'.[652] Thus, what he depicted he believed to appropriately connote the sublime.

In the Darius and Prometheus drawings Romney, like Fuseli, has attended to how figures might be arranged so as to magnify the depicted scene's potential terror. In these pictures Romney has grouped figures to direct attention on the principal action, the appearance of Darius's ghost, and Prometheus's torment. Yet, beyond this compositional strategy, Romney's images do not relay the intensity of sublime effects noted in Fuseli's work. Romney, rather than developing his figure arrangements through truly evocative backgrounds, provides *The Ghost of Darius* with a vague suggestion of architecture and with spectral smoke, while neither version of *Prometheus Bound* possesses telling backdrops. Furthermore, Romney does not explore the use of pronounced tone to heighten the psychological potentials of any of these drawings. This Fuseli had done, for instance, in *Lady Macbeth Sleepwalking* (Fig. 17) which is an image with comparatively little actual background. While Romney may have imitated aspects of Fuseli's designs, his depictions of the human form more closely followed the efforts of Runciman, Sergel and Jefferys.

In *Prometheus Bound*, especially, Romney exaggerates the figures' anatomies much like Jefferys. Thus, as in Jefferys' *Drawing of a Prison Scene* (Fig. 90), Romney's

[651] These images were part of a series of eighteen cartoons, each concentrating on 'horrific and supernatural subjects', Myrone, 2005, 61.
[652] *Ibid*.

human bodies are effectively repulsive and intimidating. These aspects are more evident in Romney's smaller pencil, ink and wash Prometheus study (Fig. 92b) which, further recalling Jefferys' and also Runciman's and Sergel's graphic mannerisms, features insistent and agitated draughtsmanship. While such mark-making tallies with Burke's associating of the sublime with immediacy of sensation, it does not equate with how Fuseli understood that the sublime should be realised through more measured, intense and concentrated visual effects.

Furthermore, Romney's use of media in *The Ghost of Darius Appearing to Atossa* and the larger version of *Prometheus Bound* (Fig. 92a), fails to develop an atmospheric intensity most appropriate to sublime subjects. Unlike Fuseli's use of pen and ink wash, Romney's application of flat chalk tone is ineffective in communicating the turbulence associated with sublimity. Indeed, Romney's media use is less appropriate to sublime subjects than Runciman's, Sergel's or Jefferys' applications of graphic materials. Overall, these artists', and Romney's, depictions of the sublime fail to equate with the 'true sublime' as it was identified by James Barry's unknown correspondent of 1783. It will be recalled that like Longinus, Bodmer and Fuseli, this individual believed that Homer had best represented the sublime by concentrating on his 'manner' of depiction, rather than on 'the subject' he depicted.[653] By this standard, the work of Fuseli's Rome circle failed to portray sublimity correctly. These artists, through their emphasising of subject rather than mode of representation, showed an interest in physiological affects in keeping with Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry*. Burke's ideas, and these artists' image-making, did not

[653] Letter contained in James Barry, *Works*, London, 1809, I, 263-267, cited Monk, 1960, 189.

foreground how the sublime affected the mind (a feature of Homer's writing) an emphasis that captivated Fuseli and guided his approach to visual representation.

Conclusion

This chapter has revealed that Fuseli's understanding, and visual processing, of the sublime was different from both his academic contemporaries and those artists more closely associated with him in Rome. Academic artists generally celebrated Raphael's art as the embodiment of sublimity. In Raphael's work the sublime was believed to be manifest in the grace and greatness of his representations. These qualities were understood to exemplify Raphael's elevated status as both a man and an artist. Academic artists thought that by referencing such Raphael-esque features in their own work their personal and professional potentials would be better met. This view of the sublime's characteristics was retained even though aesthetic standards were modified to focus attention on the possibly greater sublimity of Michelangelo's art.

For the artists comprising Fuseli's Rome circle the new aesthetics of sublimity appearing around mid-century, epitomised by Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry*, gave licence to challenge academic views of the subject. Most notably, these artists sought to contest the academic belief that the sublime should be associated with poise and refinement. Instead, they emphasised the sublime's unsettling properties. Fuseli's closest artist contemporaries, acknowledging Burke's

concern with the sublime's physiological nature, used excessive graphic techniques to depict expressive human forms involved in turbulent, or terrifying, situations. While Fuseli, to a degree, influenced these artists' modes of depiction, his own representations of the sublime owed more to his appreciation of Longinus's thinking on the subject than to Burke's.

Tutored in the Longinian sublime by Bodmer, Fuseli conceived of its terrifying aspects as being particularly concerned with constructively influencing the mind, and elevating the human character/soul. Consequently, Fuseli's visual responses to the sublime sought to most fully engage and enhance spectators' mental involvement via a measured mode of representation. In keeping with this conception of how to evoke sublimity, Fuseli's visual formulations can be considered to be crafted depictions comparable to the convincing artifices characterising Homer's, Shakespeare's and Milton's writings, to the beguiling staging typifying the mid-eighteenth-century London theatre, and with the waking dream state – the ideal presence – as determined by Lord Kames. In Fuseli's art, the human body was one aspect of an integrated visual device constructed to relay the sublime's potential in an intense calculated fashion.

Fuseli's adopting of this depictive mode finds parallel with Bodmer's tuition, notably his promotion of the ethical prospect that he associated with artworks that could communicate their makers' ideas in a concerted fashion, and with 'utmost intensity'.[654] Moreover, Fuseli was aware of Bodmer's comparing of the ethical possibilities of the greatest art with the character traits possessed by its makers.

[654] Bodmer, *Critische Betrachtungen*, Zurich, 1741, 274, cited Junod, 2003, 140, note 17.

Therefore, not only was, for instance, Homer's work ethically motivated, but Homer himself was a highly principled individual. Fuseli acknowledged these connections in his schooling and attempted to realise them visually, wishing to attain a commensurate status for himself and his art. Besides the aesthetic emphases of his education, Fuseli would have gained a comparable appreciation of himself and his purpose from his theological training. He recognised that if visual forms were to serve the highest purposes they should be produced from an amalgam of references most appropriate to the task. Hence, his use of select allusions to dominant art practice in conjunction with choice features from the work of elevated artists and theorists which his education had emphasised. Such creative leanings explain why Fuseli largely avoided his peers' chosen subject types and depictive modes. Moreover, so considered, Fuseli's drawings of the human form (assessed in the previous chapter) and his pictorial inventions (examined in Chapter One) reveal his concerted attempts to recognise and depict the sublime potential of his chosen source materials and pictorial themes.

To this point my thesis has established that Fuseli's art had particular visual characteristics. He evidently understood academic visual conventions but he contested them. Furthermore, while his art failed to conform to these academic standards neither did it mesh wholly with those concepts that influenced the work of his closest artist contemporaries in Italy. Thus, the source materials and themes that Fuseli selected and visually re-processed in a particular manner were distinct. Based on this chapter's evidence, Fuseli's drawings appear to concentrate on serving a particular purpose - the directing of human comprehension to its most elevated

condition. This was a state of sublime exaltation predicated on the development of high-mindedness and enhanced consciousness. Such a focus was significantly inspired by Fuseli's theological background. Throughout, this chapter and this thesis have emphasised how Fuseli's ecclesiastical training influenced his mindset and energised his conception of art, of being an artist, and of the potentials of both. So far, the thesis has established the interwoven visual and theoretical contexts informing Fuseli's appreciation of the relationships between visual art and magnified human potential. The following, final, chapter indicates how Fuseli synthesised these perspectives into a visual art capable of directing attention to such an enhanced condition, while further addressing the ways in which he contested the conventions that characterised normative art practice.

CHAPTER 4
PREDETERMINED MIMESIS

The three previous chapters of this thesis have established that Fuseli's drawings produced during the 1770s possessed particular characteristics. Through them he traded knowingly upon academic inventive and compositional principles, he contravened conventional uses of the depicted human form, and challenged the expectation that visual art should portray respectable human conduct. Additionally, Fuseli's drawings referenced a distinct conception of the sublime, which was shown most prominently through his particular manipulations of drawing media and via representations which were designed so as to have unconventional pictorial features. As the preceding chapter especially argued, the turbulent subjects which inspired Fuseli's drawings provided him with the means to align a number of his interests, those which he understood to be capable of improving the personal and social existences of his contemporaries.[655] I argued that Fuseli's drawings were devices for promoting an individual's different and more profound sense of themselves and their experiences. He conceived of these images as a way of expanding human consciousness and, in particular, a person's sense of virtue.[656]

The previous chapters have given consistent attention to how Fuseli's art theory, especially his Academy *Lectures*, related to his art making. Each chapter

[655] In this thesis's third chapter these interests were indicated to be the works of, for instance, Shakespeare and Milton, concepts of the sublime, the aesthetic theory of Lord Kames, and Fuseli's training as a Zwinglian preacher.
[656] This assertion corresponds to Luisa Calè's interpretation of the potential of Fuseli's images, in *Fuseli's Milton Gallery, Turning Readers into Spectators*, Oxford, 2006.

demonstrated that the ideas which Fuseli presented (in print in, for instance, his articles for the *Analytical Review* and verbally at the Academy), were concepts which his art practice had helped him to develop, or that his thinking was a re-framing of certain notions that he had encountered during his education.

These interfaces and exchanges between Fuseli's art theory and practice are again noted in this final chapter which, by appraising his conception of artistic imitation, more closely considers how his art functioned as a device for altering human perceptions. As the previous two chapters have noted, Fuseli's art-making was largely dependent on his appreciation and replication of particular creative strategies.[657] Eighteenth-century visual artists considered the emulation of select artistic forebears' creative methods and imagery to be important. However, while an artist's pertinent selection and imitation of these resources largely conditioned their critical success, they were keen to avoid being accused of plagiarism.[658] The practice of imitation was closely tied to that of invention, a subject which has been examined through various contexts during this thesis thus far. Therefore, concluding the thesis with an appraisal of imitation in this chapter provides suitable closure to the argument presented overall.

As in the previous chapters the current chapter further assesses how Fuseli's art theory/practice contested and transformed normative conventions. In particular, this

[657] For example, when working from the antique Fuseli sought to emulate visually that, which he understood as, Phidias's particular artistry. Additionally, this thesis's previous chapters have noted Fuseli's striving to suggest visually the particular artistry of Michelangelo, and the quintessence of Homer, Shakespeare and Milton's creative methods.

[658] In the eighteenth century the term 'plagiarism' was understood to mean much the same as it does today, the stealing of another person's images or ideas, as is revealed by Reynolds's opinion on this issue in *Discourses* VI and XII. An inferred visual critique of Reynolds's own use of imitation can be seen in Nathaniel Hone's painting *The Conjuror* (1775).

chapter argues that his conception and use of artistic imitation were heavily influenced by his Zurich education and, consequently, they were distinctively marked. Notably, Fuseli conceived of artistic imitation as a means to directly align his art practice with the work of the great creative individuals whom Bodmer had promoted. However, as was indicated by the previous two chapters particularly, besides Bodmer's 'great artists', Homer, Shakespeare and Milton, Fuseli also rated highly Phidias's and Michelangelo's artistic capabilities. Indeed, Fuseli considered all these artists to be commensurate creative forces.[659] Importantly, Fuseli's conception of artistic imitation was not focused on appropriating notable visual forms for clear-cut reuse. In the *Discourses* Reynolds had implied that this was imitation's purpose.[660] Rather, Fuseli's perception of artistic imitation was directly connected to his wish to reproduce the condition of the 'great artistic soul' which Bodmer had outlined to him. This state is commensurate with the character attributed to the Zwinglian preacher/prophet, which Fuseli was trained to be, and with that of a person realising themselves to be spiritually elect by dint of such a preacher's interpretations of how the profane and otherworldly realms were interconnected. This chapter contends that Fuseli's drawings should be acknowledged to have been a means for negotiating his conceptual and visual relationships to artistic precursors, as devices for realising the sublimity he associated with these artists and their works, and as a method for re-working this sublimity to provide conditions for instituting personal revelation.[661] Making art in these contexts not only allowed for the imitation of one's creative forebears, it also acknowledged the imitator's superior intellect and consciousness in

[659] Information on this alignment is provided by Mason, 1951, see for example, 322.
[660] See for example Discourse VI. Further information is given on Reynolds's ideas on the subject in the following pages.
[661] Such a notion reflects Bodmer's promotion of the sublime, outlined in the previous chapter.

comparison to their contemporaries. Additionally, such art-making made possible aesthetic experiences suited to similarly elevating others to a point at which they might gain a sense of their highest potential. Therefore, Fuseli and his art served aesthetic, philosophical and, in effect, spiritual purposes.

This chapter examines the likelihood that Fuseli used drawing to effect alterations in consciousness so as to provoke changes to conceptualisations of self and experience. Addressing this proposal the chapter is divided into three parts. The first part (*Academic understandings of artistic imitation*) summarises eighteenth-century academic notions of this concept. The second (*Fuseli's understanding of artistic imitation*) assesses more fully the mode of imitative practice that Fuseli learnt through his education and, in this context, further considers the figures which Fuseli included in his drawings. The third part (*The Nobility of Self*) analyses, in detail, Fuseli's use of artistic imitation to inform his processing of pictorial compositions. To aid comprehension of the argument the chapter's second and third parts are sub-divided.[662] As with the preceding chapters Fuseli's art is examined in relation to his pedagogy. It is proposed that his *Lectures* were a means to teach others, and to reinforce to himself, how to know and, moreover, that they were a way of communicating his notion of what it meant 'to be'. In other words, Fuseli's *Lectures* (complementing his artwork) provide evidence of his conception of what qualities constituted a great, creative mind and soul.

[662] Part Two has the sub-section *Bodmer's dramatic writing, his character types, and Fuseli's use of imitation when drawing figures*, while Part Three has two sub-sections, *Imitating the condition of great artistic mind and character* and *Mysterious experiences: Drawing, a means for elevating mind and enhancing character*.

Alongside analyses of Fuseli's graphic works and Academy *Lectures* the chapter considers ideas presented to him in Zurich concerning dramatic characterisation and the relationship of the sublime to the religious. Both of these subjects are argued to have further shaped Fuseli's appreciation of his art's potential, and function. This chapter also further develops the contention that Fuseli sought to modify those discourses which informed conventional art-making, and that the images he produced as a result were purposefully incongruous. It is argued that Fuseli conceived of their visual oddness as a means for unsettling the viewing experience; his drawings were devices for challenging established modes of visual perception and thought and, ultimately, were instruments focused on changing appreciation of one's actions. Consequently, his drawings are identified as having particular rhetorical, ethical and effectively religious overtones.[663] While Fuseli's drawings are visually different from academic art they, nevertheless, stress a principle that interested his academic peers, the development of self-understanding. As with academic art practice, Fuseli's artwork is noted to be philosophically orientated, focusing attention on human nature and on the nature of experience. However, Fuseli's work is shown to differ from academic art in the degree to which his theorising, and production of visual forms, addressed ontological and epistemological concerns.

[663] As indicated in this thesis's main *Introduction* the unorthodoxy of Fuseli's images, especially how they presented unsettling experiences through use of unconventional subject matters will, in this chapter, be compared with more regular notions of how human identity, in the eighteenth century, was conditioned by religion. This comparison is developed through reference to the theories of Mircea Eliade (*The Sacred and the Profane, The Nature of Religio*n, New York, 1959), Emile Benveniste (*Indo-European Language and Society*, Miami, 1973), and Alain Besançon (*The Forbidden Image – An Intellectual History of Iconoclasm*, Chicago, 2000).

Part 1: Academic understandings of artistic imitation

Academic art theorists considered artistic imitation to merit serious study. Joshua Reynolds, for instance, devoted his entire sixth Discourse to the subject. Imitation was, he maintained, the 'following of other masters, and the advantage to be drawn from the study of their works.'[664] Although Reynolds's advice appeared straightforward, he stressed that successful imitation required continual study of worthy masters to acquire, 'a mind enriched by an assemblage of all the treasures of ancient and modern art'.[665] An artist so acquainted with such source materials would, Reynolds argued, be 'more elevated and fruitful in resources in proportion to the number of ideas which have been carefully collected and thoroughly digested.'[666] Fuseli's *Lectures* also directly refer to imitation, but less fully than Reynolds's *Discourses*. Fuseli, using deceptively simple terminology, claimed that imitation was 'choice, directed by judgement and taste'.[667] As was indicated during this thesis's previous three chapters issues of 'choice', 'judgement' and 'taste' underpinned Fuseli's challenge to academic artistic protocols.

According to eighteenth-century academic visual conventions one should avoid directly replicating notable artists' works.[668] Rather, one should employ imitation to

[664] Reynolds, Discourse VI, 85.
[665] *Ibid*., 90.
[666] *Ibid*.
[667] Fuseli, Lecture VII, 491.
[668] To a large degree these conventions had been established by the French Académie Royale which indicated that the artworks most worthy of imitation were those of Poussin and Le Brun, especially the latter's 'Alexander' series, for instance, *Alexander at the Tent of Darius* (1660), the merits of which were considered by André Félibien in *Les reines de Perse aux pieds d'Alexandre, peinture du cabinet du roy*, Paris, 1663. Examples of eighteenth-century painters employing similar methods are Francis Hayman in his *The Humanity of General Amherst* (1760-61), and Benjamin West in *Queen Philippa Soliciting her Husband Edward the Third to Save the Lives of the Brave Burghers of Calais* (1788).

reference commonly understood pictorial methods, those reflecting the 'classification of poses and relationships' observable in approved masters' imagery.[669] Effectively, academic aesthetic principles determined that past-masters had resolved representation's fundamental problems and their solutions held continued contemporary relevance.[670]

Artistic imitation, as interpreted by Joshua Reynolds in light of past art, should result from 'an intellectual response to nature' founded on rigorous observation.[671] Reynolds understood that imitation, so practiced, required representation 'of general, not particular nature'.[672] Reynolds's ideas re-codified the concept of artistic imitation presented in Jonathan Richardson's *Essay on the Theory of Painting*; Richardson had written that, in particular, imitation was 'the Expressing [of] those Rais'd Ideas he [the artist] has conceiv'd of possible Perfection in Nature'.[673] Reynolds, theorising according to this notion, understood that the artist worked like 'the philosopher, [he] will consider nature in the abstract, and represent in every one of his figures the character of the species.'[674] David Morgan has argued that Reynolds's ideas are reminiscent of John Locke's philosophical method, especially regarding how thoughts attain generality as a result of 'separating from them the circumstances of

[669] Carl Goldstein, 'Towards a Definition of Academic Art', *The Art Bulletin*, 57:1, 1975, 102-109, 106.
[670] For more information on this issue see Goldstein, 1975, 106. Evidence that this convention was still believed valid in the late 1760s is provided by Reynolds's first Discourse, 21. That Reynolds practiced what he advised is shown by his picture *Three Ladies Adoring A Term of Hymen* (1774), whose figures were imitated from those in a Poussin Bacchanal. For more detail on Reynolds's use of imitation in this painting see Ernst H. Gombrich, 'Reynolds's Theory and Practice of Imitation', *Burlington Magazine*, 80:467, 1942, 44. Further information on Reynolds's conception of artistic imitation is given by Amal Asfour and Paul Williamson, 'On Reynolds's Use of De Piles, Locke and Hume in his Essays on Rubens and Gainsborough', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 60, 1997, 215-29.
[671] David Morgan, 'The Rise and Fall of Abstraction in Eighteenth-Century Art', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 27:3, 1994, 449-478, 460.
[672] *Ibid*., 461.
[673] *Essay on the Theory of Painting*, the second enlarged and corrected edition, London, 1725, 168.
[674] Reynolds, Discourse III, 50.

time and place, and any other ideas that may determine them to this or that particular existence.'[675] Reynolds understood that the dialogue between art and philosophy was centred on an abstraction of form, produced through intellectual distinctions that differentiated between art and nature; these allowed the artist to categorise 'The value and rank of every art in proportion to the mental labour employed in it.'[676] Thus, central to Reynolds's assessment of imitative practice was the need for it to occupy particularly the mind.[677]

Reynolds's conception of the relationship between imitation and the human intellect was founded on notions of taste, the theme of his seventh Discourse. Reynolds aligned taste in the arts to a striving after truth, he observed that, 'The natural appetite or taste of the human mind is for *Truth* [Reynolds's emphasis].'[678] Harvey Goldstein has contended that Reynolds, in addressing the issue of taste, established 'a complex dialectic involving artists, artistic qualities, and artistic effects', which framed a particular set of values and relationships.[679] Accordingly, Reynolds's *Discourses* presented a hierarchy of 'aesthetically tasteful' artistic styles and forms for imitation, his 'hierarchy of excellences' which, in turn, were connected to a scale

[675] Morgan, 1994, 461. Morgan quotes from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, London, 1690, I, 16-17.
[676] Reynolds, Discourse IV, 55. At root Reynolds was keen to discriminate between art considered as a liberal pursuit (the sort of art he was referring to), and a mechanical application of art's more rudimentary qualities.
[677] Reynolds reiterated the centrality of this theme to his notion of art practice at the beginning of Discourse VII. Edgar Wind, in *Hume and the Heroic Portrait: Studies in Eighteenth-Century Imagery*, Oxford, 1986, 3, draws attention to a parallel existing between the standards of taste being referred to in the eighteenth century, in respect of visual art, and the concerns of Enlightenment philosophers. Edmund Burke's obituary notice of Reynolds (*The Times*, February 27, 1792), noted Reynolds, 'To be such a painter he was a profound and penetrating philosopher.'
[678] Reynolds, Discourse VII, 109.
[679] Goldstein, 'Ut Poesis Pictura: Reynolds on Imitation and Imagination', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 1:3, 1968, 217.

of mental qualities.[680] Again, Reynolds re-presented Richardson's ideas, for Richardson had observed that the best art formed 'an Idea of Something beyond all we have yet seen; or which Art, or Nature has yet produc'd […] Such as when all the Excellencies of the several Masters are United and their several Defects avoided.'[681] Coupling intellect with artistic imitation provided Reynolds with 'an analytic device that controls his scheme of relationships and values.'[682] This device was founded on a distinct appreciation of natural form which Reynolds defined as 'not only the forms which nature produces, but also the nature and internal fabrick and organisation, as I may call it, of the human mind and imagination.'[683] Reynolds's concept of nature encompassed both external phenomena and a particular model of human consciousness, that determining an individual's 'proper nature'.[684] Consequently, his notion of artistic imitation was largely concerned with identifying those visual forms able to yield the most appropriate vision of nature/human nature.[685] Artists selecting inappropriate models to imitate (according to the standards Reynolds was promoting) could never hope to 'enlarge the conceptions, or warm the heart of the spectator', because incorrectly chosen forms would fail to 'function as if [they] were universal.'[686] The only art worth imitating was that which had perceived value as a mechanism for enlarging positively one's understandings of human nature. Such art, specific works

[680] *Ibid*., 218.
[681] *Essay on the Theory of Painting*, 1725, 259-60.
[682] Goldstein, 1968, 218. Goldstein notes how this 'analytic device' underscored Reynolds's *Discourses*.
[683] Reynolds, Discourse VII, 111.
[684] Reynolds is here referring to an idea similar to that proposed by the Earl of Shaftesbury (*Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, 3 Vols., London, 1711). Goldstein, 1968, 222, further assesses this matter, as does John Barrell in, *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt*, New Haven and London, 1986.
[685] Reynolds had first reflected on this idea in his second letter to the *Idler* (1759).
[686] David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, 3 Vols., London, 1739-40, Vol. I, i, 7. Goldstein, 1968, 225, indicates that David Hartley had also considered the apparent contradiction that objective study could provide a subjective experience.

by antique and Renaissance masters, attributed legitimacy by tradition, and thus acknowledged to be suitably tasteful, was determined to enable philosophical reflections on significant human experiences.[687] Contemporary art constructed in imitation of these sanctioned source materials was considered an analogical counterpart for the elevated operation of the human mind.[688] James Barry's picture *Philoctetes on the Island of Lemnos* (1770) (Fig. 93) is a suitable example through which to assess these academic concepts.

Martin Myrone argues that Barry's painting was constructed to imitate values associated with the antique in order to provide the most eloquent visual counterpart for a heroic state of mind.[689] While Barry's favouring of particular classical sources for this picture is seen to mark his 'insertion […] into a distinguished artistic heritage', his actual image referenced the composition of Guido Reni's *Hercules on the Pyre* (c.1669) (Fig. 94).[690] However, Barry considered Reni's work conceptually commensurate with the antique.[691] Additionally, the pose Barry gave Philoctetes, in particular the character's unsupported and injured foot, was imitated from the work of a similarly regarded 'modern artist', Pietro Testa's *The Dead Christ* (c.1650-55) (Fig.

[687] The types of classical and modern art referred to have been elucidated during the first two chapters of this thesis.
[688] It was only those individuals possessed of a high level of aesthetic discernment that would be able to interact with visual art in this way. William Hazlitt later mused on Reynolds's perceived reliance on this convention in his own practice. See *The Complete Works*, Vol.18, *Art and Dramatic Criticism*, London, 1933, 53.
[689] For more information see Myrone, 2005, 85-91.
[690] *Ibid*., 85. A similar quality was noted for Barry's art in this thesis's second chapter, regarding his conceptual merging of Michelangelo's art with the antique.
[691] Reni, alongside Annibale Carracci, was acknowledged as an artist who had rescued art from decline in the later sixteenth century by crafting an art practice characterised by his combining of visual features that were believed to connote classical ideals.

95). Barry, in keeping with Reynolds's developing art theory, was imitating sanctioned classical and more modern subjects.[692]

Barry's decision to layer visual quotations from Testa upon those from Reni was designed to provide the figure of Philoctetes with, 'more Agony & ye disordered leg will be more distinctly mark'd by having it stretched out in air without any support from ye rock he sits on.'[693] Barry apparently decided that Philoctetes's leg should be so depicted because he wished to show the ideal of superhuman nobility consumed by extraordinary pain, and wanted to demonstrate this through an image encapsulating the most comprehensive expression of heroic sentiments.[694] In sum, Barry's use of a particular form of artistic imitation sought to engage most fully the intellect and imagination (of viewers capable of interpreting his work) towards a philosophical reflection on the theme of suffering to attain virtue.[695] The associations generated by Barry's re-presentation of source materials, when considered alongside Reynolds's theory of imitation, can be thought to be an equivalent for how the educated spectator was believed to intellectually frame their conception of self and experience through their imaginative engagement with visual art. Unlike these academic artists, Fuseli did not use imitation to make such unequivocal visual references to existing art. As will be seen, in his work Fuseli effectively disregarded conventional notions of imitation and what its practice connoted. Fuseli, like Reynolds, sought out art's philosophical potential. Yet, Fuseli's comprehension/use

[692] In 1769 Reynolds had corresponded with Barry, while the latter was in Rome, advising him to study the Sistine Chapel. See Jane Martineau (et al), 2003, 62.
[693] Myrone, 2005, 86.
[694] See Myrone 2005, 90. For further information on this point see Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History*, New Haven, 1994.
[695] For further discussion of this idea see Myrone, 2005, 86-90.

of artistic imitation aimed to establish a more profound insight into the motives underpinning that he conceived to be the greatest art, and how these might be applied for the development of human nature.

Part 2: Fuseli's understanding of artistic imitation

This part of the chapter identifies the theories of imitative artistic practice which Fuseli encountered prior to 1770. Principally, consideration is given to the concepts of artistic imitation promoted during his Zurich education; these supported art practices which were markedly different to those endorsed by academic theory. This part of the chapter also examines Johann Bodmer's imitation, and manipulation, of classical dramatic conventions when writing his own dramas. Bodmer's dramatic writing is significant, for it enhances our understanding of Fuseli's appreciation of the role of character types in ethically-grounded art. Also considered is Fuseli's awareness of how incongruity might be most creatively employed to enhance an artwork's ethical potential. Significant to the education provided by Bodmer and his colleague Johann Breitinger were theories of artistic representation.[696] In sum, their teaching sought to challenge the concept of verisimilitude (*das Wahrscheinliche*), championed by Gottsched in Germany, with that of the marvellous (*das Wunderbare*).[697] However, it

[696] In their work both Bodmer and Breitinger emphasised the role of the metaphysical and sought out examples of great art (principally literature), as a means to convey a particular form of 'truth'. See Hall 1985, 15, for more detail.

[697] Carol Hall (1985) provides a useful commentary on the dispute over this matter between the Zurich scholars and Gottsched in Leipzig, see 14-16. Further information on this subject can be found in, for example, Detlev Schumann, 'The Latecomer: The Rise of German Literature in the Eighteenth Century', *The German Quarterly*, 39, 1966, 417-449, Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp (Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition)*, Oxford, 1971, and John B. Lyon, 'The Science of Sciences:

is probable that Fuseli was aware of ideas contributing to this pedagogy before entering the Carolinum.[698] Fuseli's father, Johann Caspar, a noted artist and art historian had close ties to members of the Zurich literary elite.[699]

David Morgan, writing in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, notes how Breitinger promoted the idea of 'truth of the imagination'.[700] Within Breitinger's pedagogy this notion was characterised as the creative procedure that poets favoured. Morgan highlights how Breitinger, in a chapter of *Critische Dichtkunst* entitled 'On the Transformation of the Actual into the Possible', outlined 'a faculty of the soul which he called the *abstractio imaginationis* (*Abgezogenheit der Einbildung*). Breitinger attributed to this faculty the power to bring forth 'marvellous [*Wunderbare*] ideas through a new combination of images [taken] from the material as well as the moral world''.[701] Such a blend of sources might be coalesced to form poetic representations (effectively these were amalgams of fantastic images derived from both nature and art). Any portrayals produced by this process were at root constructs, or abstractions, formed from a mix of the actual and the marvellous, and Breitinger noted how these new forms were characterised by a collective poetic language. His concept of imitation, while commensurate with academic thinking on the need to visually abstract from source

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Replication and Reproduction in Lavater's Physiognomics', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 40, 2007, 257-77.

[698] Breitinger's *Critische Dichtkunst* was in print from 1740.

[699] Camilla Smith, 2008, 30, footnote 83, reflects on Fuseli senior's relationship to these intellectuals. Moreover, Fuseli, through his father, would also have become familiarised with the emergent neo-classical taste in the arts; Fuseli senior was an associate of both Mengs and Winckelmann. For confirmation of these proposals see Torbruegge, 1968, 69-70. Fuseli's father had published works on, and by, prominent personalities in the art world.

[700] 'The Rise and Fall of Abstraction in Eighteenth-Century Art', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 27:3, 1994, 449-478, 451. Morgan is quoting from Breitinger's *Critische Dichtkunst*, Zurich, 1740, 138-9. Bodmer wrote a companion piece to Breitinger's text, published the same year, entitled *Critical Treatment of the Marvellous in Poetry and its Relation with the Probable in a Defence of John Milton's Poem of Paradise Lost*.

[701] *Ibid*. Morgan quotes from *Critische Dichtkunst*, 286. All following citations of this work are taken from Morgan, 1994.

materials, was underpinned by conventions markedly different from those buttressing academic art theory.

The emphasis that Breitinger placed on 'truth of the imagination' licensed the poetic-artist to invent generalised characterisations. Equally, truths of the imagination equipped such artists with a series of common concepts through which they might then recognise, and understand, 'the universal principles according to which [characters] operate.'[702] It should again be noted that although Breitinger's imitative theory focused on poetry and the poet, his work with Bodmer considered ways to align poetry with painting.[703] Bodmer, following his viewing of the work of noted Renaissance painters in Milan's Biblioteca Ambrosiana (in 1718), had sought to gather together like-minded individuals with the aim of discussing and publishing ideas for improving 'mores and taste along with the status of German letters'.[704] This shared interest group Bodmer labelled the 'Cotterie der Maler oder Patrioten' and their thoughts were published in *Die Discourse der Mahlern*.[705] Bodmer's designating of the members of this gathering 'painters' stemmed from his recognition of how sixteenth-and seventeenth-century artists had equated poetry and painting, in terms of the art forms' shared capacity for affecting the imagination.[706] This connection of the poetic and painterly arts was maintained subsequently in his and Brieitinger's teaching. However, both scholars rated poetry as the higher art form; hence, it's more regular referencing in their theories.

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[702] *Ibid*.
[703] This interpretation of the Zurich scholars' work was presented in this thesis's previous chapter.
[704] Torbruegge, 1968, 103. Bodmer's enthusiasm for the art he saw was related in a letter to Meister dated November 19, 1718.
[705] Published Zurich, 1721-22. Further information on this aspect of Bodmer's career was presented in Chapter Three of this thesis.
[706] A similar conception of the relationship of poet and artist can be found in Winckelmann's *Gedanken*, see, for example, 56-60.

Breitinger, in contrast to Gottsched, suggested that creative fancy should serve as a key mode of perception arguing that through such insight 'entirely new beings' could be envisioned.[707] M.H. Abrams has argued that these beings were made possible because Breitinger and Bodmer based their notion of artistic imitation on actual phenomena, created by God, plus 'Leibniz's description of the way God created the world […] according to Leibniz, God had present to him at the creation an infinite number of 'possibilities', or model essences [...] God, in accordance with his excellence, selected the best of all possible worlds for realisation.'[708] Thus, an artist utilising Leibniz's version of the Creation could, besides the actual, access aspects of all the probable worlds which God had discounted. As God was believed to be incapable of self-contradiction and, therefore, all that he created was of some value, any materials which he discarded were considered to be viable sources with which the artist/poet might widen their imitative procedure's scope considerably. The new materials provided by God's creative activities gave further artistic licence to intermix the factual, the probable and the wondrous.[709] Among the new possibilities for such artistic imitation were representations conventionally associated with allegory, 'the virtues […] kinds of vice […] the passions […] and so forth.'[710] Being centuries old much of this material had entered common tradition. Consequently, images referencing such sources were potentially recognisable by a large number of people.

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[707] Breitinger outlined his conception of such beings in *Critische Dichtkunst*, I, 53-77. Breitinger challenged Gottsched's prescription, made in the *Versuch einer kritischen Dichtkunst*, Leipzig, 1730, that the fantastic, or marvellous, should be kept within the bounds of probability.
[708] Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp (Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition)*, Oxford, 1971, 276-77. Similar observations are made by James Engell in, *The Creative Imagination, Enlightenment to Romanticism*, Cambridge, Mass., 1981, 96-7.
[709] *Critische Dichtkunst*, 139. These ideas have been assessed previously in Chapter Three of this thesis.
[710] *Ibid*., 143.

Therefore, Breitinger argued, an artist utilising this mode of imitation could comprehensively affect their audiences.

This concept of imitation, which mixed probable and marvellous phenomena with forms derived from the observable world, contradicted academic aesthetic theory's insistence on material veracity.[711] Additionally, Breitinger's valuing of unnatural subjects gave artists licence to employ representation incongruously. Normative art practice sought to clearly align chosen subjects with appropriate depictive modes and ethical objectives. Breitinger's ideas challenged such requirements. So schooled, Fuseli would have recognised that the factual and the probable were interchangeable. A comparable idea had informed his theological training.[712] Art produced according to such principles would, by conventional standards, be uncertain. Yet, this conception of art, while potentially ambiguous, was nonetheless founded on just principles, it sought to ascertain the truth of the imagination. Thus, Breitinger's idea of art addressed those motives lying at the heart of the creative process. In effect, his thinking considered the imagination's potential for compounding images from the material and otherworldly realms in order to form a moral world. For Breitinger, this creative imagination served as 'a faculty of the soul',

[711] This concept of imitation, especially in its use of fictive and actual references, is also notably different from how, for example, late-eighteenth-century French artists sought to inter-mix these depictive registers in order to invent visual allegories. In France, visual allegories constructed using actual and imaginative sources served to comment on real, contemporary, events or persons. Such images were conceived and executed as a means of coalescing different representational strategies designed to provide coherent accounts of particular historical moments. Conversely, Fuseli's use of visual imitation/allegory (outlined below), served to address the viewer through a 'world of art' which had, if any, a far less distinct relationship to actual, contemporary events. For more information on uses of allegory in eighteenth-century French art see, for instance, Antoine De Baecque, 'The Allegorical Image of France, 1750-1800: A Political Crisis of Representation', *Representations*, 47, 1994, 111-143.

[712] For more information on this aspect of Fuseli's education see Camilla Smith, *Religion, Morality and Pedagogic Methods in the Early Drawings of Henry Fuseli (1753-63)*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2008, 73 especially.

it aimed to enhance and uplift both perception and understanding.[713] From this overview of Fuseli's schooling in artistic imitative practices it is clear how the principles outlined conformed to the general tenets of his religious education. Both pedagogic methods were concerned with the enhancing of human promise and the raising of human experiences beyond the commonplace.

The plasticity granted to representation by Breitinger's imitative theories had its parallel in Johann Georg Sulzer's aesthetics, with which Fuseli became most fully familiar in 1763.[714] Leaving Zurich that year, Fuseli stayed in Berlin where he assisted with Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* , a four-volume encyclopaedia of aesthetics the first of its kind in Germany.[715] Fuseli co-authored a number of the *Allgemeine Theorie's* articles, including one on allegory (*Allegorie*). How the concept of allegory was presented in this treatise is significant for Fuseli's understanding of artistic representation. In the *Allgemeine Theorie* allegory was given two, apparently contradictory, definitions. First, allegory was classed as being 'like a symbol or a personification' (according to Karen Junod 'no distinction [was made in the *Allgemeine Theorie*] between the two'); allegory was considered to be 'a sign or a figure referring to a general idea of an abstract entity.'[716] For allegory to so

[713] *Ibid*., 286. It is acknowledged that, being a cleric, Breitinger would have been expected to have an interest in the 'life of the soul'.
[714] Johann Sulzer (1720-1779) was a Swiss professor of mathematics at the *Joachimsthalsches Gymasium* in Berlin and was a close friend and former student of Fuseli's mentor Bodmer. Detail of the connection between Sulzer and Bodmer, and the model of the imagination Sulzer outlined in his *Allgemeine Theorie*, can be found in Engell, 1981, 104-08.
[715] Fuseli left Zurich following his and Lavater's accusation of unjustness against the high land-bailiff Grebel. Their publication of a pamphlet entitled 'The unjust Magistrate, or the Complaint of the Patriot', detailing Grebel's acts, necessitated their (at least) temporary departure. The *Allgemeine Theorie* was published in Leipzig, 1771-74. The second extended edition, also published in Leipzig, ran to four volumes and a register. Fuseli collaborated with Sulzer on seven articles for this text.
[716] Junod, 'Henry Fuseli's Pragmatic use of Aesthetics: His Epic Illustrations of Macbeth', *Word & Image*, 19:3, 2003, 138-150, 140.

function it had to be legible. When an allegorical term was seen, or read, what it signified should be recognised. However, in Sulzer's treatise, allegory was attributed another characteristic, it was also presented as 'an obscure, opaque sign which does not reveal its entire meaning'.[717] Effectively, allegory could suggest the ungraspable because it possessed both rationally consistent and incongruous characteristics. It could appear clear, yet be secretive and mysterious. Through this suggested obscurity Fuseli/Sulzer's definition of allegory provided means to express the invisible through the visible. Allegory hinted at things that could not be seen with the naked eye, but might be imagined. Considering Fuseli's prior experience of Breitinger's commensurately multi-faceted theory of imitation, which emphasised the affectivity of the imaginatively constructed, he arguably recognised a kinship between Breitinger's ideas and Sulzer's aesthetics.

Carol Hall has revealed that Fuseli and Sulzer's work on allegory ostensibly reiterated ideas on the subject contained in Winckelmann's *Gedanken* (Fuseli would become more intimately familiar with this text when translating it into English in 1765).[718] Actually, Hall emphases that Fuseli's later descriptions of allegory, in his *Aphorisms* and *Lectures*, were similar to Winckelmann's.[719] Here it is worth noting the

[717] *Ibid*. Sulzer refers to this double nature of allegory in the *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*, Vol. 1, 73-112.
[718] Hall, *Blake and Fuseli – A study in the Transmission of Ideas,* 1985, 91. The notion of allegory forms a central part of the *Gedanken*. It was also the subject of a second, larger essay written by Winckelmann in 1764, *Versuch einer Allegorie, besonders für die Kunst*.
[719] See Hall, 1985, 91. For instance, Fuseli, when considering allegory in his 163rd and 166th *Aphorisms*, suggested that conventional allegorical notions were akin to deserts, devoid of suitable artistic inspiration. Discussion of allegory also formed a substantial part of Fuseli's fourth Lecture, where he again opposed allegory's usual interpretation. For example, he enquired whether '[Homer and Milton's writings] which alone can impress us with the importance of the maxim that dictated to the poet narration and to the artist imagery', should be disgraced 'with the frigid conceit of an allegory', Fuseli, Lecture IV, 440-441. Fuseli did make use of a 'more traditional' mode of allegorical representation for two drawings he made during the 1770s. Yet, both these images accord with the idea of art as an imaginative vision, for they show an unnamed artist – probably Fuseli – being initiated

distinctiveness of Fuseli's conception of allegory and how this fits with the current discussion of his creative project. When Fuseli refers to 'allegory' he means us to understand that the term is being contextualised particularly. He did not consider allegory in a traditional light: it was not to be associated 'with the […] allegory [of] Cesare Ripa, or some other emblem coiner'.[720] Fuseli, according to his own characterisation of allegory, determined it to be a means 'to excite [an interest] in us', to encourage us to 'believe what [it] tells'.[721] Importantly, Fuseli noted that allegory's verity was produced through particular types of artistry, those presenting a 'supposed reality'.[722] So considered, allegory was 'that magic which places on the same basis of existence […] the mythic or superhuman, and the human parts' of works such as 'the Ilias, of Paradise Lost, and of the Sistine Chapel'.[723] Fuseli's elucidation of allegory meshes with Breitinger's concept of artistic imitation and with Kames's notions of the 'waking dream' and 'ideal presence'[724] because it licensed the intermixing of factual, probable and marvellous phenomena. Fuseli's appreciation of allegory also indicated his belief in the affective power of a necessary interaction with the supernatural in order to facilitate the realising of latent human potentials, allegory aligned the 'superhuman, and the human'. Such a profitable merging of the common and uncommon (a characteristic of, for instance, *Paradise Lost*, and Michelangelo's art) blurred those boundaries normally separating human life from the otherworldly; this

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into the most suitable way of making art; *Allegory of the Artist's Initiation into Painting* (1771), and the *Second Allegory of Painting* (1777).

[720] Fuseli, Lecture IV, 441.

[721] *Ibid*., 440.

[722] *Ibid*.

[723] *Ibid*.

[724] 'The distinctness of ideal presence […] approacheth sometimes to the distinctness of real presence' (Kames, *Elements of Criticism,* 1762, 112), it 'supplies the want of real presence; and in idea we perceive persons acting and suffering, precisely as in an original survey' (*Elements of Criticism*, 111). Due to the 'ideal presence' one loses 'consciousness of self [and] conceives every incident as passing in his presence, precisely as if he were an eye-witness' (*ibid*., 112).

quality Peter Tomory contends concerned Fuseli during the 1770s, resulting in his efforts 'to reconcile poetry and life, spirit and flesh' through his artwork.[725] Fuseli's *Lectures* stressed allegory's enhanced prospect and thus re-emphasised the thinking on allegory he had engaged with when assisting Sulzer. In effect, Fuseli's use of the term 'allegory' can be thought open to misinterpretation. As shown above, Fuseli, rather than talking of allegory conventionally ought to rather, as Eudo Mason argues, be seen to be 'groping for […] some […] term […] to differentiate intense imaginative vision from bald schematic allegory.'[726] Such a visionary conception of art, one that was a close surrogate for sensate experience, and of artists, reinforces the connections here argued to exist between Fuseli's self-perception, and the idea of 'divine selfhood' that was indicated through the prophetic preaching which grounded his theological training. Therefore, Fuseli's considerations of the notion 'allegory' reveal his desire to assemble an intense mode of artistry constructed from interconnected conceptual models. Such artistry was concerned with initiating the fullest self-scrutiny.[727]

This type of art practice, being characterised by visual contrariness, alerted audiences to the possibility that their perceptions of the actual world, and of themselves, were incorrect. Such art's 'wrong-ness', according to conventional standards, acted to counterbalance the inadequacies of that presumed to be normality. Through this 'new art' fresh, and potentially improved, ways of seeing thinking and acting were implied. Therefore, art conceived, designed and executed

[725] Tomory, 1972, 28.
[726] Mason, 1951, 237.
[727] Carol Hall, 1985, 92, observes the degree to which Fuseli's ideas on this issue were shaped by Winckelmann's *Gedanken*.

accordingly might instruct ways to enhance one's perceptions, understandings and deeds, and it could thus be deemed to have a pedagogic purpose.[728] Consequently, as Breitinger had contended, art produced according to these principles, while unconventional, was fundamentally ethical. Alongside Breitinger, his colleague Johann Bodmer had pronounced views on art's ethical nature.[729] The following section examines how Bodmer responded to his belief in the justness of art by writing dramas. Within these works Bodmer, in common with Breitinger's ideas on imitation, considered character types. Assessing Bodmer's use of these leads to further analyses of Fuseli's depicted figures in his Italian drawings.

Bodmer's dramatic writing, his character types, and Fuseli's use of imitation when drawing figures

This section examines Johann Bodmer's dramatic writing. In the period during which he taught Fuseli, Bodmer produced a series of dramatic works focusing on legendary, ethical and political themes. As Anthony Scenna has convincingly argued, these themes carried over from Bodmer's teaching at the Carolinum.[730] It is, therefore, likely that Bodmer's own creative work was a contemporary and practical accompaniment to his pedagogic promotion and interpretation of certain artistic sources and their functions. This section briefly considers the range of Bodmer's

[728] This notion can be interpreted to underpin Breitinger's idea that the creative imagination served as a faculty of the soul enabling the individual to be capable of self-education, a thought outlined in *Critische Dichtkunst*, 286.
[729] This is confirmed by, for example, Smith 2008, and Anthony Scenna in, *The Treatment of Ancient Legend and History in Bodmer*, New York, 1937.
[730] See Scenna, 1937, 51.

dramatic work but, more particularly, it emphasises his understanding of how drama might improve one's self-perception. Central to Bodmer's conception of dramatic writing was his use of character types, the principal means through which he communicated his thinking. Considering Bodmer's characterisations provides an opportunity to more fully assess Fuseli's own use of depicted figures, while further revealing Fuseli's creative debt to Bodmer. Looking again at Fuseli's figure drawings enables us to consider his practical application of imitation. These assessments serve to prepare the analyses of Fuseli's more finalised drawn compositions made in this chapter's third part.

Bodmer, in the *Critische Betrachtungen*, revealed his interest in how Greek and Roman histories had used characterisations to uncover those forces motivating historical figures.[731] For Bodmer, history was most valuable in 'revealing the hearts of men'.[732] In particular, he was concerned with the ethical aspects of classical civilisations, an interest that Anthony Scenna contends was 'the expression of a personal attitude'.[733] Between 1750, and the mid-1770s, Bodmer wrote a number of dramas that were concerned with ethical and political subjects. These dramas clearly imitated the themes of a range of existing dramatic works.[734]

[731] Published Zurich, 1741. Bodmer made use of a number of classical writers to inform his research, for example, Cicero, Vergil, Seneca, Homer and Plutarch. For more detail see Scenna, 1937, 20-21.
[732] Scenna, 1937, 74.
[733] *Ibid*., 51.
[734] For example, Bodmer's 1759 drama *Ulysses* was based on Lazzarini's *Ulisse il giovane* (Padua, 1720), his *Oedipus* (1759-60), bore a close similarity to Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, *Marcus Brutus* (1761), was substantially derived from Plutarch's biographies of Caesar and Brutus, and borrowed freely from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* ('Shakespeare is full of […] metaphors', Bodmer acknowledged, 'and I have taken many from him'), while *Cato* (1764) owed much to Cato's *History of Rome*.

Bodmer, although making extensive creative use of drama, never organised his ideas into a definitive theory. However, his interest in drama was founded on two beliefs: that character types were more important than described events, and that dramatic writing should employ characters to improve, even educate, the mind.[735] The dramatic form that Bodmer felt was most conducive to audience improvement was tragedy which he proposed should be used for 'the cultivation of morality, virtue and usefulness.'[736] Notably, as was indicated in this thesis's previous chapter, Lord Kames's *Elements of Criticism* (which Fuseli had read on publication) had promoted tragedy as a most effective means for engaging people's interests in others', and indirectly in their own, experiences.[737] Actually, Fuseli had shown an early interest in tragedy. According to Mason, he had attempted to translate *Macbeth* while in his teens and had also 'embarked on one or two verse tragedies of his own. In early letters there are references to a *Caesar*.'[738] For Bodmer, tragedy's potential was best realised via the emotions rather than through reason. Ostensibly, he considered that a well-conceived dramatic tragedy was the best way to counter failing educational standards, a means to fuse poetry, politics, love of liberty and a striving after justice.[739]

[735] For more detail on Bodmer's understanding of drama see Torbruegge, 1968, 125-26, and Scenna, 1937, 75-82.
[736] Scenna, 1937, 75-76.
[737] See *Elements of Criticism*, Edinburgh, 1762, Vol.1, 117. Kames also noted that the power of performed tragedy 'belongs also to painting.'
[738] Mason, 1951, 26. Bodmer had referred to Plutarch's biography of Caesar and Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* when writing his drama *Marcus Brutus* (1761).
[739] In *Critische Betrachtungen* (432) Bodmer indicated that such concerns were fundamental to the well-being of the state and middle class. For more detail on this matter see Scenna, 1937, 76.

The value that Bodmer attached to ancient drama was most clearly indicated in an article he produced for Sulzer in 1770.[740] In this Bodmer praised the educational purpose which he felt had motivated ancient Greek writers, especially how they had used their work to address democratic principles and people's rights. Discussion of citizens' rights was dangerous within the political systems that operated in most mid eighteenth-century European countries.[741] Yet, Bodmer believed that newly composed dramas, on such themes, might still serve as they once had in classical civilisation. It should be noted that Bodmer was not writing for the theatre and the common people, but was creating 'armchair dramas' for 'thinking people'.[742] Additionally, Bodmer's dramas paid little attention to the mechanics of performance and scenic properties. Accordingly, his preferred audience was the echelon of society who might be best placed to query accepted standards. Notably, this audience type matched that which Bodmer had implied that the artist's work should address if they wished to aim to better civilisation.[743] Bodmer's dramas featured suitably realised character types, considered by him to be 'strong souls', through which he articulated his ideas. Given this chapter's earlier relating of religion, imitation and the metaphysical, the term 'strong soul' can be interpreted to indicate those individuals who were capable of unequivocally demonstrating their independence of thought/action (in respect of usual thinking/behaviour), while revealing how their self-perception owed much to their imitation of the personal

[740] The article was entitled *Politisches Trauerspiel*, and it formed part of Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*. For further detail on Bodmer's authorship of this article see Scenna, 1937, 77.
[741] In many countries in the eighteenth century, Switzerland included, the ruling power was concentrated in the hands of an elite. Contrasting with the conception of the ancient Greek state Bodmer celebrated, the vast majority of people were uninvolved in government.
[742] Scenna, 1937, 77. Again, Bodmer's interest in avoiding commonplace emphases is revealed in his focus.
[743] Bodmer had forwarded this idea of the relationship between the artist, their work and their audience, in the *Critische Betrachtungen*, Zurich, 1741.

characteristics of notable forebears. Commensurate with this chapter's earlier assessment of incongruous artistic practice, Bodmer acknowledged that his strong souls might either be traditionally positive examples of such or, more tellingly, 'fanatics' little appreciated by a common audience, and 'oppressors […] such as Sulla, Caesar, or Catiline.'[744] Moreover, Bodmer contended that drama should feature commendable depictions of suffering rather than heroic actions.[745] Significantly, Fuseli's art of the 1770s was characterised by unadorned backgrounds (comparable to Bodmer's avoidance of dramatic scenery), the representation of anti-heroes, and the depiction of anguished situations, for example, the exploits of Macbeth, Hamlet, Brutus and Achilles. Further connections between Bodmer's and Fuseli's depictive methods can be detected in their choices of historic source materials. Fuseli's drawings of the 1760s, but most especially of the 1770s, featured historical characters rather than those derived from more modern source materials. Comparably, Bodmer selected ancient not contemporary characters for his dramas, and through his writing presented general rather than specific ideas although, as Anthony Scenna has argued, Bodmer's literary strategy emphases his desire to circumvent censorship in Zurich.[746] Moreover, Bodmer's conception, and use, of classical source materials gave him licence to regard legend and history as

[744] Scenna, 1937, 77-8.
[745] Torbruegge, 1968, 125, notes that Bodmer indicated this opinion of drama in a letter of 1738, citing Hermann Hettner, *Literaturgeschichte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Part III, Book 1: *Vom westfälischen Frieden dis zur Thronbesteigung Friedrichs des Grossen (1648-1740)*, 5th revised edition, Braunschweig, 1909, 346. Further, Torbruegge indicates that Bodmer held the view that tragedy ought to exert its influence through 'the excitement of the Aristotelian emotions rather than by the example of inimitable heroes', 126.
[746] As Scenna, 1937, 81 notes, 'As a teacher of history and politics in a rather reactionary city [Bodmer] felt that he was especially liable to official censure'.

indistinguishable.[747] Notably, Fuseli seems to have shared this attitude concerning the relationship of fact and fiction when making the figure drawings now considered.

These drawings Fuseli processed from the studies he had made from antique and Renaissance art.[748] While those works resembled their sources, these drawings evidence how Fuseli experimented with character types derived from these references. These drawings might, therefore, be thought transitional, for they allow insight into how Fuseli moved from observation and recording to realising those figures that featured in his more finalised compositions, pictures that are further considered later in this chapter.

In 1771 Fuseli made two almost identical studies for the figure of Macbeth (Fig. 96). Clearly, both are derived from the *Horse-tamer* statue (Fig. 25, also see Fuseli's drawings after this sculpture, Fig. 44a-d). Only the Macbeth figures' arm positions differ from those of Phidias's sculpture. Fuseli has retained the pronounced musculature and dynamic stance of Phidias's statue, making the Macbeths seem forward thrusting and ostensibly noble. The pose of these Macbeths, and more particularly Fuseli's choice of this classical source, again reflect how his perception and reworking of visual materials was affected by the mannered posturing he had previously witnessed on the London theatre stage. As with, for example, David Garrick's attention to the dramatic potential of 'individual points of passion',[749] so

[747] This emphasis in Bodmer's creative work has been noted by Scenna (1937, 147). Torbruegge (1968) contends that the same focus informed Bodmer's teaching.
[748] These studies were assessed in the second chapter of the thesis.
[749] Kenneth Richards, Peter Thompson (eds.), *The Eighteenth-Century English Stage*, London, 1972, 60. For more detail on the relationship of this mode of performance to Fuseli's perception of art's purpose, see Chapter Two, Part One, of this thesis.

Fuseli can be seen to maximise the Macbeths' expressiveness via the imitation of a classical source which he perceived to be suitably articulate. Yet, such a representation of Macbeth conflicted with Shakespeare's portrayal of the character, and with the way that *Macbeth* was assessed in eighteenth-century literary criticism. Dr. Johnson, in notes to his edition of Shakespeare, considered that whereas Macbeth's martial bravery might be noted, his character was despicable.[750] Considering these contexts it is clear that Fuseli's imitation of a heroically conceived classical sculpture, to underpin a depiction of an unsavoury character, does not conform to dominant artistic imitative practice, that employed by, for example, James Barry in *Philoctetes on the Island of Lemnos* (1770) (Fig. 93).[751] Barry's seeking after a clear conceptual alignment between his chosen subject and his mode of representation is not Fuseli's concern. Indeed, Fuseli's depiction of Macbeth, besides conflicting with the tenets and accepted subject matters of high art, also opposed how Macbeth was portrayed by Fuseli's contemporaries, Johann Zoffany's *David Garrick and Mrs Pritchard in Macbeth* (1768) (Fig. 97) being a more typical example.[752]

Fuseli's Macbeth figure studies reveal his interest in exploring use of an incongruous depictive mode. This method is conceptually similar to Winckelmann and Sulzer's

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[750] Johnson related, 'though the courage of Macbeth preserves some esteem, yet every reader rejoices at his fall', William K. Wimsatt (ed.), *Dr. Johnson on Shakespeare*, Middlesex, 1969, 134.
[751] This type of imitative practice also informed the work of Alexander Runciman, as can be seen in his *Achilles Dragging the Body of Hector around the Tomb of Patroclus* (c.1770), which closely imitates the figure relationships in Pietro Testa's *Achilles Dragging the Body of Hector around the Walls of Troy* (c.1648-50).
[752] Strictly speaking, in eighteenth-century academic visual art, Shakespeare was not considered to be a suitable subject through which to most clearly connote attitudes and behaviours likely to positively influence audiences' thoughts, and actions. A close analysis of the relationship of these works is carried out by Stephen L. Carr in 'Verbal-visual Relationships: Zoffany's and Fuseli's Illustrations of *Macbeth*', *Art History*, 3:4, 1980, 375-388. Zoffany's Macbeth more closely relays the emphases of Shakespeare's play; Zoffany shows an apprehensive Macbeth, clearly swayed by his wife's scheming.

interpretations of allegory and imaginative art, and practically akin to Bodmer's constructing of dramatic character types based on historical 'fanatics […] or oppressors'.[753] Commensurate with Bodmer's attribution of such protagonists as 'strong souls' Fuseli has depicted the Macbeth figures in a way which serves to complicate how they might be interpreted and, consequently, how Shakespeare's *Macbeth* might be understood and reflected upon by its audiences. Viewed in this way, it is probable that Fuseli aimed to develop figure types similar in purpose to those which featured in Bodmer's dramas, those 'little appreciated by the [common] audience'.[754] By so doing, Fuseli, like Bodmer, was increasing the connotative potentials of his art, especially how such art might serve to elevate the perceptions of persons having the insight to conceive of life other than in conventional ways.[755] Such evidence implies that Fuseli, like Bodmer, was also interested in addressing 'thinking people' rather than common spectators.[756] Art made according to this criterion was concerned with instituting improved modes of thought via which attitudes and actions might be positively altered.

Additionally, via Bodmer's teaching, Fuseli was potentially aware of Longinus's interpretation of the conflict of the gods from Book XX of the *Iliad*. Considering this event Longinus had noted that 'the passions of the gods, awe-inspiring as they are, are ungodly if not taken figuratively.'[757] This observation suggests that if certain types of representation, for instance, otherworldly subjects like Macbeth's supernatural

[753] Scenna, 1937, 77-8.
[754] *Ibid*. Bodmer celebrated Milton's satanic characters for the same reason. On this matter see Torbruegge, 1968, 156.
[755] The *Horse-tamer* figure on which the Macbeths are based can also be interpreted as conforming to Bodmer's notion of an uncompromising character, one who is not prepared to accept the traditional limitations of human existence.
[756] Scenna, 1937, 77.
[757] Torbruegge, 1968, 95.

encounters, were (incorrectly) interpreted literally, they appeared negative. Longinus's remark thus gave the artist further licence to challenge their audiences' critical acumen, via contrary modes of depiction which contested what these audiences presumed to know. As noted above, re-framing a spectatorship's understandings might best achieve the reformation of social and cultural standards. Quite plainly a purposely-incongruous art practice conflicted with dominant artistic protocol. However, an artist working in an obscure manner might effectively dispute the sureties underpinning their contemporaries' intellectual faculties.[758] Such art-making accorded well with Bodmer's attitude towards drama and with his appreciation of Homer's and Milton's creative practices to which he introduced Fuseli.[759] It is, therefore, possible to identify a parallel between Bodmer's intellectual and creative influences, and Fuseli's. Furthermore, this observation strengthens Carol Hall's assertion that Fuseli, through the scope of his work, should consequently be seen a transmitter of new ideas, not merely within the German-speaking world but, 'from one country to another', a comment that additionally accents Fuseli's aesthetic theories.[760]

The artistic incongruity here alluded to can be identified in a range of Fuseli's 'transitional figure drawings'. Between 1770 and 1779 Fuseli produced a series of studies showing young men (Fig. 98), for the most part dressed in a contemporary fashion, either brooding on some matter or apparently distressed. As with the

[758] This idea was further assessed towards the end of the previous section, regarding Fuseli's appreciation of allegory.
[759] Bodmer's appreciation of the relationships between Homer and Milton's art is relayed in detail in Torbruegge, 1968.
[760] Hall, 1985, 2. Hall is quoting Werner Paul Friedrich, 'who has contributed much to the comparative studies of European thought', in Alexander Gilchrist, *The Life of William Blake: With Selections from his Poems and other Writings*, 2nd ed., New York, 1969, I, 6.

Macbeth figures just considered these young men are modelled on Fuseli's studies after significantly posed figures; in this case Michelangelo's *Ancestors* appear to be the source (see, for example, Fig. 60). While those figures reflected stoically on the Messiah's arrival these young men seem overcome by their waiting and thinking.

The youths' depiction in contemporary dress might allude to Fuseli's dissatisfaction with contemporary society's values, as Peter Tomory has proposed. Tomory contends that while Fuseli was in Italy he was affected by a sense of the impossibility of achieving fulfilment 'in the existing state of things'.[761] He argues that Fuseli attempted to challenge this feeling by attending to, what Tomory terms, 'that recurring Northern dilemma', the need to reconcile lived experience, art and prospective human divinity.[762] Fuseli's attending to this quandary, through these factors, has been noted to be a feature common to many of his creative and intellectual influences. Additionally, these aspects recall the emphases of Fuseli's religious education which, alongside the spiritual, highlighted the issue of 'social distress', but implied that this might be resolved via 'a meeting with the living Lord'.[763] So considered, Fuseli's converting of Michelangelo's spiritual *Ancestors* into

[761] Tomory, 1972, 28. Tomory alludes to the influence of Goethe's writing on Fuseli, especially *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* and *Götz von Berlichingen*. The emphases of these two dramas plausibly reinforced Fuseli's appreciation of art-making, and his conception of being an artist. While *Young Werther* centres on a frustrated passion, *Götz von Berlichingen* emphasises the theme of liberty. In combination, these subjects underscore Fuseli's drive to achieve a mode of artistry capable of realising positive changes in appreciations of selfhood, and in one's circumstances. Connections between Fuseli's artistry and Goethe's have also been noted by Stuart Sillars in, *Painting Shakespeare – The Artist as Critic 1720-1820*, Cambridge, 2006. Sillars considers that Fuseli's drawing *Hamlet and Ophelia* (1775-76), shows Hamlet as a 'Wertheresque man of sorrows', 108.
[762] Tomory, 1972, 28, the need 'to reconcile poetry and life, spirit and flesh'.
[763] Gottfried Locher, *Zwingli's Thought, New Perspectives*, Leiden, 1981, 33-34. As this chapter's final part reveals Fuseli's use of imitation, when composing images, was underscored by a coalescing of art, human life and the prospect of higher human purpose. It should be remembered that Fuseli was ordained a Zwinglian cleric on leaving the Carolinum. The scope of Zwingli's ideas, and their affect on Fuseli, is dealt with by Camilla Smith in, *Religion, Morality and Pedagogic Methods in the Early Drawings of Henry Fuseli (1753-63)*, 2008, and Carol Hall in *Blake and Fuseli: A Study in the Transmission of Ideas*, 1985.

depictions of distressed, contemporary young men, seems to be a reflection on how being earthly, yet potentially spiritually enlightened, was the challenge to be met in order to acquire enhanced modes of perception.[764]

Another, notable, example of Fuseli's amalgamating of images that had contrary connotations is *Hamlet ponders the Murder of King Claudius* (1777-78) (Fig. 99). Two figures are placed centrally on this sheet of images, one standing, moving forward, and the other shown kneeling. These can be interpreted as Hamlet (standing), bladed weapon in hand, and Claudius (kneeling), looking heavenward (this kneeling figure echoes the postures of the saved and damned in Michelangelo's *Last Judgement*) (Fig. 100). Maintaining this devout inference Hamlet's pose appears to be derived from that of St. Peter also from this *Last Judgement* (Fig. 101).[765] However, Hamlet's face is mask-like. His visage was possibly inspired by Fuseli's remembrance of a mosaic by Dioscorides featuring masked and costumed Greek musicians, which he had seen while visiting Naples in 1775 (Fig. 102).[766] The drawing's mixed sources equate to Fuseli's observations contained in his third Academy Lecture, in which he alluded to a series of connections between classical and Shakespearean dramas, 'the shade of Patroclus and the ghost of Hamlet […] differ less in essence than in local, temporary, social modifications'.[767] The Hamlet image's characteristics also correspond with Bodmer's conception of the need to portray dramatic characters through historic forms. Fuseli's use of charged figures

[764] A similar quality is present in a pair of figures (possibly studies for future pictures) which Fuseli drew during the 1770s; the figures were drawn responses to episodes from Dante (1770-78), and that of *Melancholy* (1777).
[765] The sheet of drawings also contains a second standing figure, which is shown walking away from the central action, hand positioned despairingly over its face.
[766] See Tomory, 1972, 79.
[767] Fuseli, Lecture III, 410. Mason, 1951, 340, also reflects on Fuseli's conceptual merging of Shakespearean folklore and classical mythology.

again indicates the enduring affect that theatrical performance had on his discernment of source materials. Additionally, the Hamlet study's amalgamated religious and earthly sources is a further example of Fuseli's challenging of conventional perceptions and aesthetic tastes, a contestation that I have proposed to have also inspired his studies for Macbeth and the troubled youths.

Besides the figures representing Hamlet and Claudius Fuseli has drawn a close imitation of Michelangelo's marble *Pietà* (1498-1500) (Fig. 103). Fuseli's choosing of this subject, and its placing in relation to the actions of Hamlet and Claudius, can be interpreted to be a further means that he utilised to challenge his contemporaries' tendencies to assume a complete understanding of this (and comparable) dramatic episode(s). The *Pietà*, a subject contemplating Christ's death, and highlighting a mother's loss, fuses mortal and supernatural states. Likewise, Fuseli's Hamlet and Claudius are formed from his imitation of similarly opposing references. Furthermore, Fuseli's combining of an artistic fiction, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, with the authority of biblical narrative, precludes deducing these figures' meanings, singly or collectively, through conventional interpretative strategies. For, as Reynolds had observed late in his *Discourses* 'I believe it may be considered as a general rule, that no Art can be engrafted with success on another art [for] each has its own peculiar modes of both imitating nature, and of deviating from it […] These deviations, more especially, will not bear transplantation to another soil.'[768] Consequently, through this drawing, Fuseli appears to infer that if elevated insight is to be attained modifications must be

[768] Reynolds, Discourse XIII, 210. In Jane Martineau (et al), *Shakespeare in Art*, 2003, 97, it is suggested that Reynolds's observation was prompted by discussions over the proposed Boydell Shakespeare Gallery, at Alderman Boydell's house, Hampstead, in November 1786.

made to usual methods of inferring significance from the subject matters and forms of visual art.

Fuseli's visual response to *Hamlet* is mysterious and, by conventional standards, illogical. His imitation, and re-use, of visual quotations from Renaissance art derails how academic art theory, and practice, sought to characterise such visual resources as verifiable means through which to endorse human virtue and intellectual surety. Instead, Fuseli presents collected images from the material and moral worlds. Through a process of visual abstraction Fuseli has amalgamated these sources into representations which connect the actual to the marvellous. Fuseli's graphic mode, in keeping with Breitinger's advice on developing and using the imagination to attain increased insights, seeks to enhance perceptions and understandings by encouraging the viewer's imagination to act as 'a faculty of the soul'.[769] Winckelmann had proposed that this faculty was realisable if the individual, as had Fuseli through his manner of drawing, forsook 'the common path'.[770] Only by using such alternative thought processes and actions might a more significant self-understanding, and knowledge of experience, be attained.[771] The three examples of Fuseli's 'transitional figure drawings' assessed suggest that he was interested in modifying accepted

[769] Breitinger, *Critische Dichtkunst*, 286.
[770] Fuseli's Winckelmann translation, 56.
[771] Marcia Allentuck provides further evidence for so locating Fuseli's conceptual and visual comprehension. She has revealed Fuseli's contribution to the 1800 English translation of Johann Herder's *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, a text recognising the 'positive role of irrationality in the arts and in history', Allentuck, 'Henry Fuseli and J. G. Herder's *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* in Britain: an unremarked connection', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 35:1, 1974, 113-120, 113. The work was originally published in four parts in German between 1784 and 1791. Its first English translation (1800), in which Fuseli played a large part, was published by Joseph Johnson. The ideas it communicated corresponded to those Herder had forwarded in his *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (*Another Philosophy of History Concerning the Development of Mankind*, 1774), which Fuseli had read on publication through a copy he had received from Lavater. Herder had been an early advocate of Fuseli and his work, having received from Lavater examples of not only Fuseli's Italian drawings, but also his poems.

analytical procedures. The four studies, which he made for frescoes based on Shakespeare's plays, further evidence his drive to realise such change.

Fuseli's Shakespeare fresco designs, for *Twelfth Night*, *Macbeth*, *The Tempest* and *King Lear* (Fig. 104a-d), show scenes from the plays incorporated into an architectonic structure akin to that of the Sistine Chapel ceiling.[772] It is not my intention to analyse these drawing's specific iconographies. Rather, in keeping with Karen Junod's convincing assessment of Fuseli's Shakespeare frescoes, attention is placed on his visual equating of the monumental hallowed plan of Michelangelo's fresco scheme with prominent episodes selected from the chosen Shakespeare plays.[773] Fuseli's interest in so using Shakespeare again shows the enduring influence of his own Zurich schooling. In Zurich, Bodmer had grounded his teaching, concerning how particular artistic inventions were best suited to the imaginative elevation of mind and soul, on Shakespeare's work in conjunction with that of Homer, biblical narratives, and Milton's writing. Formally, if realised, Fuseli's Shakespeare frescoes would have required viewers to direct their attention upwards, to literally look above themselves and engage with higher phenomena. Fuseli noted that Michelangelo's visual scheme for the Sistine ceiling was highly suitable for inducing such upward aspiration; he observed that 'we stand with awe before Michelangelo,

[772] Several scholars have made analyses of these drawings, including, Schiff, 1973 and 1975, Chayes, *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities*, LXXXV, 2, 1982, Lentzsch (ed.) 2005, and Sillars, 2006. According to Alan Cunningham's *The Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors and Architects* (6 Vols., London, 1830-33), Fuseli had, 'imagined a splendid temple, which he […] would fill with pictures from his favourite poet [featuring] the major heroes and heroines […] the changing fates of life [and] scenes of feeling, the happiness of heaven, the tortures of Hell, all the supernatural, all the terrible', cited Schiff, 1973, 109.
[773] See Junod, 'Henry Fuseli's Pragmatic use of Aesthetics: His Epic Illustrations of Macbeth', *Word & Image*, 19:3, 2003, 148-49.

and tremble at the height to which he elevates us'.[774] Fuseli, by associating Shakespeare's writing with such an affecting, sublime experience, one also offered by the biblical themes of the Sistine ceiling, was connecting Shakespeare's words with the tenor of religious events. So framed, Shakespeare's work was made to effectively transcended time and place and present the prospect for realising an alternative form of 'moral tendency or of some doctrine useful to mankind'.[775] Below, this chapter's final part attends to how other of Fuseli's drawings effect similar states, by reinforcing relationships between mysterious experiences and the artwork's ethical potentials.

So far, this chapter has indicated the particularity of Fuseli's conception of artistic imitation. Also noted has been how his appreciation of art practice was informed by a need for the artist, and the audiences for their work, to enlarge their perceptions of themselves and their interpretations of their experiences. The chapter has shown how these requirements necessitated the production of ethically and philosophically-grounded aesthetic experiences. In respect of these emphases, Fuseli was taught that mysteriously charged aesthetic situations were most suited to achieving ethical and philosophical goals. He was instructed that such mysterious experiences had the potential to elevate both artists' and audience's minds. Furthermore, Fuseli was led to understand that the artist, while exhibiting their greatness of mind through their work's form, might more surely indicate their spiritual majesty via the subjects which they depicted. Thus, the highest type of art, a product of the most elevated form of artistry, was determined by the particular attention it placed on structure and content.

[774] Fuseli, Lecture II, 384.
[775] Torbruegge, 1968, 206. Torbruegge quotes from Knowles, *The Life and Writings of Henry Fuseli*, II, 166.

As established, Fuseli's art conformed to this specification through the forms he chose and visually processed and via his artwork's conceptual/thematic emphases.

Part 3: The nobility of self

While the underlying formal characteristics of Fuseli's drawings have been assessed, this (final) part of the chapter more thoroughly examines those frameworks informing his understanding of how his work's appearance, and subject matter, might address the elevation of human consciousness. This part of the chapter also considers Fuseli's identification of which visual forms and themes ought to be imitated to most surely exhibit artistic integrity and purpose. It is argued that Fuseli considered that the highest form of visual art was denoted through particular subject types, and that these should be thought to be devices for evoking, a sense of, mystical experience. Consequently, in this part of the chapter, a range of Fuseli's drawings from the 1770s are analytically unpacked to show how they portrayed, and ostensibly served as, a form of mystifying, yet transcendent and effectively religious experience. However, to begin, those conceptual frameworks informing Fuseli's particular understandings of such mystery are examined. These are subsequently used to underpin interpretations of his use of supernatural subjects. Comparisons are made between Fuseli's and his contemporaries' representations of these themes to show that Fuseli's understandings, and representations, of supernatural subject matter owed much to his appreciation of mystic experience. The evidence of these assessments underscores the chapter's ultimate assertion that Fuseli's visual art served as a device for distinctively elevating

both the human mind and soul; subsequently, Fuseli's drawings are analysed to show how they functioned to effect alterations in both human perceptions and understandings. Consequently, it is claimed that Fuseli's drawings of the 1770s were designed to raise his audience's, and his own, prospect for attaining intellectual, perceptual and spiritual enhancements. To appropriately frame this investigation attention is turned initially to how Fuseli conceptually aligned himself, and his own artistic activity, with the personal characteristics and the artistry he associated with those elevated creative individuals he wished to imitate.[776]

Imitating the condition of great artistic mind and character

In Italy Fuseli made several 'self-portrait' drawings, including *Fantasy Portrait in the style of Reynolds* (1770-78) (Fig. 105) and *Caricature of the Artist Leaving Italy* (1778) (Fig. 106). These images are significant because while they again show Fuseli's adopting/adapting of academic 'visual language', they also reveal how he imitated other visual styles and forms in order to challenge the verity of dominant aesthetic conventions. With these self-portrayals Fuseli emphasises the contra-dictory nature of his art practice (and of his self-conception) in order to represent himself as an artist differing in type from the norm.

[776] Previously in this thesis some attention has been given to this theme, notably regarding Fuseli's, conceptual, assessments of Homer's and Michelangelo's art.

Fantasy Portrait in the style of Reynolds shows a man facially resembling Fuseli fashionably dressed in a contemporary gentleman's elegant attire.[777] Here, Fuseli's drawing style does not match that which he usually employed while in Italy. Rather, the style he uses suggests Reynolds's notational graphic technique used when Reynolds was studying the antique in the 1750s (Fig. 107). Fuseli seemingly imitates Reynolds's – academic – 'visual language' to present himself 'in the style of' Reynolds, as a refined proto-academic artist and gentleman. The serenely graceful pose which Fuseli gives himself suggests that of the *Apollo Belvedere* (Fig. 32c), 'the very sculpture singled out by Winckelmann as […] ideal […] and sensuously beautiful' a statue whose forms and posture were typical of the classical art favoured by academic practitioners.[778] So contextualised, and considering Fuseli's opinion of normative aesthetic appreciations of the antique, his self-depiction might be thought to reflect his view of academic artists' imitations of classical figures, that is, as being ineffectual. Consequently, this drawing can be interpreted as a satire in which Fuseli plays the central role in mocking that generally conceived of as 'conventional (artistic) identity'.

In contrast, *Caricature of the Artist Leaving Italy* shows a bold, physical and contesting figure. Fuseli's drawing style resembles that which he used in his studies after the *Horse-tamer* sculpture and in his figure drawings from Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel designs. The body that Fuseli depicts appears a reversed, yet close,

[777] The way this man's face is represented is a close approximation to how Fuseli's countenance was depicted by James Northcote, in his *Portrait of Henry Fuseli* (1778). It this, therefore, probable that the face Fuseli draws is his own.
[778] Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History,* New Haven, 1994, 118. Potts notes that in the eighteenth century the *Apollo Belvedere* 'functioned as the epitome of ideal manhood', rather than 'a muscular, solidly virile bruiser like the *Farnese Hercules*'.

approximation of the *Laocoön's* central figure (Fig. 2)[779] which, in his *Lectures*, Fuseli indicated was a collection of affirmative human attributes moulded into a powerful hybrid of the highest human potential.[780] Considered in this way, and in contrast to the comparative insipidity of the figure in the *Fantasy Portrait*, Fuseli's *Caricature* demonstrates plausibly how he interpreted himself and his own potential. It also provides a meditation on the professional travails awaiting him on leaving Italy and his attitude to facing these. Fuseli portrays himself as super-human.[781]

Fuseli, through the *Caricature* especially, demonstrates his identification with Bodmer's opinion of the artist as one who contests norms so as to provide alternative interpretations of existence. The manner of Fuseli's drawing shows that he too considered the creative-self to be a pivotal force for the transformation of accepted perspectives.[782] Moreover, Fuseli, by playing the central role in both the *Caricature* and the *Fantasy Portrait*, further reveals his astute appreciation of Garrick's acting. In both images Fuseli directs attention to how self-image could be interpreted. In *Fantasy Portrait* Fuseli depicts himself indeterminately. In keeping with Garrick's stage-craft Fuseli appears as himself (via his countenance) while simultaneously seeming to be someone else (via his pose and costume). Consequently, Fuseli can

[779] This figure is also similar in pose to one of Michelangelo's *Ignudi,* framing the *The Sacrifice of Noah*, in the Sistine Chapel.
[780] Although struggling, 'the victim of *one* great expression [Fuseli's emphasis]', Fuseli conceived that the sculpture's central figure was, nevertheless, dignified in defiance of his fate, see Fuseli, Lecture I, 376.
[781] The travails in question are indicated by Fuseli's depiction of three mice on a schematic map of England, to his figure's left. These mice are identified as 'Oz. Humphrey', 'G. Romney' and 'B. West', three artist rivals – and rivals via the mode of art they practiced - for Fuseli in what was to become his adopted homeland. In his '2nd Ode on Art', Fuseli had dismissed academic artists as the 'vermin of art' who appeared in Rome, 'blown by the winds' - this ode has been translated by A.M. Atkins, ''Both Turk and Jew': Notes on the Poetry of Henry Fuseli, with Some Translations', *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly*, Spring 1983, 206-11, 209-10.
[782] For more information on this idea, see the previous chapter of this thesis.

be judged to 'play with' the idea of 'identicality' which, Dror Wahrman has persuasively argued, was the concept of self most frequently adhered to during the eighteenth century, 'the collective grouping highlighting whatever a person has in common with others'.[783] Fuseli, by satirising such a notion of identity, reveals the pitfalls associated with accepting self-hood as continually mutable, as a performance seeking after unobtainable ideals. In contrast, Fuseli's *Caricature* image determinedly asserts how consolidating uncommon, but more robust human traits, provided for a less superficial conception of identity. Thus, Fuseli's self-portrait drawings show him manipulating the visual as 'an imaginary stage under his own theatrical direction', resulting in the act of drawing serving as device for realising Fuseli's 'own meta-theatre'.[784] As will be seen, this conception of drawing also underpinned Fuseli's more finalised pictorial compositions.

Fuseli's *Caricature* also demonstrates his challenging of accepted normality, his contesting of standard interpretations of classical art and human nature, through scatological references. This emphasis originally featured in his drawings *Till Eulenspiegel's Bequest to the Canon of Mölln* (1758-60) (Fig. 108) and the *Carol Singers* (1763) (Fig. 109), whose lower portion shows defecating figures. In this respect Fuseli's 1778 drawing re-references his thematic interests of the previous decade which, in turn, corresponded with issues raised by his Zurich schooling.[785] Notably, in the *Caricature*, he imitated forms associated with his favoured visual

[783] *The Making of the Modern Self*, *Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*, New Haven, 2004, 276.
[784] Petra Maisak, *Henry Fuseli – 'Shakespeare's Painter'*, Pape and Burwick (eds.), 1996, 70.
[785] For detail on the figures in *Till Eulenspiegel's Bequest to the Canon of Mölln* and in the *Carol Singers*, their use and significance for Fuseli's early art work in respect of his religious education, see Smith 2008, for example, Chapter One. In the *Introduction* to this work Smith also provides a detailed, alternative, interpretation of the *Caricature of the Artist Leaving Italy*, in respect of Fuseli's early art and in context of the themes informing his schooling.

artists, Agesander (sculptor of the *Laocoön*), Phidias and Michelangelo. Fuseli's interest in imitating these artists is traceable to his Zurich education. Bodmer, via his appraisals of Homer's and Milton's writings and his contextualising of biblical narratives, had provided the foundations for Fuseli's appreciation of Phidias's and Michelangelo's art.[786] The principal characteristic that Fuseli understood to connect all these sources' artistic power was 'sublimity of conception',[787] an attribute that he recognised was necessary to imitate, and a quality which he particularly identified with Michelangelo and his artwork.

As will be recalled, this thesis has already established that Fuseli was potentially aware of Michelangelo's artistic prowess before 1770. In Bodmer's *Critische Betrachtungen* (1741) Michelangelo was the only visual artist identified as capable of enriching the imagination in ways comparable to Homer and Milton.[788] Fuseli, in his *Lectures*, apparently developed Bodmer's perception of Michelangelo noting that his Sistine Chapel designs should be placed 'on the same basis of existence' as the *Iliad* and *Paradise Lost*.[789] The 'grandeur of form' characterising all these works stemmed from their shared 'sublimity of conception' which in Michelangelo's case was fully manifest in the *terribilvia* of his *Last Judgement*.[790]

[786] The degree to which Bodmer's ideas coloured Fuseli's art theory can be gauged from *Lectures* I, III and X.
[787] Fuseli's opening remark on Michelangelo given in his second Lecture, 382.
[788] The *Critische Betrachtungen* was published Zurich, 1741. Both Anthony Scenna (1937) and Marilyn Torbruegge (1968), identify 36 of this text as the source of Bodmer's appreciation of Michelangelo's artistic quality.
[789] Fuseli, Lecture IV, 440.
[790] Fuseli, Lecture II, 382.

Marilyn Torbruegge has noted that Longinus identified sublimity of conception as the principal requirement for significant art.[791] This thesis's previous chapter assessed how Longinus's interpretation of the sublime influenced Fuseli's education. Fuseli rated Longinus's analytical faculties highly, noting him to be 'the universal voice of genuine criticism'.[792] Fuseli's *Lectures*, especially in the ways in which they connected Michelangelo's art with sublimity of conception, indicated that Michelangelo produced work according to valued Longinian creative criteria. Thus, Fuseli can be judged to associate the terror and astonishment associated with Michelangelo's Sistine fresco designs with Longinus's guidance on the sublime mind's use, advice communicated to Fuseli by Bodmer. So considered, Fuseli's referencing of a Michelangelo-esque 'visual language' in his *Caricature* seems to be a device for connecting his own artistic prowess with that of the Renaissance master, and with concepts of artistic invention which Fuseli appreciated as related.

Michelangelo's particular creative relevance was his use of a sublime mindset and an artistically terrible manner. In the treatise on *Einbildungskraft*, co-authored by Bodmer and Breitinger, citation was made of Longinus's thoughts on training the mind towards a similarly sublime condition.[793] Key to the success of Longinus's concept was the provision of circumstances which allowed the mind to accept imaginatively produced phenomena in preference to materials from the observable world. The most suitable means for providing these attractive imaginative forms was

[791] See Torbruegge, 1968, 205. It should be noted that like Bodmer and Breitinger, Longinus considered poetry to be the highest art form. As was reinforced in the second part of this chapter, the Zurich scholars had sought to connect the artistic potentials of the literary and visual arts.
[792] Fuseli, Lecture I, 366.
[793] The treatise on *Einbildungskraft* was published in Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1727. For more information see Torbruegge, 1968, 112.

the carefully crafted artwork which, when so employed, was also thought to be spiritually empowering. Fuseli had suggested his awareness of what characterised this type of art through the contra-dictive features of his *Caricature* drawing. He also alluded to it in his *Lectures*, noting how Michelangelo's visual inventions for the Sistine enabled 'all self-consideration [to be] absorbed in the sublimity of the sentiment'.[794] In other words, Fuseli conceived of Michelangelo's designs as so unearthly that he believed they could became a vehicle of spiritual transport because of the degree to which they could engage viewers' imaginations. Here again can be detected a parallel between Fuseli's conception of Michelangelo's art, Fuseli's previous familiarity with the imaginative enthralment he associated with contemporary theatre, and with Lord Kames's aesthetics. Effectively, experience of Michelangelo's artwork could enlarge viewers' perceptions and uplift their souls. Michelangelo's art was, therefore, considered to serve principled purposes. The imaginative conditions and possibilities provided by his work resulted from his creative powers which were manifest in his visual forms. Comparable use of pointed visual references characterise Fuseli's two portrait drawings considered above, as they do his art in general.

Fuseli conceived of the above indicated imaginative, artistic effects as devout, because they amalgamated human and unearthly situations.[795] He noted that classical art had a comparable emphasis, his *Lectures* record religious devotion as

[794] Fuseli, Lecture III, 425.
[795] This mix of characteristics featured prominently in the theories of Bodmer and Breitinger, a mark, in part, of their association with Zwinglian religious doctrine. For more information on the relationship of the earthly and supernatural in Fuseli's education, see Smith, 2008, Torbruegge, 1968, and the remainder of this chapter.

'the first mover of [ancient] art'.[796] Moreover, Fuseli conceived that Michelangelo had absorbed this characteristic into his work after studying artists like Phidias. Evidence of Michelangelo's grasp of how classical artists had used the unearthly, as the means of attaining great mind and soul, could be seen in the Sistine Chapel designs. There Michelangelo had, according to Fuseli, 'planned for painting what Homer had planned for poetry, the epic part, which, with the utmost simplicity of a whole, should unite magnificence of plan and endless variety of subordinate parts.'[797] Before viewing the Sistine ceiling, Fuseli had made similarly sublime images for Bodmer's biblically-inspired literary epic *Die Noachide* (1765) (Fig. 110).[798] Therefore, prior to 1770, Fuseli arguably recognised the challenges associated with producing art in accord with the ostensibly ethical tenets he associated with the greatest artistic minds and souls.

Among Fuseli's drawn illustrations for *Die Noachide* were a number of intense, impassioned images, including the fall of the giants in the wake of the thunder of the Almighty and the deluge itself.[799] Actually, one of Fuseli's earliest drawings (the *Fall of the Damned*, 1752) (Fig. 111) shows that he had been interested in similarly wondrous, tumultuous subjects from an early age. The theme of the eventual fate of

[796] Fuseli, Lecture I, 349. Fuseli noted that the ancients 'fancied themselves of divine origin', and this he believed largely determined their art's appearance.
[797] Torbruegge, 1968, 205.
[798] Published Berlin, 1765, and largely unfavourably received. However, Wieland defended it in a 400-page treatise entitled *Abhandlung von den Schönheiten des epischen Gedichts Der Noah*, Zurich, 1753. For more on Wieland's favourable opinion see Torbruegge, 1968, 183-84. *Die Noachide*, although based on the theme of the Great Flood, was conceived by Bodmer in the spirit of Milton's *Paradise Lost*; Marilyn Torbruegge notes that Milton's subject matter was 'only a few biblical chapters away from the story of the deluge', Torbruegge, 1968, 176.
[799] Fuseli's drawings are now lost but Christian Gottfried Mathes' etchings after them give a sense of their characteristics. Eight of these prints exist. For more detail on these see Schiff, 1973 and David H. Weinglass, *Prints and Engraved Illustrations, by and after Henry Fuseli: A Catalogue Raisonne*, Hants, 1994.

humankind attracted Fuseli's attention further while he was studying Renaissance art in Italy during the 1770s. Besides examining such subject matter in the Sistine Chapel (Michelangelo's *Last Judgement*) Fuseli also considered the similar emphases of Luca Signorelli's Orvieto Cathedral frescoes, those showing the *End of the World*, the *Coming of the Anti-Christ* and the *Last Judgement* (Fig. 112).[800] Fuseli's interest in these subjects would have been enhanced by his previous theological training which accentuated the extent to which human spiritual salvation depended on attaining knowledge of oneself prior to God's judgement.[801] The themes of Bodmer's *Die Noachide* would have reminded Fuseli of this religious schooling, while encouraging a mindset advantageous to his later viewing of art in Italy. Fuseli's artistic outlook, besides being partly shaped by his religious background, was arguably also conditioned by Bodmer's appreciation of the most insightful form of artistry, that practiced by Homer especially, his own key creative reference. Bodmer believed that art-making should have prophetic aims.

When teaching Fuseli Bodmer had presented Homer's writing as a counterpart of biblical narrative. Bodmer, following Longinus's lead, had compared a storm in the *Odyssey* with a similar incident in Psalm 107; Longinus had previously associated the Creation in *Genesis* with a passage from the *Iliad*.[802] Through his analogy Longinus sought to highlight nobility of conception. Bodmer, by re-framing Longinus's thinking, emphasised how a cohesive artistic idea could be indicated through

[800] Fuseli's third Academy Lecture (423) emphasised how Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* was an 'immense plain' on which Michelangelo had 'wound up the destiny of man'. For Fuseli's own responses to Renaissance religious frescoes, see his letter to James Northcote of 29 September 1778, in David H. Weinglass, *The Collected English Letters of Henry Fuseli*, London, 1982, 17-18.
[801] For more information on this aspect of Fuseli's understanding of theology see, for example, Smith, 2008, and Locher, 1981.
[802] See Torbruegge, 1968, 115.

appropriate considerations, selections and combinations of source materials. Bodmer conceived that Homer's use of this mode of artistry, and also that of artists who, subsequently, were capable of working in a comparable manner, proclaimed his (their) profundity of insight into human nature and into the nature of existence. Apparently, Fuseli came to similarly conceive of the artist. As will be recalled, in his seventh Lecture, Fuseli (reminiscent of Bodmer's celebration of Homer's artistry) had stated that careful choice, judgement and taste should guide artistic imitation; 'choice directed by judgement and taste constitutes the essence of imitation.'[803] Furthermore, Fuseli's third Lecture (Invention) indicated that prominent among an artist's subject choices should be those merging past, present and future events.[804] Fuseli's words show him musing on how an artist should engage with the everyday and with impending situations. Fuseli, like Bodmer, considered that the artist should be capable of prophetic insights. Actually, as Camilla Smith has convincingly argued, Fuseli's earliest drawings also emphasised past, present and future themes, and this quality marked his notion of art as conflictive. She states, 'Fuseli's [early] drawings suggest that he was clearly interested in capturing past religious history, contemporary debates and offering the viewer his sceptical vision of the future of mankind'.[805] The idea of the splendid, insightful creative thought promoted in Bodmer's teaching, apparently influenced Fuseli's long-term understanding of artistic procedure. Making art was a means to contest understood ideas of self and of human experience.

[803] See Fuseli, Lecture VII, 491.
[804] See Lecture III, 419; the artist paints 'life […] the past, the future'. Fuseli also made this point, in slightly different form, in his *Aphorisms*, see Knowles, *The Life and Writings*, 1831, Vol. 3, 82.
[805] Smith, 2008, 192.

Bodmer's appreciation of Homer's prophetic artistry was, besides Longinus's *On the Sublime*, influenced by Thomas Blackwell's *Inquiry into the Life and the Writings of Homer* (1735), a text Bodmer had partly translated in 1743.[806] In common with Blackwell, Bodmer had acknowledged Homer to be an ''Originalgeist' or 'Ur-poet''.[807] Consequently, Homer's art was timeless and through it everyday events were elevated 'to a higher level of reality.'[808] By designating Homer an 'Ur-poet' Bodmer was inferring that not only was his work prototypical in nature, but that Homer himself was prophetic. As such, Homer, an example of a great mind capable of providing grand images, might also be considered to have used the conceptions underpinning these to realise his own spiritual transcendence.[809]

Bodmer's identification of Homer as an 'Ur-poet' and prophet assists in shedding further light on Fuseli's interest in drawing Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel oracles, the *Prophets*, *Sibyls* and *Ancestors*.[810] Chapter Two of this thesis focused on how Fuseli adapted his graphic mode to communicate these figures' intense introspection.[811] In particular, Fuseli was noted to focus on how the bodily attitudes of Michelangelo's oracles indicated their remove from the petty constraints and conventions that

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[806] See Karen Junod, 'Henry Fuseli's Pragmatic use of Aesthetics: His Epic Illustrations of Macbeth', *Word & Image*, 19:3, 2003, 138-150, 140. For a discussion of Blackwell's ideas see Burton Feldman and Robert Richardson, *The Rise of Modern Mythology 1680-1860*, Bloomington, Ind., 1972, and Kirsti Simonsuuri, *Homer's Original Genius. Eighteenth-Century Notions of the Early Greek Epic (1688-1798)*, Cambridge, 1979.
[807] Junod, 2003, 140.
[808] *Ibid*.
[809] Between 1778 and 1781 Fuseli painted *Self Portrait with Bodmer and a Bust of Homer*, an image reinforcing Fuseli's identification with an august intellectual company. Fuseli also made two highly worked portrait drawings of Bodmer (1778-79), one full face the other a three-quarter view, a mark of his attachment to his tutor.
[810] It can be assumed that familiarity with the Zwinglian concept of cleric-prophet would have also contributed to Fuseli's interest in such subjects.
[811] The visual qualities Fuseli that extracted from Michelangelo's oracular figures can also be seen to underpin those drawings Fuseli made of quiet, introspective subjects, such as *Melancholy* (1777), *Pastoral Scene I* (1777-78), *The Shepherd's Dream* (1793), *Solitude at Dawn* (1794-96), and *Silence* (1799-1801).

characterise everyday existence. Fuseli's drawings inferred higher forms of activity. In this regard they conform to Bodmer's identification that the greatest art and artists, emphasised other than normal human experiences. By so representing Michelangelo's oracles Fuseli announced his identification with the characteristics distinguishing the highest forms of art and life's greatest purpose, enhanced spiritual self-awareness, something for which his theological background had primed him. For Fuseli, necessary to pronouncing his elevated condition was making art of a certain type.[812]

Further presaging Fuseli's interest in Michelangelo's *Prophets* was Bodmer's written drama *Oedipus*, which had foregrounded the theme of oracular activity.[813] In this drama Bodmer, through the character of Teiresias, had announced that the ancient gods were, 'nothing more than the forces and endowments which are innate in the very nature of divine, mortal, human creatures'.[814] As Anthony Scenna argues, Bodmer's grounding as an eighteenth-century intellectual meant that he was inclined to distrust 'the obscurantism and arbitrary power of the priests as spokesmen for the gods.'[815] Via Teiresias Bodmer was suggesting that all humans had latent potentials which the ancients presumed were the preserve of divinities. However, means were required for convincing people that they were inherently divine. In *Oedipus* Bodmer was quite sure how this should be achieved. Enhanced spiritual wisdom, rather than

[812] For more on Fuseli's appreciation of Michelangelo's comprehension of the highest human prospect, and how Michelangelo's own soul was so inspired, see Knowles, *The Life*, Vol.2, 1831, 161-66. Indeed, judging from the numerous references in Fuseli's *Lectures* to Michelangelo and Homer's shared creative and conceptual prowess, Fuseli considered them equally prophetic of artistic and principled renown, see, for instance, Lecture III, 420 and Lecture IV, 440.
[813] Bodmer wrote *Oedipus* between March 1759 and November 1760, see Scenna 1937, 35-38. *Oedipus* was written in the spirit of Bodmer's classical inspiration Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*.
[814] Scenna, 1937, 37. Teiresias's words are from Act 5, scene 4, of *Oedipus*, 312.
[815] *Ibid*.

being identified solely with the supernatural domain, should be considered to be within humans' grasp.[816]

Bodmer's conception of human oracular wisdom meshed with the emphases of Zwinglian belief, through which Fuseli was also educated. At the Carolinum Fuseli was introduced to the idea that human destiny was largely dependent upon effective self-governance.[817] Principal to establishing this degree of self-formation was the gaining of a most complete sense of individual identity which, as Fuseli's Zurich education stressed, was only possible if a person endeavoured to consider themselves in the 'hour of decision before God'.[818] This was the moment, Zwingli asserted, that man 'learns to know himself'.[819] According to this precept, a person attained 'oracular insight' that enabled them to realise their elevated potential. Consequently, individuals could gain an augmented sense of virtue and, as Longinus had suggested, become, as had Homer, sublimely magnificent.[820] As indicated throughout this chapter, Bodmer believed human thought and action should be founded on ethical principles. Absolutely necessary for this goal's achievement was a need for individuals to renounce interest in inconsequential everyday events. Rather,

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[816] Bodmer's proposal is comparable with the Zwinglian concept of predestination, which suggested that all people were – potentially – elect (believers), but only when they were made fully self-aware could they recognise their highest potentials.
[817] For further information see, for example, Locher, 1981, 190-95.
[818] Locher, 1981, 98.
[819] *Ibid*., 192, footnote 233. As indicated in the *Introduction* to this thesis, this conception of self has much in common with John Locke's idea of 'the person', which he characterised as possessed of 'identity-of-consciousness', a distinguishing sense of selfhood. For a more detailed discussion of Locke's ideas, in respect of commonplace eighteenth-century ideas of human identity, see Christopher Fox, *Locke and the Scriblerians: Identity and Consciousness in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Berkeley, 1988, and Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self, Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*, New Haven, 2004. Also see Smith, 2008, 114 for assessment of Fuseli's early knowledge of Locke's theories.
[820] See Torbruegge, 1968, 111-113. Again, this idea of sublime magnificence can be related to the state the person achieved via the elevated level of consciousness required by Zwinglian faith.

attention should be turned to situations that were grand, strange and rare.[821] Whereas Fuseli's artwork in general emphasised grand or strange subjects, it is notable that during the 1770s he was attracted to themes concerned with the revelation of human destiny. His drawing *Samuel Appears to Saul in the Presence of the Witch of Endor* (1777) (Fig. 68) is a prominent example of his interest in this subject.[822]

For this prophetic topic Fuseli chose figures to demonstrate the mystical import he evidently wished to be associated with the theme.[823] The figure of Samuel is based on God from Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel *Creation of Eve* (Fig. 113), while that of Saul is derived from a relief-carved classical figure, the *Baccante Morente* (Fig. 114). Meanwhile, the witch is based on the kneeling woman in the foreground of Pellegrino Tibaldi's *Sermon of John the Baptist* (Fig. 115).[824] In combination, these sources provide a powerfully resonant compendium of contrasting figure poses a visual strategy (as noted in the previous chapter) that Fuseli used to evoke sublimity and revered themes. His considered arranging of these figures suggests an ambience in keeping with that which Christian Klemm associates with the sublime (as it was understood by Fuseli). The scene infers 'the *tremendum* of original religious experience [Klemm's emphasis]' [825] an event which tallies with the Zwinglian 'hour of decision before God'. From his Zurich schooling Fuseli understood that the sublime's

[821] For further information on this aspect of Bodmer's theory see Torbruegge, 1968, especially 115-117
[822] Fuseli made two versions of this image, both dated 1777.
[823] As indicated earlier in this chapter, Fuseli was particularly attracted to prophetic subjects and those concerning human destiny more broadly.
[824] Schiff suggests Fuseli knew of Tibaldi's work from Zanoti's book of engravings after paintings by the artist and Niccolos dell'Abbate, published Venice, 1756, see Schiff, 1975, 97.
[825] Lentzsch (ed.), 2005, 90. Klemm is referring to the affects attributed to the concept of the sublime in which Fuseli had been schooled.

terrifying properties shocked the experiencing subject out of their usual mode of comprehension, replacing this with a 'frightening and irrational experience', possessed of a 'terrible power', a circumstance 'wholly different from […] profane [everyday experience]'.[826]

This correspondence between the sublime moment and 'the *tremendum* of […] religious experience' appropriately presages Fuseli's unsettling, and otherworldly accented, drawing of Saul and the Witch of Endor . Indeed, this image's setting reinforces the scenario's uncommon state. Fuseli has portrayed the drawing's background as a mass of multi-directional swathes of ink wash, suggesting supernatural disturbance of the earthly plane. In effect, this picture's amalgamated components combine to form an affective, religiously nuanced, viewing arena.[827] This heightened, unearthly atmosphere can equally be judged to be commensurate with the disconcerting properties which Lord Kames had associated with the waking dream state.[828] So considered, Fuseli utilises drawing to suggest an affirmative mysterious happening. The following sub-section more fully examines how Fuseli adapted his drawings to convey this purpose.

[826] Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane, The Nature of Religion*, New York, 1959, 9-11.
[827] In this thesis's previous chapter this characteristic was argued to identify Fuseli's particular approach to depicting the sublime.
[828] In the previous part of this chapter a similar point was made concerning Fuseli's conception of allegory – he appreciated it as an intense, imaginative vision.

Mysterious experiences: Drawing, a means for elevating mind and enhancing character

This final sub-section of the chapter more fully considers Fuseli's appreciation of art in respect of the prophetic and religious. Additionally, attention is given to how Fuseli's use of these contexts enabled him to visually evoke conditions capable of inducing alterations in perception in order to enhance both the mind and soul's potentials. As the chapter, and thesis, to this point have argued, Fuseli's art-making consistently challenged and re-framed dominant visual, and theoretical, conventions. In their stead Fuseli presented what he believed to be was a more principled vision of art practice. Attending to the demands of this 'new art' required Fuseli to synthesise wide-ranging theoretical/visual discourses with contentious visual forms, source materials and graphic processes. Moreover, Fuseli's distinct appreciation of the form and potentials of visual art required him to adopt a particular view of the artist and their role in society and culture. Fuseli, inspired by his Zurich education, perceived artists and their work to be engaged in the vital task of elevating human thought and possibilities. So motivated, Fuseli framed his artistry through reference to a select band of artistic mentors, including Homer, Shakespeare and Michelangelo, and perceived himself as similarly employed in a drive to improve the nature of visual art and its audiences.

This sub-section argues that Fuseli's art-making was concerned with visual form and its status regardless of the subject matter he selected. No matter whether Fuseli's inspiration was Shakespearean tragedy or Michelangelian otherworldliness, he

judged all of his chosen creative starting-points to be commensurately concerned with enhancing human insights. At root the sub-section contends that Fuseli recognised that the above mentioned improvements to art and its audiences could be best achieved by re-crafting the visual into profoundly mysterious experiences. It is argued that through imaginative interactions with Fuseli's extra-ordinary imagery the viewer was potentially made conscious of new ways of seeing and thinking. Thus, Fuseli's drawings are identified as purposely constructed, dissenting instruments which challenged and modified viewers' perceptions and conceptions of depicted phenomena and these viewers' sense of being. Fuseli's artistry corresponded with how his formal education had contextualised discourses on the purpose of imaginative art, on the characteristics of religious experience, and on personal identity.

Most of this sub-section demonstrates how Fuseli's drawings so functioned and focuses on his images, from the 1770s, derived from Homer, Shakespeare and Milton.[829] In particular, it is observed that from these sources Fuseli selected supernatural, rather then conventionally religious, situations because he perceived these to have the most potential for developing human understandings.[830] Fuseli's depiction of unorthodox, rather than conventionally religious, episodes for this purpose has been reflected on by Camilla Smith. She reminds us that by the early 1760s Fuseli had turned away from his Zwinglian calling due largely, Smith argues, to his dislike for the 'clerical stringency of Zurich [for] the rules and regulation' of

[829] Besides these subjects, where appropriate, reference is made to drawings Fuseli produced in response to, for example, Dante.
[830] Notably, as revealed in Chapter One of this thesis, academic practice considered only the positive aspects of Christian narratives, historical events, or sanctioned classical myths, appropriate to art's ethical objectives. For example, see Reynolds's opinion on this issue, Discourse IV, 55-6.

religious life.[831] Yet, she indicates, he favoured 'some aspects [of this life] whilst rejecting others.'[832] As noted previously, Fuseli, educated through, for example, Longinus, Homer, Shakespeare and Milton, had been provided with wide-ranging source materials from which to construct an alternative vision of life's mysteries, and their relationship to the formation of human identity. Considering Smith's point, that Fuseli was inclined to observe some aspects of his theological schooling while disregarding others, it is plausible that he would endeavour to find unconventional ways of coming to terms with religious belief and the human condition.[833] Indeed, Fuseli's education had emphasised how supernatural subjects had the potential to address truth-seeking and ethical themes in ways comparable to standard religious thinking. Thus, it is unsurprising that he would choose supernatural themes when addressing his concerns over human destiny. As the sub-section makes clear, Fuseli's received understanding of how the supernatural could elevate perception of sentient experience, and transform self-awareness, encouraged him to re-employ it as a prophetic instrument for exposing how accepted ways of seeing and thinking limited human understandings. This appreciation of Fuseli's artistry reveals that his comprehension of the concept religious/supernatural meshes with those contentions (made in this thesis's first and second chapters especially), concerning his uses of normative aesthetic discourses and drawing practices. Fuseli can be judged to wilfully manipulate supposedly understood conceptual/visual systems in order to expose them as veneers of knowledge beneath which lay abysses of the unknown. By picking at these facades, Fuseli's artwork and art theory queried how it was

[831] Smith, 2008, 291.
[832] *Ibid*.
[833] Fuseli had a 'complicated opinion of Christianity, which arguably remained unresolved in his later life', *ibid*., 146.

understood that one should maintain control of self and over those circumstances that conditioned self-conception. Consequently, his drawings offer an incendiary challenge to received understandings of self and experience. Accordingly, Fuseli's artistry is proposed to be underscored by philosophical and ethical objectives. Although religion infused Fuseli's formal education, he had grave doubts about conventional notions of Christianity. While Fuseli revered Christ he had a hatred of 'christianism', a term he applied to the beliefs of the majority of churchgoers.[834] Fuseli considered that the substance of Christ's message had been inaccurately interpreted and had consequently become diluted.[835] Fuseli, opposing commonplace ideas of Christ at the centre of, what he saw as, a debased faith system, acknowledged that Christ was an individual whose vision was largely beyond the scope of regular comprehension.[836] Indeed, as Carol Hall contends, Fuseli was increasingly inclined to consider himself as similarly misunderstood.[837] Fuseli thus conceived of himself as an out-cast. Like Christ he was an enlightened visionary able to comprehend humanity's collective faults and, through analytical insights, propose correctives.

Fuseli's predisposition towards this stance is evident in his early correspondence from Italy. A letter to Lavater of 30 July 1770 made clear Fuseli's dislike for

[834] Smith, 2008, 73-77, examines the non-conformist, three tier system of religious belief (comprising philology, philosophy and theology), underpinning Fuseli's education. Further evidence for Fuseli's opinions on Christianity can be found in, for instance, Mason, 1951, 159-168 and Hall, 1985, 109-117.
[835] Fuseli related this idea to Knowles who records in *The Life* Fuseli's opinion that 'There are no real Christians, for the religion of Christ died with its great author', *The Life*, I, 392. Fuseli called attention to the difficulty in depicting the Supreme Being in his 104th Aphorism and fourth Lecture. He relayed his interpretation of a Christian way of being in a letter to Lavater from Rome in July 1770.
[836] Within Zwinglian theology Christ was considered to have a binding authority over humankind, for he had performed the highest of sacrifices for the sake of humanity as 'Christ our Captain'. For more information on this idea see Gottfried W. Locher, *Zwingli's Thought*, Leiden, 1981, 72-87. It was against this background that Fuseli related Rousseau to Christ. Both Mason (1951) and Hall (1985) indicate that, for Fuseli, Rousseau's actions in defiance of commonly understood systems of knowledge and comprehension, effectively cast him in the role of a rebuked seer in the Christ mould. See Mason, *Introduction* and 121-137, and Hall, 117-125.
[837] See Hall, 1985, 118-119.

conventional piety, but his attachment to principles he associated with being 'Christ-like'.[838] Additionally, Fuseli's communication revealed his interest in unconventional role models. Fuseli wrote, 'though I am less a Christian than you (for it seems to me that the religion of Jesus Christ had perished before the days of St. Paul), the divine man will always inspire my head and my hand with the intensest ardour. What I think is not damnation [but] I shall always prefer Socrates and Brutus to the hermit Jerome or Ambrose the bishop.'[839] Plainly, Fuseli considered that the highest type of inspiration was provided by those who challenged orthodoxy. Significantly, Fuseli's letter also indicated how he conceived of his artistic mission in this context. By stating that the divinity of Christ, as he viewed it, would 'always inspire my head and hand', Fuseli revealed that his thinking and actions were adapted to a similar purpose. Equally, the conclusion to Fuseli's letter showed that he conceived of his work in Italy (so framed) to be ethically driven. Fuseli informed Lavater, 'I intend, however, to do what I do for the bettering of myself and therefore of the world.'[840] Here is a clear indication of the principled purpose that Fuseli associated with elevated human activity which, in his case, was the production of art. Likewise, Fuseli's statement reveals how the emphases of his theological background, while modified, continued to inform his perception of himself and his purposes during the 1770s.

[838] It should be remembered that Fuseli's Zwinglian training presented the preacher's mission as focused on the enabling of his congregation to recognise, and realise, their Christ-like-ness.
[839] Fuseli, letter to Lavater, 30 July 1770, cited Mason, 1951, 163. The continued sway of Fuseli's Zwinglian influenced education, over his conception of conventional Christianity, is revealed by two drawings he made during the 1770s. In 1772 Fuseli drew *The Escapee, Scene in the Hospital of S. Spirito in Rome*, a picture showing a man, in extremis, attempting to avoid being given the last sacrament by fiend-like clerics. Also, the picture *Folly of the Church* (1770-78) shows an episode from the *Till Eulenspiegel* cycle, a subject that Fuseli had originally engaged with during his time under Bodmer at the Carolinum.
[840] *Ibid*.

Fuseli considered Christ's truth-seeking to most challenge regular conceptions of selfhood and of sentient experience. The manner of Christ's searching confirmed that he possessed a great mind and a magnificent soul. So viewed, Bodmer's presentation of Shakespeare and Milton would have strongly resonated with Fuseli, for Bodmer nominated them as bringers of lost, or hidden, inner-truths pertaining to human existence. Both were believed seers, the quality of their insights being demonstrated through their superior creative faculties. Shakespeare and Milton were so significant to Bodmer's educational programme because, through study, the particularity of their perceptions of humanity might be identified, isolated, and subsequently imitated in new artworks designed to affect human conduct. Below examples of Fuseli's more finalised drawings from the 1770s are assessed. These show how he absorbed Bodmer's theory of the artwork, and Longinus's and Lord Kames's ideas concerning art's potential for inducing reverie-like states. It is argued that Fuseli's drawings of the 1770s were designed to facilitate, and encourage, such a visionary condition. Through this viewer's might conceive of ways to attain their fullest potential, to critique and consequently to see beyond the restrictions that standard thought/belief placed upon them so as to realise a more advanced conception of being.

The following analyses of a range of Fuseli's drawings emphasise how they attract attention to the limits of received understanding. Fuseli achieved this by intensifying, complicating, and making mysterious the viewing experience through his unifying of

disconcerting, incongruous subject matter with pronounced graphic strategies.[841] In each drawing considered below, Fuseli used significant archetypal figures. For Fuseli human forms in visual art ought to show superior purpose via their impassioned states and through their expressive, even defiant, actions. Moreover, Fuseli's representations of particular bodily types/forms can be associated with his attempts to depict the profundity of human existence. As noted in this thesis's previous chapter Fuseli, in his artwork, offset contrasting figure forms in order to increase an image's momentousness. Correspondingly, Camilla Smith has claimed that Fuseli's early drawings employ 'physiognomy as a reflection of the divine'.[842] Although physiognomic study conventionally concerned the human face, Fuseli expanded its prospect. He debated Lavater's interpretation of physiognomy, stating in a letter to him 'My observations have been directed not to the countenance of nations only [but to] the general form of the human body, its attitude, and manner [which might be] less deceitful signs […] than the countenance separately considered.'[843] Thus, Fuseli deemed that the body, rather than the face alone, could act as a surer means for assessing human disposition. Consequently, it is appropriate to acknowledge that Fuseli's figures were ostensibly typological. They served as generalised expressive statements, not as specific visual interpretations of character.[844] Therefore, the figures in Fuseli's drawings should be seen as broad visual statements of human travail. However, it should be noted that Fuseli was aware of how to intensify the

[841] The point made here connects Fuseli's graphic approaches and choice of subject with the ideas presented earlier in this, and the previous chapter. For more information on academic notions of picture-making, in respect of Fuseli's art and his ideas on art-making, see Chapter One of this thesis.
[842] Smith, 2008, 173.
[843] Fuseli, 'Letter dated at St. Petersburg', in Johann C. Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy* (1775-78), Thomas Holcroft (trans), London, c.1844, 353, cited in Myrone (ed.) 2006, 26. A more obvious example of Fuseli applying this creative strategy to depiction of the human body is his drawing *Fear: Three Crouching Girls* (1780-82).
[844] Such a typological interpretation of the figures Fuseli selected for study, and drew, has been given earlier in this thesis, especially in Chapter Two.

import of such human types, by re-presenting notable figures appropriated from other artworks. This has been seen, for example, in his use of particular figures in *Saul and the Witch of Endor*. Camilla Smith has established that Fuseli through his early artwork was 'clearly interested in representing human behaviour and morality'.[845] Yet, as this thesis has consistently argued, such an interest can be ascertained in Fuseli's artwork of the 1770s when this is considered in light of his assimilation of the theoretical, artistic and theological discourses he engaged with prior to his departure for Italy. It is likely that the figure types that Fuseli chose during the 1770s served as a further means to consider philosophical and ethical questions relating to human identity and destiny.

The figures Fuseli used in his work were integral to the subjects he selected, intimately connected to his interpretations of how those subjects must be relayed. Therefore, Fuseli's figures, unlike those used by academic artists, who chose figures to connote particular ethical perspectives, are akin to his uses of other visual and graphic strategies. Fuseli's figures serve as a vehicle (albeit a notable one) for inducing a cohesively powerful engagement with subject matter. In this regard we can again ascertain how the effusive theatricality, which Fuseli had observed on the London stage, affected his conception of the significance of the human form within a sequence of events.

Overall, Fuseli's drawings, figures included, should be considered to be commensurate with Werner Hofmann's interpretation of Fuseli's pictorial

[845] Smith, 2008, 173.

compositions. Hofmann argues, as do the above assessments of Fuseli's drawings, that Fuseli's work 'should really be classed as phenomena aiming at provoking a strong emotional reaction'.[846] With this in mind, the following assessments of Fuseli's drawings do not feature separate iconographic examinations of the figures he used. This method of analysis, which infers that Fuseli purposely constructed figures from various visual sources (to produce definite meanings), is contentious. Such an analytical mode has been employed to interpret Fuseli's art by, for example, Peter Tomory and Stuart Sillars.[847] However, this interpretative process has been critiqued for failing to adequately, or consistently, account for Fuseli's art practice. Ronald Paulson has argued that Tomory's deductive method (for instance) is ostensibly flawed. Tomory infers that Fuseli's art possesses an iconographic complexity. However, Paulson contends, 'In general, Fuseli's iconography proves to be rather simple [due to his] reliance on […] sources like […] Michelangelo [and because] it conforms to a few deeply personal […] obsessions.'[848] Paulson's view on Fuseli's iconography is corroborated by interpretations made of Fuseli's art in this thesis, for instance, that Fuseli selected certain figure types because he conceived of them as corresponding with the expressive power he identified with favoured visual references (classical art, Michelangelo, the theatre), and with how character types were used to address the human condition in the literature which Fuseli esteemed (for example, that of Homer, Shakespeare and Milton). Additionally, the 'obsessions' that Paulson alludes to are those this thesis unpacks, and relates to the character of Fuseli's work. Paulson's opinions of Tomory's analytical method, and how this thesis

[846] *Henry Fuseli, 1741-1825*, London, 1975, 35.
[847] By Tomory in, *The Life and Art of Henry Fuseli*, London, 1972, 75-8, and Sillars in Chapter 4 of his *Painting Shakespeare – The Artist as Critic, 1720-1820*, Cambridge, 2006.
[848] Paulson, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 9:2, 1975, 279.

interprets Fuseli's artwork, are reinforced in Martin Myrone's and Christian Klemm's scholarship.[849] Both of these more contemporary scholars refer to Fuseli's reliance on visual schematising, and his uses of repetitive compositional devices and figure poses. However, as this thesis argues, Fuseli adopted this practice and utilised these visual characteristics for a reason. Both were means through which he attempted to realise visually his conception of art.

While acknowledging issues concerning Fuseli's representation of figures, in this thesis, attention has been directed to his use of appropriated figure forms to reinforce his work's mystical properties.[850] Importantly, Fuseli's drawings are analysed to show how their constituent elements functioned as an interrelated visual whole. In each of the drawings assessed it should be noted how Fuseli achieved particular visual effects by opposing his chosen visual elements. This design strategy can be traced to Fuseli's appreciation of Michelangelo's devising of his images for the Sistine ceiling. Michelangelo's artistic method, Fuseli noted, should be the 'light we ought [to use] to contemplate a great part of the Cappella Sistina', especially the *Last Judgement*, in which 'collateral arrangement [was] the ruling plan'.[851] These factors, and those noted above, further demonstrate how Fuseli's artistry conflicted with academic protocol. He produced notably different representations, using unorthodox graphic and formal combinations, which suggests his alternative understanding of the functions of art practice and of images.

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[849] Myrone, *Henry Fuseli*, London, 2001, and Klemm in Lentzsch (ed.), *Henry Fuseli, The Wild Swiss*, Zurich, 2005.
[850] This has already been noted with regard to his drawing *Samuel Appears to Saul in the Presence of the Witch of Endor*.
[851] Fuseli, Lecture V, 461. Fuseli's use of apposition in his compositions is, among other aspects of his mode of pictorial arrangement, examined by Christian Klemm in Lentzsch (ed.), 2005, 103-109.

While in Italy Fuseli made a significant number of drawings featuring the mysteries associated with prophetic activity.[852] Alongside themes taken from Shakespeare, for instance, *Macbeth and the Armed Head* (c.1774) (Fig. 69), *Lady Macbeth Sleepwalking* (c.1775-76) (Fig. 17) and *Richard III Sees the Ghosts of his Victims* (1777) (Fig. 116), Fuseli also addressed the subject through drawings after Dante, *The Thieves' Punishment* (1772) (Fig. 66), biblical narratives, *King David Being Warned by the Prophet Nathan* (c.1772) (Fig. 117), *Moses Praying in Sinai* (1776-78) (Fig. 118) and classical literature. Most prominently, in this last category, Fuseli made two drawings of the exploits of Odysseus and Teiresias, *Teiresias Drinks the Sacrificial Blood* (1774-78) (Fig. 21) and *Odysseus before Teiresias in Hades* (c.1776-77) (Fig. 22). Fuseli's focus on Teiresias aligns his interests with Bodmer's; Teiresias featured prominently in Bodmer's drama *Oedipus* which had re-framed Sophocles' use of oracular themes.

In all these pictures Fuseli's representations conform to Bodmer's advice that artworks should provide vivid, imaginative evocations of significant events, if they were to most appropriately address the realising of human greatness. Additionally, Fuseli's graphic strategies make it clear that he is not portraying the everyday. The block-like applications of tonal wash used in, for example, *Macbeth and the Armed Head* and *Lady Macbeth Sleepwalking*, or the comparatively fluid, and ostensibly abstracted marks that form *Odysseus before Teiresias in Hades*, necessitate concerted imaginative interpretation. In the majority of the drawings listed above Fuseli's media use complicates deciphering of the images. Rather than making each

[852] Commensurate with this theme is Fuseli's *Self Portrait reading to the Hess Sisters* (1778), in which Fuseli shows himself as a quasi-religious or prophetic individual, posed akin to Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel lunette figures, with a halo-like, multi-directional light source emanating from his head.

image visually straightforward Fuseli seems to have designed their compositional elements and these element's mutual relationships, so as to challenge conventional modes of reception. The lack of alignment between depicted subject and depictive mode forces the eye and mind to become increasingly engaged in the visual ebb and flow of Fuseli's pictorial arrangements. Once so absorbed, one's consciousness of circumstances beyond the picture is reduced while the potential for one's imaginative reverie is increased.

King Lear Supported by Kent and the Fool Meeting Edgar on the Heath (c.1772) (Fig. 119) is a fine example of how Fuseli's use of design affects his pictures' connotations. Here, Fuseli's use of extremes of light and shade suggests a troubled atmosphere. This mood is enhanced by his dividing of the image's background space into irregular and discordant shapes, inspiration for which may have been Michelangelo's Sistine *Last Judgement* (Fig. 64) which features similar fluctuating, indeterminate masses and areas. As was noted in this thesis's previous chapter, such a manipulation of an image's background characterised Fuseli's evocations of the sublime.[853] Additionally, Fuseli has developed this picture's ambience by placing large archetypal figures towards the drawing's edges.[854] Consequently, a black expanse fills this picture's centre, isolating the two figure groups used, pushing them apart. This depictive strategy challenges the viewer's ability to view both groups simultaneously (adding to the picture's disconcerting qualities), while suggesting their unbridgeable separation, an impression further emphasised by Fuseli's arranging of

[853] The particularity of Fuseli's images, in this respect, I contended to differentiate them from both academic artists' depictions of the sublime and those of members of the 'Fuseli circle'.
[854] Fuseli's figure placement defies academic convention which required principal figures to occupy centre stage. Reynolds, in Discourse VIII, 138, presents the academic principles governing this aspect of pictorial design.

his figures so as to imply that Lear's and Edgar's hands might be able to touch. Fuseli's use of these compositional devices might be evidence of his wish to intensify viewers' apprehension.[855] Thus, in contrast to the narrative closure expected of an academic image, Fuseli's picture fails to resolve the episode depicted. Instead, he reinforces the picture's unsettling nature. This drawing's implied lack of outcome most suitably suggests the unresolved existential drama of this Shakespearean subject and, commensurately, references the comparable spiritual dilemma which Fuseli's education had implied haunted contemporary humanity.[856] Notably, Fuseli's *Lectures* place such a conception of the visual at the heart of the artist's inventive process. Fuseli contended that, while seeking to show 'some great maxim' characterised by 'darkness […] life, death, the past, the future',[857] the artist should, as had Michelangelo, portray 'that transient moment, [full] of suspense, big with the past, and pregnant with the future'.[858]

Fuseli, besides his use of particular media and compositional effects in this *Lear* image, intensifies its profundity and mystery by grouping the naked Lear, posed to suggest Christ crucified, Kent and the Fool (whose clothing and bodies are effectively merged into evocative anatomical forms, akin to those in Fuseli's drawings after Michelangelo's *Prophets* (see, for example, Fig. 55)), implying a deposition from the

[855] A commensurate interpretation of Fuseli's manipulation of his drawing's compositions is made by Camilla Smith, in her discussion of Fuseli's late pornographic drawings; see Smith, 'Between Fantasy and Angst: Assessing the Subject and Meaning of Henry Fuseli's Late Pornographic Drawings, 1800-25', *Art History*, 33:3, 2010, 420-447, 428.
[856] Here reference is made to both Bodmer's assessments of how art could be used to transform one's self-conception, and Zwingli's belief that people should be guided to overcome their flawed natures in order to attain an elevated self-conception. Like this Shakespearean subject Fuseli's work, per se, has a similar degree of irresolution.
[857] Fuseli, Lecture III, 419.
[858] *Ibid*., 421. Fuseli is here making an interpretation of the Sistine ceiling's design.

Cross.[859] Such an incongruous marrying of religiously suggestive visual references with a profane literary source destabilises the conventional connotations of such posed figures.[860] Therefore, this Shakespearean subject, like *Saul and the Witch of Endor* discussed above, is a charged depiction whose resonant figure types simultaneously engage and disrupt the viewing experience. Fuseli's judicious choice of subject, his considerations of formal content and applications of graphic materials, enable this drawing, as with that biblical picture, to confront the viewer with an 'awe-inspiring mystery', a 'reality of a wholly different order from 'natural' realities'.[861] These pictures show that which 'goes beyond […] natural experience' and, as such, they can be considered 'manifestations of sacred realities'.[862] These are images designed to alter one's comprehensions of that which one had presumed about oneself and sentience.

In this respect, Fuseli's artistry can be compared to how he understood that Michelangelo was consciously absorbed in the devout themes of his Sistine designs. Michelangelo's captivation with this project had caused to him emphasise that 'feature that stamps on human nature its most glorious prerogative', spiritual magnitude.[863] To become so elevated one's mind must be focused on circumstances unconstrained by particular time and place. The problem artists faced was providing

[859] This aspect of Fuseli's drawings after Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel designs was discussed in Chapter Two (part II) of this thesis. Fuseli's purposeful merging of his figures bodies with their garments, so as to produce powerfully expressive, physical human forms that appear naked, is a feature of the majority of his drawings, one that carries over into his paintings. Parallels can also be noted between this mode of drawing, one that Fuseli emphasised when drawing anatomical *écorché* figures in Roman drawing academies, and that he used when studying the antique (these images were also assessed in this thesis's second chapter).
[860] A comparable interpretation was made of Fuseli's 'transitional figure drawings' earlier in this chapter.
[861] Eliade, 1959, 9 and 11.
[862] *Ibid*., 11 and 12.
[863] Knowles, *The Life*, Vol.2, 161-66, cited Torbruegge, 1968, 205.

visual conditions whereby the everyday, the resource from which visual form must, at least, be partly derived, could be balanced against otherworldly elements to induce the most profound experiences.[864] If this issue could be overcome, the resulting visual forms' enigmatic and insistent natures might profitably enhance both artists' and viewers' consciousness and insights. Fuseli conceived that Michelangelo had achieved his eminent status through his successes with this procedure.

Fuseli's efforts to produce other-worldly images, akin to Michelangelo's, are revealed by his adaptation of drawing media in respect of his chosen subjects. Above, it has been established that Fuseli favoured themes addressing human destiny. In his visual responses to, for example, Macbeth's fateful encounters with the witches, it is notable how Fuseli negotiates a re-conceptualisation of this subject and the graphic strategies he uses. His motivation for these thoughts/actions can be judged to be a need to remove the act of viewing beyond those boundaries within which conventional experience limited comprehension. It is credible that Fuseli, in his *Macbeth* inspired drawings and indeed, in similar subjects sought, through re-presentation, to emphasise that which Alain Besançon has identified as 'a kind of holiness'.[865] Besançon's observation concerns those subjects not conventionally deemed religious (for example, the nihilistic) and how these can be so defined due to the ways in which they oppose the material world. Such subjects are not of this world, not profane, can thus be thought otherworldly and, as a consequence, prospectively hallowed. Besançon's interpretation of 'holiness' can be paralleled with

[864] Such visual conditions conform to the theories of artistic imitation Fuseli heard at the Carolinum. These were overviewed in the first part of this chapter.
[865] Alain Besançon, *The Forbidden Image – An Intellectual History of Iconoclasm*, Chicago, 2000, 6.

Mircea Eliade's and Emile Benveniste's conceptions of sacredness.[866] All three scholars identify the holy/sacred as that entirely 'different from the profane', as 'something set apart [separate] from all human relations'.[867] Certainly, Fuseli's general choice of subject matter conforms to this description of the unearthly. Indeed, comparing Fuseli's *Macbeth and the Armed Head* (c.1774) (Fig. 69) with Alexander Runciman's *The Witches Show Macbeth the Apparitions* (c.1771-72) (Fig. 120), reveals how Fuseli's particularly unorthodox depiction of this Shakespearean subject corresponds with Besançon's, Eliade's and Benveniste's definitions of otherness.

Fuseli's *Macbeth and the Armed Head* features three witches showing Macbeth a prophesying head. Fuseli's use of a horizontally-orientated composition provides this scene with a focused intensity, one that seems to oppress his chosen figures. The drawing is divided into two principal areas, a dark-toned left side containing the head, and a lighter right side showing Macbeth - 'on a ridge, his down dashed eye absorbed by the murky abyss'[868] - and the witches.[869] Yet, Fuseli's use of light and shade is not fully consistent with any discernable light source. The image is lit unnaturally and theatrically, especially the figure of Macbeth whose forms seem flattened by harsh lighting. Fuseli was familiar with such illumination of objects having

[866] Mircea Eliade, in *The Sacred and the Profane*, 1959, and Emile Benveniste, in *Indo-European Language and Society*, 1969.
[867] Eliade, 1959, 11, and Benveniste, 1969, 468. This concept of the sacred can also be connected to how Zwinglian theology identified the majesty of Christ, and the type of relationship that should be formed with God through him.
[868] Fuseli describing how Macbeth could 'be made an object of terror', Lecture IV, 454.
[869] Fuseli's division of the picture space is recalled in James Northcote's *Macbeth and the Witches* (c.1777-78). Northcote's awareness of Fuseli's work appears indicated by his figure of Macbeth, which is a close reproduction of Fuseli's drawing of the character from 1771.

viewed antique statues in the Museo Clementino by similarly stark torchlight.[870] Moreover, how Fuseli has lighted this scene equates to his observation on the shared inventive procedures of Homer and Michelangelo. Fuseli noted how 'we see [Homer's] heroes […] by the light that blasts them […] This is [also] the principle of that divine series of frescoes [that adorn] the lofty compartments of the *Capella Sistina* [Fuseli's emphasis]'.[871]

The picture's figures are tightly grouped to right of centre a positioning that, according to dominant visual conventions, was considered to result in a defective composition. Yet, their placing means that the opposite side of the image shows a spatial void, an emptiness that adds substantially to the forceful unease produced by the picture's compressed format. In this empty space Fuseli has drawn the over life-size head whose positioning seems to have been used as a means to develop further the drawing's disquiet (again, given contemporary habitual modes of reception, regarding dominant visual conventions).[872] Comparable to the positioning of the figures in *King Lear Supported by Kent and the Fool Meeting Edgar on the Heath* (Fig. 119), Fuseli has placed the head low to the left, pressed close to the picture's edge. Consequently, the head to the left and the witch furthest right in the picture appear a great distance apart, an impression magnified by Fuseli's choice of horizontal arrangement. Therefore, the organised visual elements in *Macbeth and the Armed Head* produce a sombre, still image that is suggestive of the halted dramatic

[870] For more information see Jane Martineau (et al), 2003, 63. So looking at classical statues was common practice at the time, and was noted in this thesis's second chapter. For information on the illumination of art in situ in Italy see the Richardson's *Account* (London, 1722), for example, 267.
[871] Fuseli, Lecture III, 420.
[872] In Chapter One of this thesis attention was given to how normative modes of pictorial invention directed the artist to provide images with particular visual balances, and relationships, to aid their interpretation.

scenarios characterising David Garrick's acting technique.[873] However, this scene is difficult to fully comprehend quickly.

Fuseli's placing of the head and the witch to the farthest right imbues the picture's composition with an inherent tension which problematises concentrating on any one point in the arrangement for any length of time. Additionally, Fuseli makes this image more visually troublesome by placing the figures on a stepped rocky outcrop which is orientated diagonally into the picture. Consequently, these figures and the ground on which they are placed conflict, spatially and in terms of perspective. Figures and picture space appear at odds, the space inadequately containing the figures. As such, Fuseli's picture violates normative visual conventions which were believed to facilitate a picture's comfortable and acceptably rewarding interpretation. Fuseli's composition, being constructed and lit in a particular way, eschews visual reserve and ready analysis in favour of sustaining a strained and uneasy atmosphere.

Fuseli has also reinforced the mood he achieved via his drawing's composition through his use of ink wash and pen outlining. He has applied ink wash more or less un-modulated, meaning that regardless of whether it serves to indicate the witches, the steps on which the figures stand, the void beyond or the head, all seem to be in a shared pictorial space. Thus, viewer's perceptions of distances within the image and of the significance of each visual element are disrupted. Furthermore, Fuseli's line work only indicates cursorily the forms depicted. Consequently, the whole image seems to lack a firm formal substance, its component parts appearing to hover

[873] As noted in this thesis's second chapter, Garrick's acting – which had revolutionised stage performance - relied heavily on the presentation of theatrical attitudes and set-pieces of particular passions.

between picture plane and ill-defined background. On viewing these offset components disruption occurs to what is believed understood about, for instance, form's material substance. Regular perceptual surety is thus undermined. This ability is usually reinforced by the awareness of space and an understanding of the relative position of objects in relation to each other, and oneself. Fuseli's drawing defeats such an interpretative method. Conversely, his representation effectively throws the mind into turmoil because his design is difficult to deduce successfully.

Fuseli's picture corresponds to how Longinus had defined the most potent, sublime art. Longinus had argued that this art was capable of stimulating such intense imaginative engagement in its audience that their imaginations superseded their intellects as the primary mode of comprehension.[874] In keeping with Longinus's concept of sublime art, *Macbeth and the Armed Head* can be judged to be an image possessing attributes so disquieting to established comprehension and perception that it could inspire an imaginative frenzy comparable, in nature, to the state attained by divinely inspired mystics. Moreover, such a hallucinatory condition conforms to those self-revelatory experiences which Zwinglian theology contended were induced by intense communion with God. It was such experiences that Bodmer, following Longinus's precepts, believed that the mind should be trained to seek out.[875] Furthermore, Bodmer's conception of the possibilities inherent in human consciousness, closely equated to his understanding of how the sublime served as a device for transforming perception. Bodmer, following Longinus's lead, proclaimed that the sublime was 'the supreme faculty of the heart […] Its object is greatness,

[874] Longinus made this proposition in Chapter XV of *On the Sublime*. For more information on this issue see Torbruegge, 1968, 111.
[875] More detail on this matter can be found in Torbruegge, 1968, 112-115.

excellence in free actions […] It manifests a noble heart or an exalted Nature'.[876] As has been noted previously in this thesis, a mind so conditioned was well advanced towards greatness. Associated inspired insightfulness might be attained following further tuning of one's perceptual, conceptual and imaginative faculties. It was pursuit of these enhanced abilities, it has been argued, that led Fuseli to so intensively study, and respond visually to, the work of Michelangelo, that of comparable classical artists and of, for example, Shakespeare. Complementing these endeavours *Macbeth and the Armed Head* is an image crafted to entice viewers' engagements with the prospect of a more highly developed self-awareness.[877]

Contrasting with Fuseli's calculated execution of *Macbeth and the Armed Head* is Alexander Runciman's pen and ink drawing, *The Witches Show Macbeth the Apparitions*. Although Runciman's and Fuseli's scenes are similar, Runciman's depictive strategy is markedly different. Runciman has orientated his paper vertically allowing maximum space for the witches' infernal visions.[878] This representation of the supernatural is quite conventional, as comparison with Salvator Rosa's *Saul and the Witch of Endor* (1668) (Fig. 121) reveals. Considering the picture space that Runciman had available (and the scale of Fuseli's figures within the space of his drawing), Runciman's witches, Macbeth and prophesying head are small, located centrally in the composition's lower half. Runciman's picture also has a logical visual unity. The centre of attention, in his picture's lower portion, is the witches' cauldron,

[876] Bodmer, *Critische Briefe*, the third letter, 102, cited Junod, 2003, 139.
[877] This new appreciation of self, and experience, is that to which Bodmer had referred when considering the vital role played by the artist, and their work, in society and culture. A fuller assessment of Bodmer's appreciation of artist and artwork was given in Chapter Three of this thesis.
[878] Runciman's recourse to a vision of winged heads and owls plausibly owes much to Salvator Rosa's well known painting *Saul and the Witch of Endor* (1668), which featured a similarly realised infernal episode.

the intense light from which throws a series of convincing highlights and shadows around the scene ordering the composition visually. While this illumination suggests the ambience Runciman associated with such a subject, his picture lacks the controlled visual uncertainty characterising Fuseli's *Macbeth* image.

Runciman's figures, especially Macbeth and the witches, have been depicted so as to emphasise their particularities (especially through costume details and physiognomy). This contrasts markedly with Fuseli's archetypal figures which were apparently derived from his studies of animate antique forms (Macbeth) and Michelangelo's sentinel-like *Ancestors*. Again, Runciman seems to be following Salvator Rosa, as many of the figures in Rosa's *Witch of Endor* are similarly individualised. Consequently, this visual strategy means that Runciman's image is unable to match the disconcerting, sublime, atmosphere which Fuseli achieved with his more studied graphic scheme.

As noted above, Fuseli's depictions of figures, in *Macbeth and the Armed Head*, complicated discernment of their natures, especially whether they should be considered to be earthly or unearthly. Indeed, Fuseli's Macbeth appears to be as insubstantial as the witches and the head. Runciman's choice of 'visual language', allowing for his image's unusual features, seems more appropriate to depictions of everyday phenomena. Unlike Fuseli's selection and combination of visual elements that repeatedly disrupt viewing, these aspects in Runciman's picture have a visual familiarity that negates any need to interpret his design unconventionally. Whereas, Fuseli's graphic strategies make his *Macbeth* image simultaneously fascinating and

perplexing, Runciman's equivalents block concerted perceptive and imaginative engagement because they are too commonplace. Runciman's design, although effectively picturing Shakespeare's text, provides scant opportunity for a viewer's intense imaginative interaction because it features visual stimuli too great in number and too routine in nature. In sum, although Runciman and Fuseli have chosen similar subjects their depictions of these demonstrate differing artistic aims. Significant for Fuseli's difference was his attitude to depicting the supernatural, most particularly because he conceived it to be analogous with the religious. The supernatural was, similarly, a means through which to achieve self-revelation.[879]

Fuseli did not favour Runciman's artistic influence, Salvator Rosa. Fuseli was especially scathing of Rosa's supernatural subjects which he determined to be 'magic visions' founded on 'mythologic trash and caprice'.[880] As Rosa's supernatural imagery featured such idiosyncrasies, rather than emphasising the 'principles of terror',[881] a more appropriate criterion for otherworldly depictions, Fuseli considered his work to be incapable of providing conditions conducive to realising human pre-eminence. This was particularly so in respect of the relationship that Bodmer had identified for Fuseli between sublimely terrifying subjects, and human enhancement.[882]

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[879] The context in which the religious is here discussed corresponds to that identified earlier in this chapter, that is, it can be seen as connected to the sense of awe-inspiring mystery Eliade (1959), Benveniste (1969) and Besançon (2000), each associate with sacred, as opposed to profane, situations.

[880] Fuseli, Lecture II, 392.

[881] *Ibid*.

[882] For example in *Critische Briefe* (1746), where Bodmer associated the sublime's terrifying aspects with the concept of 'the noblest souls' (*Critische Briefe*, the fourth letter, 104, cited Junod, 2003, 140), while the dread caused by the sublime was that sensation in which, 'A noble heart delights [because the sublime] provokes a certain admiration, mixed with stupefaction and surprise' (*Critische Briefe*, the third letter, 102, cited Junod, 2003, 139).

Suggesting that Fuseli's appreciation of sublime terror informed his critique of Rosa's supernatural subjects finds support in Lord Kames's definition of the 'false sublime'. Kames indicated how this was 'more faulty than bombast' because, as with Rosa's and Runciman's supernatural subjects, it attempted to 'force an elevation by introducing imaginary beings without preserving any propriety in their actions; as if it were lawful to ascribe every extravagance and inconsistence to beings of the poet's creation.'[883] Fuseli, being familiar with Kames's text, alongside interpretations of the sublime given by, for instance, Longinus, Bodmer and Burke, was well aware of what connoted sublimity most suitably. Inappropriate to sublime subjects were forms more likely to evoke ideas of horror rather than those of terror, those 'paroxysms of a fever' which Fuseli associated with Rosa's supernatural subjects.[884] Fuseli's appreciation of the distinctions between terror and horror was conceivably derived from Bodmer who, in his *Critische Betrachtungen* (1741), noted how Milton's fallen angels were 'terrible' rather than 'repulsive'.[885] Support for this idea is provided by Fuseli's drawing *Satan and Death Separated by Sin* (1776) (Fig. 72). The picture shows the moment at which Satan, Death and Sin agree to work together towards the destruction of humanity, a notably supernatural subject. However, Fuseli's use of dramatic tonal variations in this drawing, while emphasising the picture's otherworldliness, also apparently serves to indicate the relative qualities of Satan and Death. While Satan is a lightly toned, lithe and affirmative presence (Fuseli's appreciation of the majesty of Milton's Satan has already been established), the dark,

[883] Kames, *Elements of Criticism,* Edinburgh, 1762, Vol.1, 306.
[884] Fuseli, Lecture II, 392. Besides Rosa's work, Fuseli identified the conventions of horror in the historic imagery of Jusepe Ribera, see Fuseli, *History of Art*, 1808, 305, cited Mason, 1951, 272.
[885] Bodmer made this assessment in a chapter of the *Critische Betrachtungen* devoted to 'den Gemählden der Dinge aus der unsichtbaren Welt', in which he assessed how the Bible might serve as the basis for imaginative poetry. For more information see Torbruegge, 1968, 163-165.

lunging, muscularly abrupt Death appears to embody visually the terror conventionally associated with potential loss of life.[886] By contrast, Runciman seems to have indulgenced 'in the effects of horror' (like Rosa) rather than terror, when selecting elements for his *The Witches Show Macbeth the Apparitions*.[887]

Runciman, by seeking to imitate Rosa's depiction of the supernatural, was working in a lesser visual style. Consequently, how Runciman represented supernatural themes had little bearing on the development of one's perception, or conception, of such subjects. Runciman's supernatural art was, therefore, bereft of a clear purpose and lacked appropriate principle. Similar criteria are arguably applicable to images by other of Fuseli's contemporaries which feature 'Rosa-like' otherworldly subjects. For example, Alexander Runciman's brother John produced a pen drawing showing the heads of *The Three Witches* (c.1767-68) (Fig. 122) wherein each face reminds of the haggard, semi-bestial countenances in Rosa's *Saul and the Witch of Endor* (1668). John Hamilton Mortimer's *An Incantation* (c.1773) (Fig. 123) also recalls Rosa's picture, through Mortimer's depictions of a smoking cauldron/brazier and overtly dramatically posed figures. These aspects are also present in George Romney's *The Ghost of Darius Appearing to Atossa* (c.1779) (Fig. 91).[888] Each of these artists, when challenged with depicting the unearthly, used a commonplace 'graphic language', unlike Fuseli who favoured unconventional visual and theoretical

[886] In his *Philosophical Enquiry* Edmund Burke had praised Milton's use of 'judicious obscurity' in his description of *Death*, noting that it was Milton's use of 'uncertainty of strokes' that enabled *Death* to seem 'the king of terrors', see James T. Boulton (ed.), *A Philosophical Enquiry*, 1958, 59. Fuseli's attitude towards the depiction of Milton's figures was given in the *Analytical Review* of June 1792 (review of Cumberland's *Calvary*, signed R.R., XIII, 123, cited Mason, 1951, 345). Fuseli also dealt with this idea in his fourth Academy Lecture.
[887] Martineau (et al), 2003, 70. The words are those of Maria Grazia Messina, and are used to describe Runciman's depiction of *The Witches Show Macbeth the Apparitions*.
[888] Commensurate visual features can also be found in George Romney's *Macbeth and the Witches* (c.1780), and Joshua Reynolds's *Macbeth Consulting the Witches* (c.1786-89).

standards. Therefore, Fuseli's contemporaries' images demonstrate little insight into the potential of supernatural subjects, and how these might be employed ethically to address the human condition. Their images fail to transcend how conventional judgements conditioned the interpretation of visual forms. According to Fuseli, rather than following the dictates of commonplace principles, efforts were required to imitate a select band of the greatest artists and writers, those whose work functioned epically and sublimely in the manner of 'Ur-poetry'. Only by imitating such artistry might the contemporary artist practice appropriately and produce images most fittingly reflecting on human disposition.[889]

The above pages have established that Fuseli had a particular conception of supernatural/sublime art, but it should be considered how his images were judged during the 1770s. Would they have been thought disconcerting and perception-altering as has been argued? During the 1780s critical opinion of Fuseli's art suggests that his peers were bewildered by his figure depictions - in 1788 a critic in the *Morning Post* opined, 'Fuseli would have some pretensions to a twig of the historic laurel, if he could ever paint a figure without breaking its limbs'.[890] However, during the 1770s Fuseli made few works public. We, therefore, have little critical evidence through which to assess his pictures from that time. Yet, as was indicated most particularly in this thesis's *Introduction*, the visual characteristics of Fuseli's drawings of the 1770s conform to those of his later paintings, the type of work which

[889] Fuseli's interpretation of Homer in the *Analytical Review* was potentially inspired by this understanding of the greatest art's purpose. See the *Analytical Review*, January 1793, review of Cowper's *Homer*, signed Z.Z., XV, 1-2, cited Mason, 1951, 245. Additionally, Fuseli's 144th Aphorism, while reflecting his appreciation of Michelangelo, also suggests a critique of his contemporaries' conception of supernatural subjects, see Aphorism 144, cited Mason, 1951, 325.
[890] *Morning Post*, Friday 6 June, 1788, issue 4749.

the *Morning Post's* critic was assessing. Thus, it is justifiable to attempt to gauge opinion of Fuseli's images during the 1770s (and re-construct a sense of the impact that these could have had), by analysing drawings which he made in that decade - but that were not exhibited publicly - in comparison to critics' responses to drawings that he did show at the Royal Academy during the 1770s. These critical estimations of Fuseli's exhibited work can then be assessed in light of critics' opinions of similar subjects by other artists selected for the same exhibitions. Consequently, by weighing-up how Fuseli's images were perceived in terms of customary standards for exhibited artworks during the 1770s, it is possible to suggest how his private drawings from that time might have been appreciated had they been shown publicly. Fuseli's drawing *Lear and the Dead Cordelia* (1774) (Fig. 124), which he did not exhibit, begins our assessment.

Fuseli filled the vast majority of this picture's available space with a freely applied expanse of black ink wash. This wash provides a suitably stark background while ensuring that the small-scale, dramatically lit, figures used appear to be overburdened by this surrounding dead tone. These figures' size and their distribution, in respect of the picture space, flout academic recommendations on the representation and placing of characters in an image.[891] Fuseli depicts his figures economically, locating their forms spatially through spare outlining and restricted tonal variations. They are tightly grouped, those foremost being a relatively free visual translation of the foreground figures in Mannerist artist Rosso Fiorentino's *Deposition* (1521) (Fig. 125). As was indicated in this thesis's second chapter,

[891] Fuseli's comparatively crowded and minute figure group fails to adhere to academic conventions determining use of figures in a picture. For more detail on this matter see Chapter One of this thesis.

Fuseli's use of Mannerist imagery was unconventional for it was regularly critiqued in dominant aesthetic treatises. Here again Fuseli, as in his drawings (assessed above) *Saul and the Witch of Endor* (1777) (Fig. 68) and *King Lear Supported by Kent and the Fool Meeting Edgar on the Heath* (c.1772) (Fig. 119), appropriates figure types from past art to intensify the connotative resonances of his chosen theme.[892] Fuseli, by using this particular visual strategy (seen in many of his drawings) of offsetting notable religious imagery against powerful literary episodes, further magnifies the impassioned nature of this incident from *King Lear*, intensifying this event's underlying unearthly characteristics.[893] In this respect Shakespeare's narrative is re-fashioned to become a more sublimely supernatural occurrence, one in keeping with Fuseli's learnt conception of the highest type of art, and an incident which might be capable of most profoundly affecting a viewer, if appropriately visually contextualised.

In *Lear and the Dead Cordelia* Fuseli places the Fiorentino-esque figures in a triangular arrangement at the foot of the picture. His use of a triangular configuration can be considered a further significant device for intensifying the image's unnatural atmosphere. Fuseli, when commenting on the arrangement of his picture *Macbeth Consulting the Vision of the Armed Head* (1793) (Fig. 126), an image 'which in composition is altogether triangular', informed John Knowles that 'the triangle is a

[892] As mentioned previously, Fuseli used this manner of visual appropriation as a telling means for magnifying the emotive, and sublime, potentials of his images. Such borrowing was one among several visual strategies that Fuseli employed for this purpose, others being the offsetting of active and passive figure types based on his studies after classical and Renaissance art, and use of those figures created via the graphic knowledge provided by the 'five-point' drawing activity. It was argued earlier in this chapter that Fuseli's appropriating of figures from other artworks should not be interpreted as providing his pictures with definitive meanings.

[893] Numerous times throughout this thesis attention has been given to Fuseli's pictures which feature this colliding of sacred and profane source materials, examples being, *The Thieves' Punishment* (1772), his studies for the troubled youths, those for *Hamlet ponders the Murder of King Claudius* (1777-78) and the *Shakespeare Frescoes*.

mystical figure'.[894] Due to Fuseli's tight grouping of the *Lear* picture's figures, their subtle gestures and touching limbs encourage viewers to focus on their configuration, attention becoming locked on them; there are no visual cues to provide distraction. Again, as with the above analyses of Fuseli's figure arrangements, we see him manipulating relationships between human forms to stress a particular ambience, and arguably, to increase viewers' apprehension. Indeed, Fuseli's choice of compositional strategies ostensibly eliminates the aesthetic distance that academic convention deemed necessary when viewing an artwork. That Fuseli does not use any distancing or mediating framing elements in the picture, to withhold visual scrutiny, increases the prospect that viewers might become engrossed in the depicted figures' plight.

Evidence that Fuseli's *Lear and the Dead Cordelia* could cause viewers to intensely engage with it, and have an unsettling experience as was argued above, is provided, indirectly, by London critics' responses to James Barry's *King Lear Mourns the Death of Cordelia* (Fig. 127), exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1774.[895] Barry's design, guided by academic imitative conventions, is far more conservative than Fuseli's, although his figure of Cordelia, being based on Christ from Annibale Carracci's *Mourning over the Dead Christ* (c.1604) (Fig. 128), is comparable to Fuseli's use of a religious source, a Deposition. However, Barry's religious source material would arguably have been considered more aesthetically acceptable than that of the

[894] Utterance addressed to Knowles after 1805. Recorded by Knowles in *The Life*, 189-90, cited Mason, 1951, 291.
[895] The general conception of Barry's picture was influenced by Daniel Webb's essay, *An Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting*, London, 1760. Webb had recommended that painters should study Italian artists and Greco-Roman sculpture, for these were seen as the best models from which to extract a sense of moral elevation, nobility of form, and provide a means to concentrate the dramatic action of a picture.

Mannerist Fiorentino. Meanwhile, the attitude of despair that Barry chose for Lear is akin to that shown by the *Laocoön's* central figure. Thus, Barry has assembled visual references that accord with dominant creative notions of what denoted levels of pathos and dignity suitable to this subject. However, Barry's interpretation of this scene was unconventional. Rather than referring to Nahum Tate's version of *King Lear*, the most popular adaptation of the play in the eighteenth century and one that ended happily, Barry, like Fuseli, has used Shakespeare's more tragic original.[896]

Reviewing Barry's picture the London critics were attracted to, and disconcerted by, his two principal figures which they perceived to be bursting from the composition.[897] The critics anticipated that an Academy submission would conform to recognised aesthetic criteria which did not countenance compositional anomalies. Unusual compositional arrangements and placing of figures, moreso than in Barry's picture, are key features of Fuseli's drawings. If reviewed, it is probable that Fuseli's *Lear and the Dead Cordelia* would have been noted as more visually unorthodox and unsettling than Barry's picture and would accordingly have suffered similar or more severe censure.[898] Barry's image also received criticism on other levels.

In the *Public Advertiser*, 3 May 1774, a critic, signing himself 'Dilettante', observed of Barry's *Lear* picture 'There is something grand and uncommon in the idea of this

[896] Nahum Tate's reworking of Shakespeare's original play (1681 – it ostensibly replaced Shakespeare's version on the English stage, in whole or in part, until 1838) featured *Lear* regaining his throne and Cordelia marrying Edgar. Tate's *Lear* was considered to be a tragic-comedy rather than a straight tragedy.
[897] See Martineau (et al), 2003, 74, where it is noted that Barry's use of pale colouration in this image also contributed to critics' negative opinions.
[898] Fuseli's drawings were, in the main, not intended for public scrutiny. However, their traits were, for the most part, transferred into those works Fuseli did exhibit, in England, from 1780 onwards.

performance; but […] it is executed in so strange a manner'.[899] A second reviewer 'Guido', writing in the same publication, in an article entitled 'The Painters' Mirror for 1774' continued this line of critique. He dismissed Barry's picture using language more usually reserved for satanic or excessive subjects. 'Guido' thought Barry's painting 'demoniac and extravagant',[900] language arguably most applicable to Fuseli's *Lear and the Dead Cordelia* which was more extreme visually than Barry's picture, and which markedly failed to accord with academic imitative and inventive protocols.

Certainly, the London art reviewers had criticised how Fuseli's *The Death of Cardinal Beaufort* (Fig. 11) (exhibited at the R.A. in the same year as Barry's *Lear* picture) exceeded accepted aesthetic taste. As will be recalled, the *Beaufort* drawing was critiqued for being a display of extravagant ideas and for possessing 'Wildness in the Expression, and Violence in the Actions of the Figures'.[901] In expression, and in the forcefulness of the figures that Fuseli used, *Lear and the Dead Cordelia* outdid the *Beaufort* composition. Based on how reviewers assessed both Fuseli's exhibited work, and James Barry's less unorthodox *Lear* picture, it is possible that Fuseli's *Lear* subject would have confounded, chiefly because it departed from sanctioned modes of artistic invention and graphic representation, and defied acceptable pictorial decorum. Fuseli's work, being far removed from the aesthetic sureties anticipated by a contemporary audience would, quite likely, have been noted as otherworldly, disconcerting and extreme. Possibly, as Johann Herder had identified in 1774,

[899] Martineau (et al), 2003, 74.
[900] *Ibid*.
[901] *Public Advertiser*, Tuesday 3 May, 1774, issue 13013.

Fuseli's art might well have been capable of tearing 'its way through the soul',[902] or as Fuseli himself was to indicate to John Knowles, in respect of *Macbeth Consulting the Vision of the Armed Head* (1793), his work would be a great 'object of terror [and] make a powerful impression on your mind.'[903]

Judging from these varied responses to Fuseli's art it would seem that not only was his work deemed unorthodox visually, but that this unconventionality was profound to the extent that his images seemed comparable to the mysteriousness associated with the 'wholly other', that which 'goes beyond […] natural experience [which] does not belong to our world'.[904] Thus, according to this assessment, the unearthliness of Fuseli's pictures is comparable to the conscious-altering properties normally associated with religious experience.[905] As Fuseli had come to understand from his education, via both its conceptual and theological strands, such otherworldliness served ethical and philosophical purposes, because it placed attention on the mysteries of existence and how these assisted in the re-formation of self-awareness.

Bodmer's tuition had made Fuseli aware that elevated human comprehension might be attained more effectively, if individuals did not adhere to conventional ethical

[902] Herder discussing Fuseli's drawings in a letter to Hamann, 14 November, 1774, cited Mason, 1951, 69.
[903] Utterance addressed to and recorded by John Knowles in *The Life*, 189-90, cited Mason, 1951, 291.
[904] Eliade, 1959, 10 and 11. Eliade uses these assessments to determine the difference between natural, profane experience, and experience of the sacred.
[905] Similar emphasis can be seen in, for example, Fuseli's drawing *Odysseus before Teiresias in Hades* (1776-77). Commensurately, Fuseli's Dante drawings, *Dante on the Ice of Cocytus* (1774) and *Ugolino and his Sons Starving to Death in the Tower* (1774-78), unsettle viewing due to Fuseli's unconventional uses of composition and drawing media.

standards, and conformist perspectives.[906] Paralleling this idea was Fuseli's valuing of unorthodox character traits those, for instance, possessed by Christ, as Fuseli interpreted him. In keeping with Bodmer's construal of, for example, the Homeric and Miltonic epics, an image's purpose was to encourage the development of positive, alternative viewpoints. Such images could engage the imagination in a form of revelatory dialogue, which reminded a person of their capacity for higher-order perceptions.[907] Fuseli's penchant for imperfect characters, engaging with the mysteries of existence, can be interpreted as being a means for increasing his work's appeal for, what he considered to be, a comparably flawed contemporary audience.[908] In this way, Fuseli, like Bodmer, hoped to improve his peers. For, as Bodmer had indicated in his *Critische Abhandlung*, 'men of superior qualities are seen in their relationship to other men in analogy to celestial beings in their relation to man. Such men are sublime'.[909] The challenge facing both Bodmer and Fuseli was how to guide their contemporaries towards such potential.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that for Fuseli artistic imitation could only be practiced appropriately if its conception was underpinned by particular principles. Most notably,

[906] Bodmer's thinking was, for example, founded on his appreciation of how Milton's satanic characters were comparable with the nobility of classical heroes. For further information on this matter see Torbruegge, 1968, 156.
[907] See Torbruegge, 1968, 155-56 for discussion of Bodmer's appreciation of Milton's work in a similar context.
[908] Smith, 2008, regularly draws attention to Fuseli's concern to appeal to the flawed natures of his contemporaries. Fuseli's interest in the fallen state of humanity is also shown through several drawings he made of heads of the damned, from Dante's *Inferno*, for Lavater's *Physiognomy*.
[909] Torbruegge, 1968, 149. Torbruegge quotes from *Critische Abhandlung*, Zurich, 1740, 9-11.

Fuseli's use of imitation has been shown to be directed by his need to attain a fuller self-conception and as tasked with inducing recognition of higher human potential in others by challenging their received understandings. Realising such objectives required Fuseli to form a deep conceptual awareness of those mechanisms through which an artwork might, most effectively, imaginatively engage the spectator. Understanding these means necessitated his study of the most elevated creative minds, and it was to this end that Fuseli turned his attention, in particular, to the work of Homer, Shakespeare, Milton and Michelangelo. Additionally, Fuseli considered that he was more likely to engage spectators' attentions if he used incongruous graphic strategies and unconventional, theatrically nuanced, manipulations of visual forms. Fuseli viewed these methods as a most potent means for disrupting commonplace awareness. They were devices through which viewers' perceptions might be disconcerted, and via which it was possible to realise the potential of alternative modes of seeing and thinking. The viewer, once perceptively and intellectually disengaged from everyday sureties, was best positioned to have their understandings modified through imaginative engagement with the artwork. To this end Fuseli, reflecting his absorption of the theoretical principles of, most notably, Zwingli, Bodmer, Breitinger and Sulzer, produced unorthodox, mysterious images. These can be considered to function as a kind of meta-theatre in which a re-evaluation of the human condition was played out.

From his Zurich education Fuseli learned of the religious overtones of the supernatural, and that the greatest artists' works were infused with an otherworldly mystery. It was this quality that evidenced these makers' profundity of insight. So

considered, the greatest artists were deemed to be prophets, while their work was conceived of as an imaginatively charged vehicle through which the viewer might interact most fully with these artists' visions. In effect, these great artistic minds (and indeed souls) sought to captivate audiences' attentions via imagery that challenged their learned responses and produced a suspension of their rational judgements. So powerful were the sentiments conveyed by these artists' works that viewers became overwhelmed by the experience they provided. Possessing such characteristics this, the highest form of art, was akin to Zwinglian religious experience and its relationship to, and its affect on, self-conception. Commensurately, the notion of artist as prophet was comparable to Zwingli's concept of the preacher, the one who 'interprets the situation […] turning it into an hour of decision'.[910]

Viewers, faced with the affecting properties of an art which had been crafted to mimic the conditions of an unearthly experience, entered into a condition of reverie. This resulted in a collapse of those boundaries normally separating their reason and intuition. Once so affected, Fuseli believed that viewers could experience a change in self-perception. Simultaneously, he also thought that viewers' understandings of phenomena would be heightened, while their increased insights into the human condition, and sentient experience, might also be achieved. Thus, while Fuseli, as maker of such artworks, demonstrated his creative and personal magnitude, his audience was enabled to partake of this elevated nature and, consequently, enlarge their own prospect for increased virtue.

[910] Locher, 1981, 98.

Fuseli, from Bodmer's tuition especially, believed that art made with this motivation was highly ethical for it served to improve humanity's lot. Commensurately, he thought that to so change human perception might produce an evolution in self-awareness and develop people's understandings of lived experience. So contextualised, art served both moral and philosophical purposes. Moreover, in Fuseli's hands, this type of art was notable otherwise. It has been seen that central to Fuseli's notion of art practice was a drive to manipulate supposedly sure concepts in order to expose their inability to completely account for key aspects of that assumed known about existence; for example, the relationship of the idea 'religious' to that of the 'supernatural'. Consequently, Fuseli's art theorising, and indeed making, have been revealed to be provocative instruments. He framed both as 'visionary critiques', means designed for the purpose of penetrating restrictions placed on people by standard thought/belief. Fuseli wished to re-contextualise these thoughts/beliefs and, subsequently, to realise a more advanced conception of existence. As this chapter has argued, Fuseli's underlying motivation for such thought/action was the imitation of the greatest artistic talents and the nature of their work. These artists similarly challenged normative ideas of the relationship existing between artistic inventions and sentient experience. Acknowledging this aim sheds light on both the pronounced, and unusual, characteristics of Fuseli's drawings and their particular function in respect of dominant visual/theoretical conventions.

CONCLUSION

In contrast to previous scholarship, this thesis has shown that Henry Fuseli's artistry is understood best if it is acknowledged that it was underpinned by a consistent visual/theoretical rationale, one which was developed in context of the dominant modes of art-making in eighteenth-century Britain. More significantly, this thesis has established that, while in Italy during the 1770s, Fuseli embarked on an extended period of creative study which resulted in a distinctive manner of drawing, one that has been shown to be at the heart of a wide-ranging artistic process which involved questioning the standards, attendant discourses and the purposes of regular eighteenth-century art practice. This thesis has assessed Fuseli's graphic investigations of these conventions through a series of detailed and close visual analyses of his drawings of the 1770s. My assessments of these drawings are unlike those made by previous Fuseli scholars because of the ways in which I have argued for a series of relationships between Fuseli's selections of drawing media, his mark-making, his choices and modifications of subject matters and his favouring of certain conceptual discourses which can be understood as having conditioned his ideas about artists and art-making. My mode of visual analysis is a significant aspect of this thesis's originality. Importantly, the mode of artistry that I have argued Fuseli established during the 1770s finds its rudiments in ideas and events that he experienced during the previous two decades, most notably those characterising his formal education at Zurich's Collegium Carolinum (c.1759-61). This Zurich education,

I have argued, has been undervalued in previous attempts to interpret Fuseli and his art-making.[911]

This thesis has determined that Fuseli's Zurich schooling had a profound and lasting influence on his self-perception, especially the extent to which he established conceptual parallels between his roles as artist and teacher/preacher. The thesis has proposed that as a consequence of this education Fuseli came to conceive of the art-making process and of its products as vital means for developing the self-conceptions of both his contemporaries and of the viewers of his images. Additionally, the thesis has indicated that the particular ways in which Fuseli constructed relationships between certain ideas (notably those of artistic invention and imitation, and of the sublime) and his art practice, subsequently provided the foundations for his own art theory.[912] Consequently, Fuseli's artistic studies in Italy, and most particularly the drawings which he made there, can be thought to be extremely important for his creative advancement and for his developing perception of what it meant 'to be' an artist and to make art.

Being an Artist

Eighteenth-century art theorists and practitioners sought to establish consensus regarding visual arts practice and its attendant discourses. Most notably, their

[911] This contention was assessed in the thesis's *Introduction* in the fourth sub-section *Conceptions of Self*.
[912] Notably for the twelve *Lectures on Painting* that he gave at London's Royal Academy of Arts (1801-25).

debates focused on what 'being an artist' should mean, on which visual forms and modes ought to characterise an artist's work, and what these visual features should connote. The 'great' or 'grand' visual style, which became dominant in the period, was predicated on the visual re-framing of the forms and of the ideas which were perceived to characterise the artworks of favoured classical and Renaissance artists. As this thesis's opening chapter indicated, the purpose of academic artists' creative borrowings was the invention of 'new' pictorial designs which were constructed in order to influence rhetorically the thoughts and social actions of a (learned) spectatorship.[913] These new images were also deemed to be ethical because they were considered to be means for regulating and subsequently perpetuating a series of pre-established personal, social, cultural and moral standards. In these respects visual representation was bounded by a series of aesthetic conventions which sought to normalise visual art's characteristics and its meanings. Within this art practice drawing was conceived of as a method for ensuring that depicted forms most appropriately communicated verified pictorial standards, especially with regard to the human body whose classically inspired forms ought to suggest paradigms of perfectibility and idealised conduct to which individuals might aspire. Fuseli's challenging of these standards cut at the heart of dominant eighteenth-century visual art and its discourses.

[913] John Barrell has notably assessed the political overtones of the Academy model of art, especially the ways in which it sought to normalise artistic standards with a view to controlling the dissemination of ideas and images so as to address and perpetuate the belief systems and social/cultural influence of the period's social elite, in *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt, 'The Body of the Public'*, New Haven and London, 1986.

As this thesis has shown, Fuseli's disputing of established aesthetic principles laid bare those discourses that had conditioned the nature and purposes of visual art and which had directed opinion concerning artists' roles in respect of society, and culture. I have argued that Fuseli, in order to most effectively contest how visual art and artists might be understood, directed his attention to querying the aesthetic and conceptual foundations underlying eighteenth-century pictorial representation. He did so by re-appraising the verities of artistic subject matter and of graphic materials and processes, and by using drawing to modify the visual codes that buttressed dominant contemporary art practice. Consequently, Fuseli's disputing of these accepted aspects of visual art – through a contra-diction of normative depictive and theoretical standards – questioned how visual art might serve as a key tool for human improvement. Fuseli's drawn and conceptual challenges to dominant philosophical and aesthetic standards contested how human experience might be translated visually, and queried the extent to which accepted theoretical conventions could adequately attribute meaning to human existence. Fuseli's art-making and theorising opened up new possibilities for exploring the epistemological and, most particularly, the ontological complexities of human life, as I have contended through assessments of how he appreciated and graphically depicted the relationships between actual experiences and the imaginatively invented.[914] The challenges which I have contended that Fuseli presented to sanctioned visual art practice and theory provided new standards against which visual art and, indeed, humanness could be appraised. Fuseli's contestation of normative aesthetic and visual paradigms led him to reconsider the function of visual art, a theme which was identified in this thesis's

[914] While such assessments of Fuseli's drawings have been undertaken throughout the thesis, particular attention was given to this issue when discussing his understandings of artistic imitation and allegory in chapter four.

Introduction as important for the re-evaluation of his art in respect of previous scholarship.[915]

A consequence of Fuseli's bid to understand, and yet contest, established notions of how visual art should denote and connote human experience was that his conception and use of a particular mode of artistry unsettled conventional eighteenth-century ideas about what artists were - or might be - and did. The concept of (artistic) 'self' (another significant theme that was identified for this thesis in its *Introduction*) has been examined by previous Fuseli scholars who have usually concluded that we should consider him to be of interest, largely due to him being an artistic anomaly, and that we ought to view his artwork as exemplifying a creative ambiguity (in terms of eighteenth-century norms). However, this thesis, while noting Fuseli's creative irregularities, has consistently argued that his self-presentation and his imagery were both underscored by ideas which were commensurate with how he conceived of himself and his purpose in life, in respect of the ways in which artists were perceived contemporaneously. Fuseli's self-conception was markedly influenced by his formal and informal educational experiences pre-1770 because the pedagogic themes and ideas which he encountered during this time provided him with the conceptual raw materials that enabled him to construct a personal philosophy, one grounded on the aligning of diverse, unorthodox and apparently contradictory principles.

[915] In this *Introduction* it was contended that whereas some previous Fuseli scholars have persuasively attributed functions to Fuseli's artworks, their efforts have not fully taken into account how Fuseli's mode of artistry might have been influenced by his experiences pre-1770, what these experiences were and how they affected Fuseli's understandings of what art was, and what its practice might enable him to achieve.

Fuseli's Zurich schooling was based on instruction in literature, history, philosophy and theology. Unifying these pedagogic themes was the idea that there were certain notable individuals whose writings or pronouncements should be considered to be important for the improvement of humanity; examples of these persons were, Homer, Shakespeare and Milton, and notable philosophers and writers of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[916] Additionally, Fuseli's education emphasised the reformist religious teachings of Huldych Zwingli which provided a prototype for ways of thinking about, coalescing and sometimes confounding 'the study of theology with philology, history, antiquity, and the fine arts.'[917] This manner of aligning and effectively complicating the connotations of various subject matters, and the merging of their distinctions, subsequently enabled Fuseli to formulate an idiosyncratic way of comprehending himself and his everyday experiences. Most notably, Fuseli, being trained to be a Zwinglian preacher, was directed to understand that he ought to conceive of himself as having the important task of guiding his contemporaries' spiritual and temporal existences; he should effectively understand himself to be a prophet concerned with indicating ways for human spiritual improvement.[918] From the outset this thesis has shown that Fuseli's perception of his activities in Italy during the 1770s was inspired by such a mindset. The second half of this thesis, in particular, has contended that Fuseli conceived of his artistry at that time as being concerned with altering established understandings of human experience in order to encourage his contemporaries' realisations of their fullest potentials. Neither of these

[916] Among these philosophers and writers were Descartes, Locke, Leibniz, Shaftesbury, Addison, and Rousseau.
[917] Hall, 1985, 14.
[918] This matter was discussed most fully in this thesis's third and fourth chapters.

explanations of Fuseli and his art has been proffered, or comparably analysed, in previous Fuseli scholarship.

Cementing Fuseli's appreciation of how human understandings of lived experience might be probed, and most productively manipulated, was the concept of the sublime with which he was familiarised at the Carolinum.[919] The sublime, as Fuseli came to conceive of it, was a means for profitably unsettling and re-adjusting peoples' comprehensions of sentient existence, especially in terms of how portrayals of unearthly phenomena might be employed to effect the deconstruction of standard comprehension. Fuseli's belief in how this appreciation of the sublime could be used constructively as a means to reframe his contemporaries' perceptions, via its potential for re-fashioning imaginatively accepted comprehensions of oneself and consciousness, was closely associated with his perception of himself as an artist. As a consequence of his Zurich schooling Fuseli devised a pronounced understanding of what artists, especially visual artists, should do and how it should be done.

Becoming Sublime

Fuseli thought that the greatest artists, for example, Homer, Shakespeare and Michelangelo, had directed their attentions to cultivating a particular form of artistic persona (they were sublime individuals), and that a contemporary artist with comparable ambitions should do likewise. Consequently, how Fuseli understood and

[919] Assessment of this idea was made in Chapter Three.

presented himself was, by the conventions of his day, unusual. Indeed, his attitude to being and acting contrasted with the personal characteristics distinguishing most of his contemporaries, regardless of whether or not they were artists.[920] This apparent individual oddness has, as was noted and critiqued in this thesis's *Introduction*, overshadowed scholars' interpretations of Fuseli. Yet, focusing on this characteristic without fully determining how, or why, Fuseli came to favour or utilise it has often led to incomplete interpretations of him and his art of the 1770s. By contrast, this thesis has contended that Fuseli sought to characterise himself as a sublime person because of his received belief that the most creatively enlightened (sublime) individuals were society's and culture's best prospects for positive change.

An artist, as Fuseli understood the role, directed peoples' attentions towards more intense comprehensions of themselves and of being. Artists were prophets and their art, like the inspired visions of classical mystics, ought to offer the most profound insights into human life. In this respect artists, while ostensibly teaching new ways of comprehending, should also serve a quasi-religious function. They should facilitate access to the mysteries of human existence by providing experiences that expanded the bounds of human comprehension. To achieve these goals artists needed to develop particularly intense means for engaging their audiences' imaginations. Fuseli, having been schooled in an interpretation of the sublime that emphasised its unnatural yet plausible qualities, and having also been guided to appreciate how the greatest (literary) artists' uses of language focused readers' imaginations, sought out

[920] This idea has underscored the thesis, but was initially broached in its *Introduction* in respect of the scholarship of, for example, Dror Wahrman (*The Making of the Modern Self, Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*, 2004), Roy Porter (*Flesh in the Age of Reason*, 2003) and John Brewer (*The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, 1997).

source materials with which to achieve comparable results. To this end, besides his drawn reappraisals of classical and Renaissance art and his choice of unorthodox themes, notably that of the supernatural (as communicated by, among others, Shakespeare), Fuseli took into account the intensely dramatic scenarios which he had witnessed on the London theatrical stage during the 1760s and subsequently he depicted figures posed to suggest the mannerisms of London's actors. All told, Fuseli's artistry centred on connotatively rich subject matters and his visual manipulations of these encouraged viewers of his art to engage imaginatively with the events he depicted.

As has been argued throughout this thesis, besides contrasting with creative norms Fuseli's ideas on art and artists, especially the ways in which he understood that visual art was important to society and culture, were formed from a broader conceptual base than was usual for most academic practitioners. This, as was noted through each of the thesis's chapters, Fuseli owed largely to his diverse educational experiences which encouraged him to assimilate ideas that conventionally were viewed as distinct. Furthermore, Fuseli's pronounced attitude to visual representation was underscored by how he had been guided to appreciate relationships between the Homeric and Miltonic epics, biblical narratives, the sublime, the supernatural, the religious and philosophies of the self, and with that determined to be the actual. Throughout this thesis, notably in chapters two and three, analysis has been undertaken of how Fuseli's choices and uses of graphic materials can be deemed to have been influenced by his efforts to challenge visually conventional understandings of the relationships proposed to exist between visual forms and aesthetic or

philosophical ideas. Additionally, throughout, focus has been given to his attempts to establish new and unforeseen correspondences between themes, subject matters and depictive strategies. Also established in this thesis have been networks of relationships connecting Fuseli's graphic re-conceptualisations of subject matters and ideas to his schooling and to his officially presented art theory. In sum, Fuseli's art-making and art-theorising have, in particular, been shown to be decisive for instituting a reappraisal of ideas which determined contemporary notions of inherited culture and of visual traditions. These types of interpretation of Fuseli's artistry have not been made previously. I have indicated that Fuseli, by reconsidering these ideas in these ways, was ostensibly questioning what counted as being civilised and what circumstances, or influences, might lead to one's personal advancement. Moreover, Fuseli, by discursively re-codifying those pictorial and theoretical discourses that were attributed value by his own generation and, it was expected, would be by their descendants, was proposing reconsiderations of which ideas and images should be acknowledged to be pertinent and should be given cultural or aesthetic currency.[921] Through his art theory Fuseli can be appreciated as focusing on visual art's importance as a vehicle for human enlightenment. As has been noted in this thesis, the subjects of Fuseli's *Lectures* especially appear to have been chosen to achieve this aim. While it is acknowledged that these Academy addresses served to educate upcoming artists and to reinforce Fuseli's professional position among his fellow

[921] As was contended in this thesis's *Introduction*, the interpretations given of Fuseli's drawings of the 1770s can be associated with how Tom Gretton characterised the artwork in his essay 'Clastic Icons: Prints taken from broken or reassembled blocks in some 'popular prints' of the Western tradition' (in *Iconoclasm, Contested Objects, Contested Terms*, 2007). Therein, Gretton proposed that art objects were 'the necessary products of a relationship in which cultural authority, cultural deference and cultural resistance are mixed together, of a situation in which new commodities have to function as vehicles both of incorporation into and of resistance to new cultural relations'; new commodities (artefacts) are determined to be 'art objects' when they can be acknowledged to possess some form of currency in the context of existing cultural frameworks, whether these artefacts can be fully assimilated into operational cultural conventions or, to some degree, they oppose them.

Academicians (and, therefore, would have needed to indicate how Fuseli's thinking might be assimilated with that of his R.A. forebears), it is also evident that Fuseli's *Lectures* queried his predecessors' ideas on art and artists.[922] Fuseli, by contesting how his English artist/theorist antecedents characterised the history of art, how they determined the respective aesthetic qualities of various visual source materials, and by challenging conventional inventive/imitative theories (for instance, those buttressing the neo-classical visual style), reappraised the nature and purposes of art theory. As his ideas about art can be connected to how his own formal education characterised and ordered concepts of art and artists, Fuseli's *Lectures* are comprehendible as reassessing how seemingly contrasting fields of knowledge can be assimilated, and as reappraising contemporary aesthetic predilections. Thus, the *Lectures* revise what Fuseli perceived his contemporaries to understand to be meant by the notion 'being enlightened'. So contextualised, Fuseli's *Lectures* can, as I have shown, be identified as the end-point of his long-standing attempts to formulate a comprehensive, all-encompassing aesthetic framework, a conceptual and encyclopaedic means for reappraising and re-assimilating those conventions which underlay dominant eighteenth-century visual culture.

Key to Fuseli's efforts to re-form contemporary aesthetics and image-making were those drawings which he produced in the 1770s. From the outset this thesis has identified how and why these drawings were significant to Fuseli's 'artistic project'.

[922] Among Fuseli's teaching forebears at the R.A. were, Joshua Reynolds, Benjamin West and John Opie. Fuseli's *Lectures* are notably different to, for instance, Opie's (who gave four lectures as Academy professor from May 1807 which were published posthumously in 1809). In contrast to Fuseli's addresses, Opie's lectures are much like those that Reynolds gave years earlier, in terms of their content and of the interpretations which Opie gave of the value of historic art and artists, of art-making and of art education.

My particular analyses of Fuseli's drawings of the 1770s have made apparent that they bore a resemblance to his drawn images made during the previous decade. Indeed, Fuseli's drawings of the 1770s bear comparison with the general stylistic traits, forms and themes of his drawings of the 1750s. Therefore, by 1770, Fuseli already had pronounced thematic interests and a recognisable visual style.[923] However, as the first two chapters of this thesis have revealed, it was Fuseli's direct experience of both classical and Renaissance artworks in Italy that altered his appreciation of the types of images that he might make, and these visual resources equally affected how he conceived of his artistry in respect of his artist peers. Through his first-hand studies of historic artworks in Italy Fuseli came to reconsider their connotative significances for contemporary art. Notably, he identified possibilities for these source materials re-framing in terms of ideas and other types of visual forms with which he was familiar, or that he had experienced during the previous decade.[924] Subsequently, Fuseli challenged his own prior affiliation to some aesthetic theories, for instance, those of Winckelmann, which consequently necessitated his extended visual and conceptual contesting of the notion of art-making which such thinking supported. It was those drawings that he made while in Italy which provided the opportunities and the most direct and efficient means for disputing dominant visual and aesthetic debates.

[923] While it is possible to detect a pictorial kinship between Fuseli's drawings of the 1770s and those he made earlier, we cannot be fully sure of the degree to which Fuseli's image-making had advanced by 1770. Comparatively few of his pictures of the later 1760s have survived, in part due to a fire at Joseph Johnson's house (with whom Fuseli was lodging in London) prior to Fuseli's departure for Italy in which most of his possessions, including artworks, were destroyed.

[924] For example, the characteristic acting styles and staged depictions which he had seen in London's theatres. Before 1770 Fuseli was arguably more accustomed to making images in response to reproduced pictures of paintings and sculptures, or in reference to drawings by other artists.

Yet, as was emphasised in this thesis's *Introduction*, Fuseli's questioning of normative standards of art-making did not result in a series of images (and ideas) that opposed convention completely. Rather, his drawings of the 1770s enabled him to examine and graphically re-make the sets of visual codes that together formed dominant artistic paradigms.[925] As I indicated in the *Introduction*, my conception of Fuseli's drawn transformations of prevailing visual codes results from my semantic development of Richard Clay's argument concerning iconoclasm.[926] Fuseli's drawings also allowed him to query visually established criteria. A key part of this figurative interrogation was Fuseli's depiction of unorthodox visual themes which directly challenged the presumed aesthetic superiority of normative art practice. Additionally, and most significantly, he graphically (and later officially, theoretically) opposed those standards of artistic invention and imitation which characterised academic art making. Drawing, as Fuseli conceived of and employed it, was a most controversial method of tackling the supposed excellencies of dominant visual art because, as a process, drawing was a commonplace and a foundational activity that was engaged in by the majority of eighteenth-century artists. As this thesis's second chapter indicated, eighteenth-century academic artists considered the activity of drawing to signify a range of related conceptual tenets centred on the exhibition of a superior aesthetic sensibility. To draw, as per academic convention, indicated one's elevated intellect and helped to cement one's (approved) status as an artist. By challenging these established standards graphically Fuseli was undercutting what, in

[925] In this thesis's *Introduction* my interpretation of the defining characteristics of Fuseli's drawings determined that he was effectively using drawing as a means to question and, subsequently to, transform the sets of conventions that governed how visual signs were mobilised; he materially transformed (through the drawing process) the visual codes that, in the eighteenth century, constituted dominant artistic practice.

[926] See this thesis's *Introduction*, the sub-section 'Intention, invention and creation: a conceptual framework'.

the period, denoted an artist's claim to be a socially and, especially, culturally valuable individual. Thus, while Fuseli did not diminish art-making's acknowledged culturally significant status, he did oppose what he conceived of as being its failings to address completely the developmental needs of contemporary persons. Although academic art practice and theory had their merits, Fuseli was unconvinced that these were adequately focused.

Fuseli's refocusing of academic visual conventions can be detected in his choice of drawing tools and in the fundamental characteristics of his images. The drawing media that he selected and his experiments with the connotative scope of the drawn line, especially how line might function to re-energise depictions of physical form, conflicted with established protocols. The forms which Fuseli constructed from these eloquent graphic marks also challenged dominant ideas about 'visual language' because Fuseli's drawings (as each of this thesis's chapters have emphasised) centred on expressive, physical human bodies, rather than on the languid human forms that were most frequently portrayed in academic artworks. Fuseli's repeated drawing from unsanctioned examples of classical and Renaissance art inspired his drawn analyses of the human form's communicative possibilities.

Moreover, the ways in which Fuseli reprocessed these source materials graphically further unsettled usual visual standards. Conventionally, academic artists sought to use their images to convey a series of related visual associations that were believed to be capable of positively affecting spectators' self-perceptions rhetorically. Academic art relied on its audiences' success in deducing depicted figures' actions

and suggested motivations (particularly as these replicated those found in classical art), and their comprehending of such figures' given physiognomic characteristics. Unlike academic artists, Fuseli did not focus on ensuring that his depicted figures had such clear connotative significance. He did not, for instance, emphasise these figures' characters in ways which would encourage audiences to deduce unequivocal meanings from them. More usually Fuseli concentrated on portraying the archetypal natures of his chosen figures. In this respect, Fuseli's drawn human types can, as this thesis has shown, be interpreted as forms whose expressive physicality appears designed to complement the extreme situations which he devised for them. Indeed, Fuseli's selecting of unorthodox narratives, especially those by Shakespeare, and his choice of backgrounds for his images (which were depicted so as to enhance his human forms' confrontational natures), seems to confirm his interest in having the audiences for his images focus on these pictures' 'irregularities'. Overall, Fuseli's drawn compositions comprised of figures and telling backdrops have been demonstrated to have provided affecting visual experiences whose formal uncertainties foregrounded Fuseli's signalling of a break with accepted aesthetic conventions and modes of comprehension. These expressive artistic strategies were shown, especially in chapters two and four, to be associable with how Fuseli had been instructed to consider artistic invention at the Carolinum and with how his principal tutor there, Johann Bodmer, had appraised classical histories and the characters that enacted them.[927]

[927] These close connections between Fuseli's artistry and his formal education are not found in Fuseli scholarship. Bodmer considered these classical narratives offered insights into that which might assist in raising contemporary educational standards, while they could also serve to instruct his peers' critical assessments of their own lives. Additionally, it was argued (in Chapter Four) that Bodmer's re-working of the characteristics (as he perceived them) of classical tales through his own written dramas, might have influenced Fuseli's appreciation of the potential form of his own images; for example, neither

Fuseli's focusing on visual expression as a decisive representational device also allowed him to interrogate why academic theorists had instituted ideal beauty as the principal aesthetic criterion. In academic artistic discourses ideal beauty, especially that of the human body, was thought to be the measure by which all significant visual art should be assessed. Ideal (human) beauty was posited as the key standard by which an eighteenth-century academic artist could demonstrate their command of neo-classical aesthetics and through which the audiences for their art might enhance their intellectual appreciations of themselves in respect of such time-honoured values. In contrast, Fuseli dismissed the pre-eminent notion of ideal beauty as the worthwhile aesthetic standard. Rather, he believed that the expressive manipulation of regular aesthetic paradigms was a more important measure of artistic significance and it was only via such that beauty might be inferred. This thinking opened the way for a more expansive interpretation of 'the ideal'. While Fuseli thought that absolute ideality was unobtainable by mortals, he did believe that humankind could be raised to an existential state more enhanced than that which it occupied at that historical moment.[928] This belief he owed largely to his Zurich schooling.

Fuseli's religious studies and ordination as a Zwinglian preacher in Zurich seems to have confirmed him in the belief that human beings were capable of a form of spiritual augmentation that might elevate them beyond commonplace, and restrictive perceptions of selfhood and sentience. This thesis has argued that Fuseli, on

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man paid great attention to scenic properties, nor did they represent traditionally affirmative character types.

[928] As Eudo Mason has indicated, Fuseli rejected his contemporaries' belief that man had a legitimate claim 'to all the highest ideal qualities and conditions'. Fuseli 'protested against this tendency […] because the ideal meant too much to him […] the perfect [was] an unattainable ideal', Mason, 1951, 180.

rejecting his clerical office, still retained a strong sense of his former religious-self and came to use this self-conception (in significantly altered guise) as a yardstick by which to gauge his artistic activities.[929] Moreover, what might be described as, his developed artist-preacher-teacher persona (the suggestion that Fuseli was to an extent 'playing a role' is intentional) can be detected in the design of his drawings of the 1770s and in the form and content of his *Lectures*.

This thesis's fourth chapter posited that Fuseli's more finalised drawings of the 1770s, the majority of which portrayed the revealing of the depicted protagonists' destinies especially as a consequence of supernatural interference, presented spectators with the prospect of engaging in an all-encompassing aesthetic experience. I have proposed that how Fuseli crafted these images encouraged their viewers to respond to them in forcefully imaginative ways, which persuaded viewers to take less notice of their everyday concerns. Instead, I suggested, viewers' attentions were swayed by Fuseli's depicted visual phenomena and the connotations that he generated through these. In these respects, the affects of Fuseli's artistry can be compared to those of religious experiences for in both one's received perceptions and comprehensions of sentient existence are unsettled by unnatural and largely inexplicable phenomena. In effect, Fuseli's images presented opportunities for the re-consideration of learned modes of perception and conception. His drawings offered

[929] It should be remembered that Zwinglianism (a reformist, Protestant faith) aimed to challenge the dogma of the Catholic Church instituting, in its stead, a means for individuals to attain a more personal, self-inspired relationship to God outside of official modes and places of worship. Zwinglianism's disputation of regular attitudes and perceptions provides a background against which we might understand better why Fuseli, later in his life, sought to confront the Academy's authority concerning visual art's appearance and purpose.

the possibility of re-appraising what it meant ‘to see’, ‘to understand’ and, consequently, where appropriate, ‘to do’.

Comparably, Fuseli’s *Lectures* engaged their audiences through his carefully structured authorship. His expounding of his ideas in this style and form can be interpreted as a realisation (on his part) that his imagery might not be capable of elucidating his ideas fully. To this end Fuseli seems to have constructed the *Lectures* so as to captivate his audiences most completely. In many places the *Lectures* have a pronounced literariness which gives the impression that Fuseli’s theoretical journeying through the history of western art and civilisation is rather like an epic, Homeric voyage.[930] Elsewhere, Fuseli’s lecturing style can be likened to Dante’s imaginative recollections of his journeying from Hell to Paradise, because Fuseli’s observations and erudition appear to be derived from his apparently intimate knowledge of subject matters of which he can have had no first-hand experience.[931] Such instances of Fuseli adopting a stylised mode of presentation reinforce the notion that his artistry was underscored by his purposeful use of a particular artistic persona to direct his various audiences. The form of Fuseli’s *Lectures* and their content, which is generally profound academically and eruditely critical, often do not fully or comfortably cohere in ways that might have been expected of such discourses. They have an inherent tension, produced by Fuseli’s uniting of direct observation, scholarly anecdotes and literary allusions, similar to the ways in which

[930] Consider, for example, Fuseli’s appraisal of Ancient Art in Lecture I.
[931] This characteristic notably determines the nature of the first four *Lectures* through which Fuseli assessed the achievements, and interpreted the ideas of, numerous classical and more modern artists, authors and theorists. Here, the idiosyncrasies of Fuseli’s delivery can be attributed to his profound scholarly erudition, through which he synthesised a dizzying amount of theoretical and visual materials. However, in certain cases, for example, in respect of the Sistine Chapel ceiling, Fuseli’s commentary was informed by first-hand experience.

his drawings of the 1770s purposely referenced the visual cues and depictive strategies of dominant art practice only to undercut their given functions. Thus, both Fuseli's drawings and *Lectures* seem to have been conceived of and executed as devices for unsettling interpretative strategies applied more usually to officially-presented visual artworks and institutional discourses.[932]

Fuseli's artistry as a whole, which should be acknowledged to encompass both his visual and theoretical/critical activities, ought to be attributed to a coherent conceptual basis. Unlike previous Fuseli scholars who do not appear to perceive his artistic activities as having a unifying underlying consistency, I have argued that how Fuseli chose to present himself and the ways in which he made art and theorised it, show that he understood himself as engaged in an urgent aesthetic/philosophical dispute with his artist contemporaries. As Fuseli attempted to instigate an evolution in aesthetic sensibility he did not accept their interpretations of how visual art ought to function. Fuseli questioned how art should aim to address its audiences (indeed, he queried contemporary appreciations of audience), challenged the way in which art must be expounded theoretically, and disputed his peers' understandings of the relationships artists had to society and culture. Such an advancement of contemporary intelligence required Fuseli to adopt a unified creative scheme which was capable of tackling a long-standing artistic/theoretical programme, an aesthetic agenda which, Fuseli believed, had not fulfilled its potential. In response Fuseli developed, and then used, his own mode of artistry to encourage others to see, think

[932] Throughout this thesis such modes of interpretation have been appraised as the counter-position to Fuseli's art theory and imagery. Asia Haut, in her Doctoral thesis *'Visions Bred on Sense by Fancy': The Transvaluation of Science, Sexuality and Polemics in the Work of Henry Fuseli and His Contemporaries*, 2002, also indicates that she detects correspondences between Fuseli's visual and literary methods (see 182).

and consequently understand better in manners comparable with himself and his mentors.[933]

Imaginative vision

I have established that Fuseli had a marked appreciation of his artistic activities and of the types of aesthetic, imaginative, or philosophical perceptions that he was encouraging audiences of his artworks or art theories to adopt. His comprehension of his artistry, and its potential affects, was based on the acknowledgement that there were connections between the interpretations of selfhood and of human experience given by notable authors of sublimely, epic literature (for instance, Homer and Milton), by comparable visual artists (for example, Phidias and Michelangelo) and with how one might actually 'be'. Peoples' recognition of the ways in which such creative individuals had analysed and subsequently re-presented that which was generally accepted as human nature and reality, might enable the use of these creative persons' endeavours as 'prophetic insights' with which to challenge their own self-conceptions and to contest how life had been preconditioned traditionally. Fuseli, through his artistry, was indicating how this type of being might be possible (he was effectively acting as a prophet), and how such an existential condition might lead to others' 'spiritual enhancement'. By following where Fuseli had trodden (figuratively) other people might be enabled to 'see through' the conceptual and actual constraints with which normal existence bound them to set ways of seeing,

[933] These mentors comprised both living persons, like Bodmer, and significant artists from the past, like Shakespeare, or Michelangelo.

thinking and acting, and appreciate how living more imaginatively expansively could elevate their humanity. Fuseli's drawings of the 1770s were contrived visual devices for shocking people out of cosy, and easy, ways of seeing and understanding. He wanted to replace such comfortable experiences of existence with a more interrogative mode of being. This was an imaginatively-based, visionary faculty through which a person might acquire knowledge by synthesising their direct perceptions, reasoning and intuitions.

Parts of this thesis have stated that the features which characterised Fuseli's drawings of the 1770s are sufficiently, visually, like the images which he made thereafter to suggest that these later artworks (both drawn and painted, and based on various literary sources) can be considered to have conceptual underpinnings comparable to his Italian drawings.[934] So contextualised, it is possible to suggest such a kinship between his images of the 1770s and those of the 1780s, for instance, *The Dream of Socrates* (Fig. 129) and *Cain marked by God after the Murder of Abel* (both 1781) (Fig. 130), *The Nightmare* (1782) (Fig. 131),[935] and *Titania's Awakening* (c.1785-90) (Fig. 132), and of the 1790s and the early 1800s, examples being, *Macbeth Consulting the Vision of the Armed Head* (1793) (Fig. 126), *Satan flees*

[934] As argued throughout this thesis, the actual subjects that Fuseli selected for his pictures were of less importance than whether his chosen themes were able to convey a comparable psychological unease, or whether they might be made to affect a similar intensity of unsettling imaginative response in a viewer.

[935] In respect of the dream-themed images *The Dream of Socrates* and *The Nightmare* Andrei Pop has made a thought-provoking analysis of the ways in which Fuseli attempted to provide viewers with access to the private experience of a dreamer ('Sympathetic Spectators: Henry Fuseli's *Nightmare* and Emma Hamilton's Attitudes', *Art History*, 34:5, 2011, 934-957). Pop's interpretations of this 'dream theme' within Fuseli's artistic oeuvre reveal, as does this thesis, the ways in which Fuseli used drawing as an effectively experimental medium through which he was able to challenge spectators' perceptions, and conceptions, of the artistically fabricated, and how such inventions contributed to expanding the scope of that which was understood as human experience.

without Answer from Chaos (1794-96) (Fig. 133),[936] *Achilles grasping at the Shade of Patroclus* (Fig. 134) (a painted version of 1803 and a drawing of 1810), *Brunhild observes Gunther hanging in Chains from the Ceiling* (1807) (Fig. 135), *Garrick and Mrs Pritchard*: *Lady Macbeth seizing the Daggers* (1812) (Fig. 136) and *The Danube Water-spirits prophesy the Downfall of Gunther and the Nibelungs to Hagen* (1800-15) (Fig. 137).[937] Determined by these comparative criteria even Fuseli's 'pornographic drawings' of the 1770s (for instance, *Symplegma of a Man and a Woman with the aid of a Maidservant*, 1770-78 (Fig. 138)), and of the early nineteenth century (examples being, *Woman Torturing a Child*, 1800-10 (Fig. 139), and *Symplegma of a Man and two Women*, 1809-10 (Fig. 140)), can be appreciated as associable with the above mentioned pictures. The visual style (if not the themes) of these pictures is suggestive of academic art's characteristic depictive mode. Yet, Fuseli's images show situations that controvert how academic artists typically represented normality or those forms of human behaviour that were central to academic practice's philosophical foundations;[938] Fuseli's imagery 'spectacularises' human experience.[939] The unorthodoxy, according to such conventional standards, of the range of Fuseli's imagery signalled a deviation from predictable, secure

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[936] In her *Fuseli's Milton Gallery, 'Turning Readers into Spectators'* (2006) Luisa Calè has argued that Fuseli's Milton-inspired images, dating from the end of the eighteenth century, were part of an exhibition project which was designed to affect audiences' comprehensions of Milton's text, of the exhibition format, and of themselves as spectators, in ways that are comparable with the analyses made in this thesis of Fuseli's drawings of the 1770s.

[937] Fuseli's principal tutor in Zurich, Johann Bodmer, was a foremost scholar in the re-discovery of and research into the *Nibelungenlied*.

[938] Here 'normality' can be understood to refer to lived experience, as this was comprehended in the eighteenth century, and also to standard eighteenth-century interpretations of the visual and literary sources to which Fuseli's art alluded. 'Philosophical foundations' (of academic art practice) alludes to those discourses which were central to dominant eighteenth-century visual art-making and theorising.

[939] That is, Fuseli's artwork shows human experience as both a spectacle and as spectacular. The notion that Fuseli was concerned for his artworks to be thought spectacles has been addressed by Martin Myrone in 'The Sublime as Spectacle: The Transformation of Ideal Art at Somerset House', in David H. Solkin (ed.), *Art on the Line –R.A. Exhibitions at Somerset House 1780-1836*, New Haven, 2001, 77-91, and by Louisa Calè in, *Fuseli's Milton Gallery, 'Turning Readers into Spectators'*, Oxford, 2006.

comprehension.[940] As was noted, especially in this thesis's fourth chapter, these pictures' unusual characteristics resulted from Fuseli's particular conception of 'intense imaginative vision'.[941] With such images it would be less easy for Fuseli's contemporaries to construe connotative significance unless they perceived and conceived of them differently than was the norm for the type of artworks which Fuseli's pictures aped visually.[942] The notion of developing alternative means of perception/conception suggests ways in which this thesis points beyond itself.

This thesis has forwarded a particular interpretation of Fuseli's artistry. However, constraints on the thesis's length have precluded attempts to assess how my methodological considerations of Fuseli's art practices, which have investigated both the 'how' and particularly the 'why' of his artistry, could be utilised in respect of other late-eighteenth-century artists. The generic frameworks underpinning this thesis – that the conception and practice of drawing is buttressed by a complex interweaving of human perceptions, learned modes of comprehension, choices and manipulations of graphic mediums and received aesthetic discourses concerning visual representation – could be used to reconsider drawing practice's significance in the

[940] That is comprehension on both Fuseli's part and consequently, necessarily, on that of his audiences. In her essay 'Between Fantasy and Angst: Assessing the Subject and Meaning of Henry Fuseli's Late Pornographic Drawings, 1800-25', *Art History*, 33:3, 2010, 420-447, Camilla Smith suggests a number of ways in which these images can be understood as questioning the social role of artists and of cultural institutions. Furthermore, Smith argues that in these drawings Fuseli appears to have been interested in using the obscurity and unease that had come to be associated with Burke's 'violent' interpretation of the sublime in order to make them appear more unsettling for contemporary viewers. Indeed, Smith suggests that Fuseli's use of composition in these images is perhaps a deliberate attempt, on his part, 'to heighten viewer's suspense' (428). In sum, Smith proposes that for Fuseli drawings such as these 'can be understood as the logical outcome of a society which endlessly questioned values and norms' (440).

[941] Mason, 1951, 237. Mason argues that this concept characterises Fuseli's appreciation of allegory, and his bid to utilise the concept 'allegory' in ways that differed from its common interpretation as a 'bald schematic' mode of visual communication.

[942] On this issue, in respect of Fuseli's pornographic drawings, Camilla Smith suggests that these images can be understood as a 'form of rebellion' against established aesthetic protocols ('Between Fantasy and Angst', 443).

eighteenth century more broadly.[943] In that period drawing was an ostensibly preparatory activity which allowed artists to investigate privately subject matters and themes that subsequently might appear in more finalised (painted) works. The methodology used in this thesis could serve to better determine the complexities of drawing practice (*actual* artistic practice), and might also permit greater attention to be given to the notion of 'visual language', as eighteenth-century artists' understood this concept. Additionally, through this thesis's particular thematic emphases I have argued that the fundamental character of artistic practice – an artist's artistry – might be determined best by studying how their non-public depictions of ideas intersect with their particular theoretical conceptions of their professional role.[944] As this thesis has contended, it was Fuseli's self-appreciation, in respect of his contemporaries, that drove him to practice art in a particular way and which informed his art theorising.

Fuseli's art-making and the theories which informed his ideas, confirmed him in the belief that a 'higher type of art' might be realisable. It was this art which he had promoted, somewhat unconventionally (as befitted its nature), to Academy

[943] As I have contended during this thesis (most notably in its second half), Fuseli's challenges to standard modes of visual depiction might have been a means to align his art practices with a particular notion of 'historic artistry', especially in terms of artistic invention being a form of allegorical re-consideration of human nature and experience. So considered, Fuseli's use of drawing could be seen as a carefully calculated strategy for intensively reappraising the form and purpose of visual depiction according to the western tradition. It would be possible to similarly reconsider how other of his contemporaries understood and used drawing in respect of inherited notions of visual depiction and cultural/aesthetic traditions.

[944] On this point it is worth considering how academic artists' drawings intersect conceptually with predominant aesthetic discourses, and the extent to which such discourses might have been shaped by artists' attempts to devise a modern 'visual language' which also referenced those stylistic traits that were believed to be the best examples of human (artistic) endeavour. That is, how 'visual language' can be considered to emerge, mature and, subsequently, is re-framed to serve necessary human development (both through images and ideas).

audiences. However, Fuseli's final three *Lectures* (1821-23) had a different complexion, for they were characterised by a marked cultural pessimism.

In his final Academy address, Lecture XII, *Present State of the Art*, Fuseli made clear his thoughts on the future prospects of the 'higher art'[945] which he had championed throughout his artistic career. Fuseli was sceptical that such an art was still viable. He was unsure that a single cause was responsible for this type of art's demise, for its sinking 'to such a state of inactivity and languor' - , but he doubted 'whether it will exist much longer'.[946] Rather, Fuseli considered the ruin of the higher art to be 'a general cause, founded on the bent, the manners, habits, modes of a nation [indeed all nations who] pretend to culture.'[947] He considered that all aspects of a fully encompassing, socially/culturally responsible human existence had been sacrificed to 'domestic' and 'private' interests, and that 'every thing that surrounds us […] has become snug, less, narrow, pretty, insignificant.'[948] Demonstrating his cynicism for his contemporary times Fuseli remarked, 'to expect a system of art built on grandeur, without a total revolution, would only be less presumptuous than insane'[949] because, as he opined, 'all depends on the character of the time in which an artist lives, and on the motive of his exertions'.[950] Upholding this bleak outlook on art's future Fuseli's final Lecture concluded with a damning indictment of his peers and of the cultural climate in which they had forced artists (such as himself) to work, but ultimately to fail in their aims. Quoting Joshua Reynolds, Fuseli dismissed his contemporaries'

[945] Fuseli's term for the type of art that he had been promoting through his *Lectures*, Lecture XII, 553.
[946] *Ibid*.
[947] *Ibid*.
[948] *Ibid*.
[949] *Ibid*.
[950] *Ibid*., 559.

appreciations of artists and of the type of work which such artists made in order to satisfy the public, these artists' received notions of their profession and their conceptions of what artworks should be like. Fuseli stated, 'those who court the applause of their own time must reckon on the neglect of posterity'.[951] Appearing to finally concede that he (and like-minded artists) had failed in his efforts to encourage a higher concept of visual art, one that would have had resonance for future generations, Fuseli lamented 'What right have we to expect […] a revolution [in the comprehension of culture] in our favour?'[952] This thesis has shown how Fuseli designed a mode of artistry in order to realise the nascent prospect of such reform. As a consequence, this thesis has provided a coherent and overarching interpretative procedure which allows for analyses of Fuseli and his artworks in respect of his most pressing creative influences and concerns. These influences and concerns underpinned Fuseli's appreciation and practice of art throughout his career and, as I have argued, were greatest during the 1770s, his most important period of creative development. The disappointments which Fuseli expressed in his final *Lectures* are perhaps understood best in respect of the optimism that had motivated these earlier artistic endeavours.

[951] *Ibid*. As was indicated in this thesis's third chapter the type of art which Fuseli's schooling had encouraged him to rate most highly was characterised by a comparable focus on posterity, rather than on satisfying the mores of the times in which it was made.
[952] *Ibid*., 553. This sentence is footnoted (by 'W') in such a way as to suggest that all hope had not been lost that contemporary culture might still be revived. The note reads, 'It is to be hoped that this revolution, if it have not already taken place, has, at all events, given substantial evidences of its approach'. This edition of the *Lectures* (Garland Publishing, New York & London, 1979) is a facsimile excerpted from a Yale University copy of *Lectures on Painting, by the Royal Academicians Barry, Opie and Fuseli*, ed. Ralph N. Wornum, London, Henry G. Bohn, 1848, and was substantially footnoted by Ralph N. Wornum, 'W'.

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