

Introduction

In the decades that followed the creation of the Royal Academy of Arts in 1768, the sister arts tradition appeared to be as alive as it had been at the beginning of the century. The literary aspirations of British visual artists were nurtured by academic precepts which claimed that by rivalling and adapting the best poetic work, painters would assert their art's intellectual value and prove that it was a 'liberal' occupation, rather than a 'mechanical' trade. While the Royal Academy promoted 'history painting' and the emulation of epic poetry as the best demonstration of the mental skills employed in painting, a new generation of visual artists sought inspiration in the most exalting and tumultuous productions of the British literary genius, and found in Shakespeare, Milton or Macpherson's *Ossian* a stimulating repertoire of dramatic scenes and themes. Besides academic exhibits, the period was fraught with ambitious pictorial ventures which revealed a genuine desire to fuse the arts or confirm their equal emotive power. This was the time of John Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery (1789–1805), Thomas Macklin's Gallery of Poets (1788–97) and Henry Fuseli's Milton Gallery (1799–1800), all of which capitalised on the new literary interests, which were shared by a growing audience of non-aristocratic spectators. It was also the time when illustrated literary editions began to be published on a large scale, to answer to the expectations of visual/verbal interactions of this wider public.

The flourishing of literary pictorial productions, however, was more a reflection of British visual artists' new ambitions than a

genuine cooperation between the arts. A closer look at the situation suggests that from the point of view of the literary elite, the 'sisterly' bonds had begun to fall apart. The practice of literary pictorialism in poetry, which had seen its heyday in Britain in the first half of the century,¹ was on the decline. As M. H. Abrams writes, 'the use of painting to illuminate the essential character of poetry – *ut pictura poesis* – so widespread in the eighteenth century, almost disappears in the major criticism of the romantic period'.² More significantly, the painters' attempts to transcribe the original and dynamic productions of favourite writers were met with much suspicion or even opposition from the critics of the day, who considered such verbal material to be incommensurable with visual representation, and followed Lessing in arguing that poetry could not be compressed 'within the narrow limits of painting'.³ Quite strikingly, a number of reactions to the literary galleries insisted that the finite and mimetic nature of painting prevented it from conveying a poetic sublimity which exceeded its 'limits'. According to John Knowles, Fuseli's first biographer, the failure of the Milton Gallery within just one year of opening was largely due to this type of criticism:

As soon as the intended exhibition was announced by the daily prints, but before the doors of the 'Milton Gallery' were opened, the public mind was attempted to be biased very unfairly by paragraphs in the newspapers calumniating the subjects as well as the execution of the pictures. These critics considered that he had attempted to represent on canvas scenes adapted only to poetic imagery, and thus transgressed the limits of the imitative art.⁴

Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery was spared such harsh comments, and an initially positive reaction from the public allowed it to endure for sixteen years, until its sale by lottery in 1805. Nevertheless, here again some voices were raised to claim the superiority of the poet over the painter, and to assert that the intangible nature and suggestiveness of poetic images was irreducible to visual representation. In 1833, upon receiving an illustrated edition of Samuel Rogers's *Poems*, Charles Lamb famously reflected back on his impressions of the gallery in unambiguous terms:

But I am jealous of the combination of the sister arts. Let them sparkle apart. What injury (short of the theatres) did not Boydell's Shakspeare Gallery do me with Shakspeare? To have Opie's Shakspeare, Northcote's Shakspeare, light-headed Fuseli's Shakspeare, heavy-headed Romney's

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Shakspeare, wooden-headed West's Shakspeare (though he did the best in Lear), deaf-headed Reynolds's Shakspeare, instead of my, and everybody's Shakspeare; to be tied down to an authentic face of Juliet! to have Imogen's portrait! to confine the illimitable!⁵

This opinion, even though it was expressed several decades after the event, seems to have reflected the intellectual context in which the gallery was inaugurated. Boydell himself was aware of a potentially hostile critical reception and anticipated it by conceding the superiority of the poetic model to its pictorial transcriptions in the preface to the gallery's catalogue:

Though I believe it will be readily admitted, that no subjects seem so proper to form an English school of historical painting, as the scenes of the immortal Shakspeare; yet it must be always remembered that he possessed powers which no pencil can reach, &c. It must not then be expected, the art of the Painter can ever equal the sublimity of our Poet. The strength of Michael Angelo, united to the grace of Raphael, would here have laboured in vain. It is therefore hoped, that the spectator will view these pictures with this regard, and not allow his imagination, warmed by the magic powers of the poet, to expect from painting what painting cannot perform.⁶

Boydell's precautionary concession very clearly reflects the hierarchy that still existed between the arts twenty years after the creation of the Royal Academy: poetry was to provide the material for the highest category of painting, 'history', but even the greatest pictorial qualities according to academic canons – 'The strength of Michael Angelo, united to the grace of Raphael' – could not match the 'magic powers' of the best poetry. Like Knowles and Lamb, Boydell also suggests what the main source of discrepancy between the two arts was, according to the literary critics: a 'sublimity' or an 'illimitable', which were within the reach of poetry only, and could not be matched by an art which remained necessarily mimetic. As the two arts were compared, painting was perceived to be constrained by its finiteness or 'limits' and by the fact that it was an 'imitative art', which prevented it from reaching the sublime.

One of the most efficient justifications of this incommensurability was given by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in an analysis of *Romeo and Juliet*:

The grandest efforts of poetry are where the imagination is called forth, not to produce a distinct form, but a strong working of the mind, still offering what is still repelled, and again creating what is again rejected;

the result being what the poet wishes to impress, namely, the substitution of a sublime feeling of the unimaginable for a mere image. I have sometimes thought that the passage just read might be quoted as exhibiting the narrow limits of painting, as compared with the boundless power of poetry: painting cannot go beyond a certain point; poetry rejects all control, all confinement.⁷

Coleridge's comparison expresses a conviction that had become common among the literary elite of his day, which was that far from being sister arts, painting and poetry functioned very differently, because of the specificity of their respective media. The former was literal ('a mere image'), and consequently constrained by 'narrow limits', as Lessing had put it, whereas the latter was characterised by its endless process and unlimitedness. The dynamic open-endedness of poetry especially allowed it to convey the sublime, which resided in an energetic striving for presentation rather than in the representation of a sublime object. Poetry substituted 'a sublime feeling of the unimaginable for a mere image'.

The conviction that, contrary to poetry, visual images were incapable of conveying dynamic conceptions that exceeded finite representations, seems to have been central to British literary Romanticism. W. J. T. Mitchell and Gillen D'Arcy Wood describe the new suspicion of painting as 'romantic antipictorialism' or 'Romantic iconophobia',⁸ while William Galperin talks of the 'imaginative iconoclasm' which is 'endemic to romantic poetics'.⁹ Naturally, this viewpoint should not be overestimated, and analogies between poetry and painting remained pervasive in Romantic criticism;¹⁰ but antipictorial opinions certainly seem to have crystallised around the notion of the sublime. As the reactions to the literary galleries suggest, the idea that pictorial representation necessarily fell short of poetic evocation hinged on the idea that the illimitable was ungraspable by images of sense. And as Coleridge's analysis implies, grasping the sublime required a living and productive artistic medium, like poetic language, rather than a strictly mimetic one.

The simultaneous development of heightened expressive and literary aspirations among visual artists and of antipictorialism among contemporary writers is one of the most interesting paradoxes of British cultural history at the turn of the nineteenth century. One way of understanding this contrast is to see it as the expression of a new *paragone*, a new rivalry between the arts which, as suggested above, was articulated by the notion of the sublime and the

respective abilities of poetry and painting to convey it. While writers claimed that painters were incapable of reaching the illimitable, visual artists, encouraged by academic theory, felt it necessary to demonstrate the sublimity and affective powers of their media. The emulation of poetry recommended by academic teaching and the superiority conferred on history painting revolved around this compelling necessity. As Paul Duro puts it, ‘from the point of view of eighteenth-century art theory the sublime is exactly what serious painting aimed for’.¹¹ In this book, I will argue that this rivalry and its effects on visual practices may to a great extent be traced to one of the most successful definitions of the sublime in British aesthetic thought, Edmund Burke’s *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757–59),¹² to its challenging criticism of the mimetic limitations of painting, but also to artists who were prepared to embrace its radical aesthetic implications nevertheless, and often found in competing theories and resourceful invention the means to do so.

The Anglo-Irish thinker and statesman Edmund Burke is better known for his contribution to political theory, especially through his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), which has been seen as a founding text of modern conservatism, and also because of an active parliamentary and debating career which has inspired both conservative and liberal traditions. Even though the youthful *Philosophical Enquiry* is overshadowed by this more mature political reflection, and even though it was a relatively short treatise which never led to further investigations, its impact on aesthetic thought and artistic practices is no less significant. In the first collection of essays devoted exclusively to the *Enquiry*, Michael Funk Deckard and Koen Vermeir argue that the treatise ‘has never received the sustained attention of professional philosophers or historians of ideas’, and that ‘In the academic literature, the work is only treated superficially in general histories of aesthetics.’¹³ While the observation is correct, it does not mean that the *Enquiry*’s importance has been neglected. Most studies of Enlightenment aesthetic theory underline its leading position and groundbreaking role, as a radical sensualist account of aesthetic experience and of the sublime,¹⁴ as the forerunner of a new irrationalist aesthetic sensibility, or even as a precursor of Kant’s theory of the sublime.¹⁵

Its impact on pictorial practices, through its systematic definition of a new, irrationalist, aesthetics of terror, is also generally

acknowledged, and is rightly seen as one of the sources of the shift towards a Romantic sensibility in British art. This filiation is actually so widely accepted that the process of transmission of ideas itself has usually been only superficially examined. In his authoritative introduction to the *Enquiry*, James T. Boulton goes some way towards outlining such a process, by providing a first appraisal of Burke's direct and personal influence on the artists of his time, including Joshua Reynolds, James Barry, Henry Fuseli and J. H. Mortimer.¹⁶ A number of individual studies of these artists also investigate the precise manner in which Burke's ideas were discovered and adapted by his immediate contemporaries. Both Marilyn Toerbruegge and Luisa Calè raise the question of this transmission in their studies of Henry Fuseli;¹⁷ Robert Wark devotes a long note to Barry's reaction to the *Enquiry*, while William L. Pressly's and Liam Lenihan's accounts of Barry's life and work highlight the important intellectual and personal role played by Burke in his compatriot's career.¹⁸ Blake's explicit hostility to the *Enquiry* has also prompted a number of inquiries into what his aesthetics owed to the Burkean sublime, negatively or not, but the emphasis has usually been placed on his writings.¹⁹ Some studies of his theory and practice of art, however, have demonstrated the connection between his assertive choice of linearism after 1800 and his rejection of the Burkean sublime and the stylistic indistinctness associated with it. Robert Essick, Morris Eaves and David Baulch provide useful analyses of these theoretical connections, and of Blake's refutation of Burke.²⁰ Vincent De Luca should also be mentioned, as he underlines the significance of the Burkean sublime for Blake's imagination, arguing that it provides a rich imagery of undifferentiated, vast and chaotic natural scenes that recurs through Blake's poems. He also maintains that Blake seeks a more fulfilling, anti-Burkean form of sublime, based on 'determinacy, concentration, and intellectual play', without however exploring the possible visual applications of his analysis.²¹

In broader studies or when immediate connections are more difficult to establish, critics have emphasised the manifest intellectual correspondences between the arguments of the *Enquiry* and the thematic and stylistic innovations of British Romantic art. Studies of Turner especially highlight the clear correspondences between his sublimity and both the themes and the natural imagery of the *Enquiry*. John Dixon Hunt and Ronald Paulson explore the connections between the treatise and Turner's conception of history,

his depiction of natural scenery and his fascination for the motif of the sun, while Andrew Wilton's *Turner and the Sublime* demonstrates the extensive impact of the aesthetics of the sublime on his whole oeuvre.²² Even though Wilton rightly considers Burke as only one of many possible theoretical influences on Turner, he also suggests how some aspects of the latter's landscapes, including his use of colour and light, or his manipulation of perspective, may have been inspired by an informed knowledge of the *Enquiry*.²³ The most extensive study of Burke's impact on British pictorial practices is Morton D. Paley's *The Apocalyptic Sublime*, which provides a landmark analysis of these developments. Paley sees Burke's treatise as a starting point for the emergence of a specifically British pictorial mode, which he calls 'the apocalyptic sublime' and describes as 'a type of art in which the terror of divine revelation becomes the object of a *nouveau frisson*'.²⁴ Throughout his survey, Paley establishes convincing correspondences between the contents of the *Philosophical Enquiry*, especially the sources of 'delightful terror' and visual indications included in it, and the specific themes or compositional devices associated with this new mode. He especially examines the works of Benjamin West, Philippe de Loutherbourg, William Blake, J. M. W. Turner, John Martin, Samuel Colman and Francis Danby. In more recent essays, Baldine Saint-Girons argues that Burke gave theoretical legitimacy to the painting of nocturnal chiaroscuro, by explaining the affective power of darkness in physiological and psychological terms; but she only allusively suggests how this may have influenced the flourishing of tenebrism in British painting at the end of the eighteenth century, even though the art of Joseph Wright of Derby or the work of Henry Fuseli call for precisely such an interpretation.²⁵ Further repercussions of Burke's theory have been observed in continental European art, in American landscape painting and in the Gothic revival in British architecture. One may mention Stephen Z. Levine's analysis of Burke's impact on French landscape painting, through the mediation of Diderot's *Salons*,²⁶ Didier Laroque's analysis of his possible influence on Piranesi,²⁷ as well as Andrew Wilton and Tim Barringer's *American Sublime*,²⁸ which suggests that Thomas Cole mediated Burke's ideas for nineteenth-century American landscape painters.

Many of the critics who consider Burke's theory to have been a significant impulse for Romantic art take for granted the influence of his thematics and its direct application to visual practices,

without always seeing – or conceding – how challenging the text of the *Enquiry* was for artists. A significant exception is an essay by Paul Duro, which begins with an acknowledgement of ‘the fundamental and unbridgeable separation [Burke] establishes between verbal and visual communication’. This recognition allows Duro to start exploring the paradoxical connection between Burke’s conviction that visual media are too mimetic to impart the sublime and British painters’ compelling attempts to do just that.²⁹ Duro examines examples of work by Barry and Fuseli which suggest how Burke’s criticism of the literalness of painting prompted stylistic innovations. Such an angle of study should be further explored. I agree with Duro that recognising such a tension is a necessary preamble to understanding the fascination for the sublime which pervaded British pictorial practices from the 1770s. In the following pages, I argue that not only is there a link between the *Enquiry*’s insistence on the limitations of painting and the significant endeavours of British artists to convey the sublime, but such a connection is actually the crux of Burke’s influence on British pre-Romantic and Romantic art.

My contention is that the repercussions of the *Enquiry* on British visual practices were even more far-reaching than is generally acknowledged, because of the dual challenge that the treatise presented for visual artists. On the one hand, by redefining the sublime as an aesthetics of terror, in which novelty and intense affect depended on this most powerful of passions, it was calling on artists to explore a new and exalting repertoire that had not yet been given visual shape. Vast, dramatic natural scenery, together with supernatural or apocalyptic subject matter, were given aesthetic legitimacy, inspiring new artistic endeavours. On the other hand, however, the treatise was casting doubt on painting’s ability to convey these new motifs, and claimed that only poetry, because of its suggestiveness, could impart the intensity of affect associated with them. According to Burke, the mimetic, ‘clear and determinate’ images of painting prevented the forming of ‘the grander passions’ and the communication of terror. He wrote: ‘When painters have attempted to give us clear representations of these very fanciful and terrible ideas, they have ... almost always failed.’³⁰ By tempting artists with the possibility of thematic and iconographic renewal, while denying that extreme intensity of affect was within the reach of their clear or literal representations, the *Philosophical Enquiry* was

inciting them to go much further than a simple change of repertoire. More importantly, by asserting the emotive superiority of the poetic medium over its pictorial counterpart, Burke was reviving the long-standing rivalry between the arts, and inciting painters to demonstrate that their medium was adequate to the new aesthetic sensibility. Addressing such a challenge implied a radical redefinition of representational paradigms and a re-examination of the mimetic assumptions that had so far underpinned the visual arts.

While the first part of the challenge and the immediate responses to it are generally acknowledged, the significant implications of Burke's refusal to admit of a pictorial sublime tend to be overlooked. The *Enquiry* is often seen as the main theoretical inspiration behind the flourishing of Gothic thematics which pervaded both textual and visual practices in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.³¹ Burke's direct influence on this type of art is in fact so much taken for granted that uncanny scenes and dramatic landscapes are often simply called 'Burkean', even though the taste for terror had emerged earlier. Already in 1704, the critic John Dennis had compiled a list of terrifying sources of the sublime which encompassed many of the motifs that were to become favourites at the end of the century: 'gods, daemons, hell, spirits and souls of men, miracles, prodigies, enchantments, witchcrafts, thunder, tempests, raging seas, inundations, torrents, earthquakes, volcanoes, monsters, serpents, lions, tigers, fire, war, pestilence, famine, &c.'³² If Burke is often credited with having inspired this new taste, it is because he was the first to explain methodically how terror could be a source of aesthetic delight. As Samuel Monk argues: 'It was Burke who converted the early taste for terror into an aesthetic system and who passed it on with great emphasis to the last decades of the century, during which it was used and enjoyed in literature, painting, and the appreciation of natural scenery.'³³ Following this radical shift in sensibility, a first test for artists was to produce works in which delight was mixed with terror and enhanced by it. They responded to it mostly with unprecedented thematic inventiveness, as Paley thoroughly demonstrates.

The other side of Burke's challenge to artists, his scepticism about the possibility of a pictorial sublime and his reintroduction of an inequality between the arts, has not gone unnoticed.³⁴ It has even been called 'revolutionary' by Jean Hagstrum, who sees it as the first direct 'challenge' to 'the values of pictorialism', and contributing,

with Lessing's *Laocoön*, 'to the virtual disappearance of *ut pictura poesis* in major romantic criticism'.³⁵ Its significance for later theories of the separation of the arts, especially Lessing's and Diderot's, but also for the antipictorialism of some Romantic writers, has already been outlined.³⁶ Nevertheless, its impact on visual practices has not yet been fully explored. Those critics who have taken into account Burke's reservations about painting have tended to argue that the fascination exerted by the new thematics of terror was so compelling that artists simply overlooked Burke's preference for poetry. Morton D. Paley thus begins his study of the 'Apocalyptic sublime' by dismissing the problem in the following terms:

By putting forward a theory that essentially distinguished the sublime from the beautiful, Burke, without particularly wishing to do so, taught his contemporaries to snatch a fearful joy from the experience of art.

It is not that Edmund Burke had painting particularly in mind in his *Enquiry* – he did not; nor is it that artists read Burke and applied his theory to their own work – though some of them certainly did. Rather, Burke's notion of the sublime passed into the general intellectual currency of the age, and it turned out to be as applicable to the visual arts as it was to the literary texts that Burke had used as examples.³⁷

This is an astute and correct analysis: Paley grants that Burke was not writing for painters, and explains his influence on them as an indirect process, following the pervasive success of the *Enquiry*'s themes and motifs. While this process clearly played an important part, however, it does not tell the whole story. Burke's contrast between the affective suggestiveness of poetry and the 'clear representations' of painting was not simply an obstacle to be overlooked by painters, but a crucial reflection about the artistic medium which could not but have direct consequences on pictorial practices. His exclusion of painting from the sublime on such terms implied a radical reassessment of the notion of representation and of artistic media. His questioning of the literalness and finiteness of the pictorial medium was fundamental, and any artist who paid attention to the contemporary developments in aesthetic reflection, as many did in the early days of the Royal Academy, could not fail to feel the significance of Burke's statements. For the most experimental artists of the time, this essential aspect of his thought necessarily prompted a reflection about the pictorial medium, about its processes and about the possibility of unlimiting it to match 'the boundless power of poetry'.

In this book, I develop the thesis that the unprecedented visual inventiveness of the Romantic period in Britain may, to a great extent, directly or indirectly, be seen as a response to the challenge raised by the Burkean sublime. Even though Burke's theory was far from being the only available treatise on the sublime at the time, I will contend that it was the most influential for visual artists, because it crystallised the aesthetic evolutions of its time, but also because it questioned the basic premises of visual representation; at the same time as it introduced a new sensibility, it called for a reassessment of the pictorial medium and its processes. By reintroducing a rivalry between painting and poetry based on the mimetic limitations of painting, Burke was inciting visual artists not just to demonstrate the emotive powers of their art, but to explore new, non-mimetic or non-finite visual paradigms. For this reason, as I intend to argue, the ambitions of British artists in the decades that followed the creation of the Royal Academy were not limited to 'history painting', or depictions of the uncanny, but also took the shape of intense experiments with visual form. These include the invention of dramatic media of visual immersion, including Philippe-Jacques de Louthembourg's *Eidophusikon* and Robert Barker's panorama, experiments with the format and style of book illustrations, as well as radical transformations in the structures and techniques of landscape painting and sketching. They may be observed in the work of most major artists of the period, including notably William Blake and J. M. W. Turner. They occurred especially when artists attempted to reach beyond the bounds of mimetic representation and to introduce a new dynamism into their pictorial or graphic productions.

Even though Burke's influence is not often acknowledged by the Romantic artists who sought these novel visual paradigms, and even though by the time it reached artists like Turner it had undergone a number of theoretical and poetic inflections, I contend that he provided a notable impetus. To begin with, his *Enquiry* initiated the antipictorialism which, I argue, stirred the ambitions of visual artists and incited them to compete with the productions of poetry. More significantly perhaps, his conception of the sublime as beyond the reach of certain forms of representations may be seen as the source of a compelling urge to 'present the unrepresentable', which I consider to be central to such experiments. By drawing attention to a gap between representation and what exceeds it, he was

highlighting the importance of creative endeavour, and shifting the focus from the finished art work to the open-ended processes of artistic production. This shift may be considered a groundbreaking moment in aesthetic reflection.

The idea that the aesthetics of the sublime is about the presentation of the unrepresentable has only recently become central to discussions of the concept. It was first expressed by Jean-François Lyotard, who demonstrated the relevance of the sublime for what he called postmodern aesthetics in a series of essays beginning with *La Condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir*, published in 1979. Lyotard famously claimed that postmodernism was ‘the presentation of the unrepresentable in presentation itself’³⁸ and connected this endeavour with the avant-garde’s quest for the sublime, of which he saw striking illustrations in the work of painters like Barnett Newman. This statement has come to epitomise the contemporary reflection on the sublime, as it may be found in the writings of Lyotard and other poststructuralist philosophers, including Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze or Jean-Luc Nancy. The starting point of their reflection is to be found in Kant’s ‘Analytic of the sublime’ in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, in which the sublime is related to supersensible ideas of reason which cannot be given sensible presentation, and to the failure of the imagination, which is a ‘sensible faculty’,³⁹ to give an adequate presentation (*Darstellung*) of these ideas. While Kant considers the tension to be resolved by the fulfilling intervention of reason, the recent debate insists that the sublime hinges on the unresolved conflict between what cannot be presented (because it exceeds the grasp of the imagination or the senses) and the endeavour to present it nonetheless. According to David B. Johnson, who focuses on the work of Lyotard, Kristeva, Deleuze and Jameson, ‘in these thinkers’ view ... the experience of the sublime involves a crisis for the faculty of presentation [the imagination] in the form of an irresolvable conflict between it and a set of objects that remain fundamentally inaccessible to it, but that it strives to present nonetheless’.⁴⁰

For Lyotard, the experience is not necessarily negative, and can be a source of invention, as long as the emphasis is not placed ‘on the powerlessness of the faculty of presentation, on the nostalgia for presence felt by the human subject’. According to him, in avant-garde artworks, the emphasis is ‘placed on the increase of being and the jubilation which result from the invention of new rules of the

game, be it pictorial, artistic, or any other'.⁴¹ In his study of Kant's 'Analytic of the sublime', he describes the 'sentiment of the sublime' as a means for thought to break open boundaries and enjoy its own 'démésure', that is to say its excessiveness and boundlessness;⁴² it is the expression of thought 'in the raw', before it is captured by limitations, forms, schemata or conceptual rules.⁴³ Steven Vine calls this 'an affirmative sublime of signifying excess'.⁴⁴

Another positive reading of this inadequacy between conception and presentation is provided by Jean-Luc Nancy, who locates the sublime in the imaginative or creative process rather than its product, in 'the play of presentation itself, without any represented *object*', or 'form forming itself, for itself, without object'.⁴⁵ One should also mention Derrida's interpretation, in which the tension at the core of presentation is also central to the experience of the sublime, but the necessity to present the unrepresentable and the process of it is seen as a form of violence:

The sublime cannot inhabit any sensible form. ... It therefore refuses all adequate presentation. But how can this unrepresentable thing present itself? ... It inadequately presents the infinite in the finite and delimits it violently therein. Inadequation (*Unangemessenheit*), excessiveness, incommensurability are presented, let themselves be presented, be stood up, set upright in front of (*darstellen*) as that inadequation itself. Presentation is inadequate to the idea of reason but it is presented in its very inadequation, adequate to its inadequation. The inadequation of presentation is presented.⁴⁶

Because Kant was the first to thoroughly explore this irresolvable tension, 'the thinkers of the postmodern sublime', according to Johnson, 'focus almost exclusively on Kant's interpretation'⁴⁷ and show little interest in earlier definitions. One of the aims of this study is to contend that such an irresolvable tension was already contained in the Burkean challenge. While Burke's description of the sublime as an experience combining delight and horror has already been understood to anticipate the conflict of faculties outlined by Kant,⁴⁸ I would like to argue that his theory also implied a reflection about the inadequation of representation and the transformation of artistic processes as a consequence. As the *Enquiry* explicitly deterred painters from representing what was beyond their reach, it implicitly incited them to endeavour to present the unrepresentable, even if that meant that they would mostly draw attention to the

inconclusiveness or failure of such attempts. Painting was the site where ‘the presentation of the unrepresentable in presentation itself’ could most obviously take place, because of its very inadequacy. Experiments with pictorial form or space could be seen as so many processes of presentation, of artistic endeavour towards an unlimited that exceeds representation. The visual arts thus became the locus where the sublime conflict between sensible presentation and the unlimited was enacted. As Burke denied these arts the realisation of the sublime in mimetic representation, they relocated sublimity within the struggle of artistic production itself.

These important ramifications of Burke’s influence in British Romantic art will be the subject of this book. To fully demonstrate their significance, I first propose to assess the extent to which British artists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were aware of, and reacting to, the representational challenge raised by a theory which questioned not only the sister arts tradition, but also the mimetic foundation of the visual arts. This entails examining the text of the *Enquiry*, confronting it with competing theories of the sublime and tracing the processes through which Burke’s ideas were transmitted to visual artists and adapted to existing theories of painting. It also requires exploring visual strategies that may be seen to address the *Enquiry*’s criticism of painting, including attempts to unlimit the pictorial image, to demonstrate its suggestiveness or vie with the dynamic workings of poetry. A wide range of pictorial and graphic techniques and media, which are not all encompassed by academic painting, should be examined, as the diversification of visual practices which characterises the age could partly be seen as a response to such a challenge.

To understand the complexity of these responses, it will be necessary to look at the Burkean sublime as an adaptable conception, which underwent a number of evolutions as it was simultaneously appropriated and rejected by the most innovative artists of the Romantic period. It will also be important to take into account the competing theories of the sublime which made it possible for artists like Reynolds, Fuseli, Blake or Turner to deal with the challenge to visual representation that had been raised by the *Enquiry*, or attenuated its message. Finally, it will be useful to examine the treatise’s implications from the point of view of contemporary aesthetic reflection. This perspective will make it possible in particular to explain how Burke’s theory eventually contributed to a quest

for sublimity within processes of production themselves rather than in the represented object; or how his reflections on the superiority of the non-mimetic poetic language may be seen to lead to visual practices in which medium reflexivity comes to the fore and supersedes the imitation of the natural object. As such displacements of the sublime towards non-mimetic models of visual representation reach far beyond Burke, who could only conceive of painting as an imitative art, they will require new interpretative frameworks. For this reason, I will, when relevant, assess these artistic innovations in the light of more recent theories of the sublime, which are not based upon a mimetic conception of art – including those of Jean-François Lyotard, Jean-Luc Nancy and Jacques Derrida. Because these theories understand the sublime as an immanent ‘event’ of artistic production, and actually show much interest in visual processes, they will prove useful to account for a number of Romantic visual strategies in which the sublime of the process of representation displaces that of the object represented.

As my purpose in this book is to outline the significant repercussions of Burke’s theory on artistic practices, I will leave aside other important aspects of the *Enquiry*, notably its social and ideological implications, which have already received thorough scholarly attention, to focus mostly on strictly artistic considerations.⁴⁹ For the same reason, I will not dwell on the *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, even though they reveal the persistence of Burke’s conception of the sublime until late in his career, and develop its original connection with fear and power.⁵⁰ The scope of my survey is deliberately restrained, yet it is ambitious, since I consider the *Enquiry* to have had a profound impact on visual practices in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, both in the British Isles and beyond.

In the first part of the book, I defend the claim that Burke is to be seen as a pivotal figure in the history of British art, by appraising both his aesthetic theory and his immediate influence on the artists of his generation. It is first of all necessary to determine what made Burke’s antipictorial definition of the sublime so significant for visual artists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when other theories that were more obviously compatible with painting were available. For this reason, I devote the first two chapters of the book to an assessment of the *Philosophical Enquiry* and its message for artists. I begin by outlining what Burke’s treatise

owes to previous theories of the sublime, but also what its innovations are, insisting on its aesthetically stimulating irrationalism and sensualism. I then focus on what I consider to be the most outstanding feature of his reflection about the possibility of an artistic sublime: his separation of visual and verbal representation, based on the rejection of the idea that they have a common mimetic basis, and his argument that only the non-mimetic, suggestive medium of the verbal arts, language, may impart the sublime. In Chapter 1, I mostly argue that, at a time when parallels between the arts prevailed, this was an isolated point of view, which introduced a new *paragone* situation and a challenge to visual artists. In Chapter 2, I suggest that this view may be seen as the source of a representational crisis for painters, who felt compelled to transform their medium so as to match the dynamic, affective and non-mimetic processes of the poetic medium. I make the point that Burke's original reflection about language as a vehicle of the sublime entails a broader reflection about artistic representation, which was eventually applicable to the visual arts, as the postmodern debate about the sublime has shown.

Chapters 3 and 4 highlight the direct intellectual connections that contributed to the transmission of Burke's ideas among painters, starting with his close friendship and sustained interaction with two important figures of British art of the time: the first president of the Royal Academy of Arts, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and the Irish painter and Royal Academy professor James Barry. Reynolds's and Burke's friendship and intellectual interactions of more than three decades are especially noteworthy, as they brought together an emphatic neoclassical conception of painting and one of the earliest expressions of a Romantic sensibility. The impact of Burke's aesthetics on Reynolds's own theory of painting is examined in Chapter 3, where I suggest that, in spite of his conventional academic approach, Reynolds was receptive to his friend's ideas. I examine Reynolds's own conception of the sublime and its various theoretical origins, in order to determine whether the *Enquiry's* irrationalism filtered into Reynolds's own discourse on art and how Reynolds responded to Burke's antipictorialism. The ultimate issue is to ascertain whether Reynolds mediated his friend's aesthetics for the Royal Academy of Arts, or at least gave it a form of 'academic' legitimacy in his discourse, if not in his practice. I argue that Reynolds's reconciliation of the neoclassical notion of the 'grand style' with a new emphasis

on imagination and intensity of affect could be seen as the first stage in the development of ‘Burkean’ academic productions, which flourished from the mid-1770s onwards with increasing emphasis on terror. Chapter 4 explores this academic predilection for dramatic or terrifying subject matter, and assesses the extent of Burke’s immediate influence on it. The correspondence between Burke and his protégé James Barry provides an eloquent starting point: it reveals the fascination exerted by the *Enquiry* on the painters of the pre-Romantic generation and it suggests how keen they were to demonstrate – to Burke himself – that their art was capable of the same intensity of affect as poetry. It also implies that such a confidence was bolstered by the neoclassical principles that still prevailed in the theory of painting at the time. The rest of the chapter examines other examples of academic painters who addressed the challenge of the sublime from the perspective of neoclassical aesthetics, and successfully conflated existing pictorial formulae with the new taste for terror. The work of Henry Fuseli, in particular, is presented as a conscious and informed response to contemporary theories of the sublime, including Burke’s, which sought dynamism, irrationalism and affective power while remaining within the boundaries of academic aesthetics.

The second part of the book links some of the most striking visual innovations of the Romantic period to artists’ awareness of Burke’s theory and of the attention it had drawn to the limitations of visual representation. I argue here that the diversification of these artistic practices especially addressed Burke’s contrast between the ‘clear representations’ of painting and the boundlessness associated with the sublime, by seeking ways of overcoming the physical limits imposed by frames, outlines and the conventional structuring of the pictorial space. I contend that the invention of the panorama, experiments in the medium of book illustration, new practices of landscape painting and sketching, as well as the flourishing of ruin paintings and drawings, may all be seen as explorations of forms that could be likely to unlimit the visual arts, by emancipating them from constraints of size, framing or internal structuring.

Chapter 5 focuses on what appears to be one of the most conscious responses to Burke’s criticism of pictorial limitations: the invention of the panorama by the Irish-Scottish painter Robert Barker in the late 1780s. By literally removing the edges of representation, and immersing its viewers within an uninterrupted circular

view, the panorama created a striking illusion of reality which, at least while the medium was still novel, caused unprecedented spectatorial thrills. Contemporary reviews called the experience ‘sublime’ and reports of powerful somatic responses of the type described by the *Philosophical Enquiry* were not uncommon. While the medium could be linked to a tradition of illusion and immersion⁵¹ which predated the Enlightenment reflection on the sublime, Barker clearly saw its relevance as a means to deny the limitations of painting and his description of his invention seems to confirm such intentions. Ostensibly addressing the objections to painting introduced by Burke, he called the panorama an ‘Improvement on Painting, Which relieves that *sublime* Art from a Restraint it has ever laboured under’⁵² and explained that he was ‘unlimiting the bounds of the Art of Painting’.⁵³ As I will argue, this conception of the panorama as the most adequate pictorial vehicle of the sublime was to endure for several decades.

Chapter 6 looks at attempts to unlimit visual representation at its edges in the ‘minor’ media of book illustrations and landscape sketches. I argue that Romantic artists showed unprecedented interest in these marginal forms of visual expression because they allowed them to work outside of the rigid quadrilateral frame of exhibition painting, on the edge of the pictorial or graphic image. They were thus able to explore the liminal space between representation and its absence, in which were articulated the essential tensions of the sublime: the encounter between images of sense and the supersensible that exceeds them, as well as the transition from the beautiful to the sublime. Postmodern theory, especially through Jacques Derrida’s notion of parergonality and Jean-Luc Nancy’s definition of sublime ‘unlimitation’, allows me to see these transitional and unstable spaces as significant places of visual exploration, and to explain in what way they can be seen as a response to the Burkean challenge. The argument first focuses on the enthusiasm of Romantic artists for book illustrations, which they used as a means to structure the work of art from within rather than from pre-given edges or limits. Blake’s illuminated poems and the Romantic vignette are analysed as attempts to unframe the visual composition in order to unlimit it, but also to increase the dynamism and suggestiveness of the visual medium, allowing it to rival the affective powers of the text it illustrates. Further examples of ‘unlimitation’ are then provided by changing compositional practices in landscape painting,

in connection with *plein-air* sketching and the use of watercolour. I consider these preliminary studies to reveal a heightened awareness of the fragmentary dimension of representations of nature. I also argue that the immediacy of the practice contributed to the unravelling of perspective space and internal framing devices within landscape compositions. In all cases, a yearning for what exceeds sensible representation is manifest.

Unlimitation could also take the form of internal destructuring, a process which is perhaps most obvious in ruin paintings and imaginary architectural drawings or *capricci*, which flourished in Britain in the decades that followed the publication of the *Enquiry*. Chapter 7 contends that in this fashionable mode, the combined influences of Edmund Burke and Giovanni Battista Piranesi fostered a new approach to pictorial space, in which the fragment and the ruin can become fundamental (de)structuring components, rather than ornamental motifs in a pre-given space. This new form of unlimitation will be shown to have been Burkean in more than one sense: as they simultaneously called for imaginary completion and plunged into a terrifying feeling of transience, the ruin paintings of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries seem to have sought the delightful horror which the *Enquiry* had made central to the sublime.

In Part III, I explore Romantic visual praxis, by which I mean the artists' concrete engagement with their materials and production, as the place where the Burkean sublime was not only addressed, but also redefined and supplanted. I focus on the work of two artists for whom medium reflexivity and reflection on processes of visual presentation become fundamental, William Blake and J. M. W. Turner. I argue that their formal explorations resolved the Burkean challenge by relocating the sublime within the tensions of artistic endeavour, or redefining it as immanent to the process of artistic production. By suggesting that instead of being a quality of the represented object, the sublime had to do with the artist's exertions towards visual presentation, such approaches may be seen to have carried out the full implications of the Burkean sublime. At the same time, they implied that issues of mimetic limitations are irrelevant, and suggested a striking way to reassert the place of the visual arts within the aesthetics of the sublime.

Chapter 8 contends that Blake's theory and practice of art define, against Burke, an original conception of the sublime as a dynamic

process located within creative activity itself rather than an empirical experience founded on passive psychological and physiological responses to external sources of terror. I argue that this shift allows Blake to give a new significance to visual production, which is no longer cut off from the sublime, but becomes a necessary process towards it. I read Blake's prophetic cycle as a dramatisation of the incommensurability of Vision and sensible form, which articulates the predicament of the artist, caught between the necessity to present forms and the awareness that material representation is the first step toward a fall from Vision. The necessity of artistic production prevails because, according to Blake, it is the energetic endeavour to produce forms which demonstrates the imaginative power of the artist, which in fact is sublime in itself. This is made manifest by the artist's emphasis on line, and the high degree of medium reflexivity in his illuminated books.

Chapter 9 concludes the survey with another major figure of British art, Joseph Mallord William Turner. Even though in his case, theoretical influences coalesced in an indistinct manner, often indirectly as a result of the intellectual and artistic context at the Royal Academy, I contend that his original practice may be understood as the culmination and synthesis of his predecessors' conscious responses to the challenge introduced by Burke. I also explain that it could be seen as one the most adequate demonstrations of how painting could overcome the medium-specific difficulties highlighted by Burke, and rival the affective powers of poetry. After outlining the convergence of theoretical and poetic influences through which Turner defined his own conception of the sublime, I explain that he addressed Burke's criticism of the mimetic limitations of painting by displaying the sublime energy of pictorial production, but also the elusiveness of the finished form. This emphasis on endeavour, and on the presentation of the unrepresentable, could be understood to take the aesthetics of the *Enquiry* to its radical conclusion, leading to a resolute change of paradigms in visual representation.

It goes without saying that the impact of Burke's theory on the practices I examine became gradually indirect, and that painters like Reynolds or Barry, who were in actual contact with the man and his ideas, were more clearly conscious of addressing them than later generations. Paradoxically, however, the evolution I retrace suggests increasingly adequate responses to the *Enquiry's* reflections on the artistic medium and an increasing awareness of the

necessity to emancipate painting, first from its conventional formats and then from its mimetic limitations. One of the reasons was that some of Burke's intuitions were given more explicit formulations by later theoreticians. Most notably, Lessing, who had read the *Enquiry* and intended to translate it into German, explained the differences between the sister arts in ways which stated more clearly what the limitations of painting were, by insisting on its spatiality and impossible development in time. It was his notion of the 'narrow limits of painting' that was to be associated with the sublime by Romantic writers, and thus to render the aspiration for unlimitation more urgent among visual artists, even though he himself had not examined the question of the sublime. Another reason was that Burke's association of the sublime with indistinctness and representational failure or inadequacy had become *topoi* of British aesthetic thought by the end of the eighteenth century. Thus, in 1791, William Gilpin was able to write with confidence that '[a]ll writers on sublime subjects deal in shadows and obscurity', that '[m]any images owe much of their sublimity to their *indistinctness*', and that the sublime is more within the grasp of the poet than of the painter because '[t]he business of the former is only to *excite ideas*; that of the latter, to *represent them*'.⁵⁴ Some of the artistic innovations that are examined in this book responded to these *topoi* more than to the *Enquiry* itself. But as often as possible, I attempt to trace the direct connections between this influential treatise and Romantic visual experiments, and I believe I show that they are numerous indeed.

Notes

- 1 See Jean Hagstrum's landmark study, *The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1958).
- 2 M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 50. Among other accounts of the decline of pictorialism in eighteenth-century literature, one may mention John Dixon Hunt, *The Figure in the Landscape: Poetry, Painting and Gardening during the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976) and Laurent Châtel, 'The Resistance of Words and the Challenge of Images: Visual Writing in Late Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Interfaces* 32 (2011–12), 49–64.

- 3 Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoön*, trans. R. Phillimore (London: Routledge, 1874), p. 56.
- 4 John Knowles, *The Life and Writings of Henry Fuseli*, 3 vols (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1831), vol. I, pp. 197–8.
- 5 Percy Fitzgerald, *The Life, Letters, and Writings of Charles Lamb*, 6 vols (New York: Case Press, 2008), vol. III, p. 62.
- 6 Preface to the Catalogue of the Shakespeare Gallery (1789), quoted in M. Merchant, *Shakespeare and the Artist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 67.
- 7 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lectures 1808–19: On Literature*, 2 vols, ed. R. A. Foakes. The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge 5 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), vol. II, p. 496.
- 8 W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 115; Gillen d’Arcy Wood, *The Shock of the Real: Romanticism and Visual Culture, 1760–1860* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), p. 175.
- 9 William Galperin, *The Return of the Visible in British Romanticism* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 19.
- 10 See, for example, Roy Park, “‘Ut Pictura Poesis’: The Nineteenth-Century Aftermath”, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 28:2 (Winter 1969), 155–64.
- 11 Paul Duro, ‘Observations on the Burkean Sublime’, *Word and Image* 29:1 (2013), 40–58, here 48.
- 12 The *Philosophical Enquiry* went through two editions, in 1757 and 1759. The second included extensive new material, notably the introduction ‘On Taste’ and the section on ‘Power’ in the second part, partly as a response to reviews of the first edition. It has been proven, however, that Burke wrote much of the *Enquiry* at an earlier stage, while a student at Trinity College, Dublin. See especially James T. Boulton, ‘Editor’s Introduction’, in Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, ed. James T. Boulton (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. xi–xvi.
- 13 Koen Vermeir and Michael Funk Deckard, eds, *The Science of Sensibility: Reading Burke’s Philosophical Enquiry* (Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London and New York: Springer, 2012), p. v.
- 14 See, for example, Vanessa Ryan, ‘The Physiological Sublime: Burke’s Critique of Reason’, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62:2 (2001), 265–79. See also Boulton, ‘Editor’s Introduction’, especially p. xxxiii, and Rodolphe Gasché, ‘... And the Beautiful? Revisiting Edmund Burke’s “Double Aesthetics”’, in Timothy M. Costelloe (ed.), *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 24.

- 15 Among the most noteworthy studies of Burke's *Enquiry* and of its aesthetic significance, one should consider Samuel Monk's *The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-Century England* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1935); Thomas Weiskel, *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), especially pp. 83–106; Frances Ferguson, *Solitude and the Sublime: Romanticism and the Aesthetics of Individuation* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Baldine Saint-Girons, *Fiat lux: une philosophie du sublime* (Paris: Quai Voltaire, 1993); James Kirwan, *Sublimity: The Non-Rational and the Irrational in the History of Aesthetics* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005); Philip Shaw, *The Sublime* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006); Emily Brady, *The Sublime in Modern Philosophy: Aesthetics, Ethics and Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); David Bromwich, *The Intellectual Life of Edmund Burke: From the Sublime and Beautiful to American Independence* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2014); and Robert Doran, *The Theory of the Sublime from Longinus to Kant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
- 16 Boulton, 'Editor's Introduction', pp. cviii–cxviii.
- 17 Marilyn Klein Torbruegge, 'Bodmer and Füssli, "Das Wunderbare" and the Sublime' (PhD thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1968). Luisa Calè, *Fuseli's Milton Gallery: 'Turning Readers into Spectators'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006).
- 18 Robert Wark, 'A Note on James Barry and Edmund Burke', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 17:3 (1954), 382–4; William L. Pressly, *The Life and Art of James Barry* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981); William L. Pressly, *James Barry: The Artist as Hero* (London: Tate Gallery Publications, 1983).
- 19 Some of the most thorough analyses of the Blakean sublime include Vincent A. De Luca, *Words of Eternity: Blake and the Poetics of the Sublime* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Peter Otto, *Blake's Critique of Transcendence: Love, Jealousy, and the Sublime in The Four Zoas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); and Stephen Vine, 'Blake's Material Sublime', *Studies in Romanticism* 41:2 (2002), 237–57.
- 20 Morris Eaves, *William Blake's Theory of Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982). Robert N. Essick, *William Blake, Printmaker* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980). David M. Baulch, "'To rise from generation": The Sublime Body in Blake's Illuminated Books', *Word and Image* 13 (1997), 340–64.
- 21 De Luca, *Words of Eternity*, p. 5.

- 22 Ronald Paulson, *Literary Landscape: Turner and Constable* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), especially pp. 80–90; John Dixon Hunt, 'Wondrous Deep and Dark: Turner and the Sublime', *Georgia Review* 30 (1976), 139–64.
- 23 Andrew Wilton, *Turner and the Sublime* (London: British Museum Publications, 1980), especially pp. 66–7, 79, 101.
- 24 Morton D. Paley, *The Apocalyptic Sublime* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 1.
- 25 Saint-Girons, *Fiat lux*, pp. 157–8; also, Baldine Saint-Girons, 'Burke, the Revenge of Obscurity and the Foundation of the Aesthetic', in Vermeir and Funk Deckard, *The Science of Sensibility*, pp. 305–19 and Baldine Saint-Girons, *Les marges de la nuit: pour une autre histoire de la peinture* (Paris: Éditions de l'Amateur, 2006), pp. 40–2.
- 26 Stephen Z. Levine, 'Seascapes of the Sublime: Vernet, Monet, and the Oceanic Feeling', *New Literary History* 12:2 (Winter 1985), pp. 377–400.
- 27 Didier Laroque, *Le Discours de Piranèse: l'ornement sublime et le suspens de l'architecture* (Paris: Éditions de la Passion, 1999), pp. 18–23.
- 28 Andrew Wilton and Tim Barringer, *American Sublime: Landscape Painting in the United States, 1820–1880* (London: Tate Publishing, 2002), p. 22.
- 29 Paul Duro, 'Observations on the Burkean Sublime', *Word and Image* 29:1 (2013), 40–58.
- 30 Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, ed. Adam Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), II, iv, p. 58.
- 31 As Vijay Mishra points out, 'Burke has been used by most theorists of the Gothic as an important precursor of the literary Gothic insofar as his insistence on the sublime as a quality of the object (which in turn made our senses excitable) is seen to be a key determinant of the sublime discourses of the Gothic.' Vijay Mishra, 'The Gothic Sublime', in David Punter (ed.), *A New Companion to the Gothic* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 288–306, here pp. 290–1.
- 32 John Dennis, *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* (1704), in Andrew Ashfield and Peter de Bolla (eds), *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 38.
- 33 Monk, *The Sublime*, p. 87.
- 34 See especially W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 116–49.
- 35 Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts*, pp. 151–3.
- 36 See, for example, Gita May, 'Diderot and Burke: A Study in Aesthetic Affinity', *PMLA* 75:5 (December 1960), 527–39, especially 536–8, or

- Calè, *Fuseli's Milton Gallery*. Recently, Alan Richardson has connected Burke's preference for obscurity with antipictorial Romantic practices. Alan Richardson, *The Neural Sublime: Cognitive Theories and Romantic Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).
- 37 Paley, *The Apocalyptic Sublime*, p. 2.
- 38 Jean-François Lyotard, 'Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?', in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 81.
- 39 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 141.
- 40 David B. Johnson, 'The Postmodern Sublime: Presentation and its Limits', in Costelloe, *The Sublime*, pp. 118–19.
- 41 Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, pp. 79–80.
- 42 Jean-François Lyotard, *Leçons sur l'analytique du sublime* (Paris: Galilée, 1991), p. 75.
- 43 Lyotard, *Leçons*, p. 152.
- 44 Stephen Vine, *Reinventing the Sublime: Post-Romantic Literature and Theory* (Brighton, Chicago and Toronto: Sussex Academic Press, 2013), p. 10.
- 45 Jean-Luc Nancy, 'The Sublime Offering', in Jean-François Courtine (ed.), Jeffrey S. Librett (trans.), *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), pp. 28–9.
- 46 Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 131.
- 47 Johnson, 'The Postmodern Sublime', p. 119.
- 48 See, for example, Doran, *The Theory of the Sublime*, pp. 178–82 and 212–13.
- 49 Studies of the ideological implications of the *Enquiry* may in particular be found in Tom Furniss, *Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology: Language, Gender, and Political Economy in Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Stephen K. White, *Edmund Burke: Modernity, Politics, and Aesthetics* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994); Terry Eagleton, 'Aesthetics and Politics in Edmund Burke,' *History Workshop* 28 (1989): 53–62. Essays by Daniel I. O'Neill, F. P. Lock, Katherine O'Donnell, Richard Bourke and Bart Vandenabeele deal with this dimension of the *Enquiry* in Vermeir and Funk Deckard, *The Science of Sensibility*.
- 50 This connection is examined, for example, in Ronald Paulson, *Representations of Revolution, 1789–1820* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983) and Neal Wood, 'The Aesthetic Dimension of Burke's Political Thought', *Journal of British Studies* 4:1 (November 1964), 41–64.

- 51 See Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).
- 52 *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 29 December 1787, I.
- 53 *The Diary; or Woodfall's Register*, 9 April 1789.
- 54 William Gilpin, *Remarks on Forest Scenery and other Woodland Views* (1791), ed. T. D. Lauder (Edinburgh: Fraser & Co., 1834), vol. I, p. 335.