

Nurturing Genius in a Pigsty: George Morland and the Making of the Modern Artist

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Abstract

This thesis reassesses the artistic *oeuvre*, practice and identity of the painter George Morland (1763-1804), who last received sustained monographic attention over forty years ago despite being an important figure in the history of eighteenth-century British art. Informed by the recent scholarship in that field as well as sociological theories on art, this thesis interprets Morland's characteristic rustic imagery as the product of artistic, commercial and exhibition strategies, including strategies for self-definition within the crowded London art world. These included 'the myth of Morland', an identifiably modern yet historically-grounded paradigm of the quasi-bohemian artistic persona and biography which previous work on the artist has tended to take at face value. Instead, this thesis argues that Morland's persona was shaped by the artist in collaboration with dealers, publishers and writers, the result of a shrewd mutual engagement with the possibilities offered by commerce for the reconfiguration of artistic values, during Morland's lifetime and beyond. Morland's persona is therefore described as part of his creative practice alongside his artistic *oeuvre*, which is here reassessed in light of extensive immersion in Morland's known output, contemporary criticism and unpublished archival material. The thesis therefore identifies four types of artworks as most central to Morland's practice: his animal paintings, his drawings, their printed reproduction and his self-portraits (as well as portraits by others). Across its four main chapters, the thesis analyses the varied form and significance of each of these types of artwork in turn, considering their distinct role in changing notions of art, aesthetic experience, and artistic practice and identity. As such, this thesis describes Morland's art and persona as participating alike in a quintessentially modern project of resituating both the artist and the artwork beyond the pale of modernity itself.

To the dear memory of my beloved mum Filomena D'Aiello,

My first and best Art History teacher

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

Celebrated as the painter of native rural scenes par excellence, his works widely collected, reproduced and copied during his lifetime and since, George Morland (1763–1804) nevertheless occupies an ambiguous place in the history of British art, a figure at once ubiquitous, familiar and obscure. Many of Morland's works are held in UK museum collections, but they are nevertheless mostly confined to storage rooms, with only a few examples considered significant and outstanding enough to be exhibited to public view. An eBay search for George Morland's works can give as many as 850 results at any one time, from cheap vintage postcards and posters to fine art engravings and oil paintings (copies, or canvases attributed to his circle, even purportedly works by Morland himself), all priced between £0.40 and £35,000. These results reveal not only the extent to which Morland's output has been imitated, reproduced and commercialized, but also how much it has been understood as embodying a particularly nostalgic idea of English rural life (rustic scenes seem to constitute the majority of his works on sale). Indeed, the commercial diffusion of Morland's images has few comparisons in the history of British art, and extends beyond his works to include lifetime and posthumous portraits of the artist himself, not least the likeness (in red coat and tricorne hat, with a palette and maulstick in one hand and a pint of beer in the other) which became the trademark of the British beer company Morland following its rebranding in 1944, a false but effective claim of connection with the painter, known for his bucolic rural imagery and fondness for alcohol.¹

Accounts focusing on Morland's famously dissolute lifestyle have been published and republished; despite writers' frequent claims to be dealing with a largely neglected figure, this vision of George Morland has never completely disappeared from standard accounts of the history of British art, and publications perpetuating his myth continue

¹ See "Edward Robert Smythe, *George Morland at His Easel*", East Anglian View sale, 5 October 2005, lot 92, Bonhams, https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/12085/lot/92/?page_lots=2; attributed to George Morland, *My Wedding Day September 22nd 1786*, private collection; "The Morland Brewery", Abingdon-On-Thames, Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society, <http://www.abingdon.gov.uk/feature-articles/morland-brewery>.

to appear today.² Nevertheless, the full character and complexity of Morland's art, as well as his persona, has rarely been addressed. Morland's cumbersome biography has famously hindered attempts at serious analysis and discouraged full scholarly engagement both with his figure as an artist and with his works as works of art, reducing his position and role in specialist publications on eighteenth-century British art to that of a minor character.³ The last book-length monographic work on Morland was David Winter's unpublished PhD dissertation, now forty years old, and the most original critical contribution on his art remains John Barrell's essay in *The Dark Side of the Landscape* (1980).⁴

Morland's uncertain position in the history of British art is somewhat ironic given that Morland was keenly aware of the utility of art-historical references for artists like himself who needed to establish their careers in an increasingly crowded art world. Morland shrewdly used art history at multiple levels of his artistic practice: he deployed the appeal of paintings and drawings by the Old Masters (which were then flooding the London art market as a consequence of revolutionary upheavals on the Continent) as well as the fascination with their apparently exceptional lives, to carve out an individual artistic style and a persona suitable for the modern era.⁵

² On Morland's apparently forgotten status, see: Roger Fry, *Reflections on English Painting* (London: Faber, 1934), p. 80; Ann Wyburn-Powell, "George Morland, 1763-1804: Beyond Barrell, Re-examining Textual and Visual Sources", *The British Art Journal* 7, no. 1 (2006): pp. 55-64; Karen Junod, *Writing the Lives of Painters: Biography and Artistic Identity in Britain, 1760-1810* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 176. For examples of recently published works on Morland's myth, see: Marian Kamlish, *George Morland: A London Artist in Eighteenth-Century Camden* (London: Camden History Society, 2008); Vic Gatrell, *The First Bohemians: Life and Art in London's Golden Age* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), pp. 46, 61-62, 140, 151, 156-165, 322, 368, 384-5; Roy Heron, *George Morland, 1763-1804: A Flawed Genius* (Newmarket: British Sporting Art Trust, 2015), pp. 1-11.

³ David Winter addresses the limiting effect of biographical cliché upon the deeper examination of Morland and his work in "George Morland (1763-1804)" (PhD. diss., Stanford University, 1977), p. 3.

⁴ See Winter, "George Morland (1763-1804)"; John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 89-129.

⁵ Although the full English translations of Giorgio Vasari's *Lives* (1568) and Arnold Houbraken's *The Great Theatre of Dutch Painters* (1718-20) had yet to be published, excerpts from them had appeared in other English-language texts, including Henry Peacham, *The Compleat Gentleman. Fashioning Him Absolute in the Most Necessary and Commendable Qualities Concerning Minde or Bodie That May Be Required in a Noble Gentleman (sic)* (London: Francis Constable, 1622); William Aglionby, *Painting Illustrated in Three Dialogues (sic) Containing Some Choice Observations upon the Art Together with the Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, from Cimabue, to the Time of Raphael and Michael Angelo. With an Explanation of the Difficult Terms* (London: John Gain, 1686); Roger De Piles, *The Art of Painting ... To Which is Added an Essay Towards an English School*, 2nd ed. (London: Charles Marsh, 1744), and Matthew Pilkington, *The Gentleman's and Connoisseur's Dictionary of Painters. Containing a Complete Collection, and Account, of the Most Distinguished Artists* (London: T. Cadell, 1770).

The present thesis reassesses Morland's work and persona in light of the most current studies on the aesthetic, cultural and historical trends in the late eighteenth-century British art world. This work sets out to reverse the spell which has been cast over Morland's persona and works, and which has sought to endow them with absolute, 'pure' and ahistorical qualities. This research places Morland and his works in context, on the one hand offering a new interpretation of the artist's decisions beyond traditional clichés, on the other hand considering his *oeuvre* in its variety of subject matter and media, addressing lesser known but more typical aspects of his output, and treating his works as (first and foremost) works of art. By putting Morland's art and persona into dialogue with contemporary issues such as the emergence of an increasingly competitive and commercialized art scene in London and the rise of a British school of painting, this dissertation will present them both as modern phenomena, the products of a changing world. Distancing my study from assumptions which mystify the artist as an exceptional figure, I set out to demonstrate instead the modernity of Morland's work and figure.

Readings of Morland's persona and art have been heavily influenced by the four early biographies published in close succession after the artist's death in 1804. Significantly, the first of these, William Collins's *Memoirs of That Celebrated, Original and Eccentric Genius the Late George Morland* (1805), appeared in its first edition as the middle volume of a fiction in three books, *Memoirs of a Picture*.⁶ As Karen Junod has noted, in recounting the art-market vicissitudes of a famous painting and its two copies in the hands of unscrupulous art dealers, the novel actually shares many affinities with the supposedly factual biography inserted within it, which describes Morland's life as similarly nomadic and subject to greedy dealers. The claims to veracity of this biography are therefore undermined by the peculiar structure of Collins's book.⁷ Like the three biographies of Morland that were to follow, this book is positioned between reality and fiction, jumbling the tropes and clichés invented for (and by) modern artists in order to

⁶ See William Collins, *Memoirs of a Painter: Being a Genuine Biographical Sketch of That Celebrated, Original and Eccentric Genius, the Late George Morland*, vol. 2 of *Memoirs of a Picture: Containing the Adventures of Many Conspicuous Characters, and Interspersed with a Variety of Amusing Anecdotes of Several Very Extraordinary Personages Connected with the Arts*, 3 vols. (London: C. Stower, 1805).

⁷ See Junod, 'Writing the Lives', pp. 189-194.

promote their careers and reputations.⁸ Focused more on his exceptional personality than on his works, and insisting on the supposed decline of his artistic skills in the last decade of his career, all these works describe Morland as an infant prodigy and a young painter of incredible talent, but at the same time as a passive subject, a naïve genius who was not only manipulated by his father, his dealers and his acquaintances, but also prone to vices and excesses, and unable to sell his works for good prices because forced by debts to sell to the first bidder. This passivity is presented as extending to his artistic choices, which here seem to have been made unconsciously and are evidence of a lack of technical skills. Later accounts, especially those published around 1900, largely summarized their precedents unquestioningly.⁹

Although based on outdated modes of art-historical interpretation in which stylistic analysis is paramount, Winter's PhD dissertation was nevertheless useful in supplying a catalogue raisonné of 208 works with information on their location, size, date, collection and exhibition history.¹⁰ Given the problems of attribution associated with Morland's work, Winter's catalogue has been an important if not itself unproblematic starting point for subsequent studies. A surge of more recent scholarship – beginning

⁸ See Francis William Blagdon, *Authentic Memoirs of the Late George Morland* (London: Barnard and Sultzer, 1806); John Hassell, *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Morland; with Critical and Descriptive Observations on the Whole of His Works Hitherto Before the Public* (London: Albion Press, 1806); George Dawe, *The Life of George Morland (1807)*, with an Introduction and Notes by J. J. Foster (London: Dickinsons, 1904).

⁹ Morland's contemporaries recorded anecdotes of his dissolute lifestyle: see Henry Charles William Angelo, *Reminiscences of Henry Angelo: With Memoirs of His Late Father and Friends*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1828-30), 1:231-33, 243, 245-8, 389; 2:223; John Thomas Smith, *Nollekens and his Times*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1829), 1:24; 2:337, 339-340; Allan Cunningham, *The Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, 6 vols. (London: John Murray, 1829-33), 2:213-241; Joseph Farington, *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, eds. Kenneth Garlick, Angus Macintyre, and Kathryn Cave, 17 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978-84), 1:177; 3:806, 907-8; 6:2289, 2439. At the turn of the twentieth century there was a new surge of publications on Morland, often explicitly presenting themselves as summaries of earlier biographies; these works seldom attempted original viewpoints on Morland's figure and work. See Ralph Richardson, *George Morland: Painter, London, 1763-1804* (London: E. Stock, 1895); John T. Nettlehip, *George Morland and the Evolution from Him of Some Later Painters* (London: Seeley, 1898); George C. Williamson, *George Morland: His Life and Works* (London: George Bell, 1904); James T. Herbert Baily, *George Morland: a Biographical Essay with a Catalogue of the Engraved Pictures* (London: Otto, 1906); Sir Walter Gilbey and Edward W. D. Cuming, *George Morland: His Life and Works* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1907); David Henry Wilson, *George Morland* (London: The Walter Scott, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), as well as Julia Frankau, *An Eighteenth-Century Artist and Engraver: John Raphael Smith, His Life and Works* (London: Macmillan, 1902), pp. 20-23, 26, 28-30, 32, 35-36, 40.

¹⁰ For similarly stylistic interpretations of Morland's work, see: Fry, *Reflections*, pp. 80-82; John Berger, *Permanent Red: Essays in Seeing* (York: Methuen, 1960), pp. 177-179; William Gaunt, *A Concise History of English Painting* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 94-96.

with John Barrell's groundbreaking *The Dark Side of the Landscape* (1980) – reopened a debate on the artist's work in light of current critical perspectives on eighteenth-century British art, but has been selective in the range of works discussed and primarily focused on their sociological dimension.¹¹ Through a close visual analysis of a few paintings held by Tate, particularly focused on facial expressions and social interactions, Barrell questioned simplistic sentimental readings of Morland's depictions of the rural poor, at that time still the dominant interpretation of his *oeuvre*. Barrell recognized that the artist challenged viewers' ability to empathize with his depictions by employing a visual vocabulary in which the subjects initially appear sentimentalised but are nevertheless handled in an ambiguous or ambivalent fashion - in this case, within rural scenes featuring the discontented, even contemptuous, figures of the rural poor.¹²

More recently, Ann Wyburn-Powell has reassessed the visual analysis employed in *The Dark Side of the Landscape*. Wyburn-Powell's study reduces Barrell's emphasis upon facial expression, arguing that the works on which he had focused were primarily meant for print reproduction and were therefore executed quickly, with the characters' faces only roughly characterized.¹³ Still, her critique does not completely undermine Barrell's observations concerning Morland's troublesome handling of eighteenth-century sentimental tropes. Finally, Wyburn-Powell and Meredith Gamer have both focused on the pendants *Slave Trade* (1788, location unknown) and *African Hospitality* (1790, Menil Foundation, Houston), and the former also on another apparently straightforward sentimental scene, *A Visit to the Child at Nurse* (c. 1788, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge). These studies again interrogate Morland's work at a sociological level,

¹¹ Josephine Gear's *Master or Servants?: A Study of Selected English Painters and Their Patrons of the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (New York and London: Garland, 1977), pp. 13-40, actually predates Barrell's account in taking a sociological approach to the study of Morland's art; an attempt at reconstructing Morland's patronage and his relationship with the market, this work possesses some qualities (it shows some awareness of the myth surrounding the artist's persona) but it does not really analyze the works themselves and appears vitiated by its heavy reliance on evidence drawn from the early biographies.

¹² By his own admission, the success of Barrell's argument depends upon a selective focus. This interpretation of Morland's art has nevertheless been influential: see Michael Rosenthal, *British Landscape Painting* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1982), pp. 88-92; Sam Smiles, "Dressed to Till: Representational Strategies in the Depiction of Rural Labor, c. 1790-1830", in *Prospects for the Nation: Recent Essays in British Landscape, 1750-1880*, eds. Michael Rosenthal, Christiana Payne and Scott Wilcox (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 85-88; Ellen G. D'Oench, "*Copper into Gold*": *Prints by John Raphael Smith, 1751-1812* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 158, 161.

¹³ Wyburn-Powell, "Beyond Barrell", pp. 55-64.

highlighting how his *oeuvre* can be read at a more profound level as engaging with the boundaries of the acceptable in the realm of eighteenth-century sympathy.¹⁴

Wyburn-Powell questions Barrell's use of Morland's early biographies as primary sources about the artist, and shows that these are instead untrustworthy documents, primarily aimed at increasing public interest towards the artist through the telling of salacious fictional anecdotes.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the standard approach to Morland's art remains one which considers it through the lens of these biographical constructions.¹⁶ Recently, however, some scholarship has begun to reassess Morland's figure and work in relation to the construction of modern artistic persona as well as the artist's own agency in this process. Harry Mount has therefore recognized that Morland's debt towards Dutch genre painting extended to his artistic personality, which became associated with the debased reputations of the Old Masters to whom his works alluded. Meanwhile, Karen Junod has reassessed the fictional nature of posthumous accounts about Morland, showing their dependence on contemporary novels and literary biographies. By demonstrating how these books fed into contemporary debates on genius and originality, she presents Morland as an early example of the modern mythology of the artist.¹⁷ Moreover, unlike Mount, Junod recognizes that eighteenth-century British painters consciously employed ready-made idiosyncratic artistic types as described in the 'lives' of Old Masters in order to invent for themselves distinctive and modern personalities.¹⁸ Nevertheless, her discussion of the fictionality of Morland's biographies is merely suggestive, mentioning only in passing that the type of the eccentric painter that these books describe has a precursor in Vasari's life of Piero di

¹⁴ Ann Wyburn-Powell, "George Morland, the Slave Trade and the Wet-Nurse" (paper, Annual Conference of the Association of Art Historians, Bristol, UK, March-April 2005); Meredith Gamer, "George Morland's 'Slave Trade' and 'African Hospitality': Slavery, Sentiment and the Limits of the Abolitionist Image", in *The Slave in European Art: From Renaissance Trophy to Abolitionist Emblem*, ed. Elizabeth McGrath and Jean M. Massing (London and Turin: The Warburg Institute and Nino Aragno Editore, 2012).

¹⁵ See Wyburn-Powell, "Beyond Barrell", pp. 55-64.

¹⁶ For example the recent exhibition catalogue by Nick Grindle, David Alexander, Kerry Bristol, *George Morland: Art, Traffic and Society in Late Eighteenth Century England* (Leeds: The Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery, 2015) consistently employs Morland's early biographies as evidence, adhering to myths of the artist's naiveté in economic matters and his supposed artistic decline in the final decade of his career.

¹⁷ Harry Thomas Mount, "The Reception of Dutch Genre Painting in England, 1695-1829" (PhD. diss., University of Cambridge, 1991); Junod, *Writing the Lives*, pp. 180-183, 189-200.

¹⁸ See Karen Junod, "The Lives of the Old Masters: Reading, Writing, and Reviewing the Renaissance", *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 30, no. 1 (2008): 67-82, for a discussion of British artists shaping their artistic personae in the image of one or more Italian Old Master.

Cosimo; ultimately, Junod does not engage in any depth with the borrowings of Morland's biographers from the literary genre of Old Masters' lives.¹⁹ Furthermore, her study is necessarily limited by an exclusive focus on posthumous fame as it was shaped through literary texts, leaving unexplored Morland's own role in fashioning his persona through, for example, the specific choices he made at multiple levels of the artistic field.

This thesis therefore aims to fill some crucial gaps in the existing scholarship on Morland's art. I have begun by adopting a contextual approach, all the more necessary for the scholar endeavouring to examine an *oeuvre* which, in its true character, is as little-known as Morland's. I have given priority to visual and historical analysis through the close inspection of artworks supported by the critical reading of archival material, and of primary and secondary texts, so as to place artist and artworks in the historical, social and cultural context to which they belong. Such an approach has also been employed to explore the material conditions of artistic production. Problems of attribution continue to dog Morland's body of work, due especially to the many imitators who could easily copy his subjects from widely available prints after his paintings and drawings. I therefore addressed the gap in the knowledge of Morland's formidable *oeuvre* by building up databases of his paintings, drawings and reproductions of his works in engraving during my research. This allowed me to acquaint myself with the characteristics of Morland's *oeuvre*, and therefore identify and discern his works more confidently, whilst also getting a strong sense of their range, multiplicity, relationship and reproduction (by Morland and by others).

Looking at Morland's corpus across the board forced me to acknowledge its peculiar character, and to develop a more effective method for approaching it than those employed previously. Morland was an exceptionally prolific painter who worked in a variety of genres (polite urban scenes, fancy pictures, genre painting, landscape, scenes of rural life, farm animal painting, sporting art, portraiture and self-portraiture, marine scenes and even historical subjects), media (painting, drawing, print) and contexts (the annual exhibitions of the Royal Academy, the Society of Artists and the Free Society of

¹⁹ See Junod, *Writing the Lives*, p. 187.

Artists, as well as dealers' shops and auction rooms). The hallmarks of his output consist in sketchiness, fragmentation, scruffiness and roughness. Unlike most other artists, Morland did not curate his legacy and was not concerned about appearing polished to posterity; consequently, his body of works is exceptionally incoherent. As a consequence, I decided that to do justice and to make sense of Morland's untidy *oeuvre* I had to allow its variety to resonate within the structure of my thesis.

At the same time, I also aim to look closely at Morland's works as artworks in order to grasp their real character. For, while Barrell did not aim at a comprehensive overview, in considering Morland's works as illustrative of socio-historical situations his account unwittingly reproduces received ideas of the artist's typical productions. Based on his early biographers' perceptions of a decline in Morland's artistic skills during the final decade of his career, Barrell's and other studies of his *oeuvre* have typically avoided late works in order to focus on a selection of well-known oil paintings, predominantly his sentimental genre paintings of the 1780s and rustic scenes of the early 1790s.²⁰ By contrast, my research re-evaluates Morland's *oeuvre* in its variety of subjects and media, including the production from the final decade of his life.

Examining Morland's output in its entirety allowed me to single out aspects of it which have traditionally been overlooked, and which can be related to Morland's construction of an artistic persona. His self-fashioning as a quintessentially English painter (riding on a period of intense patriotism) and the early nineteenth-century canonization of British art as coinciding with landscape and rural genre perhaps combined to produce the later identification of Morland as the leading proponent of nostalgic rustic figurative imagery.²¹ However, I realized that the bulk of Morland's art falls in the genre of animal

²⁰ For example, Dawe's biography included a chapter entitled "Remarks on the Works by Morland" which began by recognizing three periods in Morland's career: preparation, maturity and decline. Having addressed the first period, Dawe engages with Morland's mature production (1788-1793), pointing out that the last period "claims but little notice". The endurance of this idea of Morland's production is evident even in Winter's monograph, which focuses overwhelmingly on Morland's career until 1793. Dedicating less than ten pages to the discussion of works realized in the last decade of Morland's life, Winter dismisses them as worthy of notice only by virtue of the painter's earlier artistic attainments. See Dawe, *The Life of George Morland*, p. 92; Winter, "George Morland (1763-1804)", pp. 117-124.

²¹ Nineteenth-century art-historical accounts similarly identified Gainsborough especially with his rural paintings, in an attempt to construct naturalism as the coherent character which the British School had

painting, and mainly consists of works portraying small and lowly farm creatures. Indeed, during Morland's lifetime and in the years immediately after his death, commentators tended to identify him as an animal painter.²² Furthermore, later studies have occasionally attempted to describe Morland as a sporting painter, though often recognizing how the artist sits uncomfortably within this limiting definition.²³ Together with animal painting, Morland's body of drawings and self-portraits, as well as the numerous portraits of him produced by other artists during his lifetime, represent further groups of works highlighted by my research which have not previously been approached systematically by scholarship, even though they represent a substantial part of the artist's production and played a significant role in shaping his artistic persona.

In the following chapters I consequently deal with a range of different topics, each adding a necessary layer to the interpretation of Morland's output and in this way building towards a deeper understanding of it. Unlocking the fuller meaning of any of Morland's works means addressing the artist's choices in terms of subject-matter and technique, as well as his relationship with the market and his self-fashioning of an artistic persona. These issues cannot be dealt with separately and inform each of my chapters to varying degrees. Nevertheless, the thesis structure I have developed allows me to engage with particular layers of Morland's agency in the artistic field in each chapter, thereby developing a multifaceted argument on the modernity of Morland's *oeuvre* and persona.

supposedly possessed since its foundation: see William Vaughan, "The Englishness of British Art", *Oxford Art Journal* 13, no. 2 (1990): pp. 15-17.

²² A newspaper article published in *The Gentleman's Magazine* and in *The European Magazine* just after Morland's death in 1804 noted that Morland "was the first ... of those who have given ... the form and action of all our most familiar animals, in all their subtleties and varieties": see Junod, 'Writing the Lives', p. 181. See also "Fine Arts, George Morland", *The Examiner*, 2 September 1810, for a detailed contemporary critique on Morland as animal painter.

²³ See Gilbey and Cuming, *George Morland*, p. V; Walter Shaw Sparrow, *British Sporting Artists* (The Bodley Head, 1922); Walter Shaw Sparrow, *A Book of Sporting Painters* (The Bodley Head, 1931); Brian Vesey-Fitzgerald, ed., *The Book of the Horse* (Nicholson & Watson, 1946); Stella A. Walker, *Sporting Art England, 1700-1900* (Studio Vista, 1972); David Beazley and Timothy Benn, *Images of Angling: An Illustrated Review of Three Centuries of British Angling Prints* (Creel Press, 2010); Heron, *George Morland*.

I begin by focusing on Morland's decisions in terms of both subject-matter (in the first chapter, which deals with his typical paintings of farm animals) and medium (in the second chapter, which engages with Morland's body of drawings). These chapters allow me to fully engage with Morland's works as works of art, whilst also beginning to shed light on Morland's development, through his formal artistic choices, of a peculiar style and persona useful for standing out in a competitive art world. The last two chapters enlarge the focus of the dissertation to broader issues of context, examining Morland's agency at other levels of the artistic field, beyond the choices that can be described as strictly artistic. The third chapter therefore contextualizes Morland and his works within the late eighteenth-century art market, analyzing his exhibiting and commercial choices and the multiple strategies deployed by him and his collaborators to make his art appealing to a broad audience. The fourth chapter finally engages directly with Morland's construction of an artistic persona, examining the substantial corpus of portraits and self-portraits he produced in his lifetime and beyond (as well as a discussion of his early biographies). This thesis structure allows me a useful critical position at the intersection between artworks and context and hence to employ various methodologies to examine Morland's output. Due to its variety and the range of issues it raises, no single method is sufficient or ideal for examining Morland's *oeuvre*, and this explains why previous scholarship (employing alternatively biographical, stylistical or socio-historical approaches) has struggled to give more than narrow and partial readings of it, often finding the task of producing a monographic account on this artist particularly overwhelming. For these reasons I found that the most suitable methodological approach for dealing with Morland's art is a multidisciplinary one. My work not only mixes the methodologies previously employed, but also adds new ones.

I have therefore employed a critical approach towards the primary literature specifically dedicated to Morland, and especially towards his earlier biographies. In so doing, I draw on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, seeing them less as "contributions to the knowledge of the object" than as "contributions to the *social construction of the very reality* of this object, and hence of the theoretical and practical conditions of its existence".²⁴ As

²⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), p. 294.

Griselda Pollock pointed out, the life-and-work model of the monograph contributes to the fictive construction of the artistic subject as the sole bearer of meaning for art. With the vision it conveys of art as the direct expression of the individual artist's own biographical data, the monograph actively excludes the investigation of the specific social conditions of its production. In the monograph, the construction of the artistic subject occurs through the biographic mode, which allows an exclusive focus on the individual, and through the narrative mode, which works to reconstruct an artist's life in a causal chain of events, consequently contributing to depict him as a sort of predestined subject. Both modes are closer to literary than to historical methods.²⁵

For this reason, my approach draws upon studies which have focused on the particular qualities of the artistic personality as recounted in artistic biographies, investigating the fictionality of this literary genre, as well as its features and evolution through time, and therefore recognizing the role played by imagination in the development of the discipline of art history more broadly. With its investigation of changing attitudes towards the question of artistic personality from the Renaissance to the Romantic period, Rudolf and Margot Wittkower's *Born Under Saturn* (1963) has helped me to discover multiple precedents for the type of the eccentric artist apparently embodied (and performed) by Morland. *Legend, Myth and Magic in the Image of the Artist* (1979) by Ernst Kriz and Otto Kurz has helped me to question the myth of Morland's persona as it is conveyed by his early biographies and recognize many of their anecdotes as common tropes and clichés derived from previous biographical constructions of artists. Gabriele Guercio's *Art As Existence* (2006) highlights the various constituents potentially coexisting in an artistic monograph (documentary, poetic and outright imaginary elements) and the role played by this literary genre in encouraging the modern belief in art as the direct expression of an artist's life. Paul Barolsky's work (*Why Mona Lisa Smiles and Other Tales by Vasari*, 1991; "Vasari and the Historical Imagination", 1999; *A Brief History of the Artist from God to Picasso*, 2010) has been particularly pivotal to my conception of Morland's biographies, for whilst recognizing the spurious nature of the anecdotes recounted in Vasari's *Lives*, Barolsky evidences positively the richer

²⁵ See Griselda Pollock, "Artists, Mythologies and Media Genius, Madness and Art History", *Screen* 21, no. 3 (1980): pp. 58-59.

understanding they can offer of the milieu in which the book was conceived as well as ideas of creativity at that time. In examining the role played by Michelangelo in the shaping of his own myth (before Vasari's biographical construction), Paul Barolsky's book *Michelangelo's Nose* (1990) has helped illuminate how painters have taken an active role in fashioning their personae since the Renaissance. My thesis similarly acknowledges and values Morland's myth, by showing that Morland actively participated in the production of this myth in various ways and for various reasons, and that it was not a solely posthumous construct. Later perpetuated and enriched by his biographies, Morland's myth can in this sense be recognized as the artist's most modern and successful artistic creation.²⁶

I also draw on studies which have questioned essentialist conceptions of art and the artist, and which have analysed the social processes which serve to naturalise these cultural concepts. Pollock's essay "Artists, Mythologies and Media Genius, Madness and Art History" (1980) denounces art history's complicity in excluding from its practices questions of history, class and ideology. Showing how art history actually works to perpetuate the myths of art and artist, this essay has been a necessary starting point for beginning to develop my own take on Morland's figure and *oeuvre*. Catherine M. Soussloff's *The Absolute Artist* (1997) and Larry Shiner's *The Invention of Art* (2001) are more sustained accounts which similarly question the mythical nature of ideas on artist and art respectively and which seek to historicize these concepts by showing them as products of a particular social and cultural situation. Furthermore, the overarching conceptual framework I use in this thesis is informed by the social sciences methodologies developed by Pierre Bourdieu in *The Rules of Art* (1992) and *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993). These books challenge theories that seek to interpret artworks without an understanding of the social context of their production as well as

²⁶ See Rudolf and Margot Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn: The Character and Conduct of Artists; A Documented History from Antiquity to the French Revolution* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963); Ernst Kriz and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979); Paul Barolsky, *Michelangelo's Nose: A Myth and Its Maker* (University Park, Pennsylvania and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990); Paul Barolsky, *Why Mona Lisa Smiles and Other Tales by Vasari* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991); Paul Barolsky, "Vasari and the Historical Imagination", *Word & Image* 15, no. 3 (1999): pp. 286-291; Gabriele Guercio, *Art as Existence: The Artist's Monograph and Its Project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006); Paul Barolsky, *A Brief History of the Artist from God to Picasso* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010).

the social positions of their producers.²⁷ In *The Rules of Art*, Bourdieu describes the formation of an autonomous literary and artistic field in modern times, examining the relationship between origin, trajectory and the contribution of specific cultural producers as well as the possibilities inscribed in the cultural 'field' within which they operate.²⁸

Applying Bourdieu's social scientific theory to the late eighteenth-century London art world is fruitful. This was the context that first witnessed the emergence of the set of agents - audience, institutions, art critics, auctioneers, art dealers, collectors and so on – contributing, through their participation in the 'game', to the production of value for artworks within a modern artistic field, and making it possible for that world to be regulated by rules of its own.²⁹ As my account of Morland's artistic persona will suggest, the possibility of appearing mythical, exceptional, endowed with super-natural powers and/or uninterested in material rewards was inscribed in the new material conditions characterizing the London art world at the end of the eighteenth century. Artists could now elevate their status by styling themselves as independent individuals, since they no longer produced their works for specific patrons. The presence of art dealers and middlemen allowed them to appear detached from the vulgarity of economic transactions, and hence as motivated by purely artistic and self-expressive motives in their practice.³⁰

²⁷ See: Pollock, "Artists, Mythologies and Media", pp. 57-96; Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993); Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*; Catherine M. Sousslof, *The Absolute Artist: The Historiography of a Concept* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001).

²⁸ Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, p. 128.

²⁹ Although Bourdieu developed his social scientific theory in relation to the nineteenth-century literary and artistic world in France, the growth in personnel dedicated to the production of symbolic and material value for artworks which he identifies as one of the main elements in the emergence of a modern system for art occurred earlier in the British than in other contexts. Bourdieu's idea that, in a modern art world, legitimate belonging of works within the aesthetic field is decided through a struggle among agents with different interests at stake, all contributing to produce the fundamental belief in the value of art through their sheer participation in said conflict, has been employed effectively for studies of the eighteenth-century British art world. See for example John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), pp. 201-288. See also Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, pp. 166-173.

³⁰ An example of contemporary painter who styled his persona as that of an individual radically disinterested in economic rewards, supposedly refusing to bow to either patrons' or market's dictates, is John Hamilton Mortimer (1740-1799), from a generation prior to Morland. Hamilton shaped his personality in the mould of the rebellious Old Master Salvator Rosa and portrayed himself as an unruly

Bourdieu's sociological approach affords some distance from the specific form of biographical interpretation which emphasises the singular and often-mythicised figure of the producer, and which is rarely concerned with questioning who creates the creator.³¹ At the same time, such an approach also problematises means of interpreting Morland's art which focus exclusively on issues of style, and which tend to exclude biography and contextualisation. Interpreting Morland's art without its author is detrimental to a full and fair understanding of it: in Foucauldian terms, "the subject ... must be stripped of its creative role" but at the same time "analysed as a complex and variable function of discourse".³² As Christie and Orton also point out, it is necessary to problematize the artist's biography rather than erase it, avoiding "over-individualized accounts of artistic creation, and reductive explanations in terms of talent or genius, or incorrigible psychoanalytical interpretations" while nevertheless presenting "historicity through the realization of human agency".³³

In this sense, I draw on scholarship which has dealt with the agency of artists in fashioning their own personalities, and on recent studies which have investigated this issue specifically in relation to the commercialized London art world of the second half of the eighteenth century, where British artists were inventing their personae in a period in which the genre of literary biography was enjoying increasing success and when the displays of Old Master works on the exhibiting scene were increasingly numerous. Covering a period roughly coinciding with Morland's lifetime (1760-1810) and investigating the careers of various British painters who shaped their personae as heroic outsiders, Martin Myrone's *Body Building* (2005), reveals the fertile ground on

artist who worked only according to his own whims. Nevertheless, this only helped him profit from the sale of prints after his popular *banditti* scenes, showing that the presence of middlemen could produce the perception of a detachment between artists and economic interests in the new market system. I discuss Mortimer as one of the models for Morland's construction of his persona more extensively in Chapter 2. See John Sunderland, "John Hamilton Mortimer and Salvator Rosa", *The Burlington Magazine* 112, no. 809 (1970): pp. 520-531; Martin Myrone, *Body Building: Reforming Masculinities in British Art, 1750-1810* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 128-130. For a discussion of the shift in the eighteenth-century British art world from a patronage to a market system for art and the modern emergence of a perceived opposition between the domains of art and money (with the artist's need to feign independence from those very people whose approval he needs for success), see Shiner, *The Invention of Art*, pp. 126-129.

³¹ Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, p. 167.

³² Donald F. Bouchard, ed., *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 138.

³³ J. R. R. Christie and Fred Orton, "Writing on a Text of the Life", *Art History* 11, no. 4 (1988): 544-564.

which the artist's fashioning of his own unconventional personality occurred, helping us to see his choices in the artistic field as strategies for reputation similar to those enacted by other artists in this period. Although the painters on which Myrone focuses worked in a different genre (history painting), like Morland they fashioned themselves as masculine geniuses (in their case with more heroic features), often shaping their personae in opposition to conventional academic models and in response to needs emerging among a new enlarged public and anxieties surrounding traditional ideas of manhood brought about by modernity. Another useful work for examining Morland's agency in the construction of his artistic identity has been Philippa Simpson's PhD dissertation "Exposing the British School" (2009). Simpson focuses on the increasingly frequent displays of Old Master paintings in London in the years c. 1793–1825, due to the influx of works of this type following the dismemberment of Continental collections brought about by the French Revolutionary wars. Her dissertation deals with the impact generated by the presence of these prominent artistic precedents in the London art scene on contemporary British painters, in terms of both professional anxieties and how Old Master paintings influenced the reception of autochthonous production.³⁴ Simpson's dissertation suggests that artists like Morland shaped their artistic style and persona in the mould of Old Masters as a shrewd form of engagement with benchmarks which at this time (with a British school still in a fledgling state) were perceived as cumbersome, and which could otherwise exercise an overpowering effect on contemporary native artists.

Shaped in the mould of seventeenth-century Dutch painters and yet also described as quintessentially English, Morland's naïve, rough and unrefined persona corresponded with a specific position-taking in the artistic field within which he was operating, and responded to existing needs and expectations. Contemporary debates on artistic talent and genius postulated both attributes as natural rather than acquired through assiduous study and application, and advocated originality rather than imitation of

³⁴ See Myrone, *Body Building*; Philippa Simpson, "Exposing the British School: The Rise of Old Master Exhibition Culture in London, c. 1793-1825" (PhD. diss., Courtauld Institute of Art, 2009); Junod, 'Writing the Lives'. The impact of Junod's work in my approach to Morland's figure has been discussed above.

classical examples.³⁵ The exemplary figures of the Old Masters were at the same time largely assimilated into the discourse on genius.³⁶ Theorized from the beginning as a matter of national prestige, the perceived need to establish a British 'School' of painting (and to define its specific character) was especially imbued with nationalistic tones during the Revolutionary Wars. Yet without the official patronage to support its achievement, that need found obstacles in the commercial character of the British art world, which drove native painters to novelty and individuation of styles, rather than homogenization.³⁷ In turn, 'originality' was valorized, and the modern myth of the artist as genius became foundational to the British School, which therefore ended up consisting more in a pantheon of exceptional personalities – or types, shaped in the image of their Vasarian predecessors – than in an ensemble of artists with shared styles and iconographies.³⁸ Whilst offering new perspectives on Morland's *oeuvre*, this thesis also therefore proposes that Morland represented an important and significant new figure within the mythology of the modern artist.

Chapter 1 addresses the paintings portraying farmyard animals which constituted the bulk of Morland's *oeuvre*. Depicting non-human creatures normally understood as lacking aesthetic qualities, and treating sympathetically animals usually seen merely in economic terms, these works sit uncomfortably within existing niches of animal painting. This chapter argues for the modernity of Morland's animal subjects, as representative of an eminently urban way of looking at non-human creatures, building upon and problematizing contemporary philosophical ideas on sensibility. The first section therefore focuses on paintings of animals on their own. In embodying Morland's mode of representing unknowable creatures through an aestheticized manner, these works are interpreted as interrogating the boundaries of eighteenth-century sympathy. It begins with two paintings of pigs. An investigation of this animal's position and role in contemporary rural and urban environments and of its symbolic, anthropological and

³⁵ Although Reynolds's *Discourses* and the promotion of artistic talent as something that could be acquired were still in circulation during Morland's lifetime, the idea of natural genius was gradually getting foothold during the eighteenth century. Joseph Addison's seminal essay on genius, which appeared in *The Spectator* in 1711, was followed by the more sustained accounts on the same topic by Edward Young (*Conjectures on Original Composition*, 1759) and Alexander Gerard (*An Essay on Genius*, 1774).

³⁶ See Junod, "The Lives of the Old Masters", pp. 67-82.

³⁷ See Vaughan, "Englishness of British Art", p. 13; Junod, 'Writing the Lives', p. 44.

³⁸ Junod, 'Writing the Lives', p. 44.

metaphorical meanings will suggest why the pig might have been singled out by Morland as the most prevalent animal in his works of this genre. Two paintings of pets (*Guinea Pigs* and *Rabbits*, Fig. 3 and Fig. 4, 1792, The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery and Museum) are then explored and set within the context of the modern transformations of domestic spaces and contemporary debates on human slavery. While the concept of pet-keeping only emerged in this period, when elite and bourgeois urban dwellings were redrawn as spaces of sociability, contemporary debates on animal captivity adumbrated doubts on the moral acceptability of human slavery. This section ends with Morland's *Four Studies of Heads of Cattle* (Fig. 6, Victoria & Albert Museum), read in the context of the progressive elite taste for Dutch paintings of low subjects, the artistic, scientific and philosophical explorations undermining human-animal boundaries, and the growth of the milk and meat industry. In the second section, paintings featuring human and animal interactions are discussed in relation to broader changes brought about by modern capitalism. Scenes of peaceful coexistence between men and animals (*Horses in a Stable*, Fig. 16, 1791, Victoria & Albert Museum; *Cowherd and Milkmaid*, Fig. 20, 1792, Tate) are juxtaposed with their opposing pairs (*The Fallen Horse*, Fig. 17, Sotheby's Parke-Bernet New York, 11 June 1981, lot 156; *Stable Scene*, Fig. 21, 1791, Christie's London, 31 May 1935) and discussed in relation to emerging debates on animal welfare, animal rights, as well as gender- and class-based inequalities in modern society. *Bargaining for Sheep* (Fig. 22, 1794, New Walk Museum and Art Gallery, Leicester) is examined in relation to contemporary criticism on consumerism and the political discourse constructing meat-eating or meat-abstention as political affiliations. The figure of the butcher, also central to patriotic discourse, is investigated more specifically in relation to Morland's artistic practice and persona. Its centrality in this and other crucial paintings by Morland (*The Country Butcher*, Fig. 26, 1793?, Sotheby's London, 3 April 1996, lot 139; *The Watchful Butcher*, Fig. 28, 1792, Sotheby's London, 27 January 1954, lot 123) allows to read it as adumbrating the artist himself. Taking a cue from Annibale Carracci's equation of the painter's practice with the butcher's profession in *The Butcher's Shop* (Fig. 27, 1580s, Christ Church College, Oxford), Morland's identification with the butcher suggests a refusal to comply with conventional academic models of educated and refined painters.

Focusing on his large body of drawings and sketches, which were produced consistently throughout his career and born of a distinctive graphic style, Chapter 2 likewise suggests that Morland fashioned an idiosyncratic persona of authentic, masculine genius for himself through his works. The first section of this chapter examines Morland's finished drawings, where the portrayal of rustic masculinities in *Shepherd Boys* (Fig. 30, 1792, British Museum) through a rough drawing style expressive of unrefined artistic persona is read in relation to the artistic precedent of John Hamilton Mortimer's drawings of *banditti*. Morland's fantasy of authentic English rustic masculinities similarly responded to contemporary anxieties concerning manhood originated by the modern threats represented by politeness, capitalism and imperialism. Also, these masculine portrayals answered to the artists' needs to create their unconventional personae in the mould of Old Masters to stand out within the increasingly crowded modern art world. The practice of collecting drawings of low and transgressive subjects such as *Shepherd Boys* is then shown to accord with a particular form of elite gendered aesthetics. The second section of Chapter 2 turns to the commoditable quality of Morland's persona of authentic, masculine genius as constructed through his idiosyncratic drawing style; it examines Morland's exhibited and published graphic works. James Gillray's print *Connoisseurs Examining a Collection of George Morland's (sic)* (Fig. 34, 1807, British Museum) introduces the tensions between claims to genius and the commercialization of its output. The peculiar case of Morland's exhibition of graphic works in 1794 is then deconstructed to show how the creation of economic and symbolic value for artworks required multiple collaborators in the modern art world. The commercialization of Morland's drawing books is finally contextualized in terms of print's longstanding role in the construction of artistic reputations, technological improvements in reproducing drawings through print, the popularization of drawing as a practice, and the cult of sketches.

Chapter 3 expands the focus of the thesis from questions of subject matter and media to the larger context of the London art world, the position of Morland's art within it, as well as the ways in which Morland and other agents within the artistic field marketed his persona and art in this context. The first section of this chapter analyses Morland's creation of an enlarged audience for his art through the development of accessible

narratives recognizable in his rural scenes painted from the 1790s onwards. This section explores the sociological field of possibilities – in terms of genre, audience, subject-matter, size, composition, finish and context - available to Morland when he exhibited *The Farmyard* (Fig. 69, Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California) at the Royal Academy show in 1792. The features characterizing Morland's individual style, exemplified in *The Farmyard* – the ability to reconcile binary opposites, both in terms of subject-matter and in terms of formal qualities such as composition, colour, light; the inclusion of elements suggesting his own exceptional personality – are here recognized as pictorial strategies meant to make his art appealing to a new enlarged market. The second section broadens the point of view to explore additional strategies, beyond the strictly formal artistic choices, through which a large market for Morland's rural anecdotes and unique persona was built. Addressing the role played by new agents in the modern art world – collectors, auctioneers, dealers, art critics – in constructing meaning and value for Morland's art, this section is also deeply rooted in Bourdieu's sociological approach. Here the analysis of commercial schemes devised by the artist, his collaborators and even agents in the artistic field unconnected to him, shows the extreme marketability and adaptability of Morland's recognizable 'brand'. The discussion begins by illustrating Morland's use of 'screens' – dealers who, taking the artist's place in selling his works on the market, allowed him to feign naiveté and lack of economic interest, to the profit of his exceptional persona. Subsequently, Morland's coexistence in exhibiting contexts at odds with each other and his substantial presence on the print market throughout his career are examined as part of his strategies for reputation and survival through the creation of an enlarged audience. The discussion of Morland's presence on the print market leads to the examination of the major collaborative commercial scheme which involved the artist with his leading publisher, John Raphael Smith: a 1793 solo exhibition of paintings to sponsor the sale of engraved reproductions by subscription. The catalogue of Smith's exhibition is examined as an example of the textual and rhetorical strategies which helped to create an enlarged market for Morland's art, consisting in using a mixed vocabulary which could speak to audiences of different social and cultural backgrounds and in presenting Morland's art as a resolved union of opposite values. The catalogue also shows the role played by new agents in the artistic field in creating aesthetic frameworks which could compete with the academic norms. Daniel Orme's 'Morland Gallery', with its publication of prints and

even a drawing book after the artist's works, is illustrated as an example of a commercial scheme which, although centred on Morland, was arguably developed without his involvement, testifying to the extreme adaptability and marketability of his accessible and recognizable 'brand'.

Finally, Chapter 4 deals with the visual and literary construction of Morland's quintessentially modern artistic persona through a selection of his portraits and self-portraits, and a discussion of his posthumous biographical constructions, both seen as related to the contemporary literary success of Old Masters' 'lives'. The first section of this chapter focuses on the portraits and self-portraits of Morland produced during his lifetime. A chronological investigation of works of this type shows the shifting terms through which Morland's artistic identity was invented, evidencing its fictionality. This analysis unveils Morland's agency in inventing his artistic identity, invalidating the idea of him as a manipulated subject which is conveyed by most of the scholarship, beginning with the early biographies. Two early works (his father's portrait of Morland aged sixteen, Fig. 96, c. 1779, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven; Morland's self-portrait at the age of thirty-two, Fig. 102, c. 1795, National Portrait Gallery, London) are read alongside contemporary portraits of Morland's father and wife as indicative of available models of artistic identity as well as in relation to contemporary philosophical ideas of sensibility, the increased importance attributed to imagination in artistic endeavours, and the radicalized political context of late eighteenth-century Britain. In their increasing immersion of the artist's (and his wife's) figure within the rustic nature typical of his art, a group of portraits from the artist's adulthood (after (?) Robert Muller, *George Morland*, Fig. 107, c. 1792-5, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool; *Mrs. George Morland*, Fig. 106, c. 1792-5, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London; Thomas Hand, *George Morland on His Hunter*, Fig. 109, 1794, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven) is discussed in relation to pre-Romantic conceptions of the artist as self-expressive subject. The conflation of artist, art and nature is seen as fully achieved in another group of portraits (title-page of *Sketches by G. Morland* by John Harris, Fig. 110, 1792 and by Daniel Orme, Fig. 111, 1793-4; both British Museum). Morland's last self-portrait (*The Artist in His Studio with His Man Gibbs*, Fig. 114, c. 1802, Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery) is then analysed in relation to contemporary constructions of

eccentric literary identities and biographies of exceptional Old Masters. Singled out as a very modern invention of the painter as outsider, Morland's last self-portrait offers further evidence that stories concerning the decline of his artistic skills in later life were fictional. The second section of Chapter 4 examines posthumous portraits of Morland (mostly prints illustrating his early biographies) which mirror the passages through which his persona was constructed during his lifetime. A brief discussion of his biographical constructions and on the crystallization of Morland's persona as a quintessentially English painter in the later part of the nineteenth century concludes the chapter.

Chapter 1. George Morland's "Minor Tribe":³⁹ Art, Animals and Audiences

The animal is there before me, there next to me, there in front of me – I who am (following) after it. And also, therefore, since it is before me, it is behind me. It surrounds me. And from the vantage of this being-there-before-me it can allow itself to be looked at, no doubt, but also – something that philosophy perhaps forgets, perhaps being this calculated forgetting itself – it can look at me. It has its point of view regarding me. The point of view of the absolute other, and nothing will have ever given me more food for thinking through this absolute alterity of the neighbor or of the next (-door) than these moments when I see myself seen naked under the gaze of a cat.

(Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, 2006)

I thank you much for the Mutton. It was very fine. The Rabbit hasn't been here.

(George Morland, letter to John Graham, 3 May 1801)

Completed between 1797 and 1800, in an artistic context in which animal painting was almost exclusively devoted to portraits of famous racehorses, prized livestock specimens, and beloved pets, *Pigs* (Fig. 1, Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery) defies such categorization. The picture focuses on three pigs outside of their pigsty, a low and thatched building partially visible to the left side of the canvas. Two of them, a recumbent sow and another pig standing behind her, occupy the foreground, a narrow area covered with golden straw and circumscribed by the pigsty, a fence and the trunk of a tree. A third pig is seen through the fence, which opens up towards a rustic landscape and a glimpse of blue sky. The pig in the background is facing away from the pigsty, perhaps in search of food. By comparison with contemporary British images of animals, *Pigs* focuses on unusual creatures and portrays them in an uneventful scene of unclear meaning.

Upon a closer analysis of its content and formal qualities, *Pigs* seems to be mainly about pleasurable sensations, in a physical and an aesthetic sense. The three animals, which are variously occupied in leisurely activities such as sleeping, being inactive and lazily rummaging for food, peacefully share a cramped space. Their appearance shows that they are comfortable, healthy, and well-fed - in sum well looked after. The body of the sow shown sleeping in the foreground is completely relaxed, with her legs tenderly curled, and her teats exposed to the viewer, an indication of her reproductive capacity.

³⁹ "Fine Arts, George Morland", *The Examiner*, 2 September 1810.

The content of the painting, consisting of animals' enjoyment of the most basic pleasures of life, is mirrored by a painterly technique that strengthens these pleasurable feelings on an aesthetic level. The colours of the pig's coat – a pinky gold with patches of black – are attuned to the mellow tones of the landscape. The animals are depicted with a great degree of accuracy, seen for example in the sow's teats, the standing pig's eyelashes, and the three animals' fine bristles. Morland's depiction of pigs here tends to underline tactile features, emphasizing particularly the softness of the fur, the cleanness of the skin, and the roundness of the bodily shape. Brute creatures, commonly understood by contemporaries as epitomes of filthiness, are here aestheticized, and even understandable as objects of sensory pleasure.⁴⁰

By focusing on ordinary farm creatures of no precise breed, and by dealing with them in an aestheticized manner, *Pigs* is a quintessential example of Morland's animal images. It is therefore a suitable picture with which to begin this chapter, which offers the first dedicated study of Morland's paintings of animals. This chapter will leave aside both his hunting scenes (wholly outnumbered by his paintings of farm animals, and neither constituting nor presenting a genre peculiar to the artist) and his numerous drawings of animals, which will be analyzed in the second chapter. Instead Morland's painterly treatment of non-human creatures will here be reviewed through a selection of images representative of both his most typical and his most unusual types of compositions in this genre and discussed as representative of a very modern and eminently urban way of experiencing animals. I begin by dealing with Morland's paintings of animals on their own, which encourage us to look at non-human creatures sympathetically, regardless of their aesthetic qualities and usefulness, and notwithstanding that their utter otherness (to refer to Derrida's quote at the beginning of the chapter) denies us access to their experiences. I then move onto images of human and animal interactions, which unfold the full implications of this treatment of animal subjects. By showing the iniquity of animals' value in modern society, these works contain a subtle critical commentary of its evils, caused by the concentration of wealth driven by commercial and capitalist

⁴⁰ In many of Morland's paintings of pigs, this enjoyable response is encouraged further through the introduction of a surrogate-viewer, usually a boy or a girl leaning on a pigsty and contentedly observing the animals' enjoyment of the most basic pleasures of life. See for example *The Piggery, or, Some Must Watch Whilst Some Must Sleep* (1790-1791, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool).

expansion. The chapter ends by considering the meanings of Morland's peculiar treatment of animal painting in relation to his own artistic practice and the construction of his unconventional artistic persona.

It is difficult to overestimate the role of animals in Morland's art: his first public appearance in the London art world was heralded by a series of prints entitled *Six Animals Drawn & Etch'd by G. Morland*, which featured asses, foxes, birds, cows, and goats.⁴¹ Among the drawings and sketches he exhibited in the 1770s, the works bearing titles suggest that Morland was already focusing on rustic scenes including farm animals.⁴² And while the sentimental scenes set in urban and fashionable environments that Morland produced in the 1780s only included animals as marginal elements, such images never completely replaced his rural subjects. Indeed, Morland's first oil painting exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1781 was a *Hovel with Asses* (unidentified), and his works at the 1782 Free Society of Artists exhibitions bore titles such as *Sunset, with Cattle and Figures*, and *A Girl Attending Pigs* (both unidentified).

After testing the audience's capacity for feeling with scenes involving the fashionable middling classes such as *Vicar of Wakefield, vol. I, chapt. 8*, and *Maria, Lavinia and the Chelsea Pensioner* (both unidentified, in 1784 and 1785), Morland seems to have made further attempts at testing and refining the audience's benevolent feelings.⁴³ First he explored these feelings in relation to human subjects on the margins of society, with the 1788 RA exhibit *Execrable Human Traffick, or The Affectionate Slaves* (location unknown), the earliest work of high art to deal with an abolitionist subject, and finally, in the 1790s, resorting solely to the rural poor, farm animals, and encounters between them.⁴⁴ In the 1790 Society of Artists exhibition, animals came to the fore in Morland's

⁴¹ Five of the prints composing this series are held by the British Museum; the sixth is collected at the Philadelphia Museum of Arts. I address this drawing book more thoroughly in Chapter 2.

⁴² Most of these works are unidentified, and the only unequivocal titles among them are: *A Corn-Loft*, *A Cow Farm*, *Farm House in a Wood*. They all correspond to works included in the 1776 Free Society of Artists exhibition.

⁴³ See Chapter 3 for a discussion of these RA exhibits.

⁴⁴ The pendant of this painting, *European Ship Wrecked on the Coast of Africa* (or, *African Hospitality*), was exhibited only in 1790, this time at the Society of Artists and is now at the Menil Foundation, Houston, Texas. Instead, the original version of *Execrable Human Traffick, or The Affectionate Slaves* (or, *Slave Trade*) was lost when sold by the Lady Lever Art Gallery in 1926. Two copies of *Slave Trade* exist, one at the Menil Collection, Houston, Texas, the other one at the Heritage Auction Galleries, Dallas, Texas

compositions with titles such as *An Ass Race* (Rhode Island School of Design, Providence), *A Mad Bull* (location unknown), *A Sow and Pigs, Calf and Sheep* (both unidentified). In the following years, Morland would therefore exhibit, at the RA, *Inside of a Stable* (Fig. 71, 1791, Tate), and *Benevolent Sportsman* (Fig. 25, 1792, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), *Goats* (1792, unidentified), *A Farm Yard* (Fig. 69, 1792, Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California), and *The Sportsman's Return* (1792, unidentified), all with animals taking centre stage.

As suggested in this thesis' introduction, despite the important role played by animals in Morland's *oeuvre*, scholarship on the artist has yet to consider his work from this perspective.⁴⁵ By extending the analysis of Morland's problematic engagement with the boundaries of eighteenth-century sympathy developed by John Barrell in *The Dark Side of the Landscape* from the field of human interactions to non-human animals, this chapter aims to produce new insights into the artist's staple output.⁴⁶

Pigs is representative of the unique way in which Morland handled sentimentality in the realm of animals. The scene explores the empathetic potential of farm creatures, rarely seen through this lens because of being primarily raised for economic profit. This was particularly true for pigs, since they are only useful when dead and transformed into meat, whereas other animals like sheep, cows and chickens could also serve men with their products during their lifetime.⁴⁷

in 2012; one copy of *African Hospitality* is at the Museum of Africa, Newtown, Johannesburg. All these copies are signed, and it is unclear whether they are by Morland or by a forger. The replicas of the *Slave Trade* at the Menil and of the *African Hospitality* at the Museum of Africa are likely to have been conceived in a pair, since they are both signed and dated identically 'G. Morland, 1789'. Meredith Gamer argued that the version of *Slave Trade* at the Heritage Auction Galleries at the time of the publication of her account could correspond to the original work previously at the Lady Lever Art Gallery, but only assuming that the painting has undergone considerable retouching since its disappearance from there. See Meredith Gamer, "George Morland's 'Slave Trade' and 'African Hospitality': Slavery, Sentiment and the Limits of the Abolitionist Image", in *The Slave in European Art: From Renaissance Trophy to Abolitionist Emblem*, ed. Elizabeth McGrath and Jean M. Massing (London and Turin: The Warburg Institute and Nino Aragno Editore, 2012), notes 13 and 14, pp. 299-300.

⁴⁵ However, see the Introduction for contemporary accounts which identified Morland as an animal painter and for later accounts trying to describe him as a sporting painter.

⁴⁶ See John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 89-129.

⁴⁷ Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 47.

Farm animal painting had not been Morland's invention: in the 1780s examples of this new genre of painting had begun to gain an audience beyond specialized circles.⁴⁸ During the eighteenth century, landowners started experimenting with modern techniques to augment production and accommodate the demands of a growing urban population. In particular the Leicestershire farmer Robert Bakewell had introduced revolutionary methods of selective breeding already developed in sporting contexts in relation to racehorses. Selective breeding, soon taken up by other landowners, consisted in choosing for reproduction the individual livestock endowed with the most favourable features for the animal's commodification, so as to establish new improved breeds after a few generations.⁴⁹ Farm animal portraiture was developed as a means of promoting the distinctive characteristics of these new livestock animals, in works which were initially commissioned and circulated among farmers specifically interested in augmenting meat production while simultaneously reducing the amount of feed.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, by the late eighteenth century, these images had begun to circulate at a popular level and were commissioned for less pragmatic reasons, such as pride of ownership or rivalry. They also appeared regularly at the Royal Academy annual exhibition, side by side with sporting art and the portraiture of horses and dogs.⁵¹ And yet, portraits of farm animals mainly depicted these creatures through a financial lens, underlining their impressive size to suggest their commercial value for meat production. If these works in turn suggest that certain kinds of farm animals had gained a higher status due to their exceptional qualities, they nevertheless show a wholly dispassionate treatment of them. Also, the creatures considered worthy of portrayal were usually either representative of a new pedigree or travelling exhibition animals fattened to exceptional proportions.

⁴⁸ Judy Egerton, *George Stubbs, Painter: Catalogue Raisonné* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 510.

⁴⁹ Elspeth Moncrieff, with Stephen and Iona Joseph, *Farm Animal Portraits* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors Club, 1996), pp. 15-16, 36.

⁵⁰ It has been argued convincingly that John Boulton, the first British animal painter who specialized in cattle portraiture, had been encouraged in this direction by Robert Bakewell, the foremost British cattle breeder. Bakewell's farm at Dishley Grange was close to Boulton's Loughborough, and the landowner commissioned from him various portraits of his improved animals. Through Bakewell, Boulton could have met the most important cattle breeders in England, earning further commissions in this new artistic niche. This suggests that the genre of livestock painting initially emerged from the demands of a group of landowners who were interested in illustrating and promoting the specific characteristics of their new breeds among their specialized circle. See Moncrieff, with Joseph and Joseph, *Farm Animal Portraits*, pp. 59-61.

⁵¹ Moncrieff, with Joseph and Joseph, *Farm Animal Portraits*, pp. 24, 30-31, 54.

By contrast, Morland focused overwhelmingly on ordinary specimens of animals of uncertain breed, and belonging to species that, among all those of the farm, were particularly low in commercial status. In this context, an analysis of the varying proportions of animal species represented in Morland's works produces striking results. The three most dominant subjects are (in order) dogs, pigs and horses. These three species outnumber by some distance the other nine taken into account in this analysis (in order, sheep and donkeys, cows, fowls, goats, rabbits, cats, guinea pigs and fish).⁵² These findings are hardly surprising when it comes to dogs and horses, which constituted the most recurrent species for other contemporary British animal painters. But pigs stand out as a particularly unique and distinctive characteristic of Morland's animal art. Unlike other farm animals raised for their meat, pigs were not bred selectively until the middle of the nineteenth century.⁵³ In medieval times, when they could be reared by leaving them partially wild, free to rummage for their food in forests, they had been fundamental to British agriculture. With the reduction of woodlands, the expansion of cultivated lands, and the growth of the sheep's financial value, rearing pigs in large numbers gradually became less advantageous. Pigs had now to be kept in sties to prevent them damaging crops and unless large quantities of waste products were available (for example from dairy and brewery factories), they had to be fed on yields.⁵⁴ Furthermore pigs could not make long journeys on their own legs like other animals, another characteristic which limited their commercialization to local markets and which determined their main function in the modern agricultural world as the feeding of individual family units.⁵⁵ In other words, they mostly became cottagers' animals, fed on the waste produced by the household. Paintings of pigs were therefore not commissioned by wealthy landowners, and they were consequently far less common -

⁵² I have examined 243 among the works of animals or of humans and animals by Morland (or supposedly by him), and I have considered twelve species. The first three species are included respectively in 103, 96, and 89 paintings, while sheep and donkeys, both in the fourth position of importance, are included in only 25. Some of the species such as fowls, cats and fish feature in only a few works, and never as protagonists.

⁵³ Thomas Almeroth-Williams has suggested that a certain degree of breeding knowledge had percolated into pig-keeping in urban settings during the second half of the eighteenth century, when the first attempts were made at selecting more compact and fatter animals, suitable for the limited spaces available in metropolitan areas. Nevertheless, his study recognizes that these methods only began to be applied systematically in the nineteenth century. See "City of Beasts: Horses & Livestock in Hanoverian London" (PhD. diss., University of York, 2013), p. 47, note 116.

⁵⁴ Moncrieff, with Joseph and Joseph, *Farm Animal Portraits*, pp. 230 -233.

⁵⁵ See Stallybrass and White, *Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, p. 44; on pigs' unsuitability for being driven on long distances, see also Almeroth-Williams, "City of Beasts", p. 46.

but potentially also less restrained by the practical requirements of the commercial world.⁵⁶

Not that pigs were difficult to encounter in eighteenth-century England. The pig's commercial value for large-scale meat production might have been insignificant but they were extremely useful and familiar animals for ordinary people in both rural and urban environments. The pig's role in the economy of ordinary households and their useful characteristic of eating waste were early recognized: Gervase Markham in his 1614 *Cheape and Good Husbandry* called the pig "the Husbandsmans best scavenger, and the Huswifes most wholesome sinke", and noted that "his foode and living is by that which would else rot in the yard make it beastly, and breed no good meature, or being caste down the ordinary sinke [*sic*]".⁵⁷ Unlike other farm animals, pigs could easily be reared in a city because fed on waste; they were often left free to rummage for food in the streets.⁵⁸ In his account of the presence and role of animals in Hanoverian London, Thomas Almeroth-Williams argues that pig-keeping grew rather than receded in the first stages of urbanization and industrialization. Growing metropolitan demand for food and the increased availability of cheap fodder in the form of waste produced by the city's massive brewing and distilling factories determined London's economic scenario at the beginning of modernity as that of a "thriving *agropolis*",⁵⁹ within which urban husbandry came to be closely intertwined with industrial activities. Pig-keeping therefore survived well into the nineteenth century in other metropolitan areas thanks to the limited spatial needs of these animals, with examples in central neighbourhoods such as St Giles', Soho, Holborn, West Smithfield and Old Street.⁶⁰ But even if the pigs showed a high degree of adaptability to urban settings, their commercial potential still remained lower than that of other farm animals in eighteenth-century England. Pig-keeping was rarely indicated as an individual's primary profession, and was rather practised as an additional source of income for the lower middle classes and the poor

⁵⁶ Moncrieff, with Joseph and Joseph, *Farm Animal Portraits*, p. 229.

⁵⁷ Gervase Markham, *Cheape and Good Husbandry, for the Vvell-Ordering of All Beasts, and Fowls, and for the Generall Cure of Their Diseases (sic)* (London: Roger Iackson, 1614), p. 87.

⁵⁸ On "keeping and fattening Hogs in Towns", see A. S. Gent, *The Husbandman's Instructor, or, Countryman's Guide* (London: A. Conyers, 1707?). See the *Times*, 19 December 1788 for a notice of a lost sow found wandering near Fenchurch Street. See also Moncrieff, with Joseph and Joseph, *Farm Animal Portraits*, p. 234, and Almeroth-Williams, "City of Beasts", p. 46.

⁵⁹ Almeroth-Williams, "City of Beasts", p. 2.

⁶⁰ See Almeroth-Williams, "City of Beasts", pp. 36, 42-43, 47, 55.

(similarly to other small-scale husbandry activities involving small animals, such as chickens and rabbits).⁶¹ However cottagers did not always rear pigs exclusively for their meat: contemporary accounts report them to be used as working animals (for example, for ploughing the fields together with oxen and horses) and for game hunting.⁶² The Game Laws forbade common people from hunting, and authorities even cut the claws of dogs to make sure they could not be used for poaching. Endowed with an excellent sense of smell and arousing considerably less suspicion, pigs were therefore occasionally employed as substitutes.⁶³ They were also a source of entertainment when pig races and contests were organized in urban streets.⁶⁴

Insofar as pigs were a useful and ubiquitous presence in rural and urban life, Morland's decision to employ them as one of the most prevalent subjects of his art was peculiar, since they were perhaps the most unlikely among all the farm animals to stimulate a sympathetic reaction in eighteenth-century London audiences. Certain characteristics inherent to pigs made them animals with which it was particularly difficult to empathize: pigs can never be completely tamed; they digest garbage of any kind, even their own and human excrement; they cover themselves in mud in order to control their hyperthermia and avoid sunburn and, when this is not available, they urinate on their own dung to make it suitable for this purpose. In addition, pigs' presence within cities was a trigger for their increasing perception as particularly disgusting animals: whilst in the countryside their excrement could be considered useful for fertilizing fields, it was only a filthy annoyance in the towns, while pigs wandering through the streets caused accidents in which they sometimes harassed (even killed) humans.⁶⁵ Throughout the early modern period and then increasingly during the eighteenth century, pigs' presence in the London's metropolitan area was blamed, at times of

⁶¹ See Almeroth-Williams, "City of Beasts", pp. 75-76, 80-81.

⁶² See Count De Buffon [Georges Louis Leclerc], *Natural History, General and Particular*, trans. William Smellie, 20 vols. (London: T. Cadell and W. Davis, 1812), 4:336.

⁶³ The story of a famous hunting pig was reported in William Parker Daniel, *Rural Sports*, 2 vols. (London: Bunny and Gold, 1801), 2:395-6. The New Forest gamekeepers Richard and Edward Toomer trained a black sow, which they named Slut, to hunt like a pointer. John Landseer portrayed the animal while hunting with one of its owners in an 1805 print (British Museum).

⁶⁴ See the *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 29 March 1788 for an advertisement for a contest in which "a soaped pig will be turned loose, which will, as usual, be forfeited to the first person that lifts it above his head".

⁶⁵ Stallybrass and White, *Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, pp. 45, 48-49.

particular tension, as the cause of disease and disruption of the public order. Legislative actions were frequently taken to contain or to ban pig-keeping in urban areas, even if the results of these measures were mostly unsuccessful.⁶⁶

Furthermore Judaeo-Christian doctrine had endowed pigs with negative qualities: they were equated with sin and with the vices of gluttony, drunkenness, lust and heresy in religious writings and iconographies. From the seventeenth century onwards, pigs became associated with offences to good manners, particularly in relation to country people's lack of refinement.⁶⁷ Also, since pigs had become particularly ubiquitous in urban slums, they became a metaphor for the poor even in its radical political aspects, as Burke suggested with his definition of the French revolutionaries as a "swinish multitude".⁶⁸

Yet the pig's symbolic associations were ambiguous: this animal was understood as a site of both disgust and desire. One out of many anecdotes celebrating pig's meat in Ned Ward's satirical *London Spy* (1700) began with a luxurious description of a London area, Pye Corner (near Smithfield market) which featured a variety of shops selling roasted pork. The mouth-watering review of the tempting wares and their smells turns into disgust when the protagonist enters a shop and finds the person roasting pork "rubbing of his ears, breast, neck, and arm pits with the same cloth he rub'd (*sic*) the pig, which brought such a qualm over my stomach, that I had much ado to keep the stuffing of my guts from tumbling into the dripping pan".⁶⁹ The ambivalent attitudes shown by Western societies towards pigs could be partly explained by the animals' unsettling proximity to the human in the context of European culture and agricultural practices. As noted above, pigs were usually fed on household waste. For this reason, they were often kept at the threshold of the house or at the bottom of the garden. Rather than marginalizing pigs, urbanization had brought them even closer to humans, since on certain occasions less-wealthy owners were induced by the lack of space to

⁶⁶ See Almeroth-Williams, "City of Beasts", pp. 43-45.

⁶⁷ Stallybrass and White, *Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, pp. 50-52.

⁶⁸ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: J. Dodsley, 1790), p. 117.

⁶⁹ Ned Ward, *The London Spy Compleat (sic), In Eighteenth Parts* (London: J. How, 1703), pp. 239-240.

share their own living quarters with them.⁷⁰ The proximity between pigs and men (and the pigs' distance from other farm animals) was not only physical: these animals were also the only ones in the farm to maintain a diet essentially identical to that of their owners. Furthermore, the colour and apparent hairlessness of pigs' hides made them disturbingly similar to the skin of white European babies.⁷¹

Considering these ambivalent associations, Morland's *Pigs* (Fig. 1) represents a conspicuous challenge to the boundaries of its audience's capacity for sympathy, especially since the painting's viewers can broadly be supposed to have belonged to the urban middling classes, a social group which defined itself in opposition to the uncivilized and the rustic, both summed up exactly in the figure of this only-half domesticated animal. Perhaps the ambiguous position of pigs in between the cultural categories of human and animal, and tamed and wild, made them useful animals for interrogating the audience's capacity for sympathy and benevolent feeling. Morland's *Pigs* challenges taboos separating animals conceived of as men's companions and those thought of as food. *Pigs* compels the viewer to appreciate the sight of, and even to experience some sensory satisfaction from, non-human creatures which are usually conceived of as disgusting, but which are shown by Morland to be very similar to men in their physical features and instincts. Ultimately the painting encourages us to question and doubt whether a clear line can be drawn between the realm of the human and that of the animal.

By 1797, pigs had become the distinctive signature of Morland's work. In that year, he had even presented himself within the refined context of the Royal Academy annual exhibition with, among others, a painting featuring them as protagonists (Fig. 2, 1797, Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery).⁷² This canvas similarly focused on two pigs,

⁷⁰ See Almeroth-Williams, "City of Beasts", p. 83.

⁷¹ Stallybrass and White, *Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, pp. 45-48.

⁷² Morland's works exhibited at the RA in that year (together with *Pigs*, also *Landscape with Figures*, *Thirsty Millers*, *Landscape and Figures*, *Sea Beach*, *Landscape and Figures*, *Sand Cart*) were appreciated by the critique, as evidenced by a passage from the RA review appeared in *The Morning Post* on 2 May 1797, transcribed by Farington: "The Landscapes of this year ... Those most entitled to praise may be thus classed ... Morland". See Joseph Farington, 10 December 1797, in *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, eds. Kenneth Garlick, Angus Macintyre, and Kathryn Cave, 17 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978-1984), 3:941.

one recumbent and the other one standing, but this time the animal behind is seen leaning its snout on the back of its companion. The scene is set indoors, within a pigsty whose sloping wooden roof is visible only to the left side, the other side being completely immersed in the darkness. Again the animals are portrayed in a cramped space, comprised between the pigsty's roof on the upper left of the painting and the overturned barrel only partly visible in its bottom right. Nevertheless, on a closer analysis, the animals' features and attitudes here suggest that we are confronting creatures somewhat different from those of the Nottingham painting. For even if the pigs' physical appearances are again made pleasant and aesthetically acceptable, their snouts and especially their ears appear sharper, their bodies less round, and their eyes partly covered by tufts of fur. The pigs' skin appears of a yellowish colour, a shade slightly different from the pinkish-golden hues of the animals in Fig. 1. A lettuce leaf, a carrot and a turnip scattered by the pigs' owner on the dirt floor reveal the animals' small size. Also, while the pigs in the Nottingham painting were placidly unconcerned with the audience observing them from outside the frame, here both animals seem to train an eye upon the viewer. Their expression seems to indicate they are wary. All these details suggest that we are faced here with piglets rather than with adult creatures: the animals' young age can explain their apparent lack of familiarity with humans. As with Fig. 1, this painting presents its viewers with creatures which are at once completely different from them (and in this case even more unknowable because less approachable), aestheticized and also shown to be capable of arousing sympathy.

Most of Morland's images of animals encouraged the viewer to look sympathetically at farm creatures (the largest constituency among his non-human characters) and especially at pigs (his most typical and distinctive subjects in this section). Nevertheless, occasionally the creatures presented by the artist as capable of arousing empathetic feelings belonged to species that, like pigs, were neglected by other contemporary British animal painters, but which positioned themselves elsewhere in the spectrum of eighteenth-century human-animal relationships, because typically kept as pets. *Guinea Pigs* and *Rabbits* (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4, 1792, The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery and Museum) are two small canvases, finely painted and conceived in pendant, again featuring animals as the main and only characters of the scene. Each of them portrays

three specimens of the same species, confined in a man-made space and provided with plenty of supplies by their human owner. During this period, keeping guinea pigs and tame rabbits as pets was common. The growing market for consumer goods led to the emergence of pet keeping on a broad scale, where it had once been a luxury confined to the elite. Morland registered this phenomenon in his painting *Selling Guinea Pigs* (Fig. 5, 1789, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven), which featured an itinerant vendor offering guinea pigs for sale to a woman and her children at a cottage door. Since the beginning of the eighteenth century, increasingly few people shared their household with livestock. Domestic spaces belonging to elites and urban middle classes were in this period being reorganized as spaces of sociability, and accordingly animals had to be confined in appropriate buildings, such as sties and kennels. This reorganization of the space of the domestic house made possible the idea of pet keeping, that is, the rearing of domestic or tame animals enjoying the special treatment of being admitted within the boundaries of a space conceived of as exclusively human. Not by chance, the modern meaning of the word 'pet' only emerged during this century: in its earliest occurrences, it indicated a lamb reared in the house, but by 1710 *Tatler* defined the pet as an animal kept exclusively for pleasure and companionship.⁷³ In a humorous fictional letter published in the *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* in 1788, an exasperated husband complained about his wife's idiosyncratic love for pets, listing among the various creatures in her possession "two tame rabbits, and a guinea pig".⁷⁴ The humorousness of the letter's conclusion, in which the husband stated: "I'll bear it no longer", promising to soon "barbecue the pig ... and smother the two rabbits with onions"⁷⁵ relied on the absurdity of overthrowing the by then accepted antithetical cultural categories of pets and food.

The definition of pets implied that certain non-human creatures were fed not in order to contribute to the economy of the household through work or meat, but instead to share an emotional bond with their owners. Following this definition, it is easy to see

⁷³ Ingrid H. Tague, *Animal Companions: Pets and Social Change in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2015), pp. 2-5.

⁷⁴ *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, 30 August 1785. Wild rabbits were still hunted for their fur and meat, and were available in London markets among the wares of game butchers, who bought them from game hunters. See Morland's paintings *Two Men Hunting Rabbits with Their Dog, a Village Beyond* (Sotheby's London, 1 July 2004, lot 162) and *Rabbiting* (Fig. 87, 1792, Tate).

⁷⁵ *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, 30 August 1785.

how pets represented in themselves a challenge to the eighteenth-century boundaries of sympathy. Their position was somewhere in-between humans and animals, since they were treated as members of the family, but at the same time they were for all practical purposes the property of their owners.⁷⁶ In eighteenth-century discourse, the contradictory coexistence of subordination and love in the relationship of pets to their owners was sometimes recognized as paralleling the condition of black servants kept in fashionable households (not the slave labourers of colonial plantations), who served as status symbols and as a source of entertainment similar to exotic pets, and who were even given extravagant names and collars in an analogous fashion. Debates on animal captivity functioned in this period as a laboratory for experimenting ideas on the moral acceptability of human slavery. Both the philosophical idea of sympathy, which encouraged empathetic feelings towards fellow creatures, and the increased understanding of liberty as a specifically British value worked against the perception of sentient creatures' enslavement as entirely legitimate.⁷⁷ Unease in relation to animal slavery was more strongly felt when discussing pets. Where rational explanations were offered for the enslavement of useful animals, easily interpretable as a necessary evil for the functioning of human economy, it was more difficult to justify the imprisonment of sentient creatures for mere pleasure.⁷⁸

In this light, it is telling that Morland paintings of guinea pigs and rabbits emphasise the tactile features of the animals portrayed, especially their fluffy fur and rounded forms. Nevertheless, here it is again difficult to ascertain if the animals are endowed with any form of subjectivity, since only one of them (the guinea pig whose head has a black patch) faces the viewer and does so with black and bottomless button eyes, which lack any recognizable expression. Devoid of any anthropomorphized features, the animals also lack any clear interiority – they appear irreducibly other and unknowable. If the animals' expressions are unreadable, their attitudes towards captivity are even more so. They are clearly being kept: they are shown eating food that their owner has provided them, and are fenced off from a natural setting. The guinea pigs are portrayed in an

⁷⁶ Tague, *Animal Companions*, pp. 2-5.

⁷⁷ Tague, *Animal Companions*, pp. 68-72.

⁷⁸ Ingrid H. Tague, "Companions, Servants, or Slaves?: Considering Animals in Eighteenth-Century Britain", *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 39 (2010): p. 117.

outdoor hutch (as evidenced by the tree on the top right, whose branches intrude into the confined space inhabited by the animals, and the small piece of cloudy sky visible in the top left) while the rabbits are presented in a high wooden box, probably so as to prevent them escaping. Seen through the lens of contemporary debates on pet-keeping, the guinea pigs and the rabbits in Morland's paintings stimulate sympathetic responses simply through their apparent condition as captives, and regardless of the audience's capacity to access their experiences.

In these paintings of pigs, guinea pigs and rabbits, Morland explored sentimentally unusual species of animals, through an unusual painterly technique. Contemporary farm animal portraitists depicted animals of commercial value and, since the illustrative potential of their images was their priority, they often privileged a practical and technical knowledge of the animals' physical features over aesthetic matters. Morland instead played skillfully with colours, merged his animals with the surrounding landscape, and rendered their textures accurately. Also, he described animals which stood as generic examples of their species and not as portraits of specific creatures. Raised and trained by his genre-painter father, Morland worked in this line rather than as a portraitist, since he described types (species of animals) rather than single creatures. Figures 1 to 4 all have a common focus on groups of various animals of the same species, the main and only characters of the scene, placed in a setting. By contrast *Four Studies of Heads of Cattle* (Fig. 6, Victoria & Albert Museum) is unusual among Morland's animal paintings because it seems to be an oil study, with four calves' heads juxtaposed against a neutral background, and because, on a closer analysis, the different heads belong to the same individual animal seen from different perspectives. If this composition is uncommon among Morland's animal paintings, yet it is typical of his drawings: Since early in his career, Morland had profited from selling his seemingly preparatory drawings, often in collections assembled in engraved sheets and marketed as drawing books.⁷⁹ Thus, even if it appears to be an oil study for personal exercise, this canvas is likely to have been produced for sale. Three additional elements reinforce this interpretation: the considerable size (64 x 76 cm) and high degree of finish for a

⁷⁹ See the prints *Studies of Animal: A Goat's Head, Two Cow Heads and Full Cows; Studies of Three Heads of Cows; Studies of Three Heads of Cows, a Face Below*, all c. 1790-1830, British Museum.

painting of this genre, and the species of animal it featured, the cow, which was particularly associated with Paulus Potter, an Old Master very much sought after in the auction market, and hence, perhaps, appealing to connoisseurs.

Even if the exploration of an individual animal from different angles had not been attempted before in an oil of this size, the composition employed by Morland had various precedents in human portraiture. *Heads of Six of Hogarth's Servants* (Fig. 7, c. 1750-5, Tate) had been hung in William Hogarth's studio till his death to promote his artistic skills in portraiture, and had similarly consisted in an assemblage of sketches on a canvas (even if here the heads belong to various individuals) unified only by a symmetrical disposition and a consistent source of light. Hogarth had also employed this composition in his engraving *Four Heads from the Raphael Cartoons at Hampton Court* (Fig. 8, 1781, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC) intended to show a range of ages and expressions typical of this Old Master (as well as Hogarth's academic knowledge of it).⁸⁰ Furthermore, analogous compositions had been employed by Rubens in his *Four Studies of the Head of a Moor* (Fig. 9, first half of the seventeenth century, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels) and by Anthony Van Dyck in his *Triple Portrait of Charles I* (Fig. 10, 1635-6, Royal Collection, Windsor Castle, which was meant to help Bernini to sculpt a bust of the King), both focused on a single individual seen from different viewpoints like in Morland's painting.

Often this type of composition served not only to illustrate the artists' skills and individual styles in rendering the physical features of their sitters, but also their ability to represent a variety of expressions in painting, as evidenced particularly by Rubens' *Four Studies of the Head of a Moor*. The problem of how to represent in painting the facial expressions most suitable to convey a variety of human emotions had occupied artists for centuries, but only Charles Le Brun's treatise *Méthode Pour Apprendre à Dessiner Les Passions*, published in 1698, had finally provided them with a practical vade

⁸⁰ The copperplate (c. 1729) was found among Hogarth's possessions after his death by his wife, and prints were issued from it only then (1781).

mecum for dealing with this difficult task.⁸¹ This text was widely translated and republished in England during the eighteenth century, often with abridgements of another lecture on physiognomy in which Le Brun referred to the pseudo-Aristotelian theory (popularized by Giovanni Battista della Porta) according to which comparisons between humans and animals could help to account for men's personalities, given that animals' characters were assumed by folklore to be fixed.⁸²

Furthermore the difference between human and animal physiology was challenged by scientific discoveries. In 1699 Edward Tyson had dissected a chimpanzee and realized that its brain did not differ much from that of a man. Since this organ was considered the site of the human mind, the discovery problematized the widely accepted Cartesian theory of the beast-machine, according to which animals were endowed with a purely bodily existence. The divide between instinct and reason that had served to distinguish clearly between the motives of animal and human actions was also challenged by the new importance given to irrational impulses within the contemporary philosophical theory of sympathy. John Locke had already speculated that animals were able to learn from sensory experiences, even if he denied them capacity for abstraction; instinct and reason were therefore increasingly interpreted as different stages in a progress rather than radically opposite concepts. In 1774 Lord Monboddo speculated that if human language was an artificial creation, then men originally were probably very close to apes, while William Smellie and then Erasmus Darwin in his 1796 *Zoonomia* developed the idea that instincts are the ultimate motives of every action, even of those apparently guided by reason.⁸³

⁸¹ Jennifer Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions: The Origin and Influence of Charles Le Brun's "Conférence Sur l'Expression Générale et Particulière"* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), p. xiii.

⁸² An example of eighteenth-century British translation of Le Brun's text is *The Conference of Monsieur Le Brun, Chief Painter to the French King, Chancellor and Director of the Academy, of Painting and Sculpture; Upon Expression, General and Particular* (London, 1701). Charles Le Brun developed his physiognomic theories in a much more sophisticated way than his predecessors, proposing that even the characters of individual animals could vary in different members of the same species. See Montagu, *Expression of the Passions*, pp. 19, 20, 24.

⁸³ Diana Donald, *Picturing Animals in Britain, 1750-1850* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 103-104, 108, 109.

Artists in this period were similarly concerned with animals' capacity for expression: for example, Sawrey Gilpin described the expressivity of the horse through the movements of its ears in one of the illustrations to his brother William's *Remark on Forest Scenery* (Fig. 11, 1794).⁸⁴ It would be tempting to interpret *Four Studies of Heads of Cattle* (Fig. 6) as a study of the calf's emotions, a combination of Le Brun's study of human expressions and that of human and animal comparisons. And indeed, with the exception of the head on top right, a three-quarter profile seen from behind, all the other views of the calf present it with its ears, eyes, muzzle and head in different positions: while in the profile view on top left the animal has raised ears and widened eye, the profile head on bottom left is bowed and the three-quarter head on bottom right presents stretched out ears, corrugated eyebrows, half-opened mouth and dilated nostrils. Yet, it is difficult to ascertain any precise correspondence with specific emotions in the calf's facial features.

Rather than obliterating the divide between humans and animals, the new cultural climate tended to recognize a continuity in nature, and to ascribe various degrees of sentience and, in certain cases, of cognitive faculties, to animals of different species. Non-human creatures were being hierarchized in the so called 'great chain of beings', and quantitative rather than qualitative distinctions were increasingly employed to understand physical, cognitive and behavioural differences between man and animal. More than equating human and animal interiority, Morland's painting chimes with the ideas of Francis Hutcheson in *Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy* (1747) and *System of Moral Philosophy* (1755) and David Hume in *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739) and *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751) on man's ability to experience sympathy across species by relying on feelings rather than on reason. Hutcheson and Hume in these texts, and then Jeremy Bentham in *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789) stated that being able to determine the cognitive faculties possessed by animals was not necessary in order to empathize with them, since one could observe their capacity for pain and pleasure.⁸⁵ The Cartesian theory of

⁸⁴ Donald, *Picturing Animals*, p. 202.

⁸⁵ For Hutcheson and Bentham see Aaron Garrett, "Francis Hutcheson and the Origins of Animal Rights", *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 45, no. 2 (2007): pp. 254-261 and 264-265; for Hume see Tony Pitson, "Hume on Morals and Animals", *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 11, no. 4 (2003): pp. 639-641.

the beast-machine, which had asserted that animals were unable to suffer and that their expressions of pain did not correspond to an internal sensation, therefore lost ground.⁸⁶ Even if the calf in *Four Studies of Heads of Cattle* lives only in the world of instincts, its utter otherness and unknowability are presented by Morland as perfectly acceptable and the creature itself is depicted as if deserving of the same degree of attention usually reserved for human beings. In this sense the painting pushed the assumption about interiority and portraiture in Rubens' and Hogarth's works to their logical conclusion. The same format which Van Dyck had employed for the portrait of a king, and which Rubens and Hogarth had used for the exploration of individuals at the alleged margins of human society - a black man and ordinary men and women usually considered only within the realm of their domestic task - was here employed in relation to a creature outside the realm of men altogether.⁸⁷

In the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century cow-keeping had thrived even in London's central areas such as Tothill Fields, a tiny plot of land between the Thames and Westminster, Knightsbridge, Chelsea and the eastern side of Hyde Park. The increasingly numerous presence of wealthy residents in London's city centre determined a growing presence of cows in these metropolitan areas: milk consumption was still a semi-luxury, and since this drink could not be kept fresh for long, easy access to fashionable neighbourhoods inhabited by rich consumers was key to the success of this trade. Nevertheless, during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the increased value of land forced cow-keeping to relocate to outer neighbourhoods (Bethnal Green, St Pancras, Southwark, Rotherhithe and Deptford). The sight of grazing cows in the cityscape also became rarer due to the increasing recourse to stall-feeding. Yet evidence suggests that cows remained a familiar sight to Londoners throughout the eighteenth century: in his painting *St James's Park* (Fig. 12, 1788-1790, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven) later reproduced in engraving, Morland recorded the activity

⁸⁶ Garrett, "Hutcheson and the Origins", p. 245.

⁸⁷ See Ronald Paulson, *High Art and Low, 1732-1750*, vol. 2 of *Hogarth*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1991), p. 301.

(diffused at pleasure gardens) of selling glasses of this drink milked on the spot from cows to guarantee that the liquid was unadulterated.⁸⁸

Nevertheless, Morland's depiction of the calf's head as not linked convincingly to its body, as well as the lack of expression conveyed by the animal's facial features, suggests that he was copying his subject from a butcher's head rather than a living calf. Thanks to the considerable growth of the market for meat consumption in this period, large animals like cattle and sheep were increasingly present in the city, especially since London possessed the largest share of wealthy residents in the whole country and also housed the administrative offices of the Royal Navy, which at times of military operations needed large meat supplies. Also, the increased wealth of the city allowed middling classes and even lower orders to consume meat occasionally.⁸⁹ This trade was still largely conducted 'on the hoof', with the living sheep and cattle transported into the city's markets through its suburbs and streets and then slaughtered by butchers after purchase.⁹⁰ In order to accommodate the growing urban demand for meat, during the second half of the eighteenth century thousands of cattle were driven through its streets in the nights before market days (Mondays and Fridays).⁹¹

Already accessible to drovers coming from the north, east and west of the city, in this period Smithfield market became even better connected with the rest of the country. In 1757 the construction of the New Road connecting Paddington to Islington undertaken by the initiative of local landowners created a safer passage for cattle and sheep coming from the west, even if many drovers kept employing the usual route (which crossed London's most bustling areas) presumably to avoid lengthening their travel. With the ameliorations of the structures of the Blackfriars and London Bridge a few years later, direct access to the market was also guaranteed from the south.⁹² After long journeys, sheep and cattle coming from the north were put to pasture in Islington to fatten, and

⁸⁸ See Almeroth-Williams, "City of Beasts", pp. 49-51, 87, 99-101. The engraving after the painting *St James's Park* is held by the British Museum.

⁸⁹ Almeroth-Williams, "City of Beasts", pp. 193-194.

⁹⁰ Moncrieff, with Joseph and Joseph, *Farm Animal Portraits*, p. 17.

⁹¹ Almeroth-Williams, "City of Beasts", p. 204.

⁹² Colin Stephen Smith, "The Market Place and the Market's Place in London, c. 1660-1840" (PhD. diss., University College London, 1999), pp. 110-111.

then driven down St. John Street to reach their place in the market.⁹³ Livestock coming from the east stopped at outposts in Holloway and Mile End, from the west in Knightsbridge and Paddington, and from the south in Newington.⁹⁴ All were fed along the way on the heathland beyond the city.⁹⁵ Until the early eighteenth century this was the only means to feed animals coming from the various regions of the country and destined for the London's meat market. Since the grass was not available in winter, most of the animals had to be killed at the end of summer, after which the market closed as a consequence. With the introduction of winter fodder in the first decades of the eighteenth century, recourse to stall-feeding became possible, and Smithfield began to be open all year round. Whilst after purchase the majority of animals were killed in Smithfield's slaughterhouses, some of them were redirected to other retail markets or to slaughterhouses located in different areas of the city. These urban movements of cattle (from suburban pastures and pens to Smithfield, from Smithfield to local markets and slaughterhouses), together with the capitalistic strategies increasingly employed by traders in meat (fattening animals before sale in outposts located just outside the city, and postponing their slaughtering to times of increased meat price) meant that the greater the scale and complexity of the meat trade in Smithfield, the greater the presence of farm animals on London's streets.⁹⁶

Mainly focused on surfaces (skin and fur) and - to judge by his *Four Studies of Heads of Cattle* (Fig. 6) – sometimes copied from slaughtered specimens, Morland's images of animals seem to suggest that the artist looked at his non-human subjects from an urban rather than a rural perspective. Morland's images of animals indicate a knowledge of non-human creatures of the kind that could be gained within the boundaries of the city, especially through proximity to the growing meat industry and the emergence of pet culture. Lacking the training in anatomy and the experience of animals in their rural setting possessed by painters working in the field of farm animal portraiture, Morland's

⁹³ Alec Forshaw and Theo Bergström, *Smithfield, Past & Present* (London: Heinemann, 1980), pp. 34-35.

⁹⁴ Almeroth-Williams, "City of Beasts", p. 204.

⁹⁵ See the *St. James Chronicle or the British Evening Post*, 20 May 1788 for an incident happened "in a field near Battersea", consisting in "two horses and a cow ... struck dead by lightening, and several sheep that were grazing in a field adjacent ... also struck dead at the same instant", which suggests that herds of larger animals could at the time be raised not far away from the heart of London.

⁹⁶ An article in the *Morning Herald*, 10 June 1788 reported: "In Smithfield Market yesterday, there was a prodigious shew (*sic*) of cattle of every kind; so much so, that the common stands were not sufficient for them, and additional hurdles were erected"; see also Almeroth-Williams, "City of Beasts", pp. 209-210.

rendering of animals was rather influenced by the tactile qualities which characterized works in this genre by Dutch and Flemish Old Masters. Conventions and expectations for Morland's kind of animal painting therefore already existed in the London art world in this period - but they were to be found in auction rooms rather than in the contemporary production of British animal painters.

Examples of paintings of domestic animals by seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish artists were increasingly available and sought-after by the 1790s. The growing appreciation for Netherlandish genre painting in general was due to two concurrent factors: increased availability of these works, and concurrent changes in taste. Since 1760, and then increasingly after the French Revolution, French collections which included numerous works of Netherlandish art began to be diverted to the London market, and even more works by Dutch artists made their way to the English capital with the French invasion of Holland in 1795.⁹⁷ The change in taste was facilitated by the exhaustion of the frenzy for collecting Italian high art, which had led to a market crowded with forgeries, while Flemish and Dutch genre painting could at least be trusted as authentic.⁹⁸ The new fashion for Netherlandish genre art was soon understood as a marker of superior taste, belonging to authentic connoisseurs of art, able to transcend the vulgarity of low subjects to appreciate the works' formal qualities.⁹⁹ The elite group of connoisseurs who began to specialize in the collection of these works was primarily constituted by the entourage of the Prince of Wales, who imitated them in this endeavour since the 1780s. The heir to the throne was expected by Hanoverian tradition to side against the court, and the Prince of Wales made no exception to the rule: consequently, the new taste for genre art of the kind produced by Netherlandish artists also acquired radical political connotations.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ See Harry Thomas Mount, "The Reception of Dutch Genre Painting in England, 1695–1829" (PhD. diss., University of Cambridge, 1991), pp. 113–118; Gerald Reitlinger, *The Rise and Fall of Picture Prices, 1760–1960*, vol. 1 of *The Economics of Taste*, 3 vols. (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1961), p. 13.

⁹⁸ Reitlinger, *Rise and Fall*, p. 11.

⁹⁹ Mount, "Reception of Dutch Genre Painting", pp. 116–118. The strategy often operated by cultural elites which consists in distinguishing themselves from the majority through the appreciation of subjects hitherto considered unpleasant, is particularly evident in relation to works such as Paulus Potter's *Pissing Cow* (whose printed reproduction is held by the British Museum), a canvas originally painted for Amalia van Solms, widow of Prince Frederik Hendrik of Orange; the risqué detail of the sow's breast in Morland's 1797–1800 *Pigs* can be better understood in this context.

¹⁰⁰ Reitlinger, *Rise and Fall*, p. 13.

Morland's two paintings of pigs had their major artistic precedent in the works of the same subject by Paulus Potter (1625-1654), a Dutch painter of farm animals. Since very early in his career Morland had drawn heavily on the work of this artist for his images of animals, as evidenced for example by his two 1774 prints *Goat Standing to Right on a Rock with Kid* (Fig. 42, British Museum) and *A Cow Standing in a Field, Facing Tree at Left* (Fig. 43, British Museum) from the series *Six animals drawn & etch'd by G. Morland*, which are copied from etchings by Marcus De Bye after Paulus Potter.¹⁰¹ Since Morland had access to albums of prints featuring animals by Marcus De Bye after Potter, he might also have been acquainted with the various images of pigs from other series by the same artist, reproduced by the same engraver and published by the same firm.¹⁰² Moreover, in the context of the new taste for Netherlandish art, Paulus Potter's works were particularly sought-after because of the appeal they had among wealthy livestock breeders, which helped inflate their prices to over one thousand pounds each by the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁰³ Numerous drawings and paintings of pigs by Paulus Potter would have hence been accessible to Morland through attendance to London auctions.¹⁰⁴ Paulus Potter was better-known for his cattle scenes than for his porcine subjects, and hence in *Four Studies of Heads of Cattle* (Fig. 6) Morland was drawing from his *oeuvre* even more directly. Numerous prints featuring cows by De Bye after Potter would have been accessible to Morland, through albums such as *Farm Animals* and *Another Series of Cows* (1657 and 1654-1688; both British Museum) and Potter's drawings of cattle heads (such as his *Study of the Heads of Two Cows*, Fig. 13, 1640-54, British Museum, which closely resembles Morland's composition in his *Four Studies of*

¹⁰¹ Anthony Lynch, "Literary Influences on the Life and Art of George Morland (1763-1804) From Aesop to Tom Jones", *The British Art Journal* 17, no. 3 (2017): pp. 23-24. The corresponding etchings by Potter (Fig. 49 and Fig. 50, 1654-1688 and c. 1657 respectively, both British Museum) belong to two different series, made up of eight numbered plates of goats and cows respectively.

¹⁰² See *A Boar Lying in Front of a Fence* and *Two Pigs Sleeping Next to a Fence* (both British Museum). The publisher of all the mentioned prints by Potter was Nicolaes Visscher I.

¹⁰³ Reitlinger, *Rise and Fall*, pp. 13, 204.

¹⁰⁴ For example, the chalk drawing *A Hog Lying Down, Study for a Print* (British Museum), the original study after which De Bye etched *A Boar Lying in Front of a Fence*, was in the English collection of John Malcolm of Poltalloch in the nineteenth century, and possibly had entered the country at the end of the eighteenth century. See also two entries for Paulus Potter's paintings of pigs which appeared in London auctions after Morland's death, in 1806 and in 1809 respectively: *Pigs*, and *Store Pigs, Lying on a Tiled Pavement, Tied and Ready for Slaughter, Getty Provenance Index® databases* (Lot 0051 from Sale Catalog Br-375, and Lot 0058 from Sale Catalog Br-673). It is not clear where Paulus Potter's canvas *Two Pigs in a Sty* (1649, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston) was at the end of the eighteenth century, but this is another remarkable example of the Dutch artist's preference for this species of animals.

Heads of Cattle), increasingly available on the London market and sought-after by connoisseurs.

Similarly, in *Guinea Pigs* and *Rabbits* (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4), Morland seems to draw upon paintings of the same subject by the Flemish Old Masters Jan Fyt (1611-1661) and David De Coninck (1636-1687). Both had been leading animal painters of their generations and had produced numerous paintings of small domestic animals like fowls, cats and dogs, which - even if they had not reached the record prices of Potter's works - were also increasingly available in the London art market by the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁵

Morland's images of animals on their own train viewers to look sympathetically at non-human creatures which not only lack the usefulness and aesthetic qualities possessed by animals portrayed by other contemporary British painters, but which are also shown to be utterly unknowable. Nevertheless, the majority of Morland's animal paintings feature encounters between animals and their human owners.¹⁰⁶ Turning to the images dealing with the animals' position in human society allows us to understand the deeper implications of Morland's sympathetic treatment of non-human subjects: Morland's

¹⁰⁵ See the chalk drawing *Farm-yard Study* by Jan Fyt (Fig. 14, 1626-1661) now at the British Museum, which describes a farmyard scene with cocks, cat, doves, a guinea pigs and two rabbits, a broken ancient stone in the background. A painting by David De Coninck now at Breamore House (Fig. 15) shows instead a cock and a hen, two guinea pigs, and two rabbits in a landscape, an overturned capital and a woman's straw hat in the background. Both works were in English collections from the beginning of the nineteenth century, and possibly earlier, having likely entered the country through auctions at the end of the eighteenth century. The provenance of Jan Fyt's chalk drawing can be traced back to John Sheepshanks (1787-1863), renowned collector of seventeenth-century Dutch drawings and prints. The painting by David De Coninck at Breamore House belongs to the collection of the descendants of Sir Edward Hulse, Baronet (1682-1759), who bought this estate in 1748, but it is not known when it was acquired. For the presence of the two Netherlandish painters' works in the London art market, see also Jan Fyt's *A Dog and Duck* (sold in an 1781 auction by the painter Nathaniel Hone), *A Squirell with Fruit* (from a 1783 auction), *A Hare with a Dog and Dead Game* (sold in London in 1793) and *Live Rabbits, Fruits and Flowers* (from a 1803 auction), *Getty Provenance Index® databases* (Lot 0033 from Sale Catalog Br-A4001a, Lot 0019 from Sale Catalog Br-A4092b, Lot 0048 from Sale Catalog Br-A5152, and Lot 0094 from Sale Catalog Br-208), as well as David De Coninck's *A Dog, With a Hare and Dead Game* (sold in London in 1791), and the painting *Two, of Live Fowls, &c.* (sold by Sir Joshua Reynolds in 1794), *Getty Provenance Index® databases* (Lot 0049 from Sale Catalog Br-A5055, and Lot 0059 from Sale Catalog Br-A5446). These examples suggest that Netherlandish genre art was appreciated by prominent British painters of a generation prior to Morland, peers of his father Henry Robert Morland, also a painter, and to whom he and his son were probably acquainted enough to be allowed to visit their collections.

¹⁰⁶ Within my substantial sample of 243 paintings of animals and of human and animal encounters by Morland, 65 works feature animals as protagonists, while 167 also include human figures.

paintings of humans and animals can often be seen to contain a subtle critical commentary on modern society.

Among Morland's scenes of human and animal encounters, his most recurrent type of iconography consisted of scenes with men feeding their animals. *Horses in a Stable* (Fig. 16, 1791, Victoria & Albert Museum) a highly finished canvas of some size (85 x 118 cm) is in this sense exemplary, being a scene set in a stable interior which features a farmer lifting a wheelbarrow filled with hay on the right, about to add it to the trough of his two horses on the left, to feed them. The only real narrative in a painting otherwise lacking any particular incident is represented by the humane behaviour of the farmer towards his animals. Indeed, while the brown horse standing at the back, its head immersed in the trough, is harnessed and saddled, as if just back from the activities of a day in the service of his human owner, the white horse in the foreground is free of these signifiers, suggesting that its day has not been as productive. The horse's expression and attitude also suggest an advanced age or an illness of some kind. Not only it is recumbent, a position which is quite unusual for horses unless deep asleep, but its bowed head and ears, its eyes only half-open, and even its indifference to the hay in the trough and to the activities occupying the other figures in the scene, suggest that it may not be in a condition to be useful for any kind of work. This subject – men feeding animals which have outlived their period of productivity – was far from unique in Morland's production. Two paintings described through the titles *Outside of a Stable, with an Old Horse*, and *Landscape with an Old Grey Horse* in the catalogue of the second opening of the Orme's Morland Gallery in 1793 (no. 27 and 29) were likely to correspond to an iconography similar to that of *Horses in a Stable*.¹⁰⁷ In suggesting that the farmer is fond of all his animals, regardless of their economical productivity, the scene conveys feelings of benevolence and affection analogous to those elicited by contemporary scenes of charity towards the poor involving the polite classes.

¹⁰⁷ See A. T. P., ed., Daniel Orme, *A Catalogue of a Superb Selection of Paintings, Exhibiting by Mess. Orme & Co. at the Morland Gallery* (exhibition catalogue, London: 1793?), Catalogues Collection, 200.BM, National Art Library, London, pp. 4-5.

In particular, the scene challenges us to consider the boundaries between sympathetic and economic bonds characterizing man's relationship with horses. As noted above, homologies between the bodies and minds of humans and animals were increasingly noted, and non-human creatures were beginning sometimes to be understood as having feelings and intelligence, and as being able to communicate with each other and even to create societies, as much as humans. Nevertheless, as suggested by the discussion on the pig's low position in eighteenth-century discourse, species of animals were thought of as situated in a natural hierarchy, the already mentioned 'great chain of beings'. Not all the species were believed to possess the same degree of intelligence, and animals' sagacity was understood to be directly proportional to their docility and utility to men.¹⁰⁸ This anthropocentric and hierarchical view of the animal kingdom reflected not only the complex power relationships which shaped contemporary British society, but also the Christian tradition, deeply embedded in Western thought, which asserted that non-human creatures were created by God to be at the service of men.¹⁰⁹ Within this hierarchy, horses were unanimously believed to be positioned at the top: before the widespread introduction of machines, the horse's work capacity was still essential for economic productivity, and in the first stages of the industrial revolution, its strength, docility and intelligence were recognized as crucial to human progress.¹¹⁰ Even if recognized by contemporaries as the most intelligent among animals, horses lived longer than their period of major utility to men. Consequently, they were often treated unsympathetically at the end of their work career, and even discarded to be devoured by packs of dogs.

The Morland Gallery at Daniel Orme's shop in 1792-3 also included the exhibit *Loaded Cart, with Horse Fallen Down, A Sketch*, a unique subject in Morland's production.¹¹¹ The content of this painting is recognizable in a small oil sketch (Fig. 17, Sotheby's Parke-Bernet New York, 11 June 1981, lot 156) which may or may not be the exhibited

¹⁰⁸ Donald, *Picturing Animals*, p. 106.

¹⁰⁹ Tague, "Companions, Servants, or Slaves?", p. 111.

¹¹⁰ Donald, *Picturing Animals*, p. 201.

¹¹¹ See [Daniel Orme], *Catalogue of a Superb Selection of Paintings, Exhibiting at the Morland Gallery, No. 14 Old Bond Street. Being a Choice Collection of the Chef d'Oeuvres of That Truly and Much Admired Master the English Teniers* (exhibition catalogue, London: 1792), Picture Catalogue II, 1790-94, microfilm, National Art Library, London, no. 90, p. 7; A. T. P., Orme, *Catalogue of a Superb Selection* (London: 1793?), National Art Library, London, no. 75, p. 6.

work and which features a horse collapsed under the weight of the brimful, huge cart it is pulling, one of its back legs bent unnaturally under its body, perhaps an indication that it has been broken by the fall. Three men are shown around the animal: two of them are occupied in supporting the cart to bring it to a horizontal position, so as to ensure its contents do not spill, and might therefore be attempting to relieve the animal of its burden. A third figure is instead shown holding the horse's harness in one hand, and raising a wooden stick to hit its head savagely with the other, his mouth open, presumably screaming an exhortation. If the subject described in *Loaded Cart, with Horse Fallen Down, A Sketch* is or was unique in Morland's production, it nevertheless resembles *A Small Boy Beating a Dog*, or, *The angry Boy and Tired Dog* (Fig. 18, Sotheby's London, 15 July 1992), one of his 1780s sentimental scenes involving the polite classes.¹¹² An elegant child is here shown mimicking the behaviour of the cruel coachman from the previous painting. The young boy, who has harnessed his lapdog to a toy cart as if it were a horse, is seen raising his arm to hit the animal with a riding crop, while he keeps it still with the leash he holds in the other hand.

As with *Horses in a Stable* (Fig. 16), these two scenes reflect upon issues of animal welfare, but this time by showing examples of unsympathetic behaviour towards non-human creatures, focusing particularly on the cruelties to horses committed by coachmen. The contemporary culture of sympathy, which encouraged empathetic feelings towards fellow creatures, stimulated debates on the moral implications of inflicting pain on animals. Numerous eighteenth-century writers, such as Alexander Pope in his *Against Barbarity to Animals* (1713), and Richard Dean in his *Essay on the Future Life of Brutes* (1768), advocated for a more humane treatment of non-human creatures, sometimes by employing a specific focus on horses, as John Lawrence did in his *A Philosophical and Practical Treatise on Horses, and on the Moral Duties of Men Towards Brute Creation* (1796-8). Some thinkers went as far as developing an animal rights philosophy: Humphry Primatt in his *A Dissertation on the Duty of Mercy and Sin of Cruelty to Brute Animals* (1776) was the first to assert animals' right to happiness and food, pointing to men's duties towards them, later followed by Jeremy Bentham's

¹¹² The painting is listed by Winter in his catalogue under the former title, and it corresponds to a small canvas later sold under the latter.

Principles of Morals and Legislation (1789) and Thomas Young's *An Essay on Humanity to Animals* (1798).¹¹³

And within the culture of sensibility, sympathetic impulses were understood as strongly connected to visibility: witnessing the pain of the sufferer was considered crucial in order to identify with it.¹¹⁴ For this reason, while the slaughter of huge numbers of animals for meat production and the fur trade had still not entered mainstream discourses on cruelty to animals, the sufferings undergone by horses in urban streets were widely criticised because they happened very publicly.¹¹⁵ With the increased traffic of goods and people, the number of horses (and for people of lesser means, donkeys) used as a means of transport in London increased during the eighteenth century. Hence it was not by chance that the ubiquitous cruelties of coachmen towards their horses were also a recurrent theme for the first writers discussing issues of animal welfare. As a further consequence of the peculiar visibility of these animals' suffering in urban settings, the first societies for the protection of animals had the horse as their main focus. The first legislation on the subject, obtained in 1822 by the reformer John Martin, specifically regarded the treatment of horses and cattle in urban streets.¹¹⁶

Morland's *Loaded Cart, with Horse Fallen Down* (Fig. 17) strongly evokes a foreground element of Hogarth's *The Second Stage of Cruelty* (Fig. 19, British Museum), from the series *The Four Stages of Cruelty* (1751). In this episode the protagonist, Tom Nero, is seen working as a coachman, and his horse has similarly collapsed under the weight of an excessive burden. In Hogarth's image this consists of a stagecoach packed with lawyers, whilst Morland's waggon seems to be filled with rubbish, making the violence

¹¹³ Aaron Garrett, "Introduction", in *Animal Language, Animal Passions and Animal Morals*, vol. 1 of *Animal Rights and Souls in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Aaron Garrett, 6 vols. (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 2000), pp. vii, xiv-xv, xviii, xxiii-xxi.

¹¹⁴ Donald, *Picturing Animals*, p. 12.

¹¹⁵ The cruelty of meat-eating was passionately condemned by the vegetarian and radical John Oswald in his *Cry of Nature* (1791). Oswald was only one out of a substantial group of thinkers (not necessarily belonging to the extremist political fringes) questioning for a large variety of reasons the growing consumption of meat. For Oswald's thought see Garrett, "Introduction", in *Animal Language*, pp. xxiv, xxv. Also, for vegetarianism in eighteenth-century Britain, see "Introduction", in Tristram Stuart, *The Bloodless Revolution: A Cultural History of Vegetarianism from 1600 to Modern Times* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2008), pp. xvii-xxvi.

¹¹⁶ Donald, *Picturing Animals*, pp. 223-4.

against the animal appear even more unacceptable.¹¹⁷ The cruel driver in Hogarth's scene is seen beating his helpless animal, which manifests signs of physical as well as mental suffering: its chest shows a wound opened by the harness, its tongue dangles out of its mouth in exhaustion and its front leg is bent unnaturally and broken, like the horse in Fig. 17. Furthermore, Hogarth's horse is clearly shown as being endowed with an interiority that enables it to perceive the cruelty of his owner: its expressive, suffering eye almost allows the viewer to imagine that a tear is about to drop onto its cheek.¹¹⁸ The same cannot be said of Morland's horse, whose stance shows it is aware of the crop being about to land on its head, but whose eyes are covered by blinkers which preclude any signs of a humanized interiority. The image seems to suggest that knowing the animal's mind is not necessary for the audience to empathize with its sufferings, and with its defeat under the workings of market forces.

Cowherd and Milkmaid (Fig. 20, 1792, Tate) and *Stable Scene, or, the Country Stable* (Fig. 21, 1791, Christie's London, 31 May 1935) are again scenes featuring human and animal encounters which can be seen to explore two sides of the same subject.¹¹⁹ Here the main focus is placed on human protagonists, but in the latter scene the presence of animals serves as a critical comment on modern human society and its corruption. The two images are further examples of how Morland played with the boundaries of sensibility, through a troubling handling of sentimental tropes. *Cowherd and Milkmaid* describes a scene of polite courtship: a young milkmaid, identified by the bucket of milk she holds in her hand, is entering a pen placed outside a rural cottage, a country landscape visible in the background on the left. Here she is greeted by a cowherd, who is leaning on the back of one of the two cows herded in the pen, which is also inhabited by three pigs. The animals' expressivity and participation in human action is reduced to a minimum: the two cows are seen from behind and, of the three pigs included in the scene, only one looks watchfully at the viewer while rummaging for food in the pen, the other two being instead curled up in the foreground, asleep.

¹¹⁷ See Mark Hallett, *Hogarth* (London: Phaidon Press, 2000), p. 228, and Ronald Paulson, *Art and Politics, 1750-1764*, vol. 3 of *Hogarth* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1991), pp. 27-28.

¹¹⁸ Donald, *Picturing Animals*, p. 200.

¹¹⁹ The painting is listed by Winter in his catalogue under the former title, and it corresponds to a small canvas sold under the latter.

The image may have been intended to elicit empathetic feelings in its audience, since it presents decently-dressed and pleasant-looking members of the lower orders, who are shown to feel romantic attachments and be capable of conducting polite courtships. Such pleasurable associations would have been reinforced by the peaceful coexistence of men and animals in this idyllic scene. The image was considered one of Morland's typical works of rustic life: it was among the thirty-six paintings he produced especially for John Raphael Smith's exhibition of his paintings in 1793, all of which belonged to the print-seller and were therefore included in his catalogue and reproduced in engraving (the print after *Cowherd and Milkmaid* was issued in 1798). Smith's catalogue mentions two Dutch Old Masters who specialized in the depiction of such rustic scenes: Adriaen Van de Velde (1636-1672) and Aelbert Cuyp (1620-1691). This painting is compared with theirs, and the catalogue gives the two protagonists of the scene names which evoke classical myth in their Dutch translation, "Hobbinol and Gandaeretta".¹²⁰

On the other hand, Morland's *Stable Scene*, or, *the Country Stable* (Fig. 21), completely subverts the idyllic vision offered in *Cowherd and Milkmaid*. *Stable Scene* describes a scene of debauchery involving alcohol and sex, set in one of Morland's typical stable interiors. Morland may have been looking again to Netherlandish genre painting, rich in scenes involving drinking and sexual excess. Two farmers appear to have intoxicated a woman so as to take sexual advantage of her: one of them is standing with a jug of beer, leaning on the back of a saddled horse, while watching his companion make physical advances on the woman, who is seated beside him on a couple of sacks scattered on the ground. She appears to have emptied the beer jug that she still holds in one hand and is trying to extricate herself with her elbow from the unwanted embrace of the man, her expression further suggesting her refusal of his advances. While the standing man appears to be completely complicit in the sexual abuse, the same cannot be said of the animals witnessing the scene, which can perhaps be read, in

¹²⁰ John Raphael Smith, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures, Painted by George Morland* (exhibition catalogue, London: 1793), Special Collections 95.G.38, National Art Library, London, p. 20. The scene draws heavily on a popular subject in seventeenth-century Netherlandish painting, and reinterpreted by Gainsborough who had explored it in works such as *Landscape with a Woodcutter and Milkmaid* (1755, private collection), *Wooded Landscape with Rustic Lovers* (1762-3, Philadelphia Museum of Art), and *River Landscape with Rustic Lovers* (1781, private collection); see Michael Rosenthal, *The Art of Thomas Gainsborough: 'A Little Business for the Eye'* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), images at pp. 44, 103 and 196.

this now unlocated painting, to be registering signs of concern for the woman's plight. The dogs, chained to the trough, might be seen to be showing alarm, and the horse, also tied at the manger, turns its back to the scene but similarly seems to be disturbed by it. Its visible eye expresses sorrow, while it casts a sidelong glance at the two people sitting behind him.¹²¹ Nevertheless, the fact that the human figures commit these acts in front of these animals is significant, suggesting that they are no better than animals themselves – indeed, perhaps even, that the animals (and particularly dogs and horses) are superior to them in their calm and equitable repose. Furthermore, Morland's *Stable Scene* features a woman and a group of animals as equally subjected to human males' cruel behaviour. By stressing men's abusive use of their power over other creatures, the painting criticized modern society's inequalities. Another painting by Morland, *Bargaining for Sheep* (Fig. 22, 1794, New Walk Museum and Art Gallery, Leicester), can be seen as representing a much more subtle but even sharper critical commentary on contemporary society with its speculative commercial practices and its emerging consumerism.

Singled out for commentary at the start of the *Oracle and Public Advertiser's* review of the Royal Academy's annual exhibition in 1794, George Morland's painting *Bargaining for Sheep* was implicitly recognized as the most relevant among the pictures presented by the artist that year.¹²² The commentator observed: "Morland exhibits more of his favourite scenes",¹²³ seeing no tension between this work and the genre of painting that the artist had helped establish and to which he had accustomed the London audience in the previous years. This genre consisted of sentimental scenes of peaceful coexistence between men and farm animals, or farm animals of different species, set in the British countryside. These seemingly unproblematic scenes merged the sentimental approach of his fashionable urban scenes with the rural setting of farm animal portraiture, but featured much more ordinary creatures. As seen above, this constituted

¹²¹ This subject was far from unique in Morland's production: his 1790 print *Virtue in Danger* (British Museum) features a woman assaulted by a man just dismounted from his horse in a rural landscape, while the painting *Farm Scene* (Parke Bernet, 12 December 1956, lot 15) shows a dog barking at a man who is making unwanted advances on a woman by a carriage.

¹²² I assumed that the canvas presented by Morland at the Royal Academy in 1794 under the exhibiting title *Bargaining for Sheep* corresponds to the painting of the same title at the New Walk Museum and Art Gallery, Leicester. Its large dimensions suggest it was an exhibition piece, and this is the only known painting by Morland carrying this title or depicting a transaction involving sheep.

¹²³ "The Royal Academy", *Oracle and Public Advertiser*, 8 May 1794.

a completely new artistic niche in its lack of direct allusion to the commercial aspect of rearing cattle. *Bargaining for Sheep* also seemed to demonstrate Morland's skillful depiction of animals, said to be "as natural as ever the pencil produced" and as having "even more expression and character, than the Artist has in general given them".¹²⁴ More than twice the size of the two paintings exhibited with it, *Bargaining for Sheep* is the second largest work among Morland's known *oeuvre*, and only slightly smaller than *Inside of a Stable* (Fig. 71, 149 x 204 cm, Tate).¹²⁵ *Bargaining for Sheep* represented Morland's last exhibit of this ambitious scale at the most important showcase of the London art world and hence, arguably, an important statement on his animal art.¹²⁶

Through its harmonic formal qualities, the canvas conveys feelings similar to those elicited by some of his most recent contributions to the Royal Academy's annual exhibition (in 1791 and 1792).¹²⁷ *Bargaining for Sheep* describes a commercial transaction taking place between a man on horseback placed at the centre of the composition (whom the *Oracle's* commentator identifies as a "chapman"¹²⁸ and a sale catalogue from a year later, more precisely, as a "butcher")¹²⁹ and a farmer, standing

¹²⁴ "The Royal Academy", 8 May 1794.

¹²⁵ The other exhibits by Morland in 1794 were *Interior of a Stable* (private collection) sized 63 x 76 cm, and *A Farrier's Shop* (Manchester Art Gallery) sized 71 x 91 cm.

¹²⁶ A mezzotint reproducing this painting indicates that it was appreciated enough at the RA exhibition to decide that the audience would be willing to buy a copy of it: see *A Farmyard* (Witt Library, London).

¹²⁷ These were *Inside of a Stable* (Fig. 71, 1791, Tate) and *Benevolent Sportsman* (Fig. 25, 1792, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), *Goats, A Farm Yard* (Fig. 69), *A Shipwreck*, *The Sportsman's Return* (1792). See Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts; a Complete Dictionary of Contributors and Their Work from Its Foundation in 1769 to 1904*, 8 Vols. (London: H. Graves and George Bell and Sons, 1905-6), pp. 294-295.

¹²⁸ "The Royal Academy", 8 May 1794. See "chapman, n.", *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/30593?redirectedFrom=chapman>: "n., 1. a. A man whose business is buying and selling; a merchant, trader, dealer. Obs. or arch."

¹²⁹ The description of the painting given one year later in the catalogue of the European Museum, where it was exhibited for sale (and which clearly corresponded to this same canvas) reads as it follows: "the grazier selling his sheep, the character of the butcher most naturally delineated, the piggery, the pigeons, &c. the most just representation of nature, the chef d'oeuvre of Morland"; see European Museum, *The New Descriptive Catalogue and Plan of the European Museum, King Street, St. James's Square: Instituted for the Promotion of the Fine Arts, and the Encouragement of British Artists* (1795, January, dates unknown), *Getty Provenance Index® databases* (Sale Catalog Br-A2073, indexed transcription). The identification of the man on horseback as a merchant seems indeed to be too generic to respond for the character's peculiar outfit: the piece of cloth covering part of his leg and placed between the saddle and the wooden tray is of a slightly different shade than his coat, indicating that it could be meant as a different garment, perhaps the apron typically associated with the butcher's trade. The man could hence be a butcher in riding attire. Also, another painting by Morland which I examine later – *The Country Butcher* (Fig. 26, 1793?, Sotheby's London, 3 April 1996, lot 139) – features a character just dismounted from his horse dressed in exactly the same way, and other two canvases by the artist – *Two Men Hunting Rabbits with Their Dog, a Village Beyond* (Sotheby's London, 1 July 2004, lot 162) and *The Watchful*

next to him and showing him a sample of his mutton for examination on a wooden plate. As in *Farmyard* (Fig. 69, Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California), the composition's central form is a white horse around which the same elements - pig's sty, stable and oak - are arranged, and the figures relate in a perfect balance of human and animal presence. The animal in the centre finds its counterpart in the brown horse confined in the stable, and the two horses in turn correspond to the human characters, their respective owners (whom they also recall in colour, the dark horse's proprietor being the farmer wearing a brown coat, and the white horse's owner the merchant dressed in a lighter shade). The group of three sheep, two recumbent and one standing, placed in the bottom right of the painting, correspond to the recumbent and standing pigs, and to the litter of piglets shown to the bottom left side. And as in the *Farmyard*, the characters are harmonized with the surrounding landscape through the deployment of mellow tones of yellow, brown and green, interrupted only occasionally by touches of red for the signs of ownership on the sheep's wool and the details of the meat. The whole is likewise united by a ray of light coming from top left to bottom right, forming a diagonal axis.

Significantly, Morland chose to place a piece of meat almost at the exact centre of the composition. A giant joint had been the focus of William Hogarth's 1748 painting *O the Roast Beef of Old England* ('*The Gate of Calais*') (Fig. 23, Tate), a widely known image that had claimed great resonance a few decades before for its patriotic and overtly chauvinistic associations.¹³⁰ And in 1790, George Stubbs had exhibited *Portrait of the Lincolnshire Ox, Now to Be Seen at the Lyceum* (Fig. 24, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool), his sole commission in cattle portraiture, at the Royal Academy. This painting had simultaneously served to promote the exhibition of the animal portrayed. The Lincolnshire Ox, also known as "the largest and fattest ox ever seen in England",¹³¹ had indeed been the subject of a successful commercial venture orchestrated by its owner, John Gibbons, who had acquired it in a local cockfight. The huge beast had been

Butcher, or, The Butcher Chastising his Dog (Fig. 28, 1792, Sotheby's London, 27 January 1954, lot 123) – show butchers wearing aprons of a similarly dark shade, the former of an identical blue. Later in the chapter I give a more informed interpretation of the horseman's profession, identifying him as a carcass butcher, an eighteenth-century profession in between those of wealthy merchant and butcher.

¹³⁰ For more information on Hogarth's canvas and the corresponding print, see Elizabeth Einberg, *Hogarth The Painter* (London: Tate Gallery, 1997), p. 48, and Paulson, *High Art and Low*, pp. 352-356.

¹³¹ *World*, 12 February 1790.

exhibited as a curious phenomenon in various London venues between February 1790 and April 1791, and ticket holders were encouraged to subscribe to an engraving after Stubbs's portrait, which had been commissioned by Gibbons. The print was published in January 1791, a few months before the animal's health started to decline.¹³²

This image, and the connected exhibition of the animal it portrayed, is the closest thing to an artistic precedent for Morland's blunt juxtaposition of living animals and meat in *Bargaining for Sheep*, since the commercial venture which spurred the commission from Stubbs had culminated in a spectacular exhibition of flesh. On 20 April 1791, when the ox's legs finally capitulated to its enormous weight, the animal was slaughtered, and its carcass remained "hung up for public inspection", the peculiar qualities of its meat advertised in detail in various newspapers. One commentator reported that: "it opens fine and solid, surprisingly clothed with Fat, and is perhaps the finest marbled meat ever slaughtered".¹³³ Another stated: "the colour particularly pleasing and inviting, more so than any of this kind ever exhibited in this or any other kingdom, in tho (*sic*) age or memory of man".¹³⁴ The meat of the animal was simultaneously advertised for exhibition and sale, the ultimate stage in an elaborate process of commodification undergone by this exceptional animal throughout its peculiar life. *Lincolnshire Ox* belonged to a genre of animal painting conceived as the celebration of an economy in which non-human creatures counted exclusively for their financial value. The imposing ox's portrait is here comically juxtaposed with that of its relatively small owner. The ridiculously small gamecock placed between them further reinforces the incongruity between the characters' sizes. By these means, Stubbs may have been satirizing in turn the genre's own characteristics, overemphasizing the focus on the animal seen as a property and highlighting the strategies used by farm animal portraitists to exaggerate the size of exceptional animals. Perhaps these choices should be interpreted as part of an inside joke developed by the artist in complicity with his patron.

¹³² Egerton, *George Stubbs, Painter*, pp. 510-511.

¹³³ *Oracle*, 21 April 1791.

¹³⁴ *Diary or Woodfall's Register*, 22 April 1791.

Like Stubbs' work, but even more so, Morland's *Bargaining for Sheep* (Fig. 22) describes animals as convertible into money, as is underlined by the red marks of property on the sheep's wool and by the centrality of the commercial transaction and of the merchant's figure. In *Bargaining for Sheep* Morland explicitly referred for the first time to a commercial transaction involving livestock with the purpose of meat production, and this was made unequivocal not only by the painting's exhibited title, but also by the piece of meat placed at the centre of the composition. This exhibit undermined the narrative of peaceful coexistence between human and animal on which Morland's rural scenes had rested, unveiling its embedded paradox, consisting in man's commoditization of non-human creatures. The only passage in the process of meat production omitted here is the slaughtering of the animals, though that could be seen as alluded to in the central figure of the merchant. Yet, at a more profound level, Morland's focus throughout his animal paintings on attitudes of care and attention towards the welfare of livestock could be seen as the product of modern agrarian capitalist practices. Recent studies have shown that farm animals were in this period becoming paradoxical recipients of an increasingly sympathetic treatment for commercial purposes, and yet also understandable as embodiments of capital.¹³⁵ In this sense, Morland's paintings of simple creatures can be interpreted as the logical precursors of the critical commentary on the modern capitalistic market which subtly underlies *Bargaining for Sheep*.

Indeed, on a closer analysis the pattern of gazes and the characters' positions in *Bargaining for Sheep* allow for a more subversive reading of the picture. In *Farmyard* (Fig. 69) the fictive 'spectator' of the main action (caring for a pig to the left of the scene) is the central white horse, which had mirrored with its peaceful expression the pig's pleasure and satisfaction in receiving attention, and had suggested an analogous pleasurable response in the viewers. In *Bargaining for Sheep* this role is taken by the brown horse confined in the stable, which of all the animals in the scene, is the only one to observe the main action from outside. This has a different and more distressing result, since its watchful and sombre gaze is unmistakably oriented at the central piece

¹³⁵ Carl J Griffin, "Animal Maiming, Intimacy, and the Politics of Shared Life: the Bestial and the Beastly in Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century England", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 37, no. 2 (2012): pp. 301-316.

of meat, at which it looks across directly. The circular pattern of gazes in the scene sharpens the contradictions implicit in the process of raising livestock for meat production. One of the recumbent sheep on the right lifts its head, as if beckoned by its owner's voice as he is convincing the merchant to buy his animals. The farmer looks at the man on horseback, waiting for his decision, while the merchant's gaze is levelled at the sheep, to assess their commercial value with an expert eye. His horse seems to look compassionately at the sheep, which are instead apparently oblivious to their fate.

Whilst in *Farmyard* Morland had annihilated the hierarchies between human and animals by putting all characters on the same level, in *Bargaining for Sheep* (Fig. 22) the merchant's superior position on horseback recalls the composition of a painting he had exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1792, *Benevolent Sportsman* (Fig. 25, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge). There, this position is held by the country squire, and serves to underline the social hierarchy between him and the gypsies below. The squire's physical and social distance from the gypsies is reinforced by his gesture of giving alms. The merchant's higher position in *Bargaining for Sheep* suggests not only a relationship of superiority between humans and animals, but also a hierarchy of intelligence among animals of different species. The horses' sombre and anthropomorphized expressions, and the direction of their gazes, suggest that they are thinking and feeling subjects, somewhere between humans and lower animals, able to understand men's purposes. The sheep seem solely aware of the humans' voices but oblivious to their fate, while the group of pigs and piglets in the bottom left of the canvas is completely separate from any interaction with the realm of men and reduced to pure bodily existence, perhaps unable to show any sign of subjectivity. In this sense, *Bargaining for Sheep* offers an essay on sympathy to its viewers, who are presented with various levels of sentience across the human-animal spectrum.

Furthermore, upon a closer examination of the scene, both social dynamics and setting reveal tensions that the superficial adoption of a sentimental vocabulary had initially concealed. The merchant is in a position of superiority, physically (on horseback) and socially, since he appears to be slightly better dressed and hence wealthier than the farmer, and since he is the customer, the one who can potentially extricate himself

from the transaction. The *Oracle*'s commentary noted his "*shrewd Air*" and "assumed surly indifference",¹³⁶ and indeed his incredulous facial expression together with the crook of his arms on his hips seem to indicate authority and knowledge of his business, as well as a certain skepticism at the farmer's offer. Nevertheless the farmer seems to have managed to trap him in a hard bargain: he is seen holding a riding crop to still the merchant's horse, and he has placed the large wooden dish with the leg of mutton on his saddle, as if to restrain his movements. The sense of drama is reinforced by the painting's claustrophobic and pinched spatial organization.

While the intercourse between the two men in the centre is characterized by tensions, the merchant not engaging with the farmer's gaze, that between their two horses appears to lack reciprocity, despite their proximity. The animals seem alienated from each other, not only because they are distracted by the human transaction – the white horse looks at the sheep, the brown one at the piece of meat – but also because there is a physical barrier between them. The brown horse is trapped in the stable (which is securely closed by a pole fastened with a hook) and its skeletal chest shows that it is dependent on man for feeding. This condition of imprisonment is reinforced by its juxtaposition with the group of pigeons on the stable's roof, free to fly and therefore feed themselves. The two horses are in this sense unable to communicate because divided by market forces. The painting seems to show how men harness natural processes and force them into an economy, here represented by the sale of animals. Men turn natural beings into objects, as evidenced by the signs of ownership on the sheep's wool. The painting's focus on the tensions determined by man's commodification of nature, and particularly by man's transformation of animals into merchandisable meat, is reinforced by the setting. The thatched stable and pigsty are covered with moss, as if the scene takes place at the edge between civilization and nature.

At the end of the eighteenth century the transformation of animals into meat to be sold at retail level had become very sophisticated, and was carried out through advanced

¹³⁶ "The Royal Academy", 8 May 1794.

commercial practices, performed by different figures of tradesmen. A pamphlet published in 1795 and entitled *Monopoly, The Cutting Butchers Appeal to the Legislature, Upon the High Price of Meat*, condemned the artificial inflation of meat's price in Smithfield's Market with practices similar to those employed at the stock exchange. It represents an important document not only for introducing all the professional figures at the time involved in the urban commerce of meat, but also for giving account of the sophisticated practices which were by now employed in this trade. Its author, speaking on behalf of the cutting butchers' category (retail sellers of meat) to which he belonged, laments the existence of a cartel between graziers (farmers who fed cattle destined for the London market), salesmen (dealing with the selling in batches of living animals within Smithfield's Market) and the more powerful carcass butchers (wholesale butchers, or jobbers), who bought the living animals in lots for slaughtering. The pamphlet denounces the carcass butchers' practice of buying animals in lots from graziers *en route* to London and then keeping them alive until a period of scarcity in the metropolitan meat market would allow a larger margin of profit from the sale of their carcasses to cutting butchers.¹³⁷

The speculative transaction of animals in *Bargaining for Sheep* stands in radical opposition to more 'innocent' economic activities of mere subsistence such as pig-keeping, at Morland's time mostly practiced by the poor and middling classes to obtain for their family a certain degree of self-sufficiency.¹³⁸ The wholesale meat trade was in

¹³⁷ The man on horseback of *Bargaining for Sheep* is depicted in a position of superiority both for his higher place in the canvas and for his role in the transaction: he seems to be discussing with the seller the purchase of a batch of animals, which indicate a buying power that only a salesman or a carcass butcher would have had at Morland's time; the horseman seems to be wearing an apron, which suggests that he is a carcass butcher, rather than a salesman: also, salesmen operated only within Smithfield market. See A Philanthropic Butcher, *Monopoly, The Cutting Butchers Appeal to the Legislature, Upon the High Price of Meat: in Which Many of the Base Practices of Smithfield Market Are Exposed, and a Remedy Pointed Out for the Poor* (London: H. D. Symonds, 1795), p. 3; Smith, "The Market Place and the Market's Place", pp. 103, 105. See also the description of *Bargaining for Sheep* made in a 1795 sale catalogue of the European Museum and mentioned in note 129, which identifies the characters involved in the transaction as a butcher and a grazier.

¹³⁸ Even an illegal activity such as poaching had been presented by Morland as 'innocent' in an undated canvas, *Two Men Hunting Rabbits with Their Dog, a Village Beyond* (Sotheby's London, 1 July 2004, lot 162). The scene presents two poor people poaching rabbits, one of them a butcher who had been on his way to deliver his wares, as evidenced by the apron he wears and the tray he has abandoned on the foreground (the symbol of a legitimate market, in opposition with the black market represented by poaching). The poor are liable to arouse sympathy, because they are probably not making a great profit out of poaching but are only helping their subsistence. It is even more significant that one of the poachers is a butcher, a national symbol of liberty, if also a debauched character.

this sense part of a consumerist economy which was emerging thanks to the excess of wealth determined by the growing accumulation and concentration of capital.¹³⁹ Voices challenging the increasingly widespread and habitual consumption of meat emerged in this period from various sections of the society, not only from the radical fringes which advocated for a complete abstention from it or which condemned the slaughtering of animals as cruel *per se*.¹⁴⁰ In *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith had drawn from recent scientific discoveries on human physiology to observe that meat, inasmuch as it is unnecessary to our diet, should be taxed as a luxury item. He also noted that meat production represented a waste of resources since the same patch of land could produce more food when used for crops rather than for grazing animals.¹⁴¹ The growing consumption of meat was also criticized within radical circles, where it was interpreted as a sign of modern society's increasing corruption. As with all luxury habits, meat consumption stood for social inequality; furthermore in this period meat-eating, and as a consequence meat-abstention, were increasingly constructed as political affiliations, especially since beef was becoming a patriotic symbol of Britain.¹⁴² As the gaze of Derrida's cat staring at the naked philosopher, the sombre look that the brown horse directs at the leg of mutton in the centre of *Bargaining for Sheep* might therefore give us pause for thought.

Bargaining for Sheep is an exceptional painting within Morland's production for its blunt and dramatic juxtaposition of animals with meat, and on a canvas of such a monumental size. Nevertheless, a few other works by Morland focus upon similar subjects: men's commerce in animals, their transformation into meat, and, in particular, the centrality of characters working in the trades involved in this transformation. In the exhibition of paintings by Morland the previous year at John Raphael Smith's shop, the first of thirty-six works listed in the catalogue of engravings available for subscription was entitled *The Country Butcher*. The advantageous position granted in the exhibition's commentary to a painting of a butcher suggests that this figure was of some significance in setting the tone of the entire show, and that it is also important for

¹³⁹ Timothy Morton, ed., *Cultures of Taste/Theories of Appetite: Eating Romanticism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 6.

¹⁴⁰ Stuart, *Bloodless Revolution*, p. xix.

¹⁴¹ Stuart, *Bloodless Revolution*, pp. 242, 401.

¹⁴² "Bloodless Brothers", in Stuart, *Bloodless Revolution*, pp. 331-346.

understanding Morland's production of animal painting. The description of *The Country Butcher* in Smith's catalogue corresponds in all its details to a painting known under the same title, as well as *The Traveller's Refreshment* (Fig. 26, Sotheby's London, 3 April 1996, lot 139). This work shows a man just dismounted from his horse, sitting at the door of a cottage while drinking drams offered to him by a woman, a tray of meat similar to that seen in *Bargaining for Sheep* by his side. Apart from the suggestion given by the painting's title, and the man's rather coarser facial features and mastiff - as remarked in Smith's catalogue: "*fit beast for slaughterman*",¹⁴³ indeed a dog at the time typically associated with the butcher's trade - there is little to distinguish him from the merchant of *Bargaining for Sheep*. However, while the meat's tray was there being shown to the merchant by the farmer, here it would seem that it has been brought to the cottage by the man, who perhaps has stopped on his way to deliver his wares. Hence the man is probably identifiable as the more modest figure of a cutting butcher dressed for riding.

While there was an established iconography of the butcher as archetypal Englishman - overtly masculine, libidinous and drunken, the John Bull figure in other words - Morland's butcher is a rather more subtle case.¹⁴⁴ He sits patiently, looking up at the buxom barmaid, enjoying the view and indeed the prospect (it would seem) of the drink she pours for him. Despite the catalogue's suggestion that "from his nose we are certain that water ... is not his favourite liquor" and that he is "evidently *making love*, and every dram he drinks adds fuel to his flame",¹⁴⁵ he appears neither intoxicated nor particularly

¹⁴³ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 6.

¹⁴⁴ The butcher's elevation to a symbol of Englishness was also due to the strong link made between patriotic identity and food and dietary habits in this period. Butchers attended to the preparation and sale of the most specifically-English dish, roast beef. In 1772 the print *France-England* (British Museum) contrasted a robust and prosperous beefeater with an emaciated Frenchman, living on garlic and other meagre food. In this context, butchers were increasingly understood as representative of English virility, and as metonyms of the prosperity, power, and veritable democracy enjoyed by British citizens, which seemingly enabled all Englishmen to afford the nourishing gastronomic staple roast beef, in opposition to the meagre meals typical of common people's tables in other countries. The butcher was a proxy for the unimpeachable masculinity and practicality of the stereotypical Englishmen, and a reminder of the country's wealth due to thriving commerce and advanced agrarian practices. See John Brewer, *The Common People and Politics, 1750-1790s* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1998), pp. 42-43, 256-257; Amelia F. Rauser, "The Butcher-Kissing Duchess of Devonshire: Between Caricature and Allegory in 1784", *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 36, no. 1 (2002): pp. 23-46; Miles Taylor, "Bull, John", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ueaezproxy.uea.ac.uk:2048/view/article/68195?docPos=3>.

¹⁴⁵ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 6.

macho. Instead he is a simple figure of country pleasures and country trades.¹⁴⁶ However, given the primacy of this image within Smith's exhibition of paintings by Morland, we might also identify this figure more closely with the artist himself. As the butcher could transform animals into merchandisable meat, Morland was able to convert them into lucrative artworks. Similarly to this figure of tradesman, Morland did not own or rear his animals, but was an intermediary market figure between producer and consumer, who turned raw material into a commodity. Morland's awareness of his status as at once sympathiser, exploiter and consumer in relation to animal bodies is perhaps suggested by his letter to John Graham (one of his most important middlemen) quoted at the opening of this chapter. The butcher's subversive personality as it was described by contemporary songs and ballads fits well with Morland's construction of his modern artistic identity, shaped in direct contrast to the conventional academic model of educated and refined painter offered by Reynolds.

One artistic precedent comes to mind here: Annibale Carracci's *Butcher's Shop* (Fig. 27, 1580s, Christ Church Picture Gallery, Oxford). During Morland's lifetime, this prominent Old Master painting was already being interpreted as a statement on art conducted through the juxtaposition of the butcher's shop and artist's studio and hence, the butcher's profession and the artist's. Within a list of the pictures collected by a General Guise in his house in George Street, Robert Dodsley's *London and Its Environs Described* (1761) mentioned Carracci's *Butcher's Shop* and recognized the four butchers depicted around the counter of their shop in this canvas as portraits of Annibale himself and other members of his family, who were also painters.¹⁴⁷ Through the comparison of painterly practice and butcher's profession, Carracci seems to have pointed at the

¹⁴⁶ Drunkenness and amorousness were often used to qualify the character of butchers, who were not only symbol of Englishness, but also particularly virile and earthy characters. In indulging especially in these aspects of the butcher's personality, songs and ballads published in Britain during the second half of the eighteenth century helped to delineate a much more debauched figure. In these works, the butcher was described as bold and frolicker character, inclined to deviant and immoral behaviours, disrespectful of social and religious values, and characterized by an especially robust sexual potency. See for example: *The Pretty Butcher of St. James's, A New Garland Containing Two New Songs* (London?: 1750?), p. 4, a particularly successful song since it was reprinted five times in London between 1760? and 1795?; *London Butcher; or, The Miser Outwitted* (Glasgow?: 1780?); *The Parson and Butcher's Garland, Containing Four Excellent New Songs* (Darlington: M. Veset, 1762-1777?), pp. 2-3; *The Butcher's Daughter's Policy, Or, Lustful Lord Well Fitted* (London: John Evans, 1780-1812), another particularly popular ballad, since it was reprinted eight times between 1760? and 1800?. See *Broadside Ballads Online from the Bodleian Library*, <http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/edition/5976>.

¹⁴⁷ R. and J. Dodsley, *London and Its Environs Described*, 6 vols. (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1761), 3:25.

manual aspects of making art, here evoked also stylistically through the rough texture of the canvas. The painting perhaps hints at the naturalistic practices taught at the Carracci's renowned Academy via a visual pun: 'drawing from life' in Italian could be also expressed with the words 'viva carne', whose literal translation is 'living meat'. If not through an engraved reproduction, Morland could have known this painting indirectly through this detailed commentary. However, Morland's butchers are significantly different from those performed by the Carracci in their distance from the abattoir. We see Morland's butchers instead on the road or by their shops, as tradesmen in other words, intermediary figures within the market between farmers and consumers, rather than as skilled craftsmen.

This is particularly evident in *The Watchful Butcher, or, The Butcher Chastising his Dog* (Fig. 28, 1792, Sotheby's London, 27 January 1954, lot 123), another painting by Morland featuring a retail butcher, and the conspicuous presence of a village in the background in contrast to a rustic scene in the foreground. The painting, dated 1792, shows a butcher wearing not only the apron but also carrying the awl-shaped tool typical of the profession. The butcher's tray of the preceding image is here replaced by a large piece of meat similarly lying on the foreground of the scene but on the right, evidently abandoned there by the butcher's dog after having been caught stealing it from the meat stall. The tradesman is about to hit the recalcitrant and barking dog – of indeterminate breed, and certainly not a typical butcher's bulldog – with a long stick, simultaneously holding it by the collar with the other hand. The scene is set in front of his shop, outside of which a wooden stall exhibits a large variety of meat on offer for purchase. Pieces of animals' carcasses appear here either hung on hooks fixed on various beams or laid on a flap table.

A first reading of the scene seems to offer a conservative social discourse. Indeed the painting shows a superior subject, a human – consisting in the figure of the butcher, hence suffused with the patriotic meanings above mentioned – assuming for himself the responsibility of teaching through physical punishment the correct moral behaviour to a lower subject, his dog. The butcher is in this sense a corrective presence in the landscape as much as the church in the background, since he is punishing the dog for

something illegitimate it has done. The tradesman is nevertheless largely understandable as a positive figure, even if the animal's punishment appears to be excessive. If we read this and *The Country Butcher* (Fig. 26) through a socio-historical lens, we would see them as suggestive of the political and class conflicts dividing British society at the end of the eighteenth century. For the former scene, these conflicts seem to be reenacted in the disruptive encounter between the implicitly polite viewer and the butcher's controversial and low character, while in the latter image they could be suggested by the dispute between butcher and recalcitrant dog. Morland's paintings of butchers would represent, according to these readings, visual contributions to the contemporary bourgeois culture of self-definition and to conservative and anti-revolutionary discourses.

While these interpretations point at recognizing a gulf and at underlining differences existing between superior and lower subjects - either humans and animals, or men of different social classes and cultures - it is a contemporary critique on one of these paintings that redirects our readings within the culture of sensibility, by contrarily placing the emphasis decisively upon similarities. The compiler of Smith's catalogue indeed described *The Country Butcher* as an aesthetic and philosophical exercise aiming at stretching the bourgeois viewer's affective muscles, noting that here a butcher's heart is shown to be "as vulnerable as the hearts of his betters".¹⁴⁸

But the main feature of the butcher in this painting is that he is clearly presented as a retailer, an intermediary figure in the market, offering his wares to the customers. The painting hints again at Morland's own painterly practice: the butcher's stall exhibiting a variety of meat hung on hooks curiously resembles the wall of an exhibition space. *Bargaining for Sheep* (Fig. 22) could also be seen as subtly alluding to Morland's own activity of painting: the viewer is encouraged to identify with the tamed brown horse, shown looking through the stable window as if contemplating a framed scene. In this reading, the farmer selling his mutton to a (not very convinced) merchant stands for

¹⁴⁸ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 6.

Morland himself, who has transformed animals into art (or meat), a long-running address to viewers and exhibition critics.

The exploration of Morland's peculiar treatment of animal painting carried out in this chapter has allowed a progressive narrative to emerge which has its premise in the painter's sympathetic depictions of non-human creatures. These works suggest that utterly unknowable, useless and even ugly animals are worthy of viewers' attention. The images of animals on their own prepared the audience to receive the powerful - if subtle - critical commentaries developed in some of his paintings of human and animal encounters, which allude to the effects of a modern economy through the lens of man's abuses of non-human creatures. Furthermore Morland's repeated depiction of butchers adumbrates a reflection on his own artistic practice and on his refusal to comply with the conventional personality of the educated and refined academic painter embodied by Reynolds. As we shall now see in the next chapter, Morland's drawings and their public dissemination would add an important dimension to both his practice and his artistic persona.

Chapter 2. Drawing on 'Genius': Morland's Sketches and Their Diffusion

The imagination of a painter, really great in his profession, is a magazine abounding with all the elegant forms, and striking effects, which are to be found in nature. These, like a magician, he calls up at pleasure with a wave of his hand; bringing before the eye, sometimes a scene from history, or romance; and sometimes from the inanimate parts of nature. And in these happy moments, when the enthusiasm of his art is upon him, he often produces from the glow of his imagination, with a few bold strokes, such wonderful effusions of genius, as the more sober, and correct productions of his pencil cannot equal.

(William Gilpin, *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; On Picturesque Travel; and On Sketching Landscape: To which is Added a Poem, On Landscape Painting*, 1794)

In hindsight, George Morland's first appearance on the London art scene with an exhibition of "Sketches" at the 1773 Royal Academy show can be recognized as paradigmatic.¹⁴⁹ His artistic career and his image-construction were deeply intertwined with the use and meanings of drawing, and particularly with those of its hasty variant, the sketch. Exhibiting at the RA show at the age of ten was already quite remarkable, but presenting graphic works in that showcase was also significant: as Gilpin's quote suggests, drawing was at this time seen as closely associated with the activity of the mind. If Morland's father, Henry Robert (also a painter) encouraged his son to present himself publicly for the first time with drawings, he had arguably decided that he should be seen as an infant prodigy. And yet, training in the practice of drawing was hardly a peculiar beginning in this profession. The young Morland was in this sense following a quite conventional artistic apprenticeship under the guidance of his father. Access to the newly founded Royal Academy Schools was subject to the evaluation of the candidate's proficiency in drawing, which was consequently an essential prerequisite for anyone aiming at a successful career as a painter.¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, traditional conceptions of drawing saw it as an artist's private means in the process of creation, not intended for public exhibition. Morland's persistent use of this medium to present himself at all the most important showcases of the London art scene during the following ten years of his apprenticeship, before enrolling to train at the Royal Academy

¹⁴⁹ See Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts; A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and Their Work from Its Foundation in 1769 to 1904*, 8 Vols. (London: H. Graves and George Bell and Sons, 1905-6), pp. 294-295.

¹⁵⁰ Sidney C. Hutchinson, "The Royal Academy Schools, 1768-1830", *The Walpole Society* 38 (1960-1962): p. 128.

Schools in 1784, is in this sense significant.¹⁵¹ Between 1775 and 1783 Morland exhibited drawings almost every year at the Free Society of Artists', at the Society of Artists' or at the Royal Academy's shows. Still in 1785, with his third appearance at the Royal Academy as "not Junior", he exhibited six sketches, although this time in oil, alongside a finished painting.¹⁵²

With the exception of one of the drawings exhibited in 1776 (*Washer Woman*, perhaps identifiable with *The Washerwoman and Child*, Sotheby Parke Bernet London, 24 July 1980, lot 96), the titles of these early drawings do not permit any straightforward identification with known works by Morland.¹⁵³ Nevertheless they betray a prevailing focus on simple rustic subjects (*A Corn Loft*, *A Cow Farm*, *A Farm House in a Wood*, *Winter Piece*, alongside various landscapes), which work to suggest their being produced outdoors, from the direct observation of nature. Further details in their descriptions such as "drawing with a poker" also speak of a spontaneous and expressive treatment (even with the use of improper drawing tools), and of a speed of execution, implicit in the word "sketch" used to describe many of them. Some of them are also described as having been drawn "from idea (*sic*)", suggesting their origin in the imagination.

This chapter will focus on Morland's drawings and their diffusion through printed reproductions. I will argue that Morland's significant production of drawings and sketches represented a crucial element in his strategies for carving out and diffusing his personality as that of an authentic, masculine artistic 'genius'. Taking advantage of circumstances peculiar to the eighteenth-century London art world, which witnessed the development of both a native school of painters and an expanded market for cultural goods, Morland and his collaborators promoted and disseminated his reputation as a modern artist through a shrewd employment of the medium of drawing,

¹⁵¹ Hutchinson, "The Royal Academy Schools", p. 147.

¹⁵² See Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts*, pp. 294-295; Algernon Graves, *The Society of Artists of Great Britain, 1760-1791, The Free Society of Artists, 1761-1783; A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and Their Work from the Foundation of the Societies to 1791* (London: George Bell and Sons and Algernon Graves, 1907), pp. 174-175.

¹⁵³ Various works among these exhibits, generically called landscapes, could have corresponded to something along the lines of the existing drawings by Morland *A River Landscape* (Courtauld Institute, London); or *Cottages by a River* and *Ruins by a River* both in the collection C. L. Loyd, Esq. Lockinge coll. Berkshire.

of its meanings and of its functions. Significantly, this was possible because in this period drawings could be reproduced faithfully and circulated cheaply for the first time thanks to innovative printing techniques.

As suggested above, exploratory drawings by modern and contemporary artists had traditionally been considered only preparatory stages towards a finished artwork, unworthy of either exhibition or sale. Yet conceptions of the medium began to change in this period, when it started to be seen as simultaneously the most direct means of copying from nature and yet closely related to imaginative processes.¹⁵⁴ Because of the role and status of Old Master drawings in academies (where they were copied as examples of excellent 'manners'), the meanings of this medium were also subject to changing notions of genius.¹⁵⁵ Morland's drawings and published sketches will be considered in relation to the eighteenth-century tastes for collecting drawings (or prints which resemble drawings) and for drawing as a pastime. Both of these practices were employed by the social elites in constructing themselves as cultural subjects, but respectively gendered as properly masculine and feminine.¹⁵⁶

While drawing formed the mainstay of the apprenticeship for young artists, it traditionally took on a more supplementary role as those artists matured. Yet Morland's existing works in this medium (as well as letters by the artist himself and other contemporary accounts) show that this was an activity that he continued to pursue throughout his life. Even if most of Morland's drawings are not dated, those which are dated range from 1791 to 1801.¹⁵⁷ Grouping Morland's existing drawings according to

¹⁵⁴ See "Introduction", in *The Visual and Verbal Sketch in British Romanticism*, ed. Richard C. Sha (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), pp. 1-21.

¹⁵⁵ Scott Wilcox, "Emanations of Genius", in *The Line of Beauty: British Drawings and Watercolors of the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Scott Wilcox, Gillian Forrester, Morna O'Neill, Kim Sloan (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 2001), pp. 9-13.

¹⁵⁶ See Ann Bermingham, "'An Exquisite Practise': The Institution of Drawing as a Polite Art in Britain", in *Towards a Modern Art World*, ed. Brian Allen (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 47-66; Ann Bermingham, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. IX-X; Ann Bermingham, "Elegant Females and Gentlemen Connoisseurs. The Commerce in Culture and Self-Image in Eighteenth-Century England", in *The Consumption of Culture, 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text*, eds. Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 489-513.

¹⁵⁷ The statistics in this chapter regarding Morland's existing drawings originate from the analysis of a database I built drawing on various sources, and consisting of 115 works. Curiously, a large majority of the dated works are from the early 1790s, and none of them from the 1770s or the 1780s. Nevertheless,

their degree of finish can help to account for the purposes – apparent and real - which prompted him to produce them so consistently and abundantly over his career. In terms of finish, Morland's existing drawings can be grouped into two large categories. More than two thirds are complete, independent scenes, which themselves vary from highly finished works (for example *Leaving the Stable*, Fig. 29, 1792, British Museum), to works still finished but demonstrating more expressive strokes (such as *Interior of a Pigsty: A Sow with Piglets*, Victoria & Albert Museum), to highly sketchy scenes (for example *Study of a Setter*, British Museum). Almost a third of Morland's existing drawings on the other hand can be classified as studies, since they focus on single figures (such as *Peasant Woman with a Bundle*, Victoria & Albert Museum), or details of them (*Head of a Greyhound: The Dog in Profile to Left*, British Museum), or on groups of studies of single figures, details of them or alternative renderings of a single motif (as in *Studies of Hands*, Collection of Sir Charles S. Hamilton).

Leaving aside for now the drawings classifiable as studies I want to begin by considering Morland's completed drawings. These were not primarily conceived in order to be reproduced in print. In fact, only six works of this type known to us were used in this way. Although the realization of finished drawings took much more time and care than quick sketches, producing such drawings took less time than painting the same subjects in oil. After all, as Morland himself seems to have said, "I generally begin and finish a stain'd Drawing every evening, and I think to do the same at home every night that's not fit to March out".¹⁵⁸ Morland's completed graphic works could therefore have been intended to cater for a market somewhere between buyers of paintings and buyers of reproductive prints. Hence perhaps those finished drawings in which he repeated subjects which had already been successful in oil, with only minor changes in the composition (for example the above mentioned drawing *Leaving the Stable*, Fig. 29, 1792, British Museum, which echoes the painting *Inside of a Stable*, Fig. 71, exhibited at the RA in 1791, Tate). Nevertheless, this commercial function does not seem the only rationale for Morland's finished drawings, which usually dealt with different subjects from his oils. Looking at the typical form of Morland's production in the medium of

Morland's early exhibiting history, as well as the presence of his drawings on the art market, testifies to his prolific production of drawings during those decades.

¹⁵⁸ George Morland, *Hieroglyphic Letter*, 12 December 1785, RCIN 917571, Royal Collection Trust.

drawing, in other words recognizing his specific style in the finished drawings and his usual technique and handling, helps us account for the production of independent graphic works. In terms of media and tools, considering the great variety of combinations employed by Morland and generally available to eighteenth-century draughtsmen, the use of broad strokes is by far the most typical across all Morland's drawings. Among the sample of finished works which I could examine in person and which were never reproduced in print, drawings in chalk, crayon and graphite prevailed, representing two thirds of the total.¹⁵⁹

Shepherd Boys (Fig. 30, 1792, British Museum) is an exemplary case in point. Realized in pencil with black, red and white chalk, it is a work whose considerable size (47.1 x 38 cm, almost comparable to a contemporary cabinet picture) and degree of finish speak of its conception as an independent artwork.¹⁶⁰ It describes an interaction, or perhaps just an exchange of looks, between two young men, one standing at the far right, his back to the viewer, an arm propped against an invisible support, the other one sitting, perhaps on a fallen tree, his clasped hands resting on his knees. Placed under the shade of a tree, the two boys are qualified as shepherds by the presence of two marked sheep on the left side, in the background, as well as by their simple rustic outfits, the shepherd's dog which accompanies the seated figure, and his wooden stick and hat lying on the ground.

Shepherd Boys shows the peculiar graphic style which Morland used in his finished drawings. The prevalence of drawn areas over blank ones is striking. The white colour of the paper is left visible only in the small glimpse of sky above the sheep and beneath the tree on the left, in the small area around the shepherd's stick in the central foreground, and in the spaces (like auras) which seem to surround the two boys' heads, and which help to distinguish their profile and hair from the vegetation behind them. The rest of the paper is crowded with graphic signs, often superimposed on each other in various layerings and drawn with different pencils and media. A first underdrawing

¹⁵⁹ These are 20 drawings collected in various institutions in London: British Museum, Courtauld Institute, Tate and Victoria & Albert Museum. Thirteen of them fall into the most common category of broad strokes and dry application, seven of them in that of fine strokes and wet application.

¹⁶⁰ Its size corresponds roughly to the dimensions of a foolscap drawing paper (35.5 x 47.6 cm). For reference to standard paper sizes in the eighteenth century see "Old English Paper Sizes", *British Association of Paper Historians*, Reference Material, <http://baph.org.uk/reference/papersizes.html>.

realized with a hard pencil, producing fine strokes, seems to then have been drawn over with a softer pencil, with the purpose of emphasizing through broader and thicker lines those compositional elements which were to be placed in the foreground. By contrast, the elements in the background remained delineated only via the underdrawing, and their fainter outlines suggest atmospheric distance. To these two media, another layering of thicker and rougher strokes in black chalk has been added to articulate outlines, volumes, and shades of the tree's lower branches and trunk, as well as details of the boys' outlines, and some of the vegetation in the foreground. Touches of white chalk are interspersed in the tree's foliage, perhaps vaguely suggesting rays of light passing through the thick branches. Finally, red chalk or sanguine has been used at certain points, applied through the technique of hatching, to suggest volume (as on the face of the boy sitting and the bare legs of the one standing), at other points, simply smeared on the paper with the fingertip (as with the standing boy's face, the marks on the sheep's wool and the abandoned jug in the foreground).¹⁶¹

While a mimetic purpose can be recognized for some of these chalk additions to the drawing – for example the black strokes suggesting the more shadowy areas of the tree's lower foliage and trunk, as well as the red chalk added to make some elements of the composition resemble their natural colour more closely – the function of others is less clear (such as the parts of the outlines re-drawn in black for the figures and the vegetation in the foreground). That lack of clarity is, I will suggest, telling. These strokes seem to have been added more in order to produce a compositional balance of darker and lighter areas, as well as to make certain elements of the drawing stand out, a function similar to the areas of white around the boys' heads which, although unrealistic, draw the viewer's attention to the figures' exchange and distinguish them clearly from the background. In general the chalk additions serve to increase the roughness of the drawing's texture. Despite the use of an underdrawing to guide the various layerings of media, Morland adopted multiple, broken graphic strokes, conferring a degree of temporariness and a sensation of movement to the elements of his composition. But perhaps it is the method employed for the suggestion of volumes and for the interplay of light and shade that deserves most attention, since it is a seemingly unregulated aspect of Morland's drawing style, and produces a

¹⁶¹ The red mark close to the knee of the boy sitting seems to be a later stain.

claustrophobic overlapping of graphic signs. While the artist applied more precision in the description of some elements in his composition (for example in the face of the boy sitting, where the volume and the shade of his right cheek is suggested through hatching drawn with red chalk or sanguine), in other elements that need less attention - for example the volumes of the boys' bodies - he more often employed zigzag lines which, though akin to hatching and cross-hatching, are much more relaxed.

This rendering of shapes and chiaroscuro becomes even freer in other parts of the work, especially in the description of the natural elements, which perhaps would have been usually conceived as an accessory in a composition presenting two figures of this size in the foreground. In the foliage of the trees above as well as in the vegetation of the foreground, the zigzag lines used to define shades and volume become free from any restraint and, coming from different directions, compete with each other through superimposition, now far away from any orderly cross-hatching technique. The definition of outlines for these elements of the composition is also freer, with sheer scrawls suggesting the shapes of leaves and grass. These scrawls are also used for some features of the animals, such as the sheep's wool. Instead of being the less relevant bit of the composition, these loosely described natural backgrounds seem to prevail on the two central figures, digesting them into a rough and utterly tactile overlapping of strokes, which in certain points become so dense to almost obliterate each other. On the one hand, this technique allows the drawing to expressively represent the sheer materiality and roughness of wild rustic vegetation. On the other hand it enabled the artist to reveal his presence through loose, rough and expressive calligraphic signs, especially in those areas of the composition less restrained by representational conventions. The lack of clarity which characterizes Morland's virtuoso handling of the graphic medium in *Shepherd Boys* seems to suggest that the drawing is the product of spontaneous and natural talent, rather than careful training and application of iconographic rules. In Gilpin's words, *Shepherd Boys* presents itself as an 'effusion of genius'. The unintelligible texture of the drawing conceals the modalities of its own realization, lending an aura of mystery and magic to the circumstances of its production and suggesting that its author must possess exceptional and superhuman powers, something akin to Gilpin's metaphor of the great artist as a 'magician' in the quote at the opening of this chapter.

Shepherd Boys is both exemplary of Morland's usual treatment of drawings and representative of his most prevalent subject matter in this medium, which mainly consisted of rustic subjects; it seems that Morland's peculiar drawing technique was particularly suited to the articulation of the simplicity and roughness of such subjects. Meanwhile, it also allowed the artist to emphasise his own presence in the representation, through rough and expressive strokes which speak of a persona as simple and unrefined as the subjects that most interested him. In making the practice of drawing so central to his public artistic profile, and in using this medium to express features peculiar to his subject matter, as well as his own persona, Morland can be compared to an immediate and influential predecessor. From the early 1770s John Hamilton Mortimer had increasingly switched from traditional historical subjects to novel and often gruesome ones – monsters, witches - found in various literary sources and sometimes never before attempted in art. At the same time, Mortimer also changed his preferred medium: from 1771 to 1777 (he died in 1779) he increasingly submitted drawings rather than paintings to public exhibitions of the Society of Artists (with which he was closely involved and in which he briefly acted as President).¹⁶²

Mortimer's drawing style and persona were particularly associated with *banditti* scenes, compositions describing criminals of various kinds shown feasting, or preparing for and engaging in combat. Mortimer exhibited as many as 30 drawings of 'pirates', 'soldiers' or *banditti* from 1772 onwards, diffused in numerous copies through etching during his lifetime and particularly in the ten years after his death (see for example *Banditti on the Look Out*, Fig. 31, 1778, British Museum). For these subjects Mortimer looked to Salvator Rosa's *Figurine*, a series of etchings by the seventeenth-century Neapolitan painter which had been republished various times over the eighteenth century.¹⁶³ Nevertheless Mortimer was the first to make these criminals the central characters in his compositions rather than picturesque staffage for landscapes. He deployed a pen-and-ink drawing style which was particularly suited to the revelation of both his own

¹⁶² See John Sunderland, "Mortimer, John Hamilton (1740-1779)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-19349>; John Sunderland, "John Hamilton Mortimer His Life and Works", *The Walpole Society* 52 (1986), pp. 52-54; Graves, *Society of Artists*, pp. 177-179.

¹⁶³ Martin Myrone, *Body Building: Reforming Masculinities in British Art, 1750-1810* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 128-129.

rapidity, bravura and freedom of imagination, as well as the vitality and liberty of his protagonists.¹⁶⁴

Mortimer's *banditti* have recently been interpreted as a fantasy of masculinity unrestrained by the threats posed to it by politeness, capitalism and imperialism. Martin Myrone has noticed how modern politeness was perceived as inhibiting traditional masculine physical expression in this period.¹⁶⁵ David Solkin has pointed to the diffused unease towards luxury and accumulation of wealth derived from Britain's newly acquired Oriental colonies, with the modern commercial society visualized as a corruptive feminine threat to British manhood.¹⁶⁶ In this sense, Mortimer's *banditti* were reassuring in being depictions of primitive masculine figures living outside the rules of conventional society and historically located in a pre-capitalistic and pre-imperialist era.

David Solkin has also noted that Mortimer's *banditti* were appropriate to the radical Whig aesthetics promoted by Richard Payne Knight, who also owned Morland's *Shepherd Boys* (Fig. 30). One of Mortimer's best patrons, Knight considered sexual freedom in primitive societies as the origin of artistic creativity, later inhibited by the institution of academies which restrained the freedom of the imagination with their prescriptive dictates. *Banditti* acted in this sense as symbols of the freedom of mind possessed by original, and indeed masculine, artistic geniuses.¹⁶⁷ It should also be noted that in eighteenth-century critique, Rosa was largely perceived as a painter who had avoided traditional patterns of artistic imitation, instead pursuing originality of subject matter, at the cost of exceeding the norm through sensationalist aesthetic and emotional effects.¹⁶⁸ This artistic inclination was thought to have resonated also in his personality: stories circulated about him having taken part in Masaniello's revolt, and

¹⁶⁴ Sunderland, "John Hamilton Mortimer His Life and Works", pp. 54-56; David H. Solkin, "'Conquest, Usurpation, Wealth, Luxury, Famine': Mortimer's Banditti and the Anxieties of Empire", in *Art and the British Empire*, ed. Timothy Barringer, Geoff Quilley and Douglas Fordham (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 135.

¹⁶⁵ Myrone, *Body Building*, pp. 133-134.

¹⁶⁶ Solkin, "'Conquest, Usurpation, Wealth, Luxury, Famine'", p. 136.

¹⁶⁷ Solkin, "'Conquest, Usurpation, Wealth, Luxury, Famine'", pp. 132-133.

¹⁶⁸ Myrone, *Body Building*, p. 130.

having himself lived among bandits.¹⁶⁹ Mortimer drew on Rosa not only through the imitation of his famous *banditti* scenes, but also through a conscious styling of his own persona in the mould of this quasi-bohemian artist: in a 1772 exhibition review to which he contributed, he described himself as “the English Salvator”, and in one of his most famous self-portraits he depicted himself dressed as one of his *banditti*, hair swept by the wind and look lost in contemplation.¹⁷⁰ Stories circulated about his own dissipation, his refusal of conventions as well as his disdain towards patrons.¹⁷¹

Mortimer’s unusual decision to dedicate himself especially to drawing, and his invention of a virtuoso graphic style, allowed him to convey something of his subject matter (the vitality and freedom of his *banditti*, masculine figures of outlaws and metaphors for the free artistic genius) as well as his persona (dissolute and free as that of the Old Master Salvator Rosa). Mortimer’s example allows us to recognize once more the “rhetorical nature of the artistic field at this time”,¹⁷² as Martin Myrone has put it. His strategies, enacted at various levels of the artistic field, all contributed towards building up a recognizable and original artistic style, and a corresponding unusual personality for himself. Despite, or rather because, of their unconventionality, these could resonate better with the needs of new markets.

Mortimer’s figures of *banditti* are placed in a realm which is very vaguely determined, both from a geographical and from a historical point of view. Morland’s *Shepherd Boys* (Fig. 30) instead are located in a roughly contemporary moment, and in a setting that, if not locally determined, is at least generically identifiable as English. The shepherds’ features are prettified and their outfits dignified in order to meet the standards of contemporary artistic decorum for the depiction of rural poverty (their outfits are not ragged, they wear shoes).¹⁷³ Furthermore, the red stains on the sheep’s wool indicating ownership correspond to a contemporary agricultural practice, and tell us that these

¹⁶⁹ John Sunderland, “John Hamilton Mortimer and Salvator Rosa”, *The Burlington Magazine* 112, no. 809 (1970): pp. 527.

¹⁷⁰ Myrone, *Body Building*, p. 130.

¹⁷¹ Sunderland, “John Hamilton Mortimer and Salvator Rosa”, pp. 528.

¹⁷² Myrone, *Body Building*, p. 144.

¹⁷³ For a discussion of the shifting boundaries of taste in the representation of rural labour in this period see Sam Smiles, “Dressed to Till: Representational Strategies in the Depiction of Rural Labor, c. 1790-1830”, in *Prospects for the Nation: Recent Essays in British Landscape, 1750-1880*, eds. Michael Rosenthal, Christiana Payne and Scott Wilcox (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 79-95.

sheep are, ultimately, commodities, and that they exist in a capitalistic economy, even as the shepherds' existence seems to unfold in a place far from any economic centre. In contrast to the indeterminacy of Mortimer's *banditti*, Morland's *Shepherd Boys* could feasibly be described as an authentic depiction of English rustics, especially for a refined urban audience only vaguely aware of the realities of rural life. By referring to a roughly contemporary social order inhabiting a generically English rustic setting, the representation evoked the virtues of a recent past untainted by the worst consequences of capitalism, playing on the commonplace which associated the countryside with authentic virtues and the city with vice.¹⁷⁴

Nevertheless, the shepherds in Morland's drawings are still rough and impolite masculine figures, presented as a close up. Andrew Hemingway has discussed 'breadth' (handling low subjects through atmospheric distance) as a fundamental device which was employed in contemporary picturesque aesthetics (derived from Venetian, Dutch and Flemish examples) in order to attenuate the potentially disturbing effects caused by the close depiction of contemporary social realities in landscape or genre subjects.¹⁷⁵ Morland's shepherds are physically closer to the viewer than contemporary aesthetic canons would have recommended and the sensation of their proximity is reinforced by the tactile features of the drawing's rough surface. Sam Smiles has observed that contemporary aesthetics for depicting rural workers required, in addition to dignified features, the use of a correspondingly refined technical treatment, namely a finished handling and an orderly composition, in order to keep low subjects at a distance, preventing them from invading the polite sphere of the viewer.¹⁷⁶ Morland's unruly and urgent drawing lines, as well as his use of rough graphic media superimposed on each other, contradict these dictates, and lend his rustic subjects an effect of disturbing proximity to the polite viewer. At the same time, the drawing suggests that Morland belongs to the rustic world he represented, since the drawing texture he created possesses the physicality of the subjects he depicted.

¹⁷⁴ See Andrew Hemingway, "Sheep as Pictorial Motif: Pastoral and Counter-Pastoral", in *Landscape Between Ideology and the Aesthetic: Marxist Essays on British Art and Art Theory, 1750-1850*, vol. 135 of *Historical Materialism Book Series* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), pp. 252-253.

¹⁷⁵ Hemingway, "Sheep as Pictorial Motif", pp. 271-272.

¹⁷⁶ Smiles, "Dressed to Till", pp. 85-88.

Moreover, Morland's transgression of contemporary aesthetic boundaries may have been due to the medium itself, since drawings were usually enjoyed privately, kept in gentlemen's portfolios and shown to (especially male) guests in equally intimate terms, and were therefore much less restrained by the moral expectations of public taste.¹⁷⁷ Henry Angelo, a contemporary memoirist, reports to this regard an anecdote on Morland. During a visit to Thomas Rowlandson when the two artists were sharing lodgings, Angelo was told: "He [Morland]'s in the next room, which he has for painting. You had better go and do the same with him, and drink gin and water; he'll like your company, and make you a drawing for nothing".¹⁷⁸ The concessions to naturalism of Morland's *Shepherd Boys*, and its representation of the pastoral as geographically and historically closer to the viewer, mean that this drawing may have functioned as a fantasy of authentic English rustic manhood, unrestrained by the modern temptations of luxury and politeness perceived to pose a corruptive, feminizing threat on masculinities in the urban setting. Morland's shepherds could be seen by London audiences as untamed, uncivilized, and (almost completely) un-commercial masculinities. With *Shepherd Boys*, Morland dealt with a depiction of rough, authentic, and primitive virility akin to Mortimer's drawings of *banditti*.

However, Morland's works share more with Mortimer's than that. Mortimer had styled his own persona after Rosa, emulating his reputation for the pursuit of originality in art and his sublime, if dissolute character, and even calling himself "the English Salvator". Likewise, Morland was associated and associated himself with the art and personae of Netherlandish genre painters: his imagery of unidealized rustic subjects derived from seventeenth-century genre drawings of the type produced by David Teniers the Younger or Paulus Potter, increasingly sought after by connoisseurs (for example Richard Payne Knight, Uvedale Price and Sir Joshua Reynolds) in London auctions at the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁷⁹ The catalogue of the first opening of the Morland

¹⁷⁷ See to this regard John Barrell, "The Private Comedy of Thomas Rowlandson", *Art History* 6, no. 4 (1983): pp. 423-441.

¹⁷⁸ Henry Charles William Angelo, *Reminiscences of Henry Angelo: With Memoirs of His Late Father and Friends*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1828-30), 2:222.

¹⁷⁹ See the examples of the drawings by David Teniers the Younger: *A Knife-grinder*, *A Peasant Carrying a Long Rod Over His Shoulder*, and *Sheet of Eight Studies of a Soldier*, originally in the collections of Uvedale Price, Richard Payne Knight and Sir Joshua Reynolds respectively, and *A Bull Standing* and *Study of a Dog Lying Down* by Paulus Potter, both from Richard Payne Knight's collection; all are held by the British Museum.

Gallery at Daniel Orme's shop (1792) therefore referred to him as "the English Teniers".¹⁸⁰ The personalities of these rustic genre painters were believed to have been as debased as the subjects they represented in their works.¹⁸¹ In associating his persona with theirs, Morland and his collaborators appropriated a rough, unconventional and authentic masculinity. This resonated clearly in his drawings, where his unique use of the medium allowed him to articulate the rusticity of both his preferred subjects and his own persona, made evident through the vibrant and thick layering of his calligraphic signs.

Yet although Morland looked to Netherlandish genre artists for the content of his works, in terms of handling of the drawing medium he was primarily indebted to Thomas Gainsborough. Many of Gainsborough's drawings were collected in portfolios of contemporary collectors such as Knight, to which Morland plausibly had access. Furthermore, in the years 1784 to 1788, Thomas Rowlandson had been producing *Imitations of Modern Drawings*, a publication which translated into print the graphic output of a variety of contemporary artists, including many works by Gainsborough.¹⁸² Indeed, Morland may himself have seen the Gainsborough drawings on which Rowlandson was working, since the two artists were already acquainted during those years (Rowlandson drew three portraits of Morland, one of which has tentatively been dated to the years 1786 – 1787).¹⁸³

While it seems that Gainsborough never used the combination of pencil and chalk that Morland employed in *Shepherd Boys*, he had worked extensively, but separately, with both media. Gainsborough had also experimented with mixing different media in his drawings, for which he invented unconventional techniques (for example a method

¹⁸⁰ [Daniel Orme], *Catalogue of a Superb Selection of Paintings, Exhibiting at the Morland Gallery, No. 14 Old Bond Street. Being a Choice Collection of the Chef d'Oeuvres of That Truly and Much Admired Master the English Teniers* (exhibition catalogue, London: 1792), Picture Catalogue II, 1790-94, microfilm, National Art Library, London, p. 2.

¹⁸¹ Refer to Chapter 3.

¹⁸² Prints from Rowlandson's series *Imitations of Modern Drawings* are held by the British Museum. Morland must have had access to drawings and/or prints after drawings by Gainsborough, since the subject of *A Woodland Scene with Two Figures in a Cart Passing a Cottage On A Road* (British Museum), one of his published drawings included in the first instalment of Daniel Orme's book *Sketches by G. Morland* (1 January 1793), closely resembles the print after Gainsborough's drawing *Wooded Landscape with Country Cart and Figures* (c. 1775-1780, Gainsborough's House, Sudbury). Morland draws heavily from Gainsborough's composition and drawing style, but makes the forest more luxuriant.

¹⁸³ See the watercolour and two drawings held by the British Museum.

called 'mopping', which consisted in using fingertips in combination with small sponges as artistic tools). Gainsborough's facility with drawing expressed itself in a sketchy manner which used loose zigzag lines (rather than orderly hatching) for defining chiaroscuro and volume, and hasty broken strokes for outlines (see for example *Study of a Tree Trunk and Foliage*, Fig. 32, 1750-55, British Museum). His rapid and rhythmical graphic signs produced a sensation of movement in many of his landscapes, and he was especially interested in the balance of light effects in his drawings.¹⁸⁴ As with his painterly technique, Gainsborough's treatment of drawing was prone to criticism for its lack of finish, which seemed irretrievably far from the academic fold. Nevertheless, while contemporary commentators usually advised artists against imitating Gainsborough's drawing style, they also tended to recognize it as an expression of his virtuosity and uniqueness.¹⁸⁵

Morland's drawings by contrast described rustic subjects without the distancing and idealization employed by Gainsborough, and through a more physical drawing texture which enhances their proximity. Contemporary criticism of Morland's drawings could therefore be particularly harsh, as exemplified in various books of drawing lessons published between 1806 and 1815 by William Marshall Craig.¹⁸⁶ In these texts, Craig endeavored to teach the correct method for drawing (especially animals and landscapes), that is a method possessing the mimetic qualities he considered indispensable to any drawing worth the name. To do so, he illustrated a number of techniques which students were to avoid, generically labeled with the adjective 'slovenly'. In eight instalments, the word recurred as many times: this was clearly a loaded and important term for Craig. As an adjective, 'slovenly' could be applied to any activity carried out without care, effort or precision. At the same time, older meanings of the word, still in use, returned it to the semantic fields of moral and physical

¹⁸⁴ John Hayes, *The Drawings of Thomas Gainsborough*, 2 vols. (London: Zwemmer, 1970), 1:10, 12-15, 23-24.

¹⁸⁵ Hayes, *Drawings of Thomas Gainsborough*, 1:15.

¹⁸⁶ The comments which follow are taken from three or four drawing manuals all published by this same author, William Marshall Craig (*Landscape Animals in a Series of Progressive Studies*, *Instruction in Drawing Landscape* and/or *The Instructor in Drawing Landscape* and *The Complete Instructor in Drawing*), of which a limited number of instalments are randomly bound in a book held at the National Art Library: William Marshall Craig, *Landscape Animals in a Series of Progressive Studies* (London: E. Orme, 1812). These drawing manuals arguably consisted of a larger number of instalments, and so the National Art Library's book only gives an incomplete idea of them.

corruption: long used to indicate lewdness, 'slovenly' could refer to untidiness and dirtiness in the eighteenth century, sometimes associated with animals or rusticity.¹⁸⁷

And although he did not attach the term to Morland's sketches, Craig explicitly referred to them as examples which the student of drawing should not emulate.¹⁸⁸ Morland's forms were "but imperfectly indicated", and his manner of "shading" and "filling up" through "extra lines" (arguably here referring to the loose zigzag lines, superimposed on each other, that the artist used to render chiaroscuro and volume) tended "only to puzzle the learner".¹⁸⁹ Craig criticized such sketchy and imprecise manners of drawing: he considered multiple, broken lines and calligraphic scrawls for defining outlines as having nothing to do with the shapes and surfaces that they were supposed to reproduce.

Related to ideas of dirtiness and laziness, and close to the semantic fields of animality and rusticity, 'slovenly' seems to be a useful word for characterizing Morland's typical drawings both in terms of their peculiar treatment of the medium, and in terms of the subjects they represented. The word is particularly fit to describe the artist's most representative animal, the pig (known for its filthy habits and for being unable to walk long distances on its legs).¹⁹⁰ And while the artist's 'slovenly' drawing style seemed to adumbrate spontaneous and natural talent, rather than regular and careful application, his focus on pigs suggested that in choosing subjects for his works Morland was driven by expressive urgencies, rather than by commercial rewards. This further contextualizes Gilpin's quote at the opening of the chapter, suggesting that a great artist exclusively followed his personal desires in the production of his works, regardless of accepted aesthetic or moral boundaries. 'Slovenliness of brush' was nevertheless a recurring motif of early nineteenth-century artistic critique. It was condemned by a variety of commentators and it manifested a generalized difficulty in making positive evaluations

¹⁸⁷ See "slovenly, adj.", *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/182156?rskey=K4dsCQ&result=1&isAdvanced=false>.

¹⁸⁸ More specifically, Craig was referring to the printed reproductions of Morland's sketches as they appeared in a drawing book entitled *Sketches by G. Morland* (1792-1799), which I discuss in the second section of this chapter.

¹⁸⁹ See Craig, *Landscape Animals*, p. 1.

¹⁹⁰ For a thorough discussion on the pig, refer to Chapter 1.

of styles, since this expression was usually attached to works whose treatment provided particular evidence of the artist's hand.¹⁹¹

However, both the kind of primitive masculinity depicted in *Shepherd Boys* (Fig. 30) and the drawing's unconventional manner, suggest that this graphic work may have been conceived to appeal to its original owner, Richard Payne Knight, and his radical Whig aesthetics of the free imagination. Knight was already a collector of drawings by those contemporary artists (Mortimer and Gainsborough) and Old Masters (David Teniers the Younger and Paulus Potter) closest in style and subject to Morland's finished drawings.¹⁹² Thus, Knight's taste might help us understand why Morland dedicated time to the production of drawings as works of art in their own right. Knight was one of the major collectors and connoisseurs of drawings of his time: in Thomas Lawrence's portrait of him (1794, Whitworth Art Gallery, The University of Manchester) he appears lost in his thoughts while leafing through an album of drawings. At his death in 1824 Knight's graphic collection, bequeathed to the British Museum, consisted of as many as 1144 works. He was an important supporter of contemporary artists, although his relatively limited finances did not allow him to acquire many oil paintings.¹⁹³

A Whig Member of Parliament since 1780, Knight's radical and oppositional attitude and his tendency to provoke outrage through the adoption of scandalous positions can be recognized in all his writings. In 1786 he published *An Account of the Remains of the Worship of Priapus*, conceived for circulation only within the Society of Dilettanti's circle, with a specially bound copy reserved for the Prince of Wales.¹⁹⁴ This investigation into the origin and nature of phallic worship concluded that all religions originated from the worship of sex.¹⁹⁵ Knight here argued that for the primitives the phallus had been an

¹⁹¹ See Andrew Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery and Urban Culture in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 123-124.

¹⁹² See note 179 in this chapter for examples of drawings by these Netherlandish artists in Knight's collection.

¹⁹³ Michael Clarke and Nicholas Penny, eds., *The Arrogant Connoisseur: Richard Payne Knight, 1751-1824* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), pp. 93-96, 104.

¹⁹⁴ See C. Stumpf-Condry and S. Skedd, "Knight, Richard Payne (1751-1824)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-15733>; Clarke and Penny, *The Arrogant Connoisseur*, p. 58.

¹⁹⁵ Andrew Ballantyne, *Architecture, Landscape and Liberty: Richard Payne Knight and the Picturesque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 93-94.

apt object to serve as a symbol of the creative generative principle belonging to a male deity, since it was the organ which enabled them to reproduce.¹⁹⁶ Knight therefore promoted a primitive male sexuality that is free in its closeness to nature, unrestrained by the hypocrisy of decency. Furthermore Knight closely linked sexual freedom to artistic creativity. In a typical Romantic fashion, Knight associated originality in art with closeness to nature (an idea endorsed by other influential authors in this period, for example Gilpin, as indicated by the quote at the beginning of this chapter) and for this reason he rejected academic teaching as the enemy of artistic genius.¹⁹⁷ He preferred artists who had achieved their own techniques of reproducing nature, away from artistic precedents and through a close engagement with their artistic materials.¹⁹⁸

When it came to the representation of rustic motifs, Knight systematized his aesthetic ideas in *The Landscape: A Didactic Poem* (1794), and then in *Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste* (1805). In contrast to his friend Uvedale Price (*Essay on Picturesque*, 1794; *Dialogue on the Distinct Characters of the Picturesque and the Beautiful*, 1801), who believed that aesthetic qualities belonged inherently to certain objects (an argument borrowed from Edmund Burke) and aesthetic judgements hence depended entirely on sensations, Knight was more akin to Scottish Associationism and placed much importance on the trains of associations with our previous experience which external objects prompt.¹⁹⁹ For Knight picturesque therefore meant “after the manner of painters”.²⁰⁰ Rough surfaces were to be considered the most pleasing to the eye, because they could produce much more varied sensations and associations compared to smooth ones in terms of effects of light and colour.²⁰¹ Knight believed that in art the works’ formal aspects were responsible for stimulating pleasing aesthetic responses in the viewer, and that the beholder’s knowledge of previous art reinforced and guided this pleasure.²⁰² Knight’s aesthetic theory allowed him to privilege formal aspects of painting and therefore to undermine conventional hierarchies of painters. Dutch and

¹⁹⁶ Frank J. Messmann, *Richard Payne Knight: The Twilight of Virtuosity* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1974), pp. 50-51.

¹⁹⁷ Ballantyne, *Architecture, Landscape and Liberty*, pp. 28-29, 166-169, 305.

¹⁹⁸ See Clarke and Penny, *The Arrogant Connoisseur*, p. 91.

¹⁹⁹ Clarke and Penny, *The Arrogant Connoisseur*, pp. 82-85.

²⁰⁰ Clarke and Penny, *The Arrogant Connoisseur*, p. 88.

²⁰¹ Clarke and Penny, *The Arrogant Connoisseur*, p. 89.

²⁰² See Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery and Urban Culture*, p. 70.

Flemish painters were therefore to be considered as equal, and even superior, to Italian masters.²⁰³

Even if Knight often placed himself in opposition to accepted ideas on political, religious and aesthetic matters, his views were far from progressive. As pointed out by Andrew Hemingway, the category of the picturesque which embodied Knight's ideas on taste was the expression of a detached and exclusive perspective on landscape. It originated from a vogue diffused among landowners, which consisted in aestheticizing their countryside properties by transforming them into landscape gardens. Of this vogue Knight's plan for his own estate of Downton Castle (near Ludlow, Shropshire) was one of the most influential examples.²⁰⁴ Knight's taste, as expressed in his acquisition of Morland's drawing *Shepherd Boys* (Fig. 30), was especially for transgressive and low subjects on the part of a cultured and progressive, masculine elite, at odds with the social realities of such representations. Pierre Bourdieu's sociological analysis on the relationship between taste and class can help us understand Knight's transgressive aesthetics as a typical elite-defining view on art.

Bourdieu has demonstrated how in a modern, autonomous field of artistic production the definition of legitimate art is established through a struggle among classes, in which the cultured elites prevail with the imposition of an aesthetic which he terms the "pure gaze".²⁰⁵ The "pure gaze" corresponds to the refined eye of the connoisseur, a member of a select minority who (Knight argued) could bring to his aesthetic experiences the potential for pleasurable associations offered by his knowledge of art. By contrast, the majority of viewers he understood to have a more limited range of reference, and to rely mostly on sensations. This expertise - whose achievement required freedom from economic concerns and gratuitous expenditure of time, and was therefore itself a mark of distinction – allowed Knight's connoisseur (similarly to Bourdieu's aesthete) to detach himself from pure matters of content. By focusing on stylistic qualities, the connoisseur could transcend the subject of the representation, and draw pleasure from the comparison of its formal characteristics with those of previously experienced aesthetic

²⁰³ Clarke and Penny, *The Arrogant Connoisseur*, pp. 91-92.

²⁰⁴ See Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery and Urban Culture*, p. 67.

²⁰⁵ See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice, with a new introduction by Tony Bennett (1984; repr., London and New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 24, 41.

objects. While unrefined viewers could only make judgements of taste on the basis of sentimental and ethical considerations, the connoisseur's refined eye allowed him independent - indeed, "pure" - aesthetic experiences. He could therefore see beauty even in the most unlikely objects, such as Morland's rustics. The connoisseur's eye was not only refined, but also refining: the "pure gaze" is in itself creative, because it endows its owner with the capacity to constitute aesthetically even common and meaningless objects.²⁰⁶ In this context, the emphasis placed on the beholder in Gilpin's quote at the opening of this chapter can be better understood: the construction of meanings for artworks required also the contribution of knowledgeable viewers. Knight and his circle's attribution of aesthetic status to artworks that might be both meaningless and transgressive of the ethical standards expected for art takes this "strategy of distinction"²⁰⁷ to its logical conclusions. Through this standpoint, the picturesque connoisseur set himself apart from the common, unrefined viewer and manifested the extent of his power to define what legitimate art was.²⁰⁸

In addition to *Shepherd Boys* (Fig. 30), Knight acquired another four drawings by Morland, of the same size and also dated 1792.²⁰⁹ Morland's depiction of primitive masculinity, as well as his rough and tactile treatment of this rustic subject, resonated well with Knight's taste. He preferred sketchy drawings to more finished scenes, and although Morland's *Shepherd Boys* was far from a quick preparatory work, its treatment suggested an urgent and imprecise realization, preserving something of the immediacy of a quick sketch. The sketchy technique employed in *Shepherd Boys*, particularly suitable to characterize the unidealized masculinity which that drawing portrays, was nevertheless applied by Morland to a range of rustic representations in the graphic medium. These were similarly conceived to cater for connoisseurs able to appreciate this type of low subject. In some of these finished works Morland employed pen, pencil and wash as an alternative to his most usual combination of pencil and chalk. 'Tinted' or 'stained drawings', as works realized through these media were known in this period, allowed him to characterize other aspects of rusticity. Of this category, *Landscape with*

²⁰⁶ See Bourdieu, *Distinction*, pp. 24, 31, 36, 42, 45, 47, 278.

²⁰⁷ See Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 279.

²⁰⁸ See Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 40.

²⁰⁹ These are *Horses Resting, Leaving the Stable* (Fig. 29), *The Countryman's Prayer* and *The Quarryman's Cart*, all held at the British Museum.

Figures (Fig. 33, Victoria & Albert Museum) is a fine example: even if smaller than *Shepherd Boys*, it is also of significant size (c. 25 x 35 cm) and is a similarly very finished work. *Landscape with Figures* portrays a scene set at the turn of a country road passing through the woods: in the foreground, to the right, a traveller carrying a sack on his shoulder walks on the road, helping himself with a stick, amid his heavily weighed pony and his dog. On the left foreground, resting on a slope by the wayside, three figures lazily watch them approaching: a woman is seated, while only the bust of a man is visible by her side. The man appears to be leaning on his arm; a little child is sprawled on the slope behind them. The basket which accompanies the three figures seems to suggest they are a rustic family on the way to or from the market, rather than gypsies, and the woman's dignified outfit suggests they are not rough figures, but just a family of peasants taking a break during a long walk, possessing a level of politeness appropriate to their social rank.

The subject of this drawing is less transgressive than *Shepherd Boys* (Fig. 30) especially in the way the composition is conceived: the viewer's encounter with the rustic figures is mediated by more breadth, since they are seen from a distance, and are much more subordinated to the landscape. Roughness is nevertheless preserved in the treatment of the natural background, and the media of pencil, pen and washes particularly contribute to articulate it. A priming consisting of yellowish-brownish wash seems in fact to have been used first of all to give a grubby and stained quality to the paper. On top of that different media overlap similarly to that seen in *Shepherd Boys*, although with a relatively more economic use of strokes and a more painterly technique, due to the use of different tools. A first underdrawing in pencil seems to have been drawn over in a brownish pen, to which Morland has applied his typical style, able to describe small rustic figures with fidelity in a few, precise strokes, as well as to render freely the natural background, with expressive scrawls. While the ink is more diluted for the elements in the background, to suggest atmospheric distance, the addition of a pinkish wash (in two areas, at the beginning and at the end of the road) helps to further highlight the diagonal organization of the composition. The drawing is in fact characterized by a prevalence of drawn areas, but a balance of lights and shades is obtained through the two lighter areas - a bit of sky visible among the trees and an area

of white around the three walking figures which also comprises the road - placed on the diagonal going from top left to bottom right.

Even if with its breadth *Landscape with Figures* (Fig. 33) relied on a more traditional type of composition than *Shepherd Boys*, it similarly presented the viewer with a quite obstructed view, privileging the description of nature's accidents, even in their humbler, rougher and untidier aspects, to the imposition of an abstract order. Representations such as *Landscape with Figures* and *Shepherd Boys* could be perceived as particularly naturalistic in their focusing on individual elements of the landscape, instead of trying to subordinate such elements to a corrective composition in order to produce a more abstract, generalized view. The appeal of such naturalistic drawings in eighteenth-century Britain was not as innocent as it seems because, as Ann Bermingham has argued, in this period different modalities for landscape representation resonated with the issues agitating the political discourse. When Morland realized *Shepherd Boys* (1792), fears of a Jacobin contagion had reached their height in Britain.²¹⁰ Whig and Tory anti-Jacobin rhetoric attributed the faults of the new political system in France to excess of theory, systematization and abstraction, concepts at the very opposite of the British empiricist tradition as well as the nationalist mythology of commonsense.²¹¹ In this light, the British constitution, the result of successive and 'organic' additions over time, impossible to comprehend in a unifying view, could be constructed as 'natural'. Seen through the lens of this contemporary conservative rhetoric, representing nature's individual variety somewhat translated in visual terms the nationalistic idea of British liberty: a liberty, for those at the various levels of the social order, to remain exactly in the position which nature had assigned them. The parallel between landscape representation and political discourse was made explicit by Price when he criticized the open prospects of Capability Brown's gardening esthetics by associating them with the homogenizing tendencies of revolutionary France.²¹² Our discussion is making evident how in the late eighteenth century the idea of genius did not necessarily coincide with our current conception, of a free thinking and liberal personality. In this period, genius

²¹⁰ Ann Bermingham, "System, Order and Abstraction: The Politics of English Landscape Drawings around 1795", in *Landscape and Power*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (1994; repr., Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 77, 79, 80.

²¹¹ David Simpson, *Romanticism, Nationalism, and the Revolt Against Theory* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 43, 50, 59.

²¹² Bermingham, "System, Order and Abstraction", pp. 78, 83, 85.

and originality could be associated with conservative ideas such as primitive masculinity, anti-revolutionary politics, nationalism, and as we will see, discourses on native talent.

Reconstructing the context within which Morland's *Shepherd Boys* was produced is leading us to uncover a contemporary culture around drawings which involve more participants than their producers. Until now the chapter's discussion has dealt with illustrating how Morland (similarly to other contemporary artists and with the collaboration of other agents such as his patrons) mobilized the meanings of drawing with the invention of a personal, idiosyncratic style in this medium, in order to construct his unique persona as that of an authentic, masculine genius. In this second section, we will turn to the commoditable quality of artistic genius and its idiosyncratic style, through the examination of Morland's exhibited and published graphic works. Paradoxically as it may seem, the sheer uniqueness of Morland's persona and style made his drawings particularly suitable for commodification in an increasingly commercialized art market.²¹³ It is not by chance that in the quote at the beginning of this chapter, Gilpin recurred to the commercial metaphor of a "magazine" when describing the artist's imagination: when put to lucrative use, this could represent a warehouse of valuable goods.²¹⁴

Graphic works which dealt with rough subjects through a 'slovenly' treatment, often featuring the imagery of a rougher masculinity and impoliteness, seemed to function particularly well within the larger context of a shared taste for these artworks expressed by aesthetically engaged and politically progressive elite men (such as Knight). The contrast between the two poles of this cultural phenomenon is made explicit in James Gillray's satirical print from 1807 entitled *Connoisseurs Examining a Collection of George Morland's (sic)* (Fig. 34, British Museum). The print describes the corner of an exhibition room, where five men are looking at numerous unframed paintings hung on the two visible walls, all by the recently deceased George Morland. Four figures of gentlemen, dressed well if sloppily, are shown gathered in front of a canvas depicting two pigs lying

²¹³ Bermingham, *Learning to Draw*, p. 144.

²¹⁴ See "magazine, n.", *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/112144?rskey=zaHBi6&result=1&isAdvanced=false>.

on the straw outside their sty, a canvas at which the men gaze intently. A corpulent and grotesque fifth man is seen lifting a painting of a boar from the wall with his chubby hands, while with gross, protruding lips he spits on it, perhaps in an attempt to clean it. While the figure on the right has been identified unanimously as a picture dealer and restorer known as Mortimer (which may set the exhibition in his private commercial gallery) the identity of the other four people in the print is less certain.²¹⁵ The man in a light coat shown observing the painting through a pair of spectacles held in reverse, and grasping a “Catalog of Pictures by Morl...” with his other hand, has been identified as either John Julius Angerstein or Captain William Baillie. Behind him the remaining three men have been identified, from left to right, as Matthew Mitchell, Caleb Whitefoord (shown as well bringing a glass close to his eye), and George Baker (who holds in his hand a paper on which can be read the word ‘pigs’). All of them were renowned collectors and connoisseurs, and the print refers to a perceived contradiction between public and private taste in this period.²¹⁶

While academic principles required that public art should tackle historical subjects, private collectors seemed to prefer the simple pleasures offered by rustic genre scenes. Gillray’s print also suggests that the private nature of this appreciation for low genre subjects is transformed by the modern art world. Within this context, works of this type could end up hung in the public space of a gallery or in the main rooms of smaller

²¹⁵ For the identification of the figure of the art dealer with Mortimer see: Thomas Wright and Joseph Grego, eds., *The Works of James Gillray, the Caricaturist: With the History of His Life and Time* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1873), p. 352.

²¹⁶ See Mary Dorothy George, *1801-1810* (1947), vol. 8 of *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, 11 vols. (London: British Museum), p. 570, no. 10791; Richard Godfrey, with an essay by Mark Hallett, *James Gillray: The Art of Caricature* (London: Tate, 2001), p. 200, no. 182b; “Connoisseurs Examining a Collection of George Morland’s (*sic*)”, Romantic Circles, Romantic Circles Gallery, <https://www.rc.umd.edu/gallery/connoisseurs-examining-collection-george-morland%E2%80%99s>. See also Timothy Clayton and Anita McConnell, “Baillie, William (1723-1810)”, Sarah Palmer, “Angerstein, John Julius (c. 1732-1823)”, and D. G. C. Allan, “Whitefoord, Caleb (1734-1810)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-1073>, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-549> and <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-29282>; “Matthew Mitchell (Biographical Details)” and “George Baker (Biographical Details)”, The British Museum, http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/term_details.aspx?bioid=175356 and http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/term_details.aspx?bioid=133584.

townhouses. Gillray's scene discusses the paradoxical nature of a distinction between private and public taste through a medium, print, in itself placed in between these two categories. *Connoisseurs Examining a Collection of George Morland's (sic)* could in fact be meant for private enjoyment when collected in a gentleman's portfolio, but could equally be publicly exhibited in a shop's window.²¹⁷ In addition to lampooning Morland's typically vulgar subjects, Gillray's print was ironic about connoisseurial culture, a subject of much satire in these decades.²¹⁸ The four connoisseurs are shown observing, with knowledgeable attitudes, scenes of rusticity of which polite and urban gentlemen could not possibly be experts. The print suggests that rather than being leaders of taste, connoisseurs are influenced by market forces and driven to appreciate commercially successful works (in fact their gaze seems to be directed to Morland's pigs by the coarse and spitting Mr Mortimer). The elegant and skinny figures of the connoisseurs are in jarring contrast with the fat and gross body of the art dealer, and similarly the elegant exhibition setting – a refined London interior characterized by plaster ceiling, a golden moulding and walls decorated with pilasters – is set against the numerous rustic subjects typical of Morland's production, satirized through an exaggeration of their vulgarity.

Gillray's print can be read as a criticism of the commercialization and popularization of art, significantly exemplified by Morland's paintings, singled out as commercial art par excellence. The print strongly argues against the idea that Morland's paintings could indeed be considered as real works of art, and criticizes the way in which his works were marketed as such by unscrupulous dealers. The equation between Morland's vulgar subject matter and the equally coarse ways in which his works were commercialized is embodied by the figure of Mr Mortimer. With his grotesque obesity and gross vulgarity, the art dealer is depicted in a way which makes him close to the vulgar countrymen and pigs of Morland's paintings. While he spits at the boar's canvas to clean it, he also does so in the direction of the four connoisseurs. The art dealer's gesture, read together with the subject of a Morland canvas only partially visible to us and placed just behind him, which portrays a cat arching its back in distaste, suggests that we have to read his

²¹⁷ "Connoisseurs Examining", Romantic Circles.

²¹⁸ See for example Henry Robert Morland's *The Connoisseur and Tired Boy* and Thomas Rowlandson's *Connoisseurs* (both British Museum).

attitude towards the connoisseurs as one of outright disrespect. Like the gypsy reading the hand of a gullible countryman in the fictive painting just above his head, Mortimer is tricking the connoisseurs into thinking that the works he exhibits are art. He is, like the grotesque woman at the door of her inn shown on the same wall, offering the elite men what they want, which in his case are paintings of low subjects. Further parallels can be made between the subjects of Morland's canvases and the main scene of the exhibition room: Mortimer herds the connoisseurs in the corner of his gallery with his coarse gesture of spitting, as the farmer in the painting just above the connoisseurs' heads drives two pigs out of their sty with the angry agitation of a pitchfork. The lustful greediness of the rustic forcing a buxom haymaker into an embrace in the painting at the top right of the same wall finds correspondence in Mortimer's own avidity: he is hoping to dispose profitably of his unworthy painting of pigs with the tricked connoisseurs. This transaction is as vulgar as the fat farmer's sale of his pig to a butcher in the painting at the top left of the print (this was not the first time that a sale of Morland's paintings was compared to a sale of pigs).²¹⁹ On the floor of the exhibition room, an empty gilded frame further comments on the jarring contrasts which characterize the whole scene: Gillray wants us to laugh at the prospect of any of the unframed Morland's paintings ending up enclosed by it, as if they were real artworks. Implicitly, Gillray's print also demonstrates how artists who produced original, transgressive artworks could often end up charged with pretension and fraud, although such attacks on genius only served to further reinforce its cult.²²⁰

We could argue that a similarly elite audience would have gathered to see the exhibition of drawings by contemporary artists held at Mrs Eleanor Lay's art shop in April 1794, which featured "original drawings by Morland, Rowlandson, Howit (*sic*), and other celebrated Modern Artists".²²¹ This exhibition can help us understand further Morland's finished drawings, since this is the only known occurrence during the artist's

²¹⁹ See "Royal Academy. Critique – No. III", *Morning Herald*, 4 May 1792, in which the commentator observed about Morland's paintings: "these Pictures ... are marked in the catalogue for sale. We doubt not the liberality of the public will keep pace with the *returning industry* of the Artist, and most sincerely hope, that he will be enabled to 'bring his *pigs* to an *excellent market*'". The quote in brackets was taken from a Gainsborough's letter from 1782 in which he commented his sale of *Girl with Pigs* to Sir Joshua Reynolds; see John Hayes, ed., *The Letters of Thomas Gainsborough* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 147.

²²⁰ Andrew Elfenbein, *Romantic Genius: The Prehistory of a Homosexual Role* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 37-38.

²²¹ "Morland, Rowlandson, &c.", *Morning Chronicle*, 9 April 1794.

maturity in which he presented himself publicly exclusively through drawings.²²² Like Payne Knight, the art dealers behind the exhibition were aligned with radical Whig politics. As Matthew and James Payne have recently revealed in their study of Thomas Rowlandson, Henry Wigstead was probably involved in the organization of this exhibition along with Eleanor Lay, who was the daughter of an ornamental carver and gilder from Soho.²²³ She had married her father's apprentice Henry Lay, and at the latter's death in the mid-1780s had continued to run the family business that also included the sale of pictures and prints from her premises in 121 Pall Mall, close to Carlton House, the residence of the Prince of Wales.²²⁴ Eleanor Lay had a close connection to Morland: in the passage we have already mentioned from his memoirs, Henry Angelo reports the artist to have been lodging above her shop at the same time as Rowlandson.²²⁵ The unidentified "Proprietor (...) induced to collect at great expense the drawings for this exhibition"²²⁶ could have corresponded to Henry Wigstead, owner of a thriving painting and decorating business in London, occasional business partner of Eleanor Lay and collector of contemporary drawings by, among the others, his friends Rowlandson and Samuel Howitt, Rowlandson's brother-in-law.²²⁷

Evidence suggests that another art dealer, the print publisher John Harris, must have been involved in this exhibition, since it especially promoted Morland's draughtsmanship (the latter's name was the first in all the advertisements, preceding even that of the equally famous Rowlandson). Instalments of the series *Sketches by G. Morland* published by Harris were available for sale at Mrs Lay's shop contemporarily with the exhibition. Relatively expensive (10s 6d each, £1 1s 0d for the coloured version), these printed reproductions of Morland's drawings could be sold in numerous copies and arguably their sale represented the main revenue of the show (exhibition catalogues were only 1s and the entrance was probably free since ticket prices were not

²²² As we will see in the next chapter, Daniel Orme's Morland Gallery only featured a very small number of drawings by the artist during its second opening in 1793, alongside his paintings.

²²³ The guess has been made in Matthew Payne and James Payne, *Regarding Thomas Rowlandson, 1757–1827: His Life, Art and Acquaintance* (London: Hogarth Arts, 2010), note 46, p. 176.

²²⁴ See Payne and Payne, *Regarding Thomas Rowlandson*, p. 122.

²²⁵ Angelo, *Reminiscences*, 2:222.

²²⁶ "Morland, Rowlandson, &c.", 9 April 1794.

²²⁷ See Payne and Payne, *Regarding Thomas Rowlandson*, note 46, p. 176, and 121–122; M. T. W. Payne and J. E. Payne, "Henry Wigstead, Rowlandson's Fellow-Traveller", *The British Art Journal* 4, no. 3 (2003): pp. 27–38.

mentioned).²²⁸ John Harris had been pivotal in the diffusion of Morland's drawings through this collection of prints, purportedly after the artist's private sketchbook, published in regular instalments during the 1790s. Harris probably conceived this exhibition as a means of boosting the sales of this publication, setting up a temporary collaboration with Mrs Lay and - perhaps - with Henry Wigstead, who could provide works by such draughtsmen as Howitt and Rowlandson, akin to Morland's drawing style and persona. The lack of an existing catalogue makes it difficult to dig deeper into Eleanor Lay's show since we do not know the titles, number of exhibits, or the names of the other artists whose works were included. Nevertheless we can infer something about the tone of this show by taking into consideration the Whig taste of its organizers and the typical output of the known artists who participated. It is unlikely that Morland's exhibits were the original sketches reproduced in Harris's print series; this correspondence was not indicated by the advertisements, which furthermore described the exhibits as 'drawings' and not as 'sketches'. Nevertheless they must have been dealing with similarly rustic subjects. At this time, thanks to his particularly close collaboration with Morland, John Harris could have even been in possession of other graphic works by the artist. Morland was close to John Harris in more than a commercial sense: the Royal Academy's catalogues report that Morland lived in Gerrard Street, where Harris had his shop (at no. 28), from at least 1794, and then moved to rooms above Harris's shop from 1797 until perhaps as late as 1799.²²⁹

In the 1770s and 1780s John Harris's firm had specialized in sporting subjects and cheap satirical prints.²³⁰ Through Rowlandson, who also published with him, Harris may have made Morland's acquaintance. The subjects of *Sketches by G. Morland* (figures of rustics and humble farm animals) allowed the firm to put together the two branches on which its reputation had rested till then: the depiction of animals and of humorous

²²⁸ "Drawings by the Celebrated G. Morland, J. (sic.) Rowlandson, &c.", *World*, 17 April 1794; the instalments' prices were advertised for example in *Morning Chronicle*, 16 March 1793. See Appendix 1 for a timeline of these publications and related exhibitions.

²²⁹ See Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts*, pp. 294-295. Incidentally, Henry Wigstead moved to 47 Gerrard Street with his wife in 1783, and was hence perhaps still Harris's neighbour at this time. See Payne and Payne, "Henry Wigstead, Rowlandson's Fellow-Traveller", p. 30.

²³⁰ Numerous prints published by John Harris are held at the British Museum; see King & Lochée, John Harris, *A Catalogue of the Valuable Stock in Trade of Mr John Harris, Printseller ... Containing Several Historical and Sea Views, a Great Number After Bunbury* (26-29 June 1812), General Collection, Sales Catalogues, 23.K.18120626, National Art Library, London; see also Timothy Clayton, *The English Print, 1688-1802* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 223.

subjects.²³¹ This project, which was the only one on which Harris and Morland would collaborate, occupied the publisher for the whole of the 1790s. At the end of these years, Harris dumped the venture, selling all the corresponding copperplates to another firm, Simpson and Thompson, who then republished the series immediately.²³² John Harris's publishing activity (for over fifty years and through frequent changes in the market) had been eclectic in character, spanning maps, fine topographical prints, literary and sentimental subjects, historic and maritime scenes, book illustrations, card and board games. As we learn from the posthumous sale of Harris's stock, in 1812 only a few works by Morland had remained in his hands, though he owned prints and copperplates of works by artists such as Mortimer, Rowlandson and Howitt. Almost sixty items (in a sale totalling 600 bids) were by Henry William Bunbury. Harris's firm had been consistently committed to publishing Bunbury's light satires from the 1780s to the 1800s, and owned a great number of his original plates.²³³ John Harris was arguably behind the addition of "the much-admired Original Drawings of Bunbury's Shakespeare"²³⁴ on 20 May 1794 as two-week highlight to Mrs Lay's exhibition, since corresponding printed reproductions were advertised as immediately available for sale at his own shop, 28 Gerrard Street.

The addition of works by Bunbury is telling for the associations that the public would have been encouraged to make especially between this artist and Morland in terms of subject matter, drawing style and persona. Bunbury was an acclaimed caricaturist of a generation prior to Morland who worked in a vigorous and sketchy style using pencil, chalks, and monochrome washes. He had firstly become known to a broad public with the patriotic satire *La cuisine de la Poste* (The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University), a watercolour exhibited at the RA show in 1770, for which Walpole renamed him the "second Hogarth". In 1779 he exhibited satires of military life at the Academy, from which followed a series of engravings. In the 1780s, among other things, Bunbury again engaged himself with print satires on another typically masculine activity, this time

²³¹ See Barrell, "Private Comedy of Thomas Rowlandson", pp. 423-441, for a discussion of the comic as a traditional element in the representation of the rural poor. Sporting and humorous subjects were however considered akin, since the ability to draw animals was judged to be one of the caricaturist's basic skills: see Godfrey, *James Gillray*, p. 225.

²³² See *Morning Herald*, 18 July 1800.

²³³ See King & Lochée, Harris, *Catalogue of the Valuable Stock*.

²³⁴ "Exhibition of Original Drawings, by Morland, Rowlandson, &c.", *World*, 20 May 1794.

hunting, in his two series *Hints to Bad Horsemen* and *An Academy for Grown Horsemen*.²³⁵ In 1791, Thomas Macklin commissioned him a (non-satirical) print series illustrative of soldiers' costumes. The works he exhibited alongside Morland's at Eleanor Lay's show were part of one of his last important commissions (never completed), a series of forty-eight drawings featuring scenes from Shakespeare's plays destined for Macklin's *Poet's Gallery*.²³⁶

Bunbury's commitment to the representation of unidealized masculinities was nowhere more explicit than in the 1781 pair of prints *Morning, or The Man of Taste*, and *Evening, or The Man of Feeling* (Fig. 35 and Fig. 36; both British Museum). The first is a scene of morning overindulgence: a wealthy man and his wife are having their breakfast served. The man holds in one hand a bowl with a spoon, in the other a groceries' bill. His belly protrudes obscenely from his trousers while a morsel of food is still half-way through his mouth. His equally obese wife meanwhile is lifting her hands, horrified by the smell coming from a dead duck which her (probably French) cook is showing them (the cook's long nose suggests that the food is putrid). The man is also struggling to transport lobsters and fish in another tray. On the left, a black servant is bringing two trays of muffins, while tea paraphernalia are already on the table.

The second scene describes three gentlemen having a glass of wine around a table at night (the clock in the back indicates eleven) while preparing to go to bed, perhaps after a day spent hunting. A young servant stands astride the leg of the man on the left, to help him remove his sporting boot; the man has a frustrated expression while he tightens his fists and pushes with his other leg on the child's back. His spurs lie on the floor. The man seated on the right has a night-cap but he is still completely dressed, and he is also shown wearing spurred boots. Perhaps the long day spent on horseback is catching up with him, since his face seems in pain while he brings a hand to his buttocks. He is preparing himself to use a medicine which lies on the table. A third man sits in the centre with his elbows on the table, eyes closed in a tired expression, his own

²³⁵ See Christopher Reeve, "Bunbury, Henry William (1750-1811)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3937>; Kate Grandjouan, "Super-size Caricature: Thomas Rowlandson's *Place des Victoires* at the Society of Artists in 1783", *British Art Studies*, Issue 4 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-04/kgrandjouan>.

²³⁶ See Reeve, "Bunbury, Henry William".

untidy and sparse hair revealed after removing the wig that a servant yawning in the back is bringing away in a box. On the right, another servant holds a candle and a warming-pan while she smiles at the child's attempt to remove the boot.²³⁷

The titles of the two prints, *Man of Taste* and *Man of Feeling*, lampoon new types of virility that were becoming current with the emergence of modern sensibility and politeness. The title of the second print referred in particular to a popular sentimental novel from a decade earlier, Henry Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling* (1771): its protagonist, Harley, was a naive young man whose innate sensibility made him prone to compassion and to emotional behaviour that was traditionally considered as exclusively feminine, such as weeping. Bunbury's satires describe masculine characters that radically contradict these modern models of male behaviour. The scenes portray a rough, impolite and ugly virility: the grotesque obscenity and gluttony of the man in the first scene push the boundaries of the aesthetically acceptable, while the wretched appearances of the three sportsmen after a day of masculine amusements in the second scene reveal everything but their politeness. Like Morland's, Bunbury's works also transgress conventional ideas of masculinity, beauty and politeness. It is therefore telling that Morland's and Bunbury's productions seem to have been perceived as related: Ingham Foster's portfolio of prints and drawings sold in 1783 included a large parcel of such works by and after Morland, alongside seventy-nine prints after Bunbury.²³⁸ In terms of artistic persona, associations between the two artists were useful to Morland for, though he was a member of the gentry, Bunbury promoted a similar idea of rough masculinity. Like Morland, Bunbury was a bon viveur, and with his wife he was known to entertain grandly the aristocracy and artistic circles of London, at the cost of frequent financial difficulties.²³⁹

²³⁷ George, 1771-1783 (1935), vol. 5 of *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, pp. 539-540, no. 5919 and 5920.

²³⁸ Mr. Barford, Ingham Foster, *A Catalogue of the First Part of the Museum of Ingham Foster, Deceased, Consisting of His Matchless Collection of Prints and Drawings, Which Will Be Sold by Auction, by Mr. Barford* (24 February 1783 and following days), *Archive.org*, https://archive.org/stream/gri_firstpartoft00barf#page/n0/mode/2up; Mr. Barford, Ingham Foster, *A Catalogue of the Remaining Part of the Collection of Prints and Drawings of the Late Ingham Foster Which Will Be Sold by Auction, by Mr. Barford* (22 May 1783 and following days), *Getty Provenance Index® databases* (Sale Catalog Br-A4111, indexed transcription). Furthermore, John Harris employed the same engraver, Joshua Kirby Baldrey, to translate Bunbury's and Morland's drawings: see J. M. Blatchly, "Baldrey, Joshua Kirby (1754-1828)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1159>.

²³⁹ See Reeve, "Bunbury, Henry William".

Like Bunbury, the other two artists included in Mrs Lay's exhibition, Thomas Rowlandson and Samuel Howitt, typically associated themselves with rough subjects and with unique drawing styles which reflected their masculine dissolute personae. Morland's friend Thomas Rowlandson worked for his whole life exclusively in the medium of drawing, although he had pursued the training traditionally recommended for becoming a painter by attending the Royal Academy schools between 1772 and 1778, by copying antique statuary at the Duke of Richmond sculpture gallery and by training at the Académie Royale in Paris. After his first exhibit at the RA in 1775, a drawing of biblical subject, Rowlandson switched to original and decisively unidealized subjects, especially of the satirical kind, at the very opposite of the lofty pursuits recommended by the RA teaching.²⁴⁰ Rowlandson's unconventional artistic choices were mirrored by a similarly unconventional and unruly lifestyle: he never got married, and he was known to have gambled all of his aunt's inheritance shortly after her death. Rowlandson had been profoundly influenced by the draughtmanship of John Hamilton Mortimer, to whom he was closer than Morland in terms of drawing style, his handling being likewise vigorous and incisive and his favourite media in his early career having similarly been pen and ink.²⁴¹ Even if he dedicated himself to a variety of subjects, Rowlandson shared with Morland an interest in rusticity, with which he dealt in a similarly unidealized manner, although in his own characteristic style.²⁴²

We do not know the titles of Rowlandson's works exhibited at Mrs Lay's, but arguably his numerous drawings of rustic subjects would have worked well alongside Morland's. Like his friend, in works of this type Rowlandson pushed the boundaries of contemporary artistic decorum, although he achieved this by means of their comic potential rather than through playing with their proximity and with their disturbing physical texture. As noted by John Barrell, in these works Rowlandson typically deployed a rounded line which exaggerated the buxom shapes of (especially females') rustic

²⁴⁰ See John Hayes, "Rowlandson, Thomas (1757-1827)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-24221>; Arline Meyer, "Parnassus from the Foothills: The Royal Academy Viewed by Thomas Rowlandson and John Wolcot", *The British Art Journal* 3, no. 2 (2002): pp. 32-43; Grandjouan, "Super-size Caricature".

²⁴¹ See Hayes, "Rowlandson, Thomas".

²⁴² For their drawings portraying lower-class subjects in rustic settings, both Rowlandson and Morland were arguably influenced by the humorous graphic production of a painter and draughtsman from a generation prior to theirs, John Collet. See Caitlin Blackwell, "John Collet (ca. 1725-1780): A Commercial Comic Artist" (PhD diss., University of York, 2013).

bodies, conveying an idea of sensual pleasure and physicality that would have represented an unacceptable transgression to the boundaries of decency if it had been attempted in the medium of painting, but which was arguably perfectly tolerable in the more private medium of drawing (see for example *The Cottage Door*, Fig. 37, Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California). Furthermore, in handling through his characteristically caricatural line not only the figures, but also the landscape elements of his rustic drawings, Rowlandson seemed to suggest that his depictions (and consequently their transgressive potential) had not to be taken too seriously.²⁴³ Dealt with through a characteristic drawing style, Rowlandson's works would have resonated with his masculine dissolute persona, akin, but veering even more towards irony, than Morland's.

Another artist included in Eleanor Lay's exhibition was Samuel Howitt: watercolourist, draughtsman, etcher and less proficient as a painter in oil, he had begun practising art as an amateur, but he became professional to cope with financial difficulties. His first public exhibition was at the Incorporated Society in 1782, when he presented himself with a group of stained drawings of hunting scenes. He specialized in the depiction of these typically masculine pursuits drawing from his own experience, since he was an excellent sportsman and liked to style himself as a refined gentleman, even if his family's wealth derived from his grandfather, a successful London merchant. Howitt was Rowlandson's brother-in-law and friend, but this relationship ended with his marriage when he made a second family with his mistress, a fact which perhaps accounts for his reputation as an unruly genius. Although generally lacking Rowlandson's humour, between 1798 and 1802 Howitt authored a group of satires, for example *A Fox Hunting Breakfast* (Fig. 38, 1798, British Museum), depicting a group of gentlemen feeding themselves while struggling to wake up and get ready for their early morning hunting expedition.²⁴⁴ In sum, what we know about the exhibition at Mrs Lay's shop, through this investigation into the taste of its organizers and the typical output of the artists who participated, suggests that Morland's and all the other works included dealt with

²⁴³ Barrell, "Private Comedy of Thomas Rowlandson", pp. 423-441.

²⁴⁴ Ruth Cohen, "Howitt, Samuel (1756/7-1823)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-13997>; M. T. W. Payne and J. E. Payne, "Samuel Howitt's Funny Turn: Samuel Howitt (1756-1823), Sporting and Wildlife Artist", *The British Art Journal* 12, no. 1 (2011): pp. 19-28.

subjects transgressing the boundaries of conventional masculinity, beauty and politeness through idiosyncratic, 'slovenly' graphic styles and a satirical approach.²⁴⁵

And as suggested above, unique personas and idiosyncratic styles as those of the artists included in Eleanor Lay's exhibition were particularly suitable for commodification in a commercialized art market. Colin Campbell has pushed this line of thinking a bit further, evidencing how the personality of the Romantic genius could be seen as actually akin to "that distinctive form of autonomous, self-illusory hedonism which underlies modern consumer behavior".²⁴⁶ At the same time, the cult itself of artistic originality can be seen as ironically caught in a double bind, since artists that strive to define their peculiar styles are contemporarily subjected to the rules of fashion dominating the art market. Also, they are expected to repeat themselves and stick to their styles. However, originality can also be seen as exchangeable, since artists can borrow elements of their colleagues' original works without straightforwardly copying them.²⁴⁷ Another aspect of inventing a unique genius persona and a corresponding idiosyncratic style in a commercialized art market is that printing techniques for the mechanical reproduction of images can be seen to paradoxically play a significant role in reinforcing, rather than undermining, their same characters of uniqueness.²⁴⁸ In commercializing prints after his drawings, Morland and his collaborators embraced and stimulated these commercial logics rather than succumbing to them. In this sense, it is first of all useful to consider the concurrent historical conditions on which they were seizing and which helped them to successfully foster the taste for printed reproductions of Morland's idiosyncratic drawings and, particularly, of his sketches, upon a large public.

The importance of mechanical reproduction for the creation of an artist's fame was understood by artists since the beginnings of the print trade, with painters of the calibre

²⁴⁵ For a recent study which has dealt with the presence and role of drawings in late eighteenth-century London exhibition culture, although here seen in relation to Hogarth's humorous artistic legacy in the fields of caricature and national satire rather than the construction of gendered and modern artistic personae, see Grandjouan, "Super-size Caricature".

²⁴⁶ Colin Campbell, "Understanding Traditional and Modern Patterns of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century England: A Character-Action Approach", in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, John Brewer and Roy Porter, eds. (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 54.

²⁴⁷ Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff, eds., *Critical Terms for Art History*, 2nd ed. (1996; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 150-151.

²⁴⁸ Susan Lambert, *The Image Multiplied: Five Centuries of Printed Reproductions of Paintings and Drawings* (London: Trefoil, 1987), pp. 7-8.

of Mantegna, Raphael and Rubens taking pains to control this process through an accurate choice of their engravers, as well as the subjects to translate in print. Raphael produced designs especially for this purpose: some of the most famous prints after his work by his engraver Marcantonio Raimondi do not correspond to any of his finished paintings. When artists did not intervene in this process, publishers could end up focusing on a fashionable aspect, rather than give a full account of their *oeuvre*, with lasting consequences for their reputations.²⁴⁹ Mechanical reproduction was therefore capable of reinforcing or distorting the perception of an artist's persona and style. Reproductive prints of Old Masters' paintings and drawings significantly contributed to make their manners known to artists and scholars who could not see their works in person, and to diffuse their fame as artistic geniuses. In particular, publications that aim at faithfully reproducing artists' drawings were initially oriented at connoisseurs, who were the first to recognize the importance of these graphic productions. Connoisseurs deeply associated drawings with the distinctive manners of individual Old Masters or their 'schools', and collecting specimens of their works in this medium was an indispensable step in the formation of connoisseurial knowledge. Yet the supply of such drawings was finite and so connoisseurial taste came to rely increasingly on copies.²⁵⁰

The connoisseurial belief in the capacity of drawings to serve as evidence of the artist's original conception and of his individual manner in a few, essential strokes encouraged the development of innovative techniques for the faithful reproduction of drawings, in prints which might satisfy this audience. The *Cabinet de Crozat*, named after the authority who presided over its publication, Pierre Crozat - banker to the king of France - was a book that traced a history of Italian art. Its text, written by one of the most sought-after connoisseurs of the eighteenth century, the print dealer and publisher Pierre-Jean Mariette, was accompanied by lavish illustrations reproducing Italian paintings and drawings from Crozat's and the royal collections.²⁵¹ Issued in two volumes in 1729 and 1742, the book gave unprecedented relevance to drawing, since among the 140 plates, as many as 41 reproduced wash drawings through a chiaroscuro woodcut

²⁴⁹ Lambert, *The Image Multiplied*, pp. 147-149.

²⁵⁰ Anne Puetz, "The Reproduction of Drawings: Charles Rogers's *A Collection of Prints in Imitation of Drawings. To Which are Annexed Lives of Their Authors, with Explanatory Notes. 1778*" (MA diss., Courtauld Institute, 1994), p. 50.

²⁵¹ Benedict Leca, "An Art Book and Its Viewers: The 'Recueil Crozat' and the Uses of Reproductive Engraving", *Eighteenth Century Studies* 38, no. 4 (2005): pp. 623-649.

technique especially developed for this publication. The authority enjoyed by this text made it into a model for collections of prints after drawings which were designed by and for connoisseurs and which explicitly strove to reproduce the texture of original artworks. In England, the first of these was Arthur Pond's *Prints in Imitation of Drawing* (1736), whose 70 plates after Italian Old Masters drawings utilize the same chiaroscuro woodcut technique pioneered in the *Cabinet de Crozat*.²⁵² This was followed by Charles Rogers's *A Collection of Prints in Imitation of Drawings* (1778), a compilation of Old Master's biographies in which individual manners are illustrated by sketches reproduced through a variety of techniques, including the innovative new French stipple engraving and crayon manner, knowledge of which had reached England thanks to one of the engravers employed by Rogers, William Wynne Ryland.²⁵³

While innovative techniques for the faithful reproduction of drawings and sketches were being successfully developed for exquisite publications destined to a limited diffusion within connoisseurial circles, prints after drawings were becoming appealing to larger sections of eighteenth-century British society. Richardson's systematization of connoisseurship as a method that could be learned through study and application made it potentially available to anyone able to enjoy some leisure. The traditionally elite taste for collecting drawings – seen a true mark of one's gentility – was hence increasingly pursued by larger social groups in search of recognition of their polite status – especially by the bourgeoisie.²⁵⁴ Taking advantage of the technical innovations developed in the connoisseurial field, faithful reproductions of drawings became hence available at a more popular level, in publications having larger reach and more explicitly commercial aims. From now on we will call these types of publications 'drawing books', the unifying umbrella which in the eighteenth century Britain grouped all publications reproducing graphic works, although we will see how these could be conceived for various purposes (but more often were meant to cater for multiple ones). Benjamin Green's *Complete Drawing Book in Imitation of Chalk Drawing* (1775) was one of the first examples in England of a commercial drawing book which employed these innovative techniques. It

²⁵² Lambert, *The Image Multiplied*, pp. 125, 174.

²⁵³ Lambert, *The Image Multiplied*, p. 82. For more details on the techniques of crayon manner and stipple engraving, see Antony Griffiths, *Prints and Printmaking: An Introduction to the History and Techniques* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 77-83.

²⁵⁴ Carol Gibson-Wood, *Jonathan Richardson: Art Theorist of the English Enlightenment* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 89.

offered designs by both painters and etchers, ranging from the seventeenth-century Italian Guercino and Stefano della Bella, and the recently-deceased eighteenth-century artists Thomas Worlidge and Franz Edmund Weirötter (respectively English and Austrian).²⁵⁵

Being himself a painter, Morland's father was arguably well aware of the role that prints could play not just in consolidating, but even in creating from scratch an artist's persona. And in fact in 1774, just one year after launching his ten-year-old son at the Royal Academy show with his "Sketches", a print series, entitled *Six Animals Drawn and Etch'd by G. Morland* (hereafter, *Six Animals*) was issued. Drawing books were increasingly popular and etching was one of the oldest techniques used to reproduce their texture through print. The publisher of this series could have been James Peake, since one of its prints, portraying a bear, is actually known to have been translated by him (despite the series' title attributing, significantly, all the work of etching to Morland). James Peake was an etcher and engraver who worked for publishers such as John Boydell and Carington Bowles after other artists' designs, especially authors of landscapes and prospect views (for example George Smith of Chichester), but occasionally also caricaturists. He also published his own designs, in particular he issued a series of etchings entitled *Animals* (1744-82) which portrayed dogs (but also asses) in a variety of realistic attitudes, with a strong appearance of having been drawn from life. Only ten years younger than Henry Robert Morland, the two artists could have been professionally acquainted.²⁵⁶

In the most recent research on *Six Animals*, Anthony Lynch has argued the series to have been after Morland's first exhibited "Sketches".²⁵⁷ Nevertheless, although the

²⁵⁵ For my judgement on the content of Benjamin Green's publication I am relying entirely on the title, since I have not been able to retrieve a copy of the original book. The title, description and price of the book are reported in the catalogue of the book seller Thomas King in 1785: "Complete Drawing Book, in Imitation of Chalk Drawings, containing upwards of 100 Copper Plates after the most eminent Masters, viz. Guercino, Della Bella, Worlidge, Weirötter, &c. by Benjamin Green, Drawing Master to Christ's Hospital, 9 s". See Thomas King, *A Catalogue of Books, in All Languages, Arts, and Sciences* (London, 1785). Green's book is mentioned and dated 1771 in Richard T. Godfrey, *Printmaking in Britain: A General History from Its Beginnings to the Present Day* (Phaidon: Oxford, 1978), p. 61, which informs us that the book was engraved through the new technique of soft-ground etching; Susan Lambert dates it 1775 in *The Image Multiplied*, p. 144.

²⁵⁶ Various prints published by James Peake are held at the British Museum.

²⁵⁷ See Anthony Lynch, "Literary Influences on the Life and Art of George Morland (1763-1804) From Aesop to Tom Jones", *The British Art Journal* 17, no. 3 (2017): pp. 23-24.

prints are clearly meant to reproduce the appearance of drawings, these published designs are very finished, making it difficult to believe that their corresponding originals could have been previously labelled as sketches. More convincingly, Lynch has evidenced how Morland's series heavily drew from two sources: Francis Barlow's designs for the *Aesop's Fables*, originally drawn to illustrate the 1666 edition of the book, and republished by Robert Sayer in 1749 as an independent booklet etched by James Kirk; and a few seventeenth-century print series by Marcus de Bye after the Dutch animal painter Paulus Potter.²⁵⁸ The pocket-size series (only 10 x 15 cm) after Morland's drawings featured a fox staring at a flying heron in the title-page (Fig. 39, British Museum): while the former animal was copied from *The Tyger and Fox* (Fig. 45, British Museum) in Barlow's booklet, the second appeared at the top left of *The Crane, and Peacock* (Fig. 46, British Museum) in the same series. Also, Morland's drawing of a bear trying to avoid being stung by bees (Fig. 40, British Museum) is identical to *The Bear and Bee Hives* by Francis Barlow in that same work (Fig. 47, British Museum). A third Morland drawing, portraying a fox with a dead bird (Fig. 41, Philadelphia Museum of Art), could have been inspired by the illustration of a fox with a goose in its mouth in the title-page of another series after Francis Barlow, *Variae Quadrupedum Species* (Fig. 48, c. 1684-95, British Museum), although this time the two images have completely different compositions and share only the subject. Instead, Morland's *A Goat Standing to Right on a Rock with Kid* (Fig. 42, British Museum) is the exact reversal of the print from the series *Goats* (Fig. 49, 1654-1688, British Museum) by de Bye after Paulus Potter, and *A Cow Standing in a Field, Facing Tree at Left* (Fig. 43, British Museum) mirrors even more strikingly one of Potter's cows engraved by de Bye in *Farm Animals* (Fig. 50, c. 1657, British Museum), since this time also all elements in the landscape are copied from the original. Another Morland print in the series, featuring two donkeys, one of them poking its head out of a stable (Fig. 44, British Museum), is strongly reminiscent of a plate by de Bye possibly also after Potter, *Sheep* (Fig. 51, c. 1664, British Museum) in which the (similarly comic) animal is protruding from its sty to bleat at the farmer in the background; it also vaguely resembled the asses from Peake's series *Animals* (Fig. 52, British Museum).

²⁵⁸ See Lynch, "Literary Influences", pp. 23-24.

Paulus Potter (1625-1654) had been one of the first artists to specialize in animals, which he painted with realism (famous was his canvas of a urinating cow, now known through a print) and which he made the main focus of his works, rather than mere staffage for landscapes. In his short but prolific career (he died at the age of 29 after having begun painting at 15, and as many as 175 paintings are attributed to him) he changed the way animals were painted: he seems to have often ventured in the countryside with his sketchbook to draw them from life.²⁵⁹ He reproduced through etching and lithography some of his animal subjects, although this work of translation was systematically undertaken after his death by the publisher Nicolaes Visscher I. Specialized on animal subjects, Visscher acquired many of Potter's drawings and employed Marcus De Bye to etch them for several print series grouped according to animals' different species (both domesticated and wild) such as *Cows*, *Another Series of Cows*, *Cows and a Sheep*, *Various Animals*, *Leopards*, *Lions*, *Bears*, in addition to the ones already mentioned, from which Morland was copying.²⁶⁰ The way the title-page of *Six Animals* (Fig. 39) was conceived was strongly reminiscent of these Old Master's typical print series. Usually Visscher's series after Potter featured an animal in a landscape in the frontispiece, depicted close by or protruding from a ruin inscribed with the name of the deceased artist (see for example *A Leopard Supporting a Stone Slab*, Fig. 53, 1658, British Museum). While Morland's title-page lacked this architectural element, it nevertheless similarly featured one of his animals looking at an inscription bearing his name. *Six Animals* arguably did not yet show what would become the artist's peculiar sketchy drawing style (the way the images are drawn is literally copied from the sources), but nevertheless it already suggested a precise persona for him. Morland appeared as a precocious artist (able to draw and etch at the age of 11) close to the persona of the Old Master Paulus Potter, working in the imaginative medium of drawing and applying himself to humble animals, subjects arguably perceived as eminently naturalistic and as having been drawn from life (even if actually heavily borrowed from artistic precedents).

²⁵⁹ See "Paulus Potter", The J. Paul Getty Museum, Collections Search, <http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/artists/259/paulus-potter-dutch-1625-1654>; "Potter, Paul or Paulus", *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, by Paul Lagasse, and Columbia University, 7th ed. (Columbia University Press, 2017), https://search-credoreference-com.ueaezproxy.uea.ac.uk:2443/content/entry/columency/potter_paul_or_paulus/0?institutionId=1278.

²⁶⁰ Prints from the series by Marcus de Bye after Paulus Potter published by Nicolaes Visscher I are held at the British Museum.

In our discussion of Morland's finished drawings, we had left aside his 'studies', which in all respects have the appearance of having been produced in preparation for larger and more finished compositions, perhaps in another medium. It is now useful to get back to them, since these works can be shown to have played a major role in the diffusion of Morland's genius and idiosyncratic style through printed reproductions. Drawings were traditionally used as preparatory works. Drawing on paper had begun to be used systematically by artists in early Renaissance Italy, when the augmented pressure for naturalism and need to depart from conventional formulas, together with the changing material conditions of increased availability and reduction in cost of paper, transformed this practice into a fundamental tool for exploring formal artistic problems.²⁶¹ During the second decade of the sixteenth century, these early experimentations (especially by Leonardo) had been systematized into a series of steps within the workshops' practices of Michelangelo and Raphael for the preparation of monumental commissions: the first exploratory sketches were here followed by composition drawings, study sheets of particular motifs, detail studies of single figures or other elements in the composition, finished composition drawings squared for transfer on other media, cartoons, auxiliary cartoons for details and finally drawings to be retained in the workshop. The importance of drawing for the development of artistic compositions was confirmed by the academies established in continental Europe during the seventeenth century, in particular the Académie Royale, which made the life-drawing class central to its artistic training, and which codified the various artistic procedures to draw, also distinguishing among various types of works in this medium.²⁶²

One would be easily tempted to interpret Morland's significant number of 'studies' as tools he used for the invention of his compositions in painting. Nevertheless no existing drawing by Morland can be associated to one of his finished paintings. Also, apart for two published studies of figures, describing respectively a farmer emptying a bucket of water in a pig's manger, and a butcher hitting a dog with a stick (Fig. 54, 1794, British Museum), corresponding to the exact reverses of the figures in the paintings *The*

²⁶¹ See Francis Ames-Lewis, *Drawing in Early Renaissance Italy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 15–17; Francis Ames-Lewis and Joanne Wright, *Drawing in the Italian Renaissance Workshop* (London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 1983), pp. 13–15.

²⁶² Beverley Schreiber Jacoby and Marjorie Shelley, "Drawing", *Oxford Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/view/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.001.0001/oao-9781884446054-e-7000023557>.

Farmyard (Fig. 69, 1792, Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California) and *The Watchful Butcher, or, The Butcher Chastising his Dog* (Fig. 28, 1792, Sotheby's London, 27 January 1954, lot 123), perhaps the four studies for two characters (Fig. 55, 1794, British Museum) resembling figures in the painting *The Reckoning* (Fig. 56, 1797-1800, Victoria & Albert Museum) and the published study for the rustic pushing a wheelbarrow (Fig. 57, 1792, British Museum) corresponding to the same figure in *Horses in a Stable* (Fig. 16, 1791, Victoria & Albert Museum), no other print after drawings by Morland can be associated to one of his finished paintings. Even when we include oil sketches in this search, we find no much evidence for Morland's employment of preparatory works in the invention of his finished compositions. Apart for *A Sketch for the Angry Farmer* (Fig. 58, Spink & Sons London, 1963), corresponding to the painting of the same name (Fig. 59, 1788, location unknown), no other existing work of this type by Morland is seen to match one of his finished paintings. In fact the only other existing oil sketch by the artist is *Sketch of Three Calves Heads, or, Study of Heads of Calves* (Fig. 60, Sotheby's London, 13 November 1991, lot 179) which as we will see later, probably was conceived of as a gift and not as a preparatory work.

Discovering if an artist used drawings or sketches in preparation of works in another medium is always complicated by the fact that, in being working tools, these objects are eminently ephemeral, subject to loss and decay. Nevertheless conspicuous evidence suggests that, if indeed preparatory sketches were produced by Morland in relation to finished paintings, they would have certainly survived. From the very beginning of his career (and well before Knight's purchase of four of Morland's finished drawings in 1792), a lively market seemed to have existed for his works in the graphic medium. Simultaneously with their being exhibited in various London venues, drawings by Morland indeed made their appearance within portfolios of polite and tasteful personalities, and consequently in the auction market. In 1782 the collection of the recently deceased renowned musician Joseph Kelway, comprising *A Lady's Portrait in Crayons* by the young George Morland, was sold off in a sale. In 1783 the merchant and collector Ingham Foster - acquainted with Morland's father Henry Robert, who had painted a portrait of him later engraved by John Raphael Smith - died, and his

“matchless collection of prints and drawings”,²⁶³ sold off in two parts. The first auction, held from 24 February to 4 March 1783, comprised more than a hundred drawings by Morland. The second sale took place between 22 and 24 May 1783 and included fifty-eight of Morland’s graphic productions.²⁶⁴ After these first instances, from 1788 Morland’s drawings became a quite regular feature of the London auction market, appearing not in such large numbers, but almost every year and at one or more sales each year during his lifetime, until 1800.²⁶⁵ Even Farington, a contemporary commentator who usually expressed extreme criticisms towards Morland’s work and lifestyle, could not help but write in 1803: “The works of Morland ... Many of his drawings in chalk are excellent.”²⁶⁶

Considering that there was a market for Morland’s drawings and sketches since the beginning of his career and that, notwithstanding this, virtually no work in preparation of his finished paintings has survived till our times, it can be concluded that the artist did not employ working tools of this kind in his studio practice. But then, if not performing a preparatory function, what purpose were Morland’s existing ‘studies’ supposed to fulfil? It should be noted that more than half of the existing drawings classifiable as ‘studies’ have been reproduced during the artist’s lifetime as part of print collections. The evidence that we have presented suggests that Morland produced drawings having the appearance of ‘studies’, supposedly private means in the process of artistic creation, not for using them in his studio practice, but especially for diffusing them among the public through print reproduction. It seems that the artist wanted to be associated with a process of artistic creation that he did not use in his actual practice.

²⁶³ Barford, Foster, *First Part of the Museum of Ingham Foster* (24 February 1783 and following days), *Archive.org*. This was the first part of Ingham Foster’s sale; it comprised “Twenty Drawings”, “Twenty-six ditto [drawings], by ditto [G. Morland]”, “Twenty-six ditto [drawings], by ditto [G. Morland]”, “Ten ditto [drawings], by ditto [G. Morland]”, “Sixteen ditto [drawings] in colours, by ditto [G. Morland]”, “A parcel of drawings, by G. Morland”, and “Two stained drawings, by G. Morland”.

²⁶⁴ Barford, Foster, *Remaining Part of the Collection of ... the Late Ingham Foster* (22 May 1783 and following days), *Getty Provenance Index® databases*. This second part of Foster’s auction included “Fifty-five drawings by Mr. Moreland, jun. in a book in Russia” and “Three landscapes in chalk.”

²⁶⁵ See various entries for “Morland + drawing + London” (1763–1810), *Getty Provenance Index® databases* (Sale Catalogues, indexed transcriptions).

²⁶⁶ See Joseph Farington, 20 April 1803, in *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, eds. Kenneth Garlick, Angus Macintyre, and Kathryn Cave, 17 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978-1984), 6:2015.

It is then unsurprising that *Sketches by G. Morland* (hereafter, *Sketches*) the artist's longest artistic endeavour – which occupied him, more or less directly, between the years 1792 and 1799 - and the most substantial publication to which he ever dedicated himself, consisted in a drawing book in two volumes, totalling sixty-eight sheets, reproducing especially his 'studies' or sketches. Published by John Harris (as suggested above, possibly the main organizer behind the exhibition of drawings at Mrs Lay, arguably conceived by him to boost the sale of this ambitious publication), the book was funded by subscription and appeared in seventeen instalments. Each instalment was made up of four sheets (sized c. 45 x 56 cm) and introduced by the same frontispiece (22 x 35 cm), bearing the portrait of a gentleman-artist sketching two horses from life in a countryside landscape, sheltered by the shade of a tree.²⁶⁷ On the one side, Harris's dedication of this work to the artist Henry William Bunbury on the label served to reassert the associations that the firm wanted the public to make between his and Morland's personalities. On the other side, it served to market the taste for drawings as a sign of gentility. The typical purchaser of this book was imagined to be like Bunbury: a male member of the elite who was a sociable and gregarious bon viveur as well as a lover of art.

Morland and Harris were business partners, possibly friends: a small oil by Morland, *Sketch of Three Calves Heads* (Fig. 60), inscribed with a dedication that reads "G. Morland for J. Harris Esqr. Grower of Yields" stands as additional proof of that.²⁶⁸ Harris is said to be able to make things grow - arguably a metaphor for Morland's popularity

²⁶⁷ See Francis Buckley, "George Morland's Sketch Books and Their Publishers" (unpublished manuscript, 1931), Press Nn, Shelf 5, no. 2, British Museum, Library of the Department of Prints & Drawings, p. 134. Buckley endeavoured to reconstruct the composition of most of the drawing books published after Morland, in a text which exists in (at least) two slightly different manuscript copies, at the National Art Library, London (General Collection, 196.F Box) and at the British Museum. A letter attached to the British Museum's copy explains the methods employed by Buckley for reconstructing Morland's drawing books, mostly consisting in matching prints according to publisher and date of publication reported in their inscriptions, aided by "a bound volume with sixty-four sketches (uncut) of the Harris Sketchbooks". I have followed the order specified by Buckley. The sizes of the label and the sheets in *Sketches* correspond roughly to the dimensions of a foolscap folio cut writing paper (33.02 x 20.32 cm) and a medium drawing paper (44.45 x 57.15 cm) respectively. Nevertheless, the sheets in the last two instalments of the second volume vary in size between around 25 x 35 and 35 x 45 cm. For reference to standard paper sizes in the eighteenth century see "Old English Paper Sizes", *British Association of Paper Historians*.

²⁶⁸ Farington reports that "Harris the frame maker of Greek St." was among the four friends and relatives whom attended to Morland's burial in November 1804. The location of John Harris's shop in the year 1804 is unknown, so it is possible that it had temporarily moved to Greek St. and that the person who attended Morland's funeral corresponded to him. See Farington, 4 November 1804, in *Diary of Joseph Farington*, 6:2433.

and economic rewards, boosted by Harris's publication of this drawing book. The gift makes evident that *Sketches* saw the artist's direct involvement. *Sketches* was initially meant to end with the publication of the tenth instalment, published in April 1795, as announced by John Harris in contemporary newspapers' advertisements, but arguably the success of the first volume induced him to begin a second one, and seven more instalments appeared between 1796 and 1799.²⁶⁹ It could be argued that Harris's announcement of the series' end with the tenth instalment was simply a marketing strategy to boost sales. Instead I would like to speculate that the second volume had not been planned from the beginning, and furthermore that it was probably not designed directly by Morland, but rather assembled by the publisher.

The first series of *Sketches* in fact mainly consists of sheets which put together various unfinished 'studies' or sketches, portraying figures of rustics and humble farm animals, assembled on the page through a careful patterning of separate vignettes, with only seven out of forty sheets reproducing finished drawings. On the contrary, all the sheets in the second series are after finished drawings.²⁷⁰ While Morland did not produce many sketches other than for publishing them, his finished drawings were available on the market for collectors (and publishers).²⁷¹ Also, three original sheets of drawings by Morland describe in their entirety the assemblages of sketches exactly as they are reproduced in three prints of the first volume, to which they also correspond in size: one from the first instalment (Fig. 61, 1791, Collection of Cecil Higgins A. G., Bedford), and two from the third number (Fig. 62, 1791, British Museum and Fig. 63, undated but published in 1792, Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California).²⁷² These original drawings suggest that Morland himself was assembling the sketches included in the first series with the purpose of publishing them. Clarifying the artist's involvement

²⁶⁹ In an advertisement from April 1795 John Harris informs that "the tenth number (being the last) is now ready for delivery". See "Appendix I. Newspaper Advertisements", in Buckley, "George Morland's Sketch Books", p. 136.

²⁷⁰ The subjects in the second volume are rustic landscapes, animals, cottage scenes and scenes of husbandry.

²⁷¹ Other firms (for example Daniel Orme's) arguably bought Morland's drawings at auctions, and then published them without sharing their profits with the artist. Others (such as Thomas Simpson's) produced drawing books containing sheets in imitation of Morland's typical style. The questionable quality and character of such publications speak of a purely commercialized take on Morland. I discuss these publications in Chapter 3.

²⁷² Only, the drawing at the Huntington has perhaps been cut, not including the strip of sketches at the bottom of the corresponding print.

with the conception of the two volumes composing *Sketches* is not futile, since I will show how the appearance of the first series as an assemblage of 'studies' made this drawing book something completely unprecedented when compared with other contemporary publications of this type. For this reason I want to conclude this chapter by focusing especially on the first part of the publication *Sketches by G. Morland*.

Significantly, the first volume opens with a sheet of animal 'studies' (Fig. 64, 1792, British Museum) of which more than a half are pigs lazing around in various attitudes, the animals most associated with Morland's persona and 'slovenly' style. The 'studies' are roughly organized on the plate in three tiers: the top one shows two pigs' heads followed by two completed animals; the central one consists of an unfinished and a completed sheep, a goat and a dog's head; the bottom one groups two pigs lying side by side, a cow's head and the head of another pig, shown while eating garbage. The animals' activities convey pleasurable sensations, suggesting simple physical joys. A comic treatment is reserved especially to the pigs, described through rounded lines in amusing and particularly lazy poses and expressions. All the animals on the plate are delineated through Morland's sketchy style, characterized by broken lines for defining outlines, and rough hatching for suggesting chiaroscuro. Nevertheless, in contrast with his finished drawings, here the blank of the paper prevails, and the figures' outlines are defined through a few, poignant strokes. When hatching intervenes, it is used especially outside the figures, to define their outlines through contrast, augmenting the sense of an economy of strokes. In most cases the 'studies' seem to represent the same animal seen from different viewpoints, giving the sense that these are indeed individual creatures, directly observed from nature and drawn from life, the sketches being records of brief, close-up encounters with them. The irregular (although aesthetically pleasant) organization of the 'studies' on the plate contributes to this effect of quickness and spontaneity.

In eighteenth-century aesthetic discourse, sketches were considered the most intellectual components in the creation of an artwork. Coinciding with the individual artist's preliminary ideas, sketches seemed to represent those ideas' stronger expression. According to the art theorist Jonathan Richardson, more developed

drawings were mere 'descriptions' by comparison with sketches.²⁷³ Sketches called for real connoisseurs, according to Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville, because they required superior qualities of imagination compared to the appreciation of finished artworks.²⁷⁴ The preference for unfinished drawings was not confined to connoisseurial circles: even contemporary commercial publications, such as William Austin's *A Specimen of Sketching Landscapes in Free and Masterly Manner, with a Pen or Pencil* (1781) focused on unfinished drawings, although in this case by an Italian Old Master, Andrea Locatelli. The book began with "some Thought concerning Sketching", in which the relative value of sketches or finished drawings is discussed, concluding: "the highest Taste in Design, is to be seen where the Execution of a Performance expresses the Intentions of the Author by the simplest Means".²⁷⁵ The book seemingly declared the ultimate preeminence of sketches over finished drawings thanks to the economy of their strokes. Gilpin was therefore aligned with widely shared ideas when, in the quote at the beginning of this chapter, he expressed himself in favour of spontaneous and quick drawings, expressive of the artist's momentary inspiration and realized with 'a few bold strokes', rather than more accurate and finished graphic productions.

As this brief discussion has already indicated, in the eighteenth century sketches seemed to enshrine meanings at odds with each other: on the one hand Morland's jotted alternatives of the same few animals on the plate seemed to suggest mimetic fidelity and observation from life, on the other hand they could be read as the artist's first ideas, and hence were strongly linked with imagination. Sketches could be described as the highest form of art *especially* for their economic use of strokes: this seems counterintuitive, because it means that in giving less to perceive, the sketches could stimulate greater sensations within the viewers. Traditionally conceived as preparatory or provisional, sketches could nevertheless surpass finished works in aesthetic value, in this way threatening to undermine standard notions of the economic

²⁷³ Jonathan Richardson, *Two Discourses, I. An Essay on the Whole Art of Criticism as It Relates to Painting ... II. An Argument in Behalf of the Science of a Connoisseur* (London: W. Churchill, 1719), p. 50, as discussed by Bärbel Küster, "Copies on the Market in Eighteenth-Century Britain", in *Marketing Art in the British Isles, 1700 to the Present: A Cultural History*, eds. Charlotte Gould and Sophie Mesplède (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), p. 188.

²⁷⁴ Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville, *Abrégé de la Vie Des Plus Fameux Peintres* (Paris, 1762), pp. lxi-lxii, as discussed by Puetz in "The Reproduction of Drawings", p. 22.

²⁷⁵ William Austin, *A Specimen of Sketching Landscape, In a Free and Masterly Manner, with a Pen or Pencil; Exemplified in Thirty Etchings, Done from Original Drawings of Lucatelli, After the Life, In and About Rome* (London, 1781), pp. 3-4.

value of artworks. Richard Sha has argued that sketches' persuasive power at the turn of nineteenth century in Britain lay in the way they were positioned at the crossroads of various meanings, and in their ability to borrow strength from both sides of a range of binary opposites.²⁷⁶ The apparent simplicity of sketches could work as guarantee of truth and veracity. On the one hand sketches suggested direct inspiration from nature, making the viewer forget that the draughtsman arguably had an artistic training and worked within an iconographic tradition. On the other hand they could appeal particularly as the direct reflections of the artist's feelings. Roughness and presence of mistakes contributed to the sketches' spontaneity and immediacy.²⁷⁷ Closeness to nature was in this period constructed as an essential element of genius and originality. The artist's conception of the first volume of *Sketches* as a collection of 'studies' was strongly persuasive in describing his unique persona and style as those of a real genius.

The frontispiece of this work (Fig. 110, 1792, British Museum) further reinforced the idea of Morland as a natural genius. The artist portrayed has facial features that are too generic to be recognizable, however, he can be easily imagined as George Morland himself, drawing his sketches from direct observation, so merged with nature that his body is almost dissolving in the tree trunk on which he is leaning. More precisely, the label gives the viewer the sense of having seen Morland in the act of drawing the very *Sketches* just purchased, and therefore functions as a proof of the book's authenticity.²⁷⁸ This frontispiece produces an almost "erotic"²⁷⁹ feeling, showing as it does the artist 'naked': the viewer is given access to Morland's most private and intimate sphere, his genius mind. He is witnessing the moment of artistic creation, and about to look at the process through which Morland - allegedly - develops in private his finished productions. Another set of binary opposites that the sketches seem to have been able to successfully conflate was the traditional distinction between public and private. Perceived as preparatory works (even if Morland created them for public consumption), these sketches seem to have revealed something that the artist apparently did not want to show about himself; the feigned privacy of the sketches

²⁷⁶ See "Introduction" and "The Visual Sketch in Britain", in *Visual and Verbal Sketch*, pp. 3, 5, 28, 45-47.

²⁷⁷ See "Introduction", in *Visual and Verbal Sketch*, pp. 4-5, 7.

²⁷⁸ See "Introduction", in *Visual and Verbal Sketch*, p. 14.

²⁷⁹ See "Introduction", in *Visual and Verbal Sketch*, p. 26.

further reinforced the idea of their authenticity.²⁸⁰ Furthermore the image on the label induces the individual purchaser to conceive, perhaps unconsciously, his own copy as coinciding with that unique and original sketchbook which the fictive Morland holds in his hands. Almost all of the sheets in Harris's book reproduced the signature and the date in the artist's handwriting, which therefore served as a further, and somewhat paradoxical, guarantee of their authenticity and uniqueness.

The closest comparisons for Morland's assemblage of animal 'studies' in the opening sheet of *Sketches*'s first volume (Fig. 64) are to be found in the exploratory sketches showing jotted versions of similar subjects which were produced by seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish genre and animal painters, and which were popular amongst eighteenth-century collectors in Britain.²⁸¹ As Gillray's print suggests, pretensions to originality could be derided as fraudulent or naïve. Paradoxically, therefore, allusions to enshrined artistic precedent were necessary for works like Morland's, however expressive of transgressive genius they were also intended to be.²⁸² Both the original drawings by seventeenth-century Dutch Old Masters and the print series after them were primarily the province of connoisseurs, elite collectors or professional artists. In terms of drawing books with a larger reach, sheets of animal studies by Dutch Old Masters were mostly to be found at the end of 'general drawing manuals'.²⁸³ The increased interest in published drawings was therefore motivated by more than the mere desire to emulate aristocratic collecting practices, for drawing was increasingly appreciated as a polite and useful practice. In Richardson's *Science of a Connoisseur*, drawing as a practice was imbued with moral, civic and nationalistic meanings, as a

²⁸⁰ See "Introduction", in *Visual and Verbal Sketch*, pp. 26-27.

²⁸¹ See the already mentioned example of drawing by David Teniers the Younger: *Sheet of Eight Studies of a Soldier*, originally in the collection of Sir Joshua Reynolds and now held at the British Museum. The subject of this drawing (a soldier with a gun described in various attitudes) strongly resembles those of two studies of a shooting soldier included in one of the plates of the *Sketches*' first series (first sheet of the fourth instalment, 1 January 1793, British Museum). It is not excluded that Morland could have seen the drawing in Reynolds's collection, since the president of the Royal Academy was acquainted with his father.

²⁸² See "Introduction", in *Visual and Verbal Sketch*, p. 8.

²⁸³ See for example Gerard de Lairese, *The Principles of Drawing* (London: Thomas Bowles, 1752); *The Artist's Vade Mecum* (London: R. Sayer, 1762); *The Compleat Drawing Master* (London: Henry Parker, 1766). I based my research concerning drawing books produced in late eighteenth-century Britain especially on the analysis of those available online at *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* and The British Museum websites. Among them I selected a few representative ones, useful for making comparisons with Morland's publications. Constraints of time have made it difficult to assess the entirety of drawing books produced in this period. For the most recent study on this subject, see Bermingham, *Learning to Draw*.

dignified accomplishment for the polite classes which could help them to guide the nation through the encouragement of its taste. Equally, drawing was considered a viable practice among the children of the lower orders destined to mechanical jobs, useful both on an individual and on a national level, since it could ultimately lead to the improvement of the country's trades.²⁸⁴ While the wealthier classes could afford to hire drawing masters, the need to acquire the principles of this practice for the less affluent resulted in the increased availability of commercial drawing manuals.²⁸⁵ Nevertheless, amateur drawing was conceived as neatly distinguished by professional art, and its products were meant for domestic circulation rather than for public exhibition; consequently they were also not marketable as serious art. These elements made amateurism the province of women. Although they were denied artistic genius and professional academic training, women were increasingly constructed as consumers in this period.²⁸⁶

General drawing manuals were usually made up of republications of prints that had originally been issued by or after seventeenth-century Italian and Dutch masters for the instruction of professional artists.²⁸⁷ They followed academic teaching by focusing primarily on the human body, and in giving less space to landscapes, animals, flowers and ornamental patterns.²⁸⁸ From the 1780s, general drawing manuals were increasingly sold side by side with specialized manuals – including some focusing on animals – which emerged as a simultaneous attempt to cater for and create new audiences.²⁸⁹ The sheets of animal studies comprised in contemporary drawing manuals were nevertheless usually conceived primarily for the practical purpose of teaching how to draw these creatures, so they did not strive to reproduce the texture of graphic productions. Although sometimes in these books animals' bodies appeared broken down in their details, so to teach how to draw from the parts to the whole, the examples proposed for the viewer to copy always consisted in finished, even if partial

²⁸⁴ Gibson-Wood, *Jonathan Richardson*, p. 202.

²⁸⁵ Bermingham, *Learning to Draw*, pp. 128-129.

²⁸⁶ Bermingham, *Learning to Draw*, pp. 128, 180.

²⁸⁷ Kim Sloan, "'The Draughtsman's Assistant: Eighteenth-Century Drawing Manuals'", in *The Line of Beauty*, p. 187.

²⁸⁸ Chia-Chuan Hsieh, "The Emergence and Impact of the 'Complete Drawing Book' in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England", *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 36, no. 3 (2013): pp. 400-401.

²⁸⁹ See Sloan, "'Draughtsman's Assistant'", in *The Line of Beauty*, p. 199; Bermingham, "'An Exquisite Practise'", in *Towards a Modern Art World*, p. 58.

designs, and not in preparatory sketches (see for example Fig. 65). On the contrary, the opening sheet of *Sketches by G. Morland's* first volume (Fig. 64) not only showed his peculiar manner of depicting animals: care was also taken to preserve the specific quality of Morland's drawing lines, making the proximity of this print to the corresponding works of art striking. Morland's drawings in the first of Harris's series were in fact translated entirely through crayon manner, an innovative printing technique for the faithful reproduction of graphic works' textures. In the first two numbers of *Sketches*, each sheet is inscribed with the name of the engraver, Joshua Kirby Baldrey (1754–1828), and it is possible that the prints in the following seven instalments of the first volume were engraved by John Harris himself, whose name appears on a dog's collar in one of the sheets from the ninth instalment (1 September 1794).²⁹⁰ By the 1790s crayon manner had become established as the best method for reproducing the effects of chalk drawing. In a period when different printing techniques were associated with different subjects and market expectations, the choice of crayon manner was charged with meaning, given its strong associations with the reproduction of Old Master's drawings.²⁹¹

William Marshall Craig's criticism of Morland's 'slovenly' drawing style in *Sketches* was based on the perception of this publication strictly as a drawing manual. He observed: "it is a work which has, for many years, been given very generally to young persons to copy".²⁹² Although *Sketches* could certainly cater for different purposes, including teaching the principles of drawing, ordinary drawing manuals were usually introduced by textual instructions, which are absent in Morland's publication. The superior quality of *Sketches* in comparison with most contemporary drawing manuals is evident when we look at their average price: a book made up of sixty-seven sheets of animal subjects in Carington Bowles's 1784 catalogue cost as much as a single instalment of Morland's series, containing only 4 sheets.²⁹³ With its focus on an artist's persona and unique graphic style, *Sketches* could arguably cater especially for purchasers interested in the

²⁹⁰ This suggestion is advanced by Buckley in "George Morland's Sketch Books", p. 134.

²⁹¹ Lambert, *The Image Multiplied*, p. 123.

²⁹² Craig, *Landscape Animals*, p. 1.

²⁹³ Carington Bowles, *Carington Bowles's New and Enlarged Catalogue of Useful and Accurate Maps, Charts and Plans ... Elegant Drawing Books* (London: 1784), p. 165.

aesthetic appreciation of drawings, rather than merely in learning the principles of a polite accomplishment.

Nevertheless, the first volume of *Sketches* did not focus exclusively on humble farm animals: it also portrayed individual human figures, or groups of them, especially rustics. The starting point for this type of plates could be found in general drawing manuals, which often had included, among their last sheets, plates with vignettes featuring contemporary figures engaged in various activities (see for example, Fig. 66). The emerging vogue for learning to draw landscapes gave the impetus for the development of these compositions into drawing books particularly focused on figures for “the embellishment of landscape”.²⁹⁴ William Gilpin’s formulation of a more democratic version of the picturesque aesthetic was in this sense particularly influential.²⁹⁵ In a series of books illustrated with views taken during tours in various parts of the country (1782–1809), Gilpin promoted local tourism and the practice of sketching to travellers in search of landscapes endowed with picturesque beauty.²⁹⁶ The aesthetic appreciation of landscape as formulated by Knight’s and Price’s picturesque theory implies the ownership of land, since it consisted of the actual modification of a countryside estate. Instead, the appreciation of landscape beauty as formulated by Gilpin became a way of seeing, available to everyone who was eager to learn it. The ability to draw landscape was fundamental in Gilpin’s version of the picturesque theory, because it enabled the beholder a symbolic, if not material, appropriation of landscape.²⁹⁷ While Gilpin’s books sometimes included plates featuring vignettes of animals and human figures to be copied as picturesque staffage for landscape compositions (as for example *Sheet with Four Small Sketches of Men and Cows*, Fig. 67, illustration to his “Essay on the Principles on Which the Author’s Sketches are Composed”, in *Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty*, 1792), other artists more akin to Morland’s style and persona were dedicating themselves to drawing books exclusively made up of this kind of plates. A drawing book by Howitt (1790), and *Outlines of Figures, and Landscape* by Rowlandson (1790-2) resembled *Sketches* in consisting of

²⁹⁴ Bermingham, *Learning to Draw*, p. 111.

²⁹⁵ Malcolm Andrews, “Gilpin, William (1724-1804)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-10762>.

²⁹⁶ Bermingham, *Learning to Draw*, pp. 77, 93-94, 100.

²⁹⁷ See “The Visual Sketch in Britain”, in *Visual and Verbal Sketch*, pp. 63-65.

plates assembling various vignettes featuring groups of animals or figures for the embellishment of landscapes.²⁹⁸ Also, similarly to Morland's publication, they were concerned exclusively with the particular personality and the typical manner of contemporary British draughtsmen (rather than an Old Master, as it had always been the norm for drawing books focusing particularly on single painters – see the example of Austin's book on Locatelli).

The first two sheets of the tenth and last instalment of *Sketches* nevertheless strike us as particularly odd: each of them features four vignettes, organized in two tiers, most of which seem to deal with specific (and not necessarily rustic) trades or jobs. The opening sheet of the tenth instalment (Fig. 68, 1795, British Museum), for example, shows on top left a vignette with a servant kneeling to clean the floor with the help of a mop and a bucket, and on the top right, a scene with a peasant having a nap on the roadside beside his basket, perhaps on his way to or from the market. The remaining two vignettes in the bottom tier describe a milkman transporting two pails on his shoulders and a woodcutter sawing the branch of a fallen tree. Howitt and Rowlandson's works had not included sheets with vignettes focusing on specific occupations as the first two sheets of the *Sketches'* tenth instalment, which find instead their closest relative in later publications which will only begin to appear in the early nineteenth century, and which were usually labelled as 'microcosms'.²⁹⁹ It has been illustrated above how the appeal of subjects showing nature's individual components and organic complexity could be seen as related to anti-Jacobin discourses in the 1790s. These discourses resonated also in the way new manuals for teaching to draw the landscape were conceived.³⁰⁰ While Gilpin had taught an abstract method, applicable to any view to be portrayed, drawing books of the types 'figures for the embellishment of landscapes' and 'microcosms' tended to break down nature in its individual variety. In particular, 'microcosms' persuasively constructed social hierarchies as natural, and portrayed the division of

²⁹⁸ Prints from the two mentioned drawing books by Howitt and Rowlandson are held at the British Museum.

²⁹⁹ See for example William Henry Pyne's *Microcosm: Or a Picturesque Delineation of the Arts* (1806-8) and *Etchings of Rustic Figures for the Embellishment of Landscape* (1817).

³⁰⁰ For another contemporary example of drawing manual exploring landscape in its components, see William Marshall Craig, *An Essay on the Study of Nature in Drawing Landscape* (London: W. Bulmer, 1793).

labour through a variety of occupations as benefiting the country's economy and national wealth.³⁰¹

If in terms of subject *Sketches* could hence be recognized to encapsulate contemporary conservative discourses, the publication's most innovative elements lay in its focus on reproducing the spontaneous handling and bold strokes typical of preliminary sketches and consequently in its appearance as the direct publication of the artist's private sketchbook. These aspects make *Sketches* unusual and possibly unique among British drawing books. Publications which, in their title and appearance, emulate artists' private sketchbooks only appeared in the nineteenth century, for examples *Laporte's Sketchbook* (1802) or George Cruikshank's *My Sketchbook* (1833-4).³⁰² Drawing books focusing on a single, living artist and his peculiar manner, and striving particularly to reproduce the quality of his drawing lines and to approximate themselves to the corresponding original works of art, as for example *Imitations in Chalk Etched by Maria Cosway from Original Drawings by Richard Cosway* (1800) and *A Collection of Prints; Illustrative of English Scenery: from the Drawings and Sketches of Gainsborough* (1802), likewise appeared only a decade later. Ann Bermingham has called these publications 'facsimile drawing books', and has argued how they resulted from the combined impetuses of an increased cult of genius and the idea that it expressed particularly in graphic productions, and a nationalistic need to define the features of British art through the consecration of native talents. These books employed soft-ground etching, a cutting-edge technique that resulted in even more faithful reproductions of an artist's original drawings. Significantly, also John Harris took advantage of this new technique, in combination with the oldest crayon manner, when publishing the second volume of *Sketches*.³⁰³

The first section of this chapter has illustrated how the elaboration of a distinctive and appropriate drawing style represented a crucial strategy enacted by Morland (and his collaborators) to construct for himself a unique persona of authentic, masculine genius.

³⁰¹ Bermingham, *Learning to Draw*, pp. 107, 111.

³⁰² For more examples of drawing books staging the appearance of artists' private sketchbooks, see "The Visual Sketch in Britain", in *Visual and Verbal Sketch*, p. 26, and note 14, p. 26.

³⁰³ See Bermingham, *Learning to Draw*, pp. 177-178. Here more examples of facsimile drawing books can be found. For more details on the technique of soft-ground etching, see Griffiths, *Prints and Printmaking*, pp. 97-99.

By appropriating the multiple and contradictory meanings attributed in this period to drawings and sketches, by referring to illustrious draughtsmen among both contemporary artists and Old Masters, by associating himself with a unique 'slovenly' drawing style, lacking clarity and expressive of spontaneity and naiveté in opposition to regular training and careful industry, Morland ended up perfectly embodying the 'magician' painter described in Gilpin's quote at the opening of this chapter. Morland's shrewd deployment of the graphic medium can be better understood within the conceptual framework offered by Pierre Bourdieu's sociological theory on the workings of an autonomous, modern field of artistic production. While distracting the viewer from the "most visible aspect of the process of production, that is, the material *fabrication*"³⁰⁴ – achieved by means of concealing drawing techniques, methods, artistic references and even through a reduction of artistic labour to a bare minimum, especially in the sketches – Morland, as Gilpin's 'magician', was able to relocate all the attention on a "charismatic ideology of 'creation'".³⁰⁵ Shifting the focus exclusively on the artist as exceptional individual, an almost god-like figure, this ideology functioned well to conceal the creators of the creator – dealers and publishers as John Harris, Eleanor Lay, perhaps Henry Wigstead, and Mr Mortimer. Nevertheless the consecration of Morland's idiosyncratic drawings – describing meaningless and transgressive subjects through rough and unclear treatment – as real art rather than fraudulent and naïve works, was possible thanks to the increased role played by elite viewers in a modern field of artistic production. As it seems to be suggested by Gilpin in his quote, the production of meaning for artworks needs the contribution of knowledgeable viewers, 'before the eye' of whom the artist-'magician' especially works to bring his scenes. Picturesque connoisseurs such as Richard Payne Knight, in possession of an "intrinsically aesthetic mode of perception",³⁰⁶ and so able to overlook the mere content of Morland's drawings in favour of pure formal matters, were hence key in their consecration as legitimate art.

The second section of this chapter has dealt with the diffusion of Morland's exceptional personality and style through his exhibited and published drawings. It is not by chance

³⁰⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), p. 167.

³⁰⁵ Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, p. 167.

³⁰⁶ Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, p. 132.

that Gilpin used a commercial metaphor for referring to the imagination of the great artist, calling it a 'magazine', that is a vast warehouse of goods. In promoting the artist's individuality and subjectivity, the cult of genius also transformed him into a celebrity, and so made him and his works particularly desirable, stimulating their endless reproduction for consumption within an increasingly commercialized market for cultural goods. The idea of genius as a self-expressive and hedonistic subject aligned well with consumption. Consumer goods presented themselves to the purchasers as means for the expression of their own uniqueness, manifested through their individual tastes, as well as vehicles for the fulfillment of personal desires.³⁰⁷ The originality of artistic genius consisted in "becoming the first of oneself"³⁰⁸ and the genius was therefore expected to repeat the characters perceived as unique and peculiar to him in all his works. Nationalistic needs to define the specific features of a British school of painting contemporarily pushed for the consecration of native painters and native art. These combined impulses made the "reification of the artist and his style"³⁰⁹ not only possible but inevitable. While a publication such as the first volume of *Sketches* shows how the artist shrewdly exploited the commoditable nature of his genius personality, through quasi-avant-garde practices, the following chapter will further illustrate the multiple strategies through which Morland and other agents marketed his persona and works on the London art scene.

³⁰⁷ See Bermingham, *Learning to Draw*, pp. 144, 177.

³⁰⁸ Nelson and Shiff, *Critical Terms for Art History*, p. 150.

³⁰⁹ See Bermingham, *Learning to Draw*, p. 178.

Chapter 3. Bringing His Pigs “to an Excellent Market”:³¹⁰

Morland Between Art and Commerce

“A painter once had the presumption to intimate, that all his merit consisted in *trick*”.

(John Hassell, *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Morland*, 1806)

“In the representation of rustic scenes, this Artist stands unrivalled”:³¹¹ thus the *Morning Herald*, reviewing George Morland’s works exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1792, labelled him as the painter of rural life par excellence. Described by later writers as the pioneer of a genre which consisted of the depiction of rustic anecdotes and which gained an unprecedented success in the last decades of the eighteenth century, Morland had that year submitted five paintings to this, the most important venue of the London art world: *Benevolent Sportsman* (Fig. 25, 1792, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), *Goats* (unidentified), *A shipwreck* (unidentified) and *The Sportsman’s return* (pendant to *Benevolent Sportsman*, unlocated), as well as *A Farm yard*, which may well be the painting “*Straw Yard*”, that George Dawe, one of his first biographers, described him bestowing “more than usual care and attention”³¹² on with the intention of showing it at the 1792 exhibition.³¹³

The Farmyard (Fig. 69, 1792, Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California) portrays a rustic and serene scene, lacking any significant event; a white and a black horse, together with a dog in the foreground, are at the centre of the picture,

³¹⁰ “Royal Academy. Critique – No. III”, *Morning Herald*, 4 May 1792.

³¹¹ “Royal Academy. Critique – No. III”, 4 May 1792.

³¹² George Dawe, *The Life of George Morland (1807)*, with an introduction and notes by J. J. Foster (London: Dickinsons, 1904), p. 224.

³¹³ Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts; a Complete Dictionary of Contributors and Their Work from Its Foundation in 1769 to 1904*, 8 Vols. (London: H. Graves and George Bell and Sons, 1905-6), pp. 294-295. Since there are no engraved works by Morland bearing this title, *Straw Yard* is likely to be a descriptive title for *The Farmyard* (1792, Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California), which was exhibited one year later at Smith’s exhibition of Morland’s pictures. As David Winter pointed out, none of the paintings by Morland better fits the role of *Farmyard* at the RA in 1792 than the one exhibited at Smith’s as *The Farmyard*. The relatively large size of this canvas, 100 x 141 cm (Morland’s paintings of this date more usually 50 x 65 cm), suggests it was intended for exhibition. See David Winter, “George Morland (1763-1804)” (PhD. diss., Stanford University, 1977), p. 186, P130.

brightened by the golden light of the sunset. On the left hand of the scene, beneath a lush oak, a farmer is seen lovingly pouring water into the trough of a pig, which leans over its sty to drink. The barnyard is covered in golden straw, and in the background the viewer sees the branches of the oak, the fence of the farmyard (whose gaps permit light to pass through) and between it and the stable, a small piece of cloudy sky. More a description of peaceful feelings and emotions than a narration of particular events, *The Farmyard* can be read as a harmonious union of binary oppositions: in terms of subject, it represents an idea of domestic harmony between men and animals in the countryside, illustrated especially by the tenderness of the man caring for his pig. The idea of peaceful coexistence is extended to the animal kingdom: the two horses and the dog seem to find pleasure in their reciprocal proximity. The painting's formal features also consist in a resolved union of opposites: in terms of composition the painting is divided into two halves, one 'open' on the left, constituted by the small piece of sky, and one 'closed' on the right, represented by the stable. Binary contrasts are recurrent in terms of colours and light: the left half of the painting is brighter than the right, where the darkest tone is used for the inside of the stable. The painting is cut by a diagonal ray of light, which divides the composition obliquely into two halves, leaving in shadow the zones of the painting at top right and at bottom left. Binary oppositions are further present in the palette, with the juxtaposition of black and white horses and the complementary colours red (the farmer's coat) and green (the oak's leaves). All these oppositions are resolved and reconciled by the group of animals at the centre of the scene, which represents the pillar that structures the composition, and which in itself is a vignette of peaceful coexistence.

In 1792, rustic and especially stable scenes were already firmly attached to Morland's profile as a painter because the young artist, from his first appearance at the Royal Academy exhibition in 1781 at the age of 18 as both a mature artist ("not Junior") and as an oil painter, chose to present a rural subject connected to the life of the poor in the countryside, *Hovel with asses* (unidentified).³¹⁴ Its subject was probably similar to that of another painting by Morland (Fig. 70, Lord Lansdowne Collection) representing the inside of a stable covered with straw, a few farming tools scattered around, inhabited

³¹⁴ Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts*, pp. 294-295.

by two donkeys in the foreground, one reclined and seen from behind and the other one standing, a dog curled up beside them, and two peasants in the background, all of them sharing the same shelter. The feeling of a relationship of tenderness and love between men and animals coexisting in the same small space is here emphasized by the position of the two men quietly chatting, one recumbent and seen from behind holding his jug, and the other sitting beside him, perfectly symmetrical to the donkeys' position.

All is peaceful. And yet the striking contrast between the refined context of the Royal Academy exhibition and Morland's *The Farmyard* (Fig. 69), its main action consisting of a pig leaning over its sty, would have been evident to any contemporary of Morland. The pig was considered the dirtiest and most disgusting animal of the farm, a subject irredeemably low and until then considered unworthy of being painted, as one of Morland's biographers implied with these words: "Morland was the first that ever gave any degree of consequence to that bristled animal, which the Jews are said to hold in abhorrence, as unclean".³¹⁵ Morland's association with the depiction of pigs is also clear from one critic's comment that he had been "enabled to 'bring his pigs to an excellent market'".³¹⁶ The presence of the stable in the background might have recalled *Inside of a Stable* (Fig. 71, 1791, Tate), Morland's exhibit at the RA the previous year, representing some farmers bringing their horses back to their barn. Together with the pig, the stable was read as a recurrent feature in Morland's work, as acknowledged in a 1794 review of another of his works showed at the RA, *Bargaining for Sheep* (Fig. 22, 1794, New Walk Museum and Art Gallery, Leicester): "Morland exhibits more of his favourite scenes – The stable door, he never willingly quits, is still propitious to him".³¹⁷ Later defined as the "Rubens of a pig-stye – the Salvator Rosa of a Farm-yard!",³¹⁸ Morland and his rustic subject matter were seen as inextricably linked, as the painter's life and the fictive plane of his picture surfaces were conflated.

³¹⁵ William Collins, *Memoirs of That Celebrated, Original and Eccentric Genius the Late George Morland, an Eminent Painter* (London: H. D. Symonds, 1806), p. 226. In describing a few paintings by Morland portraying pigs, a contemporary commentator would call it alternatively "misshapen voracious animal" and "voluptuous brute". See John Raphael Smith, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures, Painted by George Morland* (exhibition catalogue, London: 1793), Special Collections 95.G.38, National Art Library, London, pp. 21-22. However, see Chapter 1 for a thorough discussion on the pig's position, role and meanings in eighteenth-century England.

³¹⁶ "Royal Academy. Critique – No. III", 4 May 1792.

³¹⁷ "The Royal Academy – Iam Nova Progenies", *Oracle and Public Advertiser*, 8 May 1794.

³¹⁸ "Royal Academy", *The Morning Post*, 19 May 1810.

This chapter will deal with the reception of Morland's paintings, how this was influenced by public perceptions of the painter himself, and in turn how the audience's idea of him was shaped and manipulated. In reading the eighteenth-century London art world as functioning according to specific rules and involving a set of new agents - audience, institutions, art critics, auctioneers, art dealers, collectors and so on, all contributing with their participation in producing the value of artworks – the chapter is informed by Pierre Bourdieu's theory on the emergence of an autonomous 'field' of artistic production in modern times.³¹⁹ In the first section, I begin by considering the possibilities available to Morland in London in terms of audience, genres, subject matter, sizes, artistic precedents, styles, forms, and the contexts of exhibition. In this way the artistic choices that led Morland to exhibit *The Farmyard* at the Royal Academy show will be interpreted as a combination of strategies for reputation and survival in a competitive art world, consisting in the elaboration of an individual style, accessible to a new enlarged audience, and the simultaneous shaping of a recognizable persona. In the second section I explore further the strategies deployed to produce broad appeal for Morland's art – at visual, rhetorical and textual level. Here I enlarge the point of view to look at the larger context of the modern art world and at the role played in this sense by the new specialized personnel in the marketing of art. The huge adaptability of Morland's 'brand' and the extent of the market for his works will be argued through an examination of business ventures focusing on the artist, initiated by him, his collaborators and even by agents in the artistic field unrelated to him.

First held in 1769, the Royal Academy annual exhibition of works by living artists had soon established itself not only as the most important event of the British art world, but also as one of the most elegant occasions of the London social season. The exhibition's overt purpose was promoting the fine arts and elevating taste. Strange then that in 1792, Morland should choose to represent himself at this refined event with a work like *The Farmyard* (Fig. 69). The representation of animals had been placed close to the bottom of the strict hierarchy of genres established almost two centuries before by Continental academies, preceding only the genre of still-life. Reynolds mentioned

³¹⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), pp. 166-173.

animal painting just three times in his *Discourses*. In *Discourse III*, delivered to the Royal Academy students in 1770, he aligned with continental Academic tradition in assigning a lower rank to painters of lesser genres, animal painters included:

The painters who have applied themselves more particularly to low and vulgar characters, and who express with precision the various shades of passion, as they are exhibited by vulgar minds, ... deserve great praise; but as their genius has been employed on low and confined subjects, the praise which we give must be as limited as its object. ... This principle may be applied to the Battle-pieces of Bourgoigne, the French Gallantries of Watteau, and ... the exhibition of animal life³²⁰

The following year, he recognized certain skills in painters of animals, but nevertheless reiterated the limits inherent in this and in other lesser genres:

It would be ridiculous for a painter of domestick scenes, of portraits, landscapes, animals, or of still life, to say that he despised those qualities which has made the subordinate schools so famous. The art of colouring, and the skilful management of light and shadow, are essential requisites in his confined labours (*sic*).³²¹

Finally in his *Discourse VII* (1776) Reynolds praised Jacopo Bassano - a sixteenth-century Italian painter, most associated with the depiction of animals - for his correct representation of them, but judged his works to belong to a lower genre in comparison with history painting:

Since I have mentioned Bassano, we must do him likewise the justice to acknowledge, that though he did not aspire to the dignity of expressing the characters and passions of men, yet, with respect to facility and truth in his manner of touching animals of all kinds, and giving them what painters call *their character*, few have ever excelled him.³²²

First President of the Royal Academy, Reynolds never questioned the traditional hierarchy of genres, his teaching doctrine being based largely on the pre-eminence of history painting, the priority of drawing over colouring, and a preference for the pursuit of the grand style. Nevertheless, referring to Gainsborough in his *Discourse XIV* to the Royal Academy students (1788), he stated that “we have the sanction of all mankind in preferring genius in a lower rank of art, to feebleness and insipidity in the highest”³²³ and before that date, in his *Discourse XI* of 1782, he had allowed that an important work of art could be produced even in minor genres under the hand of genius: “Whether it is

³²⁰ Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourse III* (1770), in *Discourses on Art*, ed. Robert R. Wark (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 51-52.

³²¹ Reynolds, *Discourse IV* (1771), in *Discourses on Art*, pp. 70-71.

³²² Reynolds, *Discourse VII* (1776), in *Discourses on Art*, pp. 130-131.

³²³ Reynolds, *Discourse XIV* (1788), in *Discourses on Art*, p. 249.

the human figure, an animal, or even inanimate objects, there is nothing, however unpromising in appearance, but may be raised into dignity, convey sentiment, and produce emotion, in the hands of a Painter of genius".³²⁴ Reynolds' contradictory theoretical positions reflect the peculiarities he could not help but recognize in the rising English School of painting which, lacking a state demand for history painting comparable to other countries, was mainly constituted by landscapists and portraitists. Also, the reality of the London art world at the end of the eighteenth century was far from the realms of Academic ideals, ideals which the Royal Academy maintained in spite of the changes its very existence was determining both in the audience and among artists as a professional class. For the foundation of the Academy with all its attendant publicity had two principal consequences: an increasing number of painters encouraged to undertake this career by the institution and its educational system, and an increasing interest in art from new social classes usually excluded as consumers of cultural products.

The expansion of the audience for art led to changes in artistic production, especially in subjects aimed at the entertainment of the viewers. Some examples of paintings reproduced for the contemporary print market give an idea of the subjects designed to appeal to bourgeois audiences, classifiable under the label of 'fancy pictures', an ambiguous genre somewhere between portrait, genre, landscape and history which emerged in England in this period in relation to an increasingly commercialised culture. Popular contemporary prints represented children, urchins, market women, beggars, a universe of 'outsiders' of the middling classes, which seem to have allowed the members of this social group to perceive a sense of identity by means of the representation of the excluded. Some of these prints reproduced the works of high reputed masters, like *A Shepherd* (Richard Earlom after Thomas Gainsborough, 1781, British Museum), *Mercury as Cutpurse* (John Dean after Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1777, British Museum), *Shrimps!* (Francesco Bartolozzi after William Hogarth, 1782, British Museum); other prints like *Oyster Woman* (Philip Dawe, 1769, British Museum) or *A Young Lady Encouraging the Low Comedian* (William Ward after James Northcote, 1784,

³²⁴ Reynolds, *Discourse XI* (1782), in *Discourses on Art*, pp. 196-197.

British Museum) were more specifically intended for the middling classes and the furniture print market.³²⁵

Hence, new markets were emerging from these changes and they offered a means of making a living for an increasing number of painters, who could find in specialization their way to survive in a competitive art world. It was easier for painters to survive by diversifying their offer, exploiting specific niches in these new markets, than by competing against each other within the only genre with Academic credibility, history painting.³²⁶ Indeed Morland's paintings at the 1792 RA show were noticeably "marked in the catalogue for sale",³²⁷ so they carried an overt commercial orientation in pronounced contrast to the claims of the Academy. Furthermore, in not being ascribable to a precise genre, Morland's paintings followed the modern tendency towards the elaboration of novel pictorial languages, very much due to the transformations in the art world determined by the establishment of a regular public art exhibition. The RA show, admitting all the people who could afford to pay its one shilling entrance ticket, created a newly democratic audience which excluded only the poor: the number of visitors to this event increased from 61381 in 1780 to 91827 in 1822. Many newspapers of the time described this audience as a tumultuous mixture of people of both sexes and of different social and cultural standing. Notwithstanding the calls of the Academicians in favour of the grand manner, the majority of artists recognized that in this new context the market commanded the rules of production. The varying and contradictory market demands led to the absence of a dominant aesthetic in the Great Room, in fact the exhibits featured a great variety of genre and styles. Being exposed to the combined forces of fashion and competition for patrons, artists exhibiting at the RA tended towards a constant research of innovation and individuation of their styles.³²⁸

³²⁵ Martin Postle, *Angels and Urchins: The Fancy Picture in Eighteenth-Century British Art* (Nottingham: The Djanogly Art Gallery in association with Lund Humphries, 1998), pp. 6, 17, 59, 73-74, 78-79, 89.

³²⁶ John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Harper Collins, 1997), pp. 219, 234-235, 246.

³²⁷ "Royal Academy. Critique – No. III", 4 May 1792.

³²⁸ David H. Solkin, ed., *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780-1836* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 5.

The impossibility of arranging the canvases in a way consistent with their internal perspectives and the modality itself of viewing the same pictures from shifting points of views due to the physical process of moving within the space contributed to the crisis of the “authoritarian politics of vision”³²⁹ which established a correct position for both image and spectator. In this context, viewing was becoming a more social and democratic experience, where the variety of point of views led to a multiplicity of responses, all potentially correct, and the exchange of which aroused pleasure. The majority of paying customers came to the exhibition to be entertained not only by the works on display but also perhaps by the voyeuristic potential of a place featuring a mixing of sexes.³³⁰ All these changes in the modalities of viewing and in the composition of the audience led artists to elaborate new pictorial languages which played on the different viewing attitudes and practices of the varied public. It is useful to look at Morland’s exhibits at the RA before the 1790s, when he began to dedicate himself exclusively to rustic subject matter, in order to reconstruct the meaning of this shift in relation to the possibilities available to him in terms of audience and modalities of visual reception in the late eighteenth-century London art world.

By 1792 Morland was already a *habitué* at the Royal Academy annual exhibition, where he had started his exhibiting career at the remarkable age of 10 and where he exhibited irregularly throughout his whole life. In 1784 he showed the painting *Vicar of Wakefield, vol. I, chap. 8*, featuring an episode from the sentimental novel by Oliver Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766).³³¹ This novel tells the story of an intelligent and virtuous, but vain and gullible parson, Dr Charles Primrose, and his happy family. Primrose’s luck changes at the beginning of the novel, when he is duped by a dishonest merchant and loses his fortune, and when his eldest son’s marriage is therefore cancelled by his future father-in-law. Consequently, the vicar and his family are forced to move to a humbler neighbourhood, their landlord, Mr. Thornhill, known for being a rake. However, when Primrose finally meets Mr. Thornhill, he easily forgets his reservations, misled by the squire’s amiable manners and interest in his daughter, which encourages the vicar’s vain ambitions for a high social status.

³²⁹ Solkin, *Art on the Line*, p. 3.

³³⁰ Solkin, *Art on the Line*, pp. 4-6.

³³¹ The novel was written between 1761 and 1762 and published in 1766.

We can perhaps get some idea of the kind of scene represented by Morland (now lost) by looking at the painting by Charles Reuben Ryley, depicting the same passage of that book and entitled '*The Vicar of Wakefield*', Vol. I, Chap. VIII: *Dining in the Hayfields*' (*Surprised by Mr Thornhill's Chaplain*) (Fig. 72, 1786, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven).³³² The Vicar of Wakefield and his family are seen picnicking in the company of Mr. Burchell, an erudite but poor friend of the curate, who saved his daughter Sophia from drowning and since then has developed a reciprocated passion for the young girl. In Goldsmith's novel, their conversation deals with romantic accounts taken from literature and their aesthetic value. In Ryley's painting we see that conversation interrupted by the sudden appearance from among trees to the left-hand side of Mr. Thornhill's chaplain, who has been shooting and who is another suitor of Sophia, though she had resisted his overtures in favour of Mr. Burchell. Indeed, in Ryley's painting, Sophia, scared by the chaplain's appearance, is represented throwing herself into the arms of Mr. Burchell, almost successfully revealing her breasts in her probably affected gesture of alarm. Subsequently, in an episode not represented in Ryley's painting, Mr. Thornhill's chaplain offers his game to Sophia, who, initially horrified by his present, is convinced to accept it willingly by a gaze from her mother.

The episode chosen by Morland is therefore centred on the reconciliation of a few binary oppositions which would prove to be recurrent in his art: first of all the contrast between rural and fashion, two subjects which are sometimes found to coexist in Morland's paintings in these earlier years, but which are also representative of two different periods in his career (namely the polite sentimental scenes produced during the 1780s, and the rustic scenes with farmers and animals that are distinctive of his production in the 1790s). Another binary opposition we find here and in many other Morland paintings is that between hunter and family. In particular the scene from the *Vicar of Wakefield* offers a binary opposition of gender-based values: masculine sensuality and hunting are juxtaposed with, and literally intrude into, polite femininity

³³² Ryley's painting was in pendant with another work by him, '*The Vicar of Wakefield*', Vol. II, Chap. III: *The Return of Olivia*, as well dated 1786 and located at the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven. Morland's *Vicar of Wakefield*, vol. I, chap. 8 must have been similarly conceived as part of a series of works all drawing from the same literary source. At least another two known paintings by Morland describe episodes from this novel: *Squire Thornhill proposes to Olivia* (Goldsmith *Vicar of Wakefield*) (Agnews, 1984); *The Fortune Teller* (Tate, London).

and sensibility. The scene is suffused with an erotic overtone, which is implicit in the contrast between aggressive masculinity penetrating into vulnerable femininity; it is also likely that the painting by Morland indulged in lascivious details similar to Ryley's depiction of Sophia's breasts.

One year later, in 1785, Morland was again at the Royal Academy exhibition with a painting featuring a literary theme: *Maria, Lavinia and the Chelsea Pensioner* (unlocated), a scene from vol. I of *Adventures of a Hackney Coach*, another popular and widely read novel (published only a few years before this exhibition, in 1781), but of a lower cultural level. This picaresque novel was more a hodgepodge of various stories than a coherent novel with a proper plot in the manner of *The Vicar of Wakefield*.³³³ The episode chosen by Morland was the fortuitous encounter of a wealthy girl from London, Maria, with a Chelsea pensioner, who was discovered to be the father of her ex nurse, a woman now in economic distress because of the death of her husband. Here the scene is centred on the intrusion of polite femininity into a poor man's life, so in a sense this time the episode represents a variation of the binary antithesis between refined womanliness and rustic masculinity already seen in the scene from *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Again, Morland displayed a sentimental domestic subject of the kind depicted by his father, focused on popular themes, sensibility and benevolence, and inspired by a successful and widely recognizable literary source. The painting also likely had a patriotic tinge, since Chelsea pensioners were veterans of the British army living at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, revered as national heroes.

Not only did these works by Morland feature a reconciliation of binary opposites in terms of content (rural and fashion, femininity and masculinity), but they also reunited sources of different stature: polite and refined literature (Oliver Goldsmith, who in Johnson's view had to be considered the best poet of that age after Pope) and the kind of literary texts written by hacks (the author of *The Adventures of an Hackney Coach*

³³³ *The Adventures of an Hackney Coach* was the last in a long series of works in a vogue for prose fictions whose central characters were animals or inanimate objects, which would later be defined as 'it narratives'. This subgenre comprised works of incredible success like *Chrysal (sic); or, The Adventures of a Guinea* written in 1760 by Charles Johnstone and reissued twenty times by the turn of the nineteenth century.

was unknown and the novel was written explicitly as a commodity for an increasingly consumer-driven market for literature).³³⁴ Both paintings were informed by the contemporary idea of sensibility, the eighteenth-century philosophical tendency which fostered the power of feeling and according to which sensation and emotion prevailed on cognition and will. In particular, as scenes taken from contemporary novels, they drew upon the interpretation of this tendency to be found in the new genre of the sentimental novel. In the pivotal and extremely popular novels by Samuel Richardson, *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1748), sensibility was an emotional fragility, the capacity to feel and display sentiments (often expressed through weeping, fainting and sighs) belonging to exceptional members of society, especially polite women. Philosophical writings by David Hume and Adam Smith described sensibility as the compassion and empathy that resulted from being the ‘spectator’ of other people’s sentiments and simultaneously by being able to imagine oneself experiencing the same feelings.³³⁵ Philosophers had been at pains to describe sensibility as a general bond within all the members of society, while novelists had interpreted it as a virtue belonging to exceptional human beings alone.

Acts of charity performed by polite feminine figures such as the one staged in *The Adventure of a Hackney Coach’s* scene were typical of sentimental novels and sentimental genre paintings. Scenes of charity and virtue were treated in a manner very close to Morland by William Redmore Bigg, a painter slightly older than Morland who had started his exhibiting career at the Royal Academy exhibition in 1780 (one year before Morland’s first participation as “not Junior”). Bigg studied under Edward Penny, one of the Academy’s founders, who developed a mixture of different genres: history paintings imbued with daily experiences and genre paintings displaying the dignity of more elevated genres. In particular, Penny specialized in the representation of charity scenes, as well as paired pictures depicting subjects from contemporary literature.³³⁶

³³⁴ Oliver Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, ed. with an introduction by Stephen Coote (London: Penguin Books, 1986), p. 204.

³³⁵ John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon University Press), pp. 44-45, 58-61.

³³⁶ For an example of his charity scenes see *An Officer Relieving a Sick Soldier* (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) exhibited at the Society of Artists in 1765. Among the literary subjects treated by Penny were Jonathan Swift’s description of a city shower or popular dramas like Nicholas Rowe’s *Jane Shore*. For a

Bigg further developed Penny's imagery, working especially on moralizing pendants, scenes describing virtuous cottagers and conversation pieces involving especially women in charitable acts (for example Fig. 73, *A Lady and Her Children Relieving a Cottager*, exhibited at the RA in 1781, Philadelphia Museum of Art).³³⁷

Through such works, artists in this period made two modalities of viewing coexist in their paintings: the one of the connoisseur, based on the recognition of meaning or coherence in the picture, and the one of the naïve viewer, who enjoyed its pleasurable aesthetics and simply identified with its content, elaborating a "technique that opens up visibility to a potentially democratic public sphere".³³⁸ This technique was the aesthetic equivalent of the philosophical theory of sympathy, in which sociability potentially belongs to those able to empathize with another's feelings and to imagine themselves experiencing them. It similarly made the instructive content of the painting accessible to all those who had eyes to see. The eye of even the most uneducated viewer could be led towards the less accessible modality of connoisseurial viewing through the more accessible aesthetic pleasures of the picture.³³⁹ Both these paintings by Morland were based on contemporary novels which were popular among the middling classes, and so they played at the same time on the pleasures produced in a broad public by the recognition of the literary reference and sympathy with the feelings represented. Viewers identifying with the sentiments conveyed in *The Adventure of a Hackney Coach's* scene could by this means penetrate into the deeper realm of the painting's meaning, its patriotic and charitable content. However the paintings arguably also offered more immediately sensory pleasures, given by the likely formal qualities of the pictures' surfaces and the voyeuristic erotic dimension suggested by the *Vicar of Wakefield* scene.

recent study on this painter, see Lucinda Lax, "The 'Ingenious Moral Painter': Edward Penny, the Royal Academy and the Reinvention of Genre Painting, 1768-1782" (PhD diss., University of York, 2013).

³³⁷ See Radford, Ernest, "Bigg, William Redmore (1755-1828)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-2370>.

³³⁸ Peter De Bolla, *The Education of the Eye: Painting, Landscape, and Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003), pp. 96, 218.

³³⁹ De Bolla, *The Education of the Eye*, p. 99.

Employing visual strategies aiming at pleasing the eye through the detailed description of accidents, erotic hints and a sensuous painterly and colour technique, sentimental scenes of the kind depicted by Bigg and Morland in the 1780s appealed to the respectable urban middling classes who represented the bulk of the Royal Academy audience. This public judged works of art mainly on the criterion of resemblance to contemporary English life and closeness to 'Nature'. Nevertheless connoisseurs, employing a different viewing attitude, "a grammar of looking at artworks that utilizes non-visual material",³⁴⁰ rejected the banalities of these scenes and were instead attracted by a different kind of genre painting, especially that produced in the Netherlandish tradition whose subject matter was too low for both the standards set by the Royal Academy and the taste of the polite bourgeoisie, yet whose prices were rising on the London art market at the end of the eighteenth century.³⁴¹ Sentimental scenes were profitable until the end of the 1780s: significantly, during the following decade Bigg struggled to earn a living while Morland, always well attuned to audience taste, promptly developed a new kind of rustic imagery to which he henceforth dedicated himself. This consisted in an amalgam of his landscape and rural imagery of the 1770s (inspired by Gainsborough's work) and the sensibility which had suffused his polite scenes of the 1780s. In the 1790s Morland therefore relocated the depiction of charitable, benevolent sentiments from the polite world of urban society to the lives and experiences of men and animals living together peacefully in the countryside.

The closest artistic precedent for the depiction of rustic incidents chosen as unique subject matter by Morland from this decade onwards was Thomas Gainsborough, as evidenced in his late landscape paintings and especially the works exhibited less than ten years before Morland's *The Farmyard* appeared at the RA in 1792. The proximity between the two painters was recognized by contemporary commentators: indeed, the words employed by the reviewer of the *Morning Herald* in relation to Morland, quoted in the title of this chapter, echoed those of Gainsborough in a letter sent in 1782 to Sir Joshua Reynolds, after the latter bought Gainsborough's *Girl with Pigs* (Fig. 74, Castle Howard Collection, York, exhibited at the RA that year) for the very good price of 100

³⁴⁰ De Bolla, *The Education of the Eye*, p. 9.

³⁴¹ Solkin, *Art on the Line*, pp. 158-159.

guineas: “I may truly say I have brought my Piggs (*sic*) to a fine market”.³⁴² Moreover, in 1790 another writer had compared Morland to Gainsborough: “Not far behind Gainsborough – is coming on very fast the delightful pencil of Morland, whose taste and whose skill as a Landscape Painter, have now scarce an equal”.³⁴³ The basis for such a comparison might indeed be found in works such as Gainsborough’s *Wooded Landscape with Peasant Family at a Cottage Door and Footbridge over a Stream* (Fig. 75, Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California), which had been exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1780. This work is an example of Gainsborough’s cottage door scenes, which differed from contemporary landscape paintings by being centred on the lives of poor peasants living in woodland cottages yet which were nevertheless permeated with high-blown references to Old Master paintings and suffused with a Venetian tone. Furthermore, among Gainsborough’s later exhibits at the Royal Academy there had been paintings of larger formats describing rural incidents, such as *A Shepherd Boy* (destroyed by fire) in 1781, followed one year later by the above-mentioned *Girl with Pigs*. Shown in the same venue in 1783, Gainsborough’s *Shepherd Boys with Dogs Fighting* (Fig. 76, Kenwood House, London) had employed a grand canvas of over two metres high for a low subject in the manner of Murillo, seriously challenging the hierarchy of formats established by academic rules. *Shepherd Boys with Dogs Fighting* portrayed two youths watching a fight between their dogs; one of them, moved by compassion and desiring to divide them, is about to hit the pair with a stick, but his companion less sympathetically stops him to watch the outcome of the fight. The modern poetics of sensibility fostered the idea that respond with feeling to a smaller event meant being able to behave similarly in relation to larger events. Gainsborough was elaborating a new kind of serious art, not employing mythological, historical and obscure stories, but relying on common experiences.³⁴⁴

Shepherd Boys with Dogs Fighting can be seen as sharing some features with Morland’s *The Farmyard* (Fig. 69). The two paintings are similarly based on balanced compositions of human and animal subjects: arranged within a horizontal canvas, Morland’s figures

³⁴² Mary Woodall, ed., *The Letters of Thomas Gainsborough* (London: Cupid Press, 1963), pp. 127-129.

³⁴³ “Artists of Fame”, *World*, 14 May 1790.

³⁴⁴ Michael Rosenthal, *The Art of Thomas Gainsborough: “A Little Business for the Eye”* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 249, 266.

are more spread out, but are similarly organized into two groups (man and pig; dog and horses). Shown moving away from the horses on the right towards the man and pig on the left, the dog links these two distinct groups. In Gainsborough's image two humans (the shepherd boys on the right) are matched by two animals (the two dogs at bottom left). The two paintings show a correspondence of emotions and gestures between the two groups they each depict, a complex of actions and reactions which in Gainsborough's canvas portrays a more problematic coexistence between men and animals, in Michael Rosenthal's words, an "inverted pastoral",³⁴⁵ while Morland's painting describes a perfect consensus among all the protagonists. And although the composition and colour of Gainsborough's painting share similarities with Morland's (not least in the use of colour contrast, between the red jacket and hair of one boy and the green jacket of his companion, which rhyme with the contrasting coats of the two dogs), Gainsborough's work was inspired by a radically opposite tradition, the Italianate, as is clearly demonstrated by its monumental figures (which Rosenthal suggests were based on Titian's *The Death of St. Peter Martyr*) and its theatrical composition (which is meant to be seen from below as if it was set on a stage).³⁴⁶

Gainsborough had paved the way to rustic imagery for Morland, but the latter artist simplified the former's blending of sensibility with rustic subject matter to his own commercial purposes and to make it more suited to his requirements within the competitive arena of the Royal Academy exhibition space. Morland's *The Farmyard* therefore represents a scene of perfect coexistence, in which pleasurable feelings of sympathy are conveyed to viewers in a quick glance and whose instructional content is significantly reduced, while Gainsborough's *Shepherd Boys with Dogs Fighting* describes a more complex subject and a more problematic scene of sympathy, which requires a lengthier engagement in order to be understood. For a commercial artist whose survival, as it will be argued, depended on a much larger audience buying his paintings and the prints made after them, an undemanding engagement, which aimed first of all

³⁴⁵ Rosenthal, *The Art of Thomas Gainsborough*, p. 110.

³⁴⁶ Rosenthal, *The Art of Thomas Gainsborough*, pp. 108-110.

at pleasing a less connoisseurial public and its particular mode of viewing, had certain advantages.³⁴⁷

In this sense, when developing his novel subject matter centred on the peaceful coexistence of animals of different species, Morland might have even been looking to a source outside the fields of painting or literature, and of a much lower stature: he was perhaps inspired by a kind of street exhibition called the ‘happy family’. This was popular in London around the time of *The Farmyard*’s exhibition at the RA show especially among a bourgeois public, and consisted of an array of small animals and birds living together peacefully in the same cage.³⁴⁸ The first account of this kind of exhibit dated back to 1750-55 when (according to the antiquary and topographer Daniel Lysons) a certain “Batchelor Dick” went around the city centre with “The Iron House”, a caravan covered in plate iron, which in addition to a number of miscellaneous curiosities inside, also carried a pigeon house on its roof, a cage with an owl, a hawk, and a pigeon living together happily, and other cages with singing birds.³⁴⁹ In his *Curiosities of Natural History*, the zoologist Francis Buckland reported that a Lambeth workman called Charles Garbett had invented the proper ‘happy family’ show, after learning the secret of how to rear together animals of different species from his cat, who had adopted a litter of baby rats after being deprived of her kittens. According to Buckland, Charles Garbett had kept the secret and improved the technique, before licensing for its use the former stocking weaver John Austin from Nottingham, known as the inventor of the enlarged version of the show.³⁵⁰ Comparing Morland’s *The Farmyard*, a painting exhibited in the refined context of the Royal Academy annual exhibition, with a street show is less hazardous than might be expected. The word ‘art’ in this period starts to be used in relation to a wider variety of contexts than ever before, beyond the prestigious and elite spaces with which it had previously been

³⁴⁷ Solkin, *Art on the Line*, p. 159.

³⁴⁸ Richard Daniel Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 431.

³⁴⁹ Daniel Lysons, *Collectanea; or, A Collection of Advertisements from the Newspapers*, 2-Vol. set 1660–1825, Pressmark 1881.b.6, British Library, London, as quoted in Altick, *The Shows of London*, p. 21.

³⁵⁰ Francis Trevelyan Buckland, *Curiosities of Natural History*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1868), 1:88-92; Francis Trevelyan Buckland, *Curiosities of Natural History*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1874), 1:60.

associated. To really understand the complexity of the London art world in the second half of the eighteenth century it is consequently useful to consider also its margins.

Returning to the comparison between Morland's *The Farmyard* (Fig. 69) and Gainsborough's *Shepherd Boys with Dogs Fighting* (Fig. 76), it should be noted that the former would not have commanded the same degree of attention as the latter, since it was very likely hung in a less advantageous position because of its smaller size and the different stature of the two artists. That said, nevertheless, *The Farmyard* followed Gainsborough's move to increase scale and ambitions of genre paintings. When he was experimenting with genre paintings of a larger scale, Gainsborough was already one of the most successful artists of his time, and so he could command higher prices and paint ambitious and larger canvases than common genre painters; the norm in terms of size for genre paintings from the preceding decade was usually 60 x 70 cm, for example *Girl Singing Ballads by a Lanthorn*, by Henry Robert Morland (1765-82, Tate, 75.6 x 62.2 cm), or *The Return from Market* by Francis Wheatley, exhibited at the RA in 1788 (1786, Leeds City Art Gallery, 74.9 x 62.2 cm). However, Morland's employment of a larger scale for *The Farmyard* followed a general increase of format for genre paintings exhibited at the RA show, both a strategy to stand out on the crowded walls of the Great Room and a result of the growing interest of the market in this production. In 1783 Gainsborough was at the end of his career and already considered among the best English painters, while in 1792 (when *The Farmyard* was exhibited) Morland's reputation was still being carved out. Furthermore in his choice of composition, tonalities and subject matter, Morland's painting belongs to the tradition of small and detailed genre paintings in the manner of Hogarth or of Netherlandish art, which he renewed by shifting the focus of the painting from men to animals, whilst also distinguishing his work from pictures in the genre of animal painting which were usually devoid of sentimental content.³⁵¹ In comparison with his 1780s exhibits at the Royal Academy, Morland's *The Farmyard* deployed a more sensuous painterly technique which played more on the sense of touch through a thick impasto and through a content that, being purified of any eroticism and describing the simple pleasure of being, was suitable for a larger public and possibly acceptable for display in a household

³⁵¹ Solkin, *Art on the Line*, p. 158.

with women and children. Consequently, *The Farmyard* was a painting unclassifiable in terms of style, genre and subject matter, which suggested a relocation of the contemporary poetics of sensibility from the human to the animal kingdom. The references to Netherlandish art may also suggest that being a commercial painter aiming to address a bourgeois public was no longer enough for Morland: he wanted to appeal to a public of connoisseurs and embrace a larger audience than before through a less eroticised reference to pleasure. It might be argued that he also meant to carve out his artistic persona along the lines of the Netherlandish tradition, its subjects and its artists, in order to build an enduring reputation.

Some apparently curious formal choices employed by Morland in *The Farmyard* (Fig. 69), which puzzled both contemporary and later critics, can be recognized as having been conceived by the artist to make his work appear more authentic and true to nature (values increasingly appreciated by contemporary audiences) through the staging of his naiveté in artistic matters. According to George Dawe, one of Morland's early biographers, although the painter had done his best to correct himself, *The Farmyard* lacked finish, one of the most important standards of traditional Academic painting. This was apparently the main deficiency perceived in his work by his contemporaries. Nevertheless in another passage of the same biography, the same work is said to have been sold by the artist's pupil at profit, and Morland's art is also described as commercially valuable and sought after by contemporary collectors.³⁵² In 1785 Morland had exhibited at the Royal Academy six *Sketches*, which were likely oil sketches: since 1781, when Morland first exhibited as "not Junior", he seems to have exhibited only works in the medium of oil painting at the Academy. The production and exhibition of loosely painted canvases was therefore likely to be a conscious and significant act for Morland, rather than the lack of competence his critics claimed to find in them. Morland may therefore have deliberately employed an unfinished style for his RA exhibits, since detailed genre paintings required a lengthier engagement and easily ended up being ignored on the crowded walls of the Great Room.

³⁵² Dawe, *The Life of George Morland*, pp. 55, 117.

Ironically perhaps, some context for Morland's lack of finish can be found in Reynolds's ideas on art which, although formally adherent to traditional artistic rules established by Continental academies, showed a new openness to the characteristics emerging within modern British art, not only in terms of genres (as has been pointed out above) but also in terms of new pictorial styles. In *Discourse XI* (1782) Reynolds therefore insisted on the necessity for the painter to give priority to the whole instead of the minute detail, because:

Something, perhaps, always must be neglected; the lesser ought then to give way to the greater; and since every work can have but a limited time allotted to it ... it appears more reasonable to employ that time to the best advantage, in contriving various methods of composing the work ... than that the time should be taken up in minutely finishing those parts.³⁵³

Again, Gainsborough's loose brushwork, similar to Rubens and Salvator Rosa, and personal, experimental and unfinished style can be considered an important precedent for Morland's painterly manner, especially looking at his exhibited works from the last decade of landscape production. His works from these years seem to challenge academic norms on what could be considered a finished work and on the established correspondence between subject matter and medium. In the 1770s, Gainsborough had already started to experiment with aquatint and soft-ground etching, new techniques which challenged the distinction between media, since they allowed him to produce prints which were close imitations of drawings.³⁵⁴ In 1772 Gainsborough therefore exhibited at the Royal Academy two large landscape drawings in imitation of oil paintings, together with a group of eight smaller examples, the outcome of a new and personal technique. Having been hung at the exhibition, they were surely not intended as preparatory sketches, but as completed works consciously realized with an unfinished technique.³⁵⁵ Furthermore, in 1780 Gainsborough was ready to publish three prints from his soft-ground etchings, since they appear to be all accompanied by a publishing line, even if the final step of issuing them was never taken. The subjects of these prints made reference to other art and this choice was significant because it meant that Gainsborough was treating ambitious subjects through the media of soft-

³⁵³ Reynolds, *Discourse XI* (1782), in *Discourses on Art*, p. 197.

³⁵⁴ Rosenthal, *The Art of Thomas Gainsborough*, pp. 258-263.

³⁵⁵ Michael Rosenthal and Martin Myrone, eds., *Gainsborough* (London: Tate Gallery, 2002), pp. 236, 240.

ground etching.³⁵⁶ Hence, Morland's unfinished style in *The Farmyard* had an artistic precedent (Gainsborough's experimental style) and a *raison d'être*, the constant need for stylistic innovation demanded by a fiercely competitive art world. Nevertheless, the partial critical endorsement of the manifest transgression of established academic rules on finish suggests that employing loose brushwork in *The Farmyard* could also have helped Morland to project an unconventional picture of himself, as an untrained and naïve painter, who worked in a highly spontaneous and original manner.

In 1806 another of Morland's early biographers, John Hassell, commenting on *The Farmyard*, emphasized "a most egregious blunder" he noted "in the ears of the grey horse",³⁵⁷ which he claimed Morland could not be persuaded to correct, an allusion to the awkward position of the ears of the horse, which seem to be anatomically wrong, almost coinciding with the forehead of the animal. However it might be argued that positioning the physical organs which could allow the horse's sympathetic response so prominently in the painting was an intentional choice. When we look at this detail with an eye informed with the contemporary doctrines of sympathy and sociability elaborated by Hume and Smith in the field of sentimental moral philosophy, we recognize in the grey horse the only 'spectator' looking at the scene of caring before him (the man tending to the pig), acting as a surrogate viewer and suggesting the expected response to the audience. In *The Farmyard* the pleasure and satisfaction of the pig, object of the personal attention of the man, are amplified by the mirroring of these feelings in the horse, which in turn suggest the viewer's identification with those feeling.

Nevertheless, criticism of *The Farmyard* (and Morland's art in general) as being inept or incorrect have been persistent. In 1977 Winter pointed out that the repetitive compositional principle of the diagonal employed by Morland in *The Farmyard* was

³⁵⁶ The three prints were *Wooded Landscape with Carts and Figures*; *Churchyard, with Figures Contemplating Tombstone*; *Landscape with Herdsman Driving Cattle Over a Bridge* (1779-1780, soft-ground etching on blue laid paper, New Haven, Yale Center for British Art), whose imagery made reference respectively to Rubens, *Watering Place*, Poussin's *Et in Arcadia Ego*, and a painting which had belonged to Oldfield Bowles. See Rosenthal, *The Art of Thomas Gainsborough*, pp. 258-263.

³⁵⁷ John Hassell, *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Morland; with Critical and Descriptive Observations on the Whole of His Works Hitherto before the Public* (London: Albion Press, 1806), p. 56.

derived directly from *Inside of a Stable* (Fig. 71), and disguised only by variation of the details. This served Winter's reductive interpretation of Morland's career as a parable of stylistic success and decline, a critical *topos* which has been adopted in all biographies of the painter, from his lifetime onwards. In other passages Winter remarks upon Morland's difficulty in rendering perspective correctly and the concealment of his inaccuracies through the arrangement of details sufficient to distract the viewer's interest.³⁵⁸ Yet in 1792 Morland was an experienced and successful painter, whose abilities had been forged by a long apprenticeship with his father and by the attendance (albeit of uncertain regularity and duration) at the Royal Academy Schools, where he enrolled in 1784.³⁵⁹ It seems unlikely, then, that he would have been unable to handle perspective. It could therefore be argued that Morland's repetitive compositions, featuring obvious errors in perspective, were a conscious and significant artistic choice, evidence of his naïveté and hence his authenticity to his subject matter. He has often been reported to have learnt to paint directly from nature and not to have enrolled at the RA Schools.³⁶⁰ Such stories fail to take into account Morland's debt to the tradition of Netherlandish painting, not only in terms of subjects but also in formal matters, and in particular to the work of David Teniers the Younger (1610-1690). In *The Farmyard* (Fig. 69), Morland referred to this tradition (in vogue on the contemporary art market) through the brownish tone interrupted by flashes of bright colours, through the rendering of the animals' fur, and through his suggestive mistakes in perspective, like the uncertain positioning of the two horses in relation to each other or the inaccurate outline of the stable.³⁶¹

Hence, *The Farmyard* employed a combination of various strategies to stand out on the crowded walls of the Royal Academy: in addition to the novelty represented by its genre

³⁵⁸ Winter, "George Morland (1763-1804)", pp. 106 - 108.

³⁵⁹ Sidney C. Hutchinson, "The Royal Academy Schools, 1768-1830", *The Walpole Society* 38 (1960-1962): p. 128.

³⁵⁹ Hutchinson, "The Royal Academy Schools", p. 147.

³⁶⁰ Dawe, *The Life of George Morland*, p. 4.

³⁶¹ For an example of seventeenth-century Netherlandish genre painting featuring a general brownish tone interrupted by an element of a bright colour, see David Teniers, *A Man Holding a Glass and an Old Woman Lighting a Pipe* (c. 1645, National Gallery, London); an example of the accurate rendering of different animals' furs in paintings from this tradition is Nicolaes Pieterszoon Berchem's *Animal Study* (c. 1645, Museum Voor Schone Kunsten, Gent); finally, David Teniers, *Flemish Kermess* (1652, Royal Museum of Fine Arts Belgium, Brussels) features suggestive mistakes in perspective in its arrangement of the rustic cottages placed the middle ground.

and style, it demanded attention with its apparent lack of a precise moral content and thanks to the originality of its low subject, the representation of the obscure farmyard of a cottage in the countryside. Morland's conscious transgression of traditional academic rules in terms of genre, subject matter, style, form and finish in *The Farmyard*, employed to stand out in a crowded exhibiting space involving many competitors, can be seen as a means of claiming a place within the modern and autonomous art world. As Bourdieu put it regarding that world's rules, "revolution tends to impose itself as the *model* of access to existence in the field".³⁶² Furthermore, Morland was employing the RA show to carve out his artistic persona through the association with recognizable rustic subject matter. Conscious mistakes in the proportions and perspective of some elements in the painting may have helped him to feign naïveté in artistic matters, and hence to present himself as an artist of authenticity and truth to nature. By drawing on various artistic precedents and sources, Morland was shaping his own individual style and his artistic personality, staying open and accessible to an audience as large as possible.

In the first section of this chapter we have considered the field of possibilities available to Morland when he submitted *The Farmyard* at the 1792 Royal Academy exhibition. The artist's elaboration of a pictorial style characterized by a resolved union of binary opposites and by elements suggesting his own exceptional personality have here been recognized as strategies or (to use Hassell's term, quoted at the very beginning of this chapter) 'tricks' meant to appeal to a new enlarged audience. In the second section the discussion will be broadened to explore additional strategies - exhibiting, textual and rhetorical - through which wide market for Morland's rural anecdotes and for his unique persona was built. The role played by new agents operating in the modern art world (art critics, as well as art dealers, auctioneers, collectors and so on) will make evident the importance of the emerging discourses on art and artist in constructing meaning and value for Morland's works.³⁶³ The efficacy of Morland's language and associated recognizable persona in reconciling contradictions and audiences will be illustrated through an examination of his presence in a variety of contexts often at odds

³⁶² Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, p. 125.

³⁶³ See Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, pp. 166-173.

with each other, and through a discussion of the ways in which Morland's 'brand' was turned to profit by him, his collaborators and even by other agents in the artistic field unconnected with the painter.

When discussing *The Farmyard* (Fig. 69), Morland's early biographers did not only describe the painter's naïveté in formal artistic choices, but also reported his lack of commercial skills and a tendency to be fooled by his collaborators. Dawe recounted that Morland never submitted paintings to the Royal Academy exhibition himself, but rather through the agency of purchasers and pupils. According to Dawe, Morland's pupil David Brown had purchased *The Farmyard* from his master and then had shrewdly sent it to the Royal Academy exhibition, raising its price to the exceptional sum (for a genre picture) of 120 guineas.³⁶⁴ And yet, in contradiction with these anecdotes, Dawe stated in another passage that "Morland was by no means indifferent to the applause his pictures received when exhibited at the Somerset-House" in 1791, and having been positively impressed by the favourable reception gained by *The Farmer's Stable* (the painting better known under the title *Inside of a Stable*, Fig. 71), "he declared the next year he would shew what he could do".³⁶⁵ This account seems more plausible: it seems likely that *The Farmyard* (and the other Morland's exhibits in 1792) were submitted by the artist himself to the Royal Academy show, given that it was common practice for artists to do so. Indeed, publicity was guaranteed for canvases exhibited in such a high-profile showcase, to the potential advantage of both artist and owner. And yet presenting himself as a painter unaware of the functioning of the art world could itself be read as a strategy to stand out in a competitive market, by encouraging the audience to think of him as an exceptional individual, at once talented and lacking any commercial skill.

Furthermore, anecdotes suggesting that someone other than the artist submitted his works to the RA hint at a strategy actually employed by Morland and other painters

³⁶⁴ Dawe, *The Life of George Morland*, p. 55. The sum reported by Dawe was indeed remarkable since only five years before the reported transaction, Gainsborough charged 160 guineas for a whole-length portrait and 80 for a three-quarter length. See David Mannings, "Notes On Some Eighteenth-Century Portrait Prices In Britain", *British Journal For Eighteenth-Century Studies* 6, no. 2 (1983): pp. 185–196.

³⁶⁵ Dawe, *The Life of George Morland*, p. 117.

who (like him) tended to work for the market and not for specific patrons. With the emergence of personnel specifically dedicated to the marketing of art, such as middlemen and art dealers, sometimes disguised as collectors and auctioneers, such artists could improve their social standing by feigning a lack of involvement in economic matters. Seemingly free from the external demands of patrons (although actually subject to fashion and other forces ruling the market), artists could now style themselves as self-expressive and independent individuals, detached from the vulgarity of material rewards and able to achieve artistic greatness by the sheer force of their talent. As Bourdieu argued, intermediaries such as middlemen and art dealers, simultaneously with taking advantage of an artist's work by commercializing it, actively participated in constructing an artist's fame in a modern art world, by exposing said work on the market, and by offering their own reputation as a guarantee of its validity.³⁶⁶ Bourdieu calls 'screen' the dealer or publisher who, taking the artist's or writer's place in selling his works on the market, allows him to self-fashion himself as uninterested in economic profits.³⁶⁷

Evidence suggests that Morland deployed intermediaries of this kind throughout his career. One of the first occasions on which a substantial number of Morland's works appeared on the London art market was the sale of Ingham Foster's rich portfolio of drawings and prints following his death in 1783 (including drawings by artists such as Salvator Rosa and Rubens and prints by, among others, Henry William Bunbury and Hogarth). Morland's father Henry Robert had been acquainted with this London merchant and collector, being the creator of the portrait (1784, British Museum) which was engraved and published by John Raphael Smith to commemorate his death. Among a total of circa 860 bids constituting Foster's sale, twenty-five included works by or after Morland and his father. More than a hundred and fifty drawings by the young Morland were sold on this occasion.³⁶⁸ At this time Morland was only twenty years old and

³⁶⁶ Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, p. 168.

³⁶⁷ See Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, p. 168.

³⁶⁸ As pointed out in Chapter 2, Foster's portfolio was sold through an auction in two parts, one taking place in February and the other one in May 1783. See Mr. Barford, Ingham Foster, *A Catalogue of the First Part of the Museum of Ingham Foster, Deceased, Consisting of His Matchless Collection of Prints and Drawings, Which Will Be Sold by Auction, by Mr. Barford* (24 February 1783 and following days), *Archive.org*, https://archive.org/stream/gri_firstpartoft00barf#page/n0/mode/2up; Mr. Barford, Ingham Foster, *A Catalogue of the Remaining Part of the Collection of Prints and Drawings of the Late Ingham*

probably still finishing his apprenticeship with his father (after which he enrolled at the Royal Academy one year later). Rather than as a disinterested passion for works by the young Morland, Ingham Foster's collection can be better explained as a strategy enacted in collaboration with Morland's father, aimed at constructing a reputation for an artist whose name was not yet established in the art market. With his substantial portfolio of drawings and prints, Foster must have possessed a reputation as a connoisseur and expert in aesthetic matters, and hence he could serve as guarantor for the young Morland's artistic credibility as a draughtsman. Another example of an agent of this sort, this time from Morland's later career, is the auctioneer John Graham.³⁶⁹ Graham was in an ideal position professionally to act as intermediary in the sale of Morland's works on the market: their postal correspondence suggests that this was the case, with the artist repeatedly demanding more time to finish commissions or money in advance.³⁷⁰ Graham's sale after Morland's death included as many as thirty-two paintings by the artist.³⁷¹

While 'screens'³⁷² allowed Morland to feign inability in profiting from his exceptional talents, his commercial-mindedness is conversely suggested by his featuring significantly in contexts more explicitly oriented towards the market than the Royal Academy. Simultaneously with his intermittent participation in the prestigious RA shows, Morland took part in the annual exhibitions of another (although more short-lived) association of artists: The Incorporated Society of Artists (which dissolved in 1791).³⁷³ The Royal Academy and the Incorporated Society of Artists (together with the Free Society of Artists, which closed down in 1783) were the result of rifts within the

Foster Which Will Be Sold by Auction, by Mr. Barford (22 May 1783 and following days), *Getty Provenance Index® databases* (Sale Catalog Br-A4111, indexed transcription).

³⁶⁹ On John Graham's short-lived political career, as the Radical candidate in the 1802 Westminster election, see: *The Morning Chronicle*, 7 July 1802; *The Morning Post and Gazetteer*, 13 July 1802.

³⁷⁰ See three George Morland's letters to John Graham: 179-?, Special Collections, VI.RC Box 18, National Art Library, London; 3 May 1801, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; 1800, f. 84 Western Manuscripts Add MS 37772 O, British Library, London.

³⁷¹ See Messrs. Robins, John Graham (4 May 1805), *Getty Provenance Index® databases* (Sale Catalog Br-331, indexed transcription, notes by B. Fredericksen).

³⁷² Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, p. 168.

³⁷³ Morland exhibited at The Incorporated Society of Artists in 1777, 1783, 1790 (with as many as eighteen works) and 1791. See Algernon Graves, *The Society of Artists of Great Britain, 1760-1791, The Free Society of Artists, 1761-1783; A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and Their Work from the Foundation of the Societies to 1791* (London: George Bell and Sons and Algernon Graves, 1907), pp. 174-175.

artistic community due to artists' contrasting views on the main aims to be pursued by an association of professionals. While the Royal Academy represented the interests of a select group of artists who set out initially to compete with Old Master pictures, and to convince their audience that their works could embody the same values, the Society of Artists expressed the more modest ambitions of commercial artists (like George Romney, George Stubbs and John Hamilton Mortimer) who worked more or less readily within the market for British art.³⁷⁴ It was not common to take part at both the Royal Academy exhibition and at the Society of Artists exhibition: these societies' statutes prohibited their members from exhibiting at both places simultaneously, and they also represented radically opposite political views. Morland's involvement in the least prestigious of these contexts, the Free Society of Artists' show, can be read as part of his strategies for reputation and survival through the creation of an enlarged audience.³⁷⁵

Furthermore, Morland's production was conspicuously oriented towards the expanding print market from the beginning of his career and throughout his life. Morland collaborated with a variety of publishers and engravers, adapting his subjects to the changing requirements of the audience: he published his first series of prints, *Six Animals Drawn & Etch'd by G. Morland* (1774, British Museum) when he was just eleven, immediately presenting himself as an animal painter and aligning his persona and art with those of Dutch genre artists.³⁷⁶ At the end of the 1770s, he promptly set aside animal and rustic subjects in favour of the sentimental and charitable scenes then in vogue.³⁷⁷ In the 1780s Morland's prints on the market were numerous, spanning from charitable scenes, sentimental subjects and even erotic illustrations featuring characters from popular novels.³⁷⁸ By the end of this decade Morland's leading

³⁷⁴ Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, pp. 229-235.

³⁷⁵ Morland exhibited at the Free Society of Artists show in 1775, 1775 and 1782. See Graves, *Society of Artists ... Free Society of Artists*, pp. 174-175.

³⁷⁶ Refer to Chapter 2 for a discussion of this publication.

³⁷⁷ See for example *Compassion* (1779, British Museum) which stages the charitable act of two fashionable women towards an old blind man sitting by a tree and accompanied by a boy holding out a hat to beg.

³⁷⁸ See for example the two pairs of mezzotints published by John Dean (1783-1788): *The Power of Justice* and *The Triumph of Benevolence*; *The Widow* and *The Happy Family* (or *The Progress of Love*). In 1787 Morland published a group of erotic illustrations drawing from popular books (*Tom Jones*, *Fanny Hill* and Rousseau's *Confession of Nouvelle Héloïse*). All are held at the British Museum.

publisher became John Raphael Smith, with whom he collaborated in ambitious commercial enterprises, such as the *Laetitia* series (Fig. 77 to 82; 1789, British Museum), an enormously successful novelistic production which imitated Hogarth's *Harlot's Progress* (but in which the story was given a happy ending in which the 'prodigal daughter' was forgiven by her family) and the *Slavery Paintings* (*Slave Trade*, 1788, whereabouts unknown and *African Hospitality*, 1790, Menil Collection, Houston), a set of scenes featuring an abolitionist subject, the first to be realized on such a large scale, in the form of proper historical subjects. Morland and Smith conceived the latter scheme to take advantage of the peak in anti-slavery sentiments in Britain between 1788 and 1792: after exhibiting *Slave Trade* at the Royal Academy in 1788, the two images had been offered for engraving by subscription (Fig. 83 and Fig. 84, 1791, British Museum).³⁷⁹

The most substantial of their commercial schemes was nevertheless the solo exhibition of more than sixty of Morland's rustic and coastal paintings, which opened at Smith's shop in the spring of 1793 (the second exhibition of Morland's work to be opened following Daniel Orme's show in 1792 but likely to be the only one in which Morland was actually involved).³⁸⁰ Among the paintings exhibited in this overtly commercial setting, there was also *The Farmyard* (Fig. 69), displayed just one year after its first public appearance at the Royal Academy. The contrast between the enterprise promoted by Smith, a printmaker and publisher, and the refined venue where the painting had been hung only one year before would have been a strong one, and again it shows the openness of Morland's art to a variety of audiences and contexts. The

³⁷⁹ See Ellen G. D'Oench, *"Copper into Gold": Prints by John Raphael Smith, 1751-1812* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 146. I discussed the likely identification and location of the original *Slavery Paintings* in note 44, Chapter 1. Further examples of works by Morland published by Smith are: *Delia in the Country* and *Delia in Town*, and *Rustic Employment* and *Rural Amusement*; the mezzotint series *The Deserter*, in 1791 (*Trepanning a Recruit*; *Recruit Deserted*; *Deserter Taking Leave of his Wife*; *Deserter Pardon'd*) engraved by John Keating. See D'Oench, *"Copper into Gold"*, pp. 122-130, 142-150.

³⁸⁰ In the notes accompanying Smith's exhibition catalogue in *Getty Provenance Index® databases*, the art historian Ellis Waterhouse suggests that this show could have opened as early as January 1793, but he does not substantiate his argument. It seems more likely that the exhibition had started in spring, when advertisements began to appear in the press. See John Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London; "The Arts", *The Diary; or, Woodfall's Register*, 30 May 1793. The approximate number of Morland works in Smith's exhibition is indicated in an advertisement dated 6 May 1793 and quoted in D'Oench, *"Copper into Gold"*, p. 152, stating: "Exhibition of Morland's Pictures, - More than 60 of the last and best productions of this justly esteemed Masters Works (*sic*)".

primary economic basis of this enterprise was the selling by subscription of engravings after the thirty-six paintings in Smith's collection, as advertisements and exhibition catalogue made clear.³⁸¹ According to Ellen D'Oench, the remaining twenty-five or so works included were on loan from the artist.³⁸² All the paintings were also on sale and a shilling was collected for admittance to the gallery.

Smith's exhibition is not to be confused with the Morland Galleries, business enterprises initiated by other art dealers in these years without the artist's involvement. The first Morland Gallery had opened one year before (9 April 1792) at the shop of the art dealer and publisher Daniel Orme. I will discuss this venture later in the chapter as a purely commercial take on Morland's 'brand', evidence of the extent of the market for the artist's works. One year after Morland's death in 1804, another Morland Gallery was held at Mrs. Macklin's shop, 39 Fleet Street, by the initiative of Charles Chatfield of Camberwell Grove. Widow of Thomas Macklin, she was in debt thanks to her husband's ambitious and costly *Poets' Gallery*, and it is significant that she therefore chose to speculate on the seemingly more secure investment of a new Morland Gallery. This enterprise took advantage of a short-term rage for Morland's works which increased their price on the market shortly before and just after his death (Macklin's exhibition contained about ninety paintings by Morland and seems to have been successful, since it was opened for four consecutive seasons).

Smith's exhibition of Morland's paintings was a shrewd commercial enterprise in addressing the British market at a moment when foreign sales were stagnating due to the Napoleonic wars. Morland's works played on patriotic fervour, catering to the nationalistic needs of contemporary audiences through reassuring depictions of a contented and dignified English rural poor.³⁸³ Ellen G. D'Oench, author of the most recent account on Morland's exhibition at Smith's shop, aligns with the consensus about the artist's lack of commercial skills which we have found manifested in his early biographies, suggesting that Morland was advised by Smith when designing his subjects,

³⁸¹ See "The Arts", 30 May 1793; Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London.

³⁸² D'Oench, *Copper into Gold*, p. 150.

³⁸³ D'Oench, *Copper into Gold*, p. 154.

and arguing that without the engraver's work of translation, able to prettify the excessive naturalism of the artist's rural works, the sale of these prints would not have been so successful.³⁸⁴ Yet Morland and Smith were co-workers and close friends who probably knew each other as early as 1784, when Smith engraved mezzotints after various portraits by Morland's father, Henry. They would surely have been acquainted by 1786, when one of Smith's pupils, William Ward, became Morland's brother-in-law, and vice versa. Smith's reproduction of thirty-six works from the 1793 exhibition at his shop occupied him for as long as thirteen years, which suggests a strong investment in Morland's art.³⁸⁵ These factors suggest we should consider this venture (as well as the other commercial enterprises which had previously involved together Morland and Smith), as a product of collaboration. With Smith acting as intermediary in the marketing of his works, Morland could project a disinterested and naïve self-image, as a painter detached from the world of money and working only for his own whims and without consideration for the accepted rules on decorum, to the profit of his exceptional persona.

After paying one shilling for the entrance ticket, visitors to Smith's exhibition were furnished with a catalogue which included a general introduction to Morland's art and individual descriptions of the thirty-six paintings from Smith's collection, arguably meant to promote the sale of their reproductions. The catalogue was openly conceived to increase public acclaim for Morland's *oeuvre* through the interpretation of his pictorial language as suitable for an enlarged audience. To achieve this aim, the compiler used on the one hand a mixed set of references, which could speak to readers of different cultural and social standing, and on the other hand presented Morland's art as a resolved union of opposite values, so that it could appeal even to viewers in possession of diametrically opposite taste. A set of new agents operating in the artistic field – art dealers, newspapers' commentators, and auctioneers – were inventing an aesthetic language that had to be understood by an enlarged audience, which included people lacking any knowledge of previous art. The compiler of Smith's catalogue appears up to date with the new artistic vocabulary when he calls "*unique*" Morland's

³⁸⁴ D'Oench, "*Copper into Gold*", pp. 158-162.

³⁸⁵ D'Oench, "*Copper into Gold*", p. 157.

“accuracy of attention”, an adjective that he indicates as typically used by “fashionable auctioneers”.³⁸⁶

Strategies which we have seen employed by Morland in his paintings to address new viewers, such as playing with the sympathetic and even humorous potential of the scenes represented, making references to popular literature and offering detailed descriptions of incidents, were transposed into textual language by the compiler of Smith’s catalogue. Throughout the text, Morland’s art is described as liable to elicit empathetic responses in the readers, who are on the one hand encouraged to identify with the feelings portrayed on the canvases and on the other hand to recognize the closeness to ‘nature’ and the ‘truth’ of Morland’s scenes of contemporary English life. For example, in one passage the reader is expected to empathize with *The Country Butcher’s* amorous feelings (Fig. 26), in another to recognize the reciprocal affection showed by man and animal in *The Horse Feeder* (unidentified).³⁸⁷ From the beginning we are informed that Morland’s pictures “are not only marked with nature, but with English nature”, and that “his women are of the class from which they are painted”, “his trees are such as grow in our provinces” and “his animals such as we see in our country”.³⁸⁸ In addition to taking advantage of the nationalistic fervour following the onset of the French Revolutionary wars, this vocabulary served to suggest that the common reader might empathize with the scenes described because of their proximity to their actual experiences, as pointed out clearly in the description of *The Public House Door* (Fig. 85, 1792, Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh): “the *tout ensemble* gives a very perfect idea of scenes we frequently see”.³⁸⁹

Furthermore, Smith’s catalogue abounded with references to popular English literature which could be recognized by an enlarged public. The text opened with a quote from Shakespeare, as immediate evidence of Morland’s direct inspiration from nature:

³⁸⁶ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 14.

³⁸⁷ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, pp. 6, 23. Although unidentified, the painting *The Horse Feeder* is known through its corresponding engraving held at the British Museum.

³⁸⁸ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 2.

³⁸⁹ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 13.

"Thou, Nature, art my Goddess".³⁹⁰ In a later passage, Morland is said to paint "as the author of the Seasons wrote, from objects that he has seen and studied, rather than from the hacknied stile and beaten walk of other masters (*sic*)".³⁹¹ Here the author referred to the successful and influential series of poems written by the Scottish writer James Thomson (1726-1730), with which many exhibition visitors would have been acquainted.³⁹² In another passage, Morland was similarly compared with Henry Fielding, who had written the immensely popular novel *Tom Jones* (1749): "Fielding was the painter of English nature; and as that great author disregarded the models of romance ... where all the characters are in high life, Morland has chosen his scenes from the same source, and narrated them with the same fidelity".³⁹³ Finally, the description of *Shepherds' Meal* (unidentified) takes its cue from George Lyttelton's *Dialogues of the Dead* (1760), a discussion of modern and ancient politics conducted through imaginary conversations between historical figures, widely known through reprinting in periodicals and anthologies.³⁹⁴

Another strategy employed by the compiler to attract the attention of even the most naïve exhibition-goer was the insertion of ekphrastic commentaries which narrated a story regarding the subject of the paintings, often adding humorous elements.³⁹⁵ For example, *A Conversation* (unidentified), a painting including a donkey and a pig, describes the two animals' behaviour in comical terms: "the former seems listening with that sober, quiet attention which marks this grave and decorous animal, while the

³⁹⁰ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 1.

³⁹¹ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 14.

³⁹² See James Sambrook, "Thomson, James (1700-1748)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-27306>.

³⁹³ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 15; see Martin C. Battestin, "Fielding, Henry (1707-1754)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-9400>.

³⁹⁴ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 18; see Christine Gerrard, "Lyttelton, George (1709-1773)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-17306>. For *Shepherds' Meal* see the corresponding engraving held at the British Museum.

³⁹⁵ As noted by Harry Thomas Mount in "The Reception of Dutch Genre Painting in England, 1695–1829" (PhD. diss., University of Cambridge, 1991), pp. 189-190, humorous ekphrasis of this type were largely employed to make more interesting the subjects of genre paintings (either by Netherlandish Old Masters or by modern British painters) in contemporary art dealers' sale catalogues.

latter ... disliking either morality or politics, makes his exit, with a sonorous grunt of disapprobation".³⁹⁶

Throughout the text Morland's originality is reiterated via disparaging comments on the more imitative productions of other artists, whose "professedly English landscapes" are said to be inhabited by "foreign animals", whose figures have "the air of busts, dressed in European habits", in whose "original action, we not unfrequently recognize an old acquaintance, copied from an old print to a new canvas" and whose titles "frequently inform us that the scene is taken from nature" even if "their scenery, figures, and animals, are so distant from nature, that the originals, if such there were, must have been made by one of her journeymen".³⁹⁷ Morland's style is therefore held out as unique: *The Country Butcher* (Fig. 26) for example is said to be "a genuine Morland, in Morland's very best manner!" and in *Fishermen Going Out* (private collection) "the pencilling can only belong to Morland".³⁹⁸ Nevertheless, ambitious artistic precedents for Morland's art are also offered (Thomas Gainsborough, David Teniers the Younger, Rubens, Berchem, Wijnants, Adriaen Van de Velde, as well as Titian, Rosa of Tivoli, Murillo, Salvator Rosa and Claude Joseph Vernet) and individual descriptions of the pictures are enriched with numerous references to prominent Old Master examples, especially Dutch and Flemish genre painters. Hence, Morland's art seems to be interpreted as a bridge between the imaginative originality which was increasingly required for creating a real work of art (and by consequence for establishing a native school of painting in England) and the imitation of prestigious artistic precedents. Morland's art therefore seems to promise the reconciliation of a particular antithesis: Englishness and truth to nature coexist with Old Master example and high art. While addressing the amateurs through various rhetorical strategies, the compiler of Smith's catalogue therefore aimed also at attracting a more sophisticated audience of connoisseurs. The taste for low genre subjects of the Netherlandish School had become fashionable among personalities belonging to the progressive elites, the Prince of Wales

³⁹⁶ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 22. For *A Conversation* see corresponding engraving held at the British Museum.

³⁹⁷ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, pp. 1, 2, 7, 13.

³⁹⁸ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, pp. 6, 20.

being the foremost figure embodying this trend. It is therefore unsurprising that Smith's exhibition of Morland's genre subjects, largely inspired by this tradition, was dedicated to the Prince Regent and (as a description of one of the paintings - *Selling Fish*, Fig. 86 - claims) had attracted his attention.³⁹⁹

The particular equation between Morland and Netherlandish art was noted by the compiler of Smith's catalogue when he pointed out that the artist "has been called the English Teniers".⁴⁰⁰ The Netherlandish School and its typical works of low genre had been negative artistic paradigms in England since Dryden's translation of Du Fresnoy's *De Arte Graphica* in 1695. In academic theory, Netherlandish art could not be wholly endorsed due to its choice of low subjects and its qualities - perceived as negative - of high finish, minuteness and truthful imitation.⁴⁰¹ However, a variety of new agents in the artistic field – collectors, dealers trading in this branch of art, modern artists refusing to comply with academic dictates – had interests in undermining official theorizations and in inventing a new vocabulary to speak differently about such tradition and genre.⁴⁰² It is from these examples that the compiler of Smith's catalogue took their cue for elaborating a language to speak positively about Morland's chosen genre and sources of inspiration.

Writers who wanted to reverse the negative paradigm which saw Netherlandish genre painting as expressions of low taste could resort to the competing theoretical framework offered by the picturesque. In Knight's systematization of picturesque aesthetics, the features of colour, chiaroscuro and minuteness usually associated with Netherlandish art were comprehensively reappraised. Considering art a matter of private pleasure rather than public morality, Knight's aesthetics reversed the negative

³⁹⁹ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, pp. I, 10. *Selling Fish* (1792) is located at the Minneapolis Institute of Art.

⁴⁰⁰ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 3. Morland had been called "The English Teniers" in the exhibition catalogue of Daniel Orme's Morland Gallery the previous year. See [Daniel Orme], *Catalogue of a Superb Selection of Paintings, Exhibiting at the Morland Gallery, No. 14 Old Bond Street. Being a Choice Collection of the Chef d'Oeuvres of That Truly and Much Admired Master the English Teniers* (exhibition catalogue, London: 1792), Picture Catalogue II, 1790-94, microfilm, National Art Library, London, p. 2.

⁴⁰¹ See Mount, "The Reception of Dutch Genre Painting", pp. II, 98-112.

⁴⁰² See Mount, "The Reception of Dutch Genre Painting", p. 113.

associations borne by such works: their appreciation became a marker of taste, since only a connoisseur in possession of a refined eye could transcend low subjects in favour of ‘pure’ formal qualities.⁴⁰³ Although Knight’s first formulation of picturesque aesthetics (in *The Landscape: A Didactic Poem*, 1794) appeared one year after the publication of Smith’s catalogue, these notions were arguably already circulating, since in certain passages the compiler seems to align with them, proposing an aesthetic which similarly privileges formal qualities over subject matter. For example, in a passage describing the painting *Stable Amusement* (unidentified), the catalogue states that “in the hand of a master, the rudest materials produce an effect, which plodding dullness cannot give to the most elegant subjects” and in *A Rabbit Warren* (arguably corresponding to the painting known as *Rabbiting*, Fig. 87, 1792, Tate) he points out that “Morland has chosen subjects equally deficient in dignity, but by the exclusive touches of his pencil they abound in picturesque beauty”.⁴⁰⁴

While this language, precursor of Knight’s aesthetics, was consonant with connoisseurial taste (including Knight’s aesthetics), since it aligned with the values underlying the progressive elites’ choices in collecting Netherlandish art, the author of Smith’s catalogue seems to have been conversant with more popularized versions of picturesque ideas. In a successful series of books (1782–1809), William Gilpin had tailored picturesque aesthetics to bourgeois audiences, who could afford to travel locally to enjoy and sketch landscape views, but who were excluded from the ownership of landscape.⁴⁰⁵ A passage within the description of *Sportsmen Refreshing* (unidentified) seems to speak to this public in contrasting Morland’s naturalistic landscape with “the representations we often see of smooth gardens with parallel rolled walks, and smooth banks of a smooth stream, that steals in a straight line through the centre, and is planted with trees *trimmed with nice art*, and denominated *a view of a gentleman’s villa*”.⁴⁰⁶ And when paralleling *The Rabbit Warren*’s “broken foreground” (Fig. 87) with

⁴⁰³ See Mount, “The Reception of Dutch Genre Painting”, pp. 132–140.

⁴⁰⁴ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, pp. 12, 17. For *Stable Amusement* see corresponding engraving held at the British Museum.

⁴⁰⁵ Ann Bermingham, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 90, 100–101.

⁴⁰⁶ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 16; for *Sportsmen Refreshing* see corresponding engraving held at the British Museum.

Wijnants' paintings, the compiler of Smith's catalogue borrowed straightforwardly from the picturesque language elaborated by Gilpin.⁴⁰⁷

Furthermore, in defending Morland's choice of low subjects and artistic precedents, the compiler of Smith's catalogue could be seen to resort to another theoretical path. Together with picturesque theories, the writing style developed by dealers trading in Netherlandish genre art constituted an alternative language to speak positively of such a tradition. This language often consisted in commending Netherlandish genre paintings for those features which were usually attacked in Academic theory, namely high finish, minuteness and truthful imitation, in addition to the positive qualities which were traditionally attributed to them, like colours and chiaroscuro. The compiler of Smith's catalogue therefore applies to Morland's paintings praises typically addressed to Netherlandish genre painting, even when unsuited to describe the artist's specific style. For example he associates Morland's art with Netherlandish painters' minuteness (especially Teniers and Berchem) although Morland's manner derived much more from Gainsborough's unfinished style, as he usually avoided the description of specific details and even of facial expressions. Morland's animals are said to be "in the most minute particulars, of the class to which they belong", the anatomy of his horses can bear "the most minute inspection", and the objects in another painting are said to show "a truth and minuteness almost microscopic".⁴⁰⁸ Elsewhere Morland's works are commended for truthful imitation (a quality usually attributed to works of the Netherlandish tradition) in displaying "the objects as in a mirror", and in portraying a winter scene so faithfully as to "chill the spectator".⁴⁰⁹ In other passages it is nevertheless suggested that Morland's art succeeds in reconciling the opposite features of Netherlandish minuteness and Gainsborough's lack of finish, by uniting "tenderness of a miniature" and "force and spirit of a sketch", or by expressing "general as well as particular effects".⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁷ See Mount, "The Reception of Dutch Genre Painting", p. 139.

⁴⁰⁸ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, pp. 2, 9, 15.

⁴⁰⁹ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, pp. 8, 21.

⁴¹⁰ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, pp. 6, 14.

The reference to Rubens, associated with Morland's broad brushwork and (inappropriately) with his colours mirrored Reynolds's revaluation of the famous Old Master in his later *Discourses*, following his trip to the Netherlands in 1781, later sanctioned in his posthumous account *A Journey to Flanders and Holland in the Year 1781* (published only in 1797).⁴¹¹ Nevertheless, the insistent comparison of Morland with the colours and brushwork of Old Masters, and with Gainsborough's English subjects, suggests a reconciliation of traditional and original, a coexistence of old and new in Morland's works. In terms of colouring, Morland's art was also related to another Old Master, Murillo, very much influenced by the realist and dramatic Caravaggio. This hyperbolic juxtaposition was probably due to the association of Netherlandish genre painting with the quality of chiaroscuro, just as the comparison with Titian was likely due to the common idea of Netherlandish genre art as heir of the colourist tradition which had its origins in Venice.⁴¹² Likewise, dealers in Netherlandish art often praised low genre paintings for their 'character' and 'expression', qualities traditionally associated with higher genres.⁴¹³ Figures in Morland's *The Country Butcher* (Fig. 26) and *The Farmer's Stable* (unlocated) are similarly commended for their 'character' in Smith's catalogue.⁴¹⁴ Furthermore, while the theoretical systematization carried out by continental Academies had established a hierarchy of pictorial genres predicated on the edifying value of a painting, the link between low subject and lack of moral value was rejected by this catalogue, which (for example) judged *Peasant and Pigs* (unidentified) as possessing "a property, of which more dignified subjects are frequently destitute", and which noted of *Alehouse Kitchen* (location unknown, pendant to *The Alehouse Door*, also known as *Outside the Ale-House Door*, Fig. 88, 1792, Tate): "the figures have neither elevation nor dignity; but in this as in his other works they are marked with what is much better, truth and nature".⁴¹⁵ Many writers dealing with the negative associations of genre art in this period tended to discriminate between low subjects treated with excessive naturalism and those which instead were endowed with

⁴¹¹ Sir Joshua Reynolds, *A Journey to Flanders and Holland* (1797), ed. Harry Mount (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 144–149.

⁴¹² Reynolds, *Journey to Flanders and Holland*, p. 201.

⁴¹³ Mount, "The Reception of Dutch Genre Painting", pp. 120, 121, 188.

⁴¹⁴ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, pp. 6, 9. For *The Farmer's Stable* see corresponding engraving held at the British Museum.

⁴¹⁵ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, pp. 16, 21. For *Peasant and Pigs* and *Alehouse Kitchen* see corresponding engravings held at the British Museum.

sufficient decorum.⁴¹⁶ This strategy was employed by the compiler of Smith's catalogue when, in the description of *Cottage Family* (unidentified), he suggests that "the view, tho' dreary, is not distressing; the family carry an appearance of comfortable quiet happiness, and though not clothed in furs, are sufficiently defended from the cold".⁴¹⁷

The textual strategies employed by the compiler of Smith's catalogue show the important role played by artistic language in the struggles for constructing the meaning and value of artworks in the modern art world. In this sense, gradually reversing the meaning of words originally intended as 'insults' can be recognized as a typical 'trick' used by agents in a modern artistic field (in this case, connoisseurs and dealers) for imposing a new vision of art (the appreciation of genre art, of Netherlandish tradition and of contemporary British painting inspired by it) and for overturning existing rules concerning artistic legitimacy (the academic beliefs in a hierarchy of genres and in the primacy of the Italian over the Netherlandish school).⁴¹⁸

With adopting references and vocabularies appropriate to readers of different social and cultural backgrounds, another strategy used by the compiler of Smith's catalogue to present Morland's art as appealing to a wide audience was emphasizing its ability to unite opposite values. As previous examples have suggested, the idea of binaries reconciled is a leitmotif throughout the catalogue. Recurring comments refer to the ideas of simplicity, truth and faithful reproduction of nature as the main features of Morland's art. In the description of *The Corn Bin* (1792, Christie's London, 23 June 1978, lot 43), the writer even states that "we are almost tempted to say, this is not an imitation of Nature – but Nature itself".⁴¹⁹ Yet, Morland is not simply a good imitator of nature, since "his pencil is always in unison with his imagination";⁴²⁰ two contrasting ideas, imitation and imagination, are resolved in a harmonious union in Morland's works.

⁴¹⁶ Mount, "The Reception of Dutch Genre Painting", pp. 183-188. For *The Farmer's Stable* see corresponding engraving held at the British Museum.

⁴¹⁷ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 18. For *Cottage Family* see corresponding engraving held at the British Museum.

⁴¹⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), pp. 262-263.

⁴¹⁹ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 22.

⁴²⁰ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 3.

Another pair of opposing values was perceived at that time between two elements of pictorial practice, drawing and colouring. The relationship between these two aspects of a painting had been the object of a long-running dispute which opposed two famous schools of painting: the Florentine (mainly concerned with correct drawing and whose most representative figure was Michelangelo), and the Venetian school (which gave more prominence to colour, as in the examples of Giorgione and Titian). In many passages of Smith's catalogue, the reader is assured about the perfect balance of these two 'ingredients' in Morland's pictures. In fact the writer maintained in the introduction that "in his colour, there is a flowing sweetness" and at the same time "in the drawing, there are no marks of either doubt or timidity".⁴²¹ Observations about the resolved union of these binary opposites in Morland's art were also scattered in the descriptions of individual paintings in Smith's catalogue: *The Country Butcher* (Fig. 26) was said to possess "correctness of drawing" and "harmony of colouring", while *Watering the Cart Horse* (unidentified) united "sober tone of colouring" to the "judicious touch of pencil", and in *Alehouse Door* (Fig. 88) "the pencilling" is judged to be "neat and spirited", and "the colouring clear".⁴²² In *Shepherds' Meal* "the figures are well drawn, and the whole admirably coloured".⁴²³

Finally, Smith's catalogue is permeated with the resolved union of gender-based binary oppositions, a kind of juxtaposition which we have already found in the content of some of Morland's earliest paintings but which is here employed to describe his pictorial style. In the introduction, we are told that "in his colouring, there is a flowing sweetness ... one tender predominant tint breathes over the whole mass", but later Morland is said to paint "with ... bold firmness", with "no marks of either doubt or timidity", and with a style which shows his "precision of touch".⁴²⁴ Similarly, *The Country Butcher* (Fig. 26) is said to achieve a peaceful union of masculine and invigorating adjectives with feminine and soft qualities: "it is accurate without being hard, delicate without being feeble".⁴²⁵ In *The Fisherman's Hut* (unidentified) the salmon is depicted with a "sharp and yet

⁴²¹ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 3.

⁴²² Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, pp. 6, 8, 15. For *Watering the Cart Horse* see corresponding engraving held at the British Museum.

⁴²³ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 18.

⁴²⁴ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, pp. 2-3.

⁴²⁵ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 6.

tender touch” and *Selling Fish* (Fig. 86) shows Morland’s “firmness of touch, united with delicacy of pencil”.⁴²⁶ The apparently successful union of opposite domains proposed regarding Morland’s art is strengthened by recurring references in the catalogue to the word harmony and its derivatives: “harmony of colouring”, “general colour transparent and harmonious”, “the union produces perfect harmony”, “the colouring clear and in perfect harmony”, “judiciously does he ... harmonize the strongest contrasts”.⁴²⁷

Even if the sets of binaries used in Smith’s catalogue to describe Morland’s art corresponded with words used in everyday language, their respective meanings in contemporary artistic language were anything but straightforward. As evidenced above, words are like “weapons”⁴²⁸ in the modern struggles among the various agents operating in the artistic field, functioning as tools to impose new views on art. It is for this reason that their meanings are characterized by extreme vagueness, and can coincide alternatively with positive or negative qualities, depending upon the position and taste of their users.⁴²⁹ One strategy used by the compiler of Smith’s catalogue for legitimating Morland’s pieces as works of art consisted in overturning the ‘insults’ usually levelled at genre painting into positive qualities. Here, through the reiterated reconciliation of binary opposites, the writer evidenced how Morland’s art could paradoxically borrow strength from both sides of a range of concepts at odds, consequently succeeding in potentially appealing to viewers of radically different tastes.

The efficacy of Morland’s accessible pictorial language and recognizable persona (as constructed by the artist and his collaborators through the visual, rhetorical and textual strategies we have been exploring) finds further evidence when we consider that some commercial enterprises focusing especially on the artist’s works were in this period initiated even by agents in the artistic field unconnected with the painter. As examples of purely commercial takes on Morland’s works, these ventures show the exceptional adaptability and marketability of his by-now recognizable and accessible ‘brand’,

⁴²⁶ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, p. 10. For *The Fisherman’s Hut* see corresponding engraving held at the British Museum.

⁴²⁷ Smith, *Descriptive Catalogue of Thirty-Six Pictures* (London: 1793), National Art Library, London, pp. 6, 12, 14, 15, 19.

⁴²⁸ Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 262.

⁴²⁹ Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, pp. 261-262.

inasmuch as this was singularly able to reconcile contradictions as well as audiences of different social and cultural standing.

Morland's show at John Raphael Smith's shop (the first entirely solo exhibition of the artist's paintings, a number of which were promoted for publication by subscription in a carefully orchestrated and coherent scheme) was nevertheless second to another exhibition, which had started a year earlier at the shop of the art dealer, painter and engraver Daniel Orme, in focusing primarily on the artist's rustic and coastal paintings and in basing its revenues similarly on the selling of shilling entry tickets as well as prints after the exhibits. The 'Morland Gallery', as it had been called, had been a feature of the London exhibition scene for two subsequent seasons, an apparent proof of public success, opening the first time on 9 April and the second on 19 November 1792.⁴³⁰ It closed definitively only on 31 May 1793, meaning that for some time it overlapped with Smith's exhibition, which had been open since at least the beginning of May 1793.⁴³¹ On 8 June 1793 the works from Orme's exhibition were put on sale.⁴³² Orme's Morland Gallery replicated the by-now established scheme of launching 'Galleries' - exhibitions of works by a single painter or by various artists working on the same subject - to profit from the sale of entrance tickets and engraved reproductions of the works exhibited (following the examples set by Thomas Macklin's *Poets' Gallery* in 1788, Boydell's *Shakespeare Gallery* in 1789 as well as Robert Bowyer's *Historic Gallery* and Valentine and Rupert Green's *Dusseldorf Gallery* in 1793).⁴³³ Despite the similarities it apparently shared with Smith's venture, at a closer examination Orme's exhibition presented fewer coherent features: during the fourteen months of its existence, it underwent multiple adjustments, attuning to changes in the market and, probably, to the artworks which were from time to time available to Orme. A quick chronological overview of these adjustments allows us to see the different basis of Orme's Morland Gallery in comparison to Smith's venture and consequently to draw conclusions on the role that

⁴³⁰ See "The Morland Gallery", *Morning Chronicle*, 6 April 1792; "Morland Gallery", *Morning Chronicle*, 15 November 1792.

⁴³¹ For the closure of the Orme's Morland Gallery see *Morning Chronicle*, 31 May 1793; the earliest advertisement I found regarding Smith's exhibition of Morland's paintings is dated 6 May 1793 and quoted in D'Oench, *Copper into Gold*, p. 152.

⁴³² "Celebrated Morland Gallery", *True Briton*, 8 June 1793.

⁴³³ Rosie Dias, *Exhibiting Englishness: John Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery and the Formation of a National Aesthetic* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), pp. 7-8; D'Oench, *Copper into Gold*, pp. 152-154.

the artist could have played in both. A more sustained discussion of the additions of various exhibits and of the changes in the commercial revenues from Orme's show also offers further proof of the exceptional adaptability of the artist's pictorial language, as well as its extensive marketability.

Alongside rustic and coastal paintings by Morland, Orme's gallery had always included paintings and drawings by other artists.⁴³⁴ Each of Orme's two exhibitions included about a hundred pieces in total, but the first was made up almost exclusively of works by Morland and only a dozen by other artists.⁴³⁵ Although announcements pointed out that "All the Prints from the Works of Morland may be had at the Gallery",⁴³⁶ unlike Smith's venture this enterprise did not ultimately reap much profit from this promised sale of reproductions. There is evidence for only five prints issued after paintings by Morland in the Gallery, *The Shepherd's Boy* and *The Woodcutter* (1792, British Museum), *Children Feeding Goats* (1793), and the pair *Morning, or the Higglers*

⁴³⁴ Information on the content of the two Orme's exhibitions and of the subsequent auction have been drawn mainly from their corresponding catalogues; nevertheless this evidence has been put together also with information drawn from numerous contemporary newspaper advertisements. In highlighting the presence of new, outstanding pieces added from time to time to Orme's show, these adverts show that the situations portrayed in the catalogues (especially of the second opening) were far from immutable. It should be noted that, while the exhibition catalogue of the first opening and the one of the sale are reliably dated, the catalogue which I have tentatively interpreted as published at the beginning of the second opening (on the basis of its inclusion of remarkable pieces whose presence was also advertised in newspapers in the corresponding period) is not clearly dated. This document is preceded by an introduction on Morland's art which uses the past tense when referring to the artist, which perhaps indicates that this is a reprint of the original exhibition catalogue, to which the descriptive text was added posthumously. See [Orme], *Catalogue of a Superb Selection* (London: 1792), National Art Library, London; A. T. P., ed., Daniel Orme, *A Catalogue of a Superb Selection of Paintings, Exhibiting by Mess. Orme & Co. at the Morland Gallery* (exhibition catalogue, London: 1793?), Catalogues Collection, 200.BM, National Art Library, London; Christie's, Orme, *A Catalogue of the Genuine and Much-admired Collection of Pictures and Drawings, by That Esteemed Artist G. Morland, and Others* (8 June 1793), *Getty Provenance Index® databases* (Sale Catalog Br-A5186, indexed transcription).

⁴³⁵ The corresponding exhibition catalogue informs us that the painters whose pieces were included were mainly contemporary British artists working on subjects closely akin to Morland: William Anderson (1757-1837), marine painter inspired by seventeenth-century Dutch masters; Abraham Pether (1756-1812), known as "Moonlight Pether", for this type of landscape was considered his specialty; Julius Caesar Ibbetson (1759-1817), landscape and genre painter; Joseph Barney (1753-1832?), sometimes author of sentimental subjects; Daniel Orme himself (1766-1837), whose works included were drawings after two Morland's subjects in the show, "75. *Outside of a Higler's (sic) Stable, with Figures Preparing to Go to Market*" and "70. *The Attentive Postboy (sic)*", arguably produced in view of realizing the corresponding prints *Morning, or, The Higglers Preparing for the Market* and *Evening, or, The Post Boy's Return* (both British Museum). None of these painters' names was singled out in the advertisements and hence Morland was clearly the main focus of the show. See [Orme], *Catalogue of a Superb Selection* (London: 1792), National Art Library, London.

⁴³⁶ "The Morland Gallery", 6 April 1792.

Preparing for Market, and Evening, or The Post Boy's Return (1796, British Museum).⁴³⁷

At the second opening, newspapers almost completely stopped advertising the reproductions of Morland's paintings, since Orme began to focus primarily on another source of revenue. In fact, in the second show the percentage of Morland's pictures dropped to slightly more than half the total.⁴³⁸ Now history paintings by Mather Brown completely overshadowed the artist's exhibits. Since the opening, Brown's two Indian subjects portraying "the two Sons of Tippoo Sultaun departing from the Zenana" and "the Royal Children ... delivering the Definitive Treaty of Peace into the hands of Earl Cornwallis" (1792, private collection, Nagpur, India), had been objects of a promotional campaign in the press, aimed especially at selling expensive engraved reproductions by subscription.⁴³⁹

Through this commercial scheme, Brown and Orme aimed at profiting from the avid public interest aroused in Britain by events that occurred in India only a few months earlier. Brown's paintings dealt with the final stages in the defeat of Tipu Sultan, able ruler of the independent Indian state of Mysore, at the hand of the first Governor-General of India Lord Cornwallis. Known as the Third Mysore War, this two-year conflict had begun under the justification of Tipu's attack to a British ally and had kept the

⁴³⁷ *Children Feeding Goats* is referred to in an advertisement promoting the sale of Orme's first number of *Sketches by G. Morland*: "Tomkins's Print of the Children and Goats, after Morland is one of his best works, and with the one after Russell, makes a capital pair of prints". See "Arts", *Morning Chronicle*, 31 January 1793. A reprint of Orme's *Children Feeding Goats* (published by I. Freeman in 1794) is held at the British Museum.

⁴³⁸ Although it is possible to estimate only approximately how many Morland works included in the first exhibition were also included in the second (their titles in the corresponding catalogues are not always specific on the subjects they described and it seems likely that titles of the same works changed between the first and the second text), about half of Morland's paintings in the first catalogue could correspond to works in the second catalogue. In addition to the painters already mentioned as part of the first exhibition, this second opening would also include: Philip Reinagle, William Williams, Teniers, Thomas Gainsborough and John Singleton Copley.

⁴³⁹ "Morland Gallery", 15 November 1792. In the copious advertisements published in the press, the public was informed that "the size of the Prints will be that of the Death of General Wolf", and that "the price to subscribers" was "Two Guinea the pair; proof and coloured Prints Four Guineas"; to add merit to this commercial operation, the two prints had been engraved by famous artists, Francesco Bartolozzi, "R. A. engraver to His Majesty" and Daniel Orme himself, "Historical Engraver to His Majesty and His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales". Advertisements also pointed out the presence in the show of another two of Brown historical subjects: *The Marriage of Henry VII, with Elizabeth of York*, and *The Baptism of Henry the Eighth*. See "Morland Gallery", 15 November 1792. In addition to these four subjects, the corresponding exhibition catalogue listed the presence at some point of a fifth work by Brown: *The Action of Sir Walter Raleigh, off Cadiz*. To further highlight the major relevance given to Brown's works in this show, the catalogue offered detailed descriptions of them, while the other works were just listed by title and author. See A. T. P., Orme, *Catalogue of a Superb Selection* (London: 1793?), National Art Library, London.

British public in suspense since. Also known as the 'Tiger of Mysore', Tipu Sultan had both fascinated and alarmed the British audience with his stubborn resistance to foreign influence as well as his military prowess. In the final stages of the war, Lord Cornwallis took hostage two of the sultan's children (who were only eight and ten years old) to make sure that the punitive conditions he had imposed on their father would have been met. The first of Mather Brown's paintings described the devastating separation of the princes from their mothers and harem women, with Tipu instead persuading them to surrender willingly to British captivity (see corresponding engraving, Fig. 89, 1793, British Museum).

The second episode (Fig. 90, 1793, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven) took place three weeks later, when Tipu finally accepted the conditions imposed by the British: it portrays a ceremony during which the elder of the two Indian princes consigned the treaty to Cornwallis at the presence of British military elites and representatives of other Indian states. Brown's works attempted at claiming sympathetic status for Cornwallis, setting him as an example of the charitable and benevolent feelings of elite British masculinity. This was achieved through a considerable manipulation of historical events. On the one hand Tipu Sultan was presented as a sly and heartless tyrant, ready to sacrifice his children for the sake of power, making Cornwallis's decision to take his children as hostage more acceptable for the audience. As Constance C. McPhee has shown, his portrayal recalled iconographies recently employed in other contemporary history paintings for the depiction of the famously cruel King Richard III. On the other side, Cornwallis's relaxed attitude and reassuring corpulent figure, together with his benevolence and kindness towards the young princes, were used to suggest the harmonious and peaceful nature of British imperial rule.⁴⁴⁰ Describing a historical event and involving a man of the highest social status, Mather Brown's paintings evoked sentiments of harmony and concord, and acts of sharing and charity, comparable to those depicted in Morland's rustic and coastal scenes exhibited with them, where

⁴⁴⁰ See Brian Allen, "From Plassey to Seringapatam: India and British History Painting, c. 1760-c. 1800", in *The Raj: India and the British, 1600-1947*, ed. C. A. Bayly (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1990), pp. 34-35; Constance C. McPhee, "Tipu Sultan of Mysore and British Medievalism in the Paintings of Mather Brown", in *Orientalism Transposed: The Impact of the Colonies on British Culture*, eds. Julie F. Codell and Dianne Sachko Macleod (Ashgate: Aldershot, 1998), pp. 202-219.

common people are shown living in peaceful coexistence among themselves and with their animals.

A further addition to the exhibits, and change in the show's commercial revenue, was announced in January 1793, when visitors were informed that the first instalment of a book after Morland's drawings, called *Sketches by G. Morland*, was available for purchase at the Gallery. These prints were said to reproduce "four capital drawings at the Morland Gallery",⁴⁴¹ while previous announcements had only described Morland's exhibits as "capital and valuable pictures",⁴⁴² which shows that graphic works by the artist were only included at this later stage of the show, arguably to promote the sale of their printed reproductions.⁴⁴³

While Morland and Smith were longstanding business partners and friends, the nature of Morland's collaboration with Daniel Orme is much less clear. Gathering about a hundred works by the artist for the first opening of his Morland Gallery, it would seem that Daniel Orme might have needed the direct involvement of the painter. And in order to realize a book after the artist's drawings, it is likely that Morland and Orme collaborated, as with the similar publication issued by John Harris (which I have discussed in depth in Chapter 2).⁴⁴⁴ But then it is difficult to explain why, after just over a year, Orme decided to close a venture which had apparently been both successful and demanding to organize, and to put all the works of his Gallery on sale. Also, Orme did not consistently pursue the reproduction of the Morland paintings he exhibited. This is not surprising: Orme would have needed to retain the works at his shop in order to reproduce them all, and the time taken to do so would have been considerable.

⁴⁴¹ See "Arts", 31 January 1793.

⁴⁴² "Morland Gallery", 15 November 1792.

⁴⁴³ The corresponding exhibition catalogue did not list Morland's drawings (for which reason I have tentatively dated it to the beginning of the exhibition, before these later additions). See A. T. P., Orme, *Catalogue of a Superb Selection* (London: 1793?), National Art Library, London.

⁴⁴⁴ My research shows that John Harris's drawing book *Sketches by G. Morland* was the product of a joint collaboration with the artist, who was entirely responsible for the conception of its first volume.

Nonetheless, even the book after Morland's drawings that he had begun to advertise in January 1793 stopped at its third instalment, with only a total of twelve prints issued.⁴⁴⁵

Indications of the Gallery's main source of profit are offered by the catalogue of its second manifestation, which insists particularly on the fact that the works were on sale, without even mentioning the option of buying prints after them.⁴⁴⁶ My research suggests that, unlike Smith, Orme organized a show of Morland's works, with the publication of corresponding prints and even a drawing book, without the artist's direct involvement, but simply by amassing a number of artworks (probably via private owners) and by imitating successful commercial schemes previously pursued with success by the painter and his collaborators. Orme's venue was probably a sort of extended pre-sale exhibition: the unifying umbrella of Orme's Morland Gallery could have hidden a number of individual owners of the artist's works, interested in displaying the pictures they possessed to boost their prices for imminent sale in an auction. This might explain the reduced number of Morland's works in the second exhibition. Perhaps the various owners were paying a commission to Daniel Orme for the advantage of exhibiting in his Gallery, as happened with other contemporary and entirely commercial venues, such as the European Museum.⁴⁴⁷ In this case Morland's involvement in the venture would have been virtually unnecessary.

⁴⁴⁵ The second instalment appeared during Orme's Gallery's last month, in May 1793, and the third appeared eight months after its closure, in January 1794.

⁴⁴⁶ A. T. P., Orme, *Catalogue of a Superb Selection* (London: 1793?), National Art Library, London.

⁴⁴⁷ The European Museum was a commercial exhibition where proprietors could display and sell artworks directly on the market, giving five per cent commission to the owner. The introduction to the 1793 exhibition catalogue highlighted the convenience of selling works by private contract in the frame of this enterprise instead of bringing them to expensive auctions. Some of the works were in the property of John Wilson, the American dealer who founded this enterprise in 1789 in King Street, St. James's Square, but the majority of the owners were individual collectors. When the paintings were not sold immediately, they stayed on display with their original lot number for two years or more; once in a while, however, unsold works were removed and sent to auctioneers. Furthermore, part of the profit from this venture consisted in the selling of annual subscription tickets to the exhibitions. George Morland's presence was registered in this venue from its very beginnings: the catalogues of the spring and autumn exhibition in 1792, and of another exhibition in 1793 included about fifteen works by the artist. Between 1799 and 1804, he exhibited annually a number of works varying from one to sixteen. See various catalogues of the European Museum published at irregular intervals (dates unknown, 1792; dates unknown, 1793; 27 May–29 June 1799; dates unknown, 1800; 16 November 1801–1 January 1803; 7 March 1803 and following days; 8 May 1804 and following days), *Getty Provenance Index® databases* (Sales Catalogues, Br-A5134, Br-A5134a, Br-A5139b, Br-A5727, Br-A5762a, Br-64, Br-165-A, Br-261, indexed transcriptions).

Apart from the Gallery and the few mentioned prints after paintings and drawings by Morland, Daniel Orme was not primarily dedicated to the reproduction of this artist's work, or even to his artistic genre. In addition to the prints after Morland already mentioned, Daniel Orme only published *The Country Stable* (a subject not included in his Morland Gallery; British Museum) in 1792. Instead Orme was closely associated with the history painter Mather Brown, whose large paintings, especially focused on historic naval events, he exhibited at his shop on more than one occasion between 1792 and 1797 to promote lavish reproductions on sale by subscription.⁴⁴⁸ As soon as Orme closed his Morland Gallery, he was involved in other projects with Mather Brown, for example the exhibition from January to April 1795 of the naval painting depicting Lord Howe assisting after the death of Captain Neville on the *Queen Charlotte*, with the issue of a print reproducing it in October.⁴⁴⁹

Given the tenuous association with Morland, it is indicative of the artist's commercial viability that not only Daniel Orme, but also his younger brother Edward (who had worked as engraver for Daniel since 1794, and who opened his own independent print shop in 1799) associated their firms closely with the artist's image. Both Daniel and Edward used the image of the artist sketching pigs from life for their trade cards in periods when they were selling prints after Morland's drawings (Daniel in 1793, Edward around 1799, when he reprinted his brother's series: see for example Fig. 91, 1800, British Museum).⁴⁵⁰ This image was the frontispiece to Orme's series of these sketches, and in publishing this book, he was attempting to replicate the commercial gains that

⁴⁴⁸ See Katherine Coombs, "Orme, Daniel (1766-1837)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-20832>.

⁴⁴⁹ See Coombs, "Orme, Daniel (1766-1837)".

⁴⁵⁰ An undated trade card held at the British Museum is inscribed "Sketches by G. Morland, Sold by Orme & Co. at the Morland Gallery, No. 14 Old Bond Street". This is likely to have been used by Daniel in the first half of 1793, when he had begun selling his book after Morland's drawings and when his Morland Gallery was still open at that address. Instead, another two draft trade cards held at the British Museum and associated with Edward's name were inscribed respectively "Sketches by G. Morland, Sold by E. Orme, 25 Conduit Street, late of Old Bond Street" and "Works of George Morland, Sold by E. Orme, 59 Bond Street". Since Edward's shop was located in 25 Conduit Street in 1800 and in 59 Bond Street from 1801, these trade cards must date from those years. In 1799 Edward had republished his brother's entire series, from which he also extracted material for several of his drawing books published over the following years. Incidentally, the significantly smaller size of Orme's frontispiece by comparison with the prints themselves makes it likely that it was simultaneously used as leaflet to advertise the sale of these prints, a practice analogous to that of the subscription print, which had been employed before by artists such as Hogarth.

John Harris had begun to reap through the selling of reproductions of drawings by Morland. By the time that Orme began work on his book after Morland's drawings in January 1793, Harris's original *Sketches by G. Morland* (funded by subscription) had already reached its fourth instalment.⁴⁵¹

Unlike Harris's book, it would seem that Morland was not directly involved with the publication of Orme's sheets after his drawings. Despite the bombastic promise made in advertisements for Orme's publication that "it will be one of the most compleat books which ever met the public eye (*sic*)",⁴⁵² the small number of prints ultimately issued (twelve while Harris's series was made up of sixty-eight) makes it probable that, while Orme sought to capitalize on the fashion for Morland's drawings by publishing the few he already possessed and by promoting the book's sale through their exhibition, he was soon forced to stop his series, unable to obtain new sketches.

Orme's drawing book replicates many of the features of Harris's without being able to match its coherent conception and standards of quality. Orme's publication followed Harris's model in terms of both the number of sheets per instalment (four) and their size. Likewise, the frontispieces to Orme's numbers feature an image of an artist sketching on the spot. Nevertheless, the technique employed in Orme's work, alternatively stipple or etching in the crayon manner, produces a less homogeneous product than Harris's. While Harris's book succeeded in feigning authenticity and autography, aiming at the accurate simulation of a private artist's sketchbook, here the alternating use of different reproduction techniques hindered that illusion. Perhaps the prints in Orme's drawing book lack homogeneity because they were reproduced by various and less skilled engravers: their names were omitted from the inscriptions. Furthermore, the Morland sketches reproduced by Orme seem not to have been designed for publication as a set, since they lack the correlation of subjects and of vignetted patterning found in Harris's numbers (see for example, Fig. 92, 1794, British Museum).

⁴⁵¹ See "Appendix I. Newspaper Advertisements", in Francis Buckley, "George Morland's Sketch Books and Their Publishers" (unpublished manuscript, 1931), Press Nn, Shelf 5, no. 2, British Museum, Library of the Department of Prints & Drawings, p. 136.

⁴⁵² "Arts", 31 January 1793.

Orme was not the only publisher who endeavoured to imitate Harris's publication and to take advantage of the fashion it created for Morland's drawings. The first instalment of a drawing manual entitled *Original Sketches from Nature by Various Masters*, published by the print-seller Thomas Simpson on 1 January 1793, also drew heavily on Harris's project. While Morland's name was not explicitly associated with the work, the frontispiece of Simpson's sketchbook (Fig. 93, British Museum) was nevertheless almost identical to that used by Harris (Fig. 110, 1792, British Museum), with a gentleman artist sketching under the shade of a tree, though this time his subjects are shown to be cows rather than horses. Moreover both the first and the second instalment of this publication (January and April 1793) contained sheets of drawings in Morland's style, though just one of them explicitly claims to reproduce a work by Morland himself through the reproduction of Morland's signature on the stool in the right side of the scene, on top of which a child is standing (Fig. 94, British Museum). The signature, features and dresses of the figures in this print allow us to attribute this subject confidently to Morland, but the same cannot be said for the frontispiece and the other three prints traditionally attributed to Morland in this collection (see for example Fig. 95, British Museum). The resemblance to Harris's *Sketches* after Morland encourages viewers to believe that the artist's hand had been employed in this work, even without explicitly (or falsely) attributing it to him.

Understandably, the appearance of all these drawing books after Morland, especially when they closely copied the style of Harris's pioneering publication, created problems for the latter's commercial venture. When Harris advertised his fourth instalment, in March 1793, he informed the public that "an imitation of the above work is now advertised", stating that this (probably Orme's project) did not have "the authority of the artist, whose name they have thought proper to assume". And while casting doubt on the authenticity of the Morland sketches reproduced by Orme, Harris implied that these works had not been selected or conceived by the artist himself for being grouped in a drawing book: "Mr. Morland never having made any Sketches intended by him for publication, but the work now publishing by J. Harris".⁴⁵³ And when the sixth instalment of Harris's publication coincided with the last instalment of Orme's, Harris was induced

⁴⁵³ *Morning Chronicle*, 16 March 1793.

to denounce his rival again, citing the artist as voice, authority and collaborator: “Mr George Morland thinks it his duty to inform the public” that of “several Works having lately appeared, entitled ‘Engravings from Original Sketches by George Morland’ ... very few ... are from his Drawings, except those published by Mr. J. Harris, Gerrard Street, Soho”.⁴⁵⁴

However, Harris’s attempts at undermining his competitors’ reputations were unlikely to be effective in a period when the market for Morland’s works was seemingly inexhaustible. In 1793, when Harris, Orme and Simpson were all publishing drawing books after Morland, or in his style, Smith also began taking subscriptions for fine art engravings after the Morland paintings at his shop, a quite different type of print, but still indicative of the wide and varied audience for the artist’s works in these years. In the end, Harris began to imitate Orme’s (arguably successful) strategy of simultaneously exhibiting drawings by Morland and selling prints after them: in April 1794 he organized an exhibition of Morland’s drawings, where visitors could also purchase all of Harris’s *Sketches*.⁴⁵⁵

It is therefore unsurprising that, when advertising the auction of his Morland Gallery, Orme also addressed a more entrepreneurial market in addition to collectors of original works. The auction comprised (as its advertisements and catalogue promised) “pictures and drawings, by that esteemed artist G. Morland” among which “will be found a number of very capital subjects for prints”.⁴⁵⁶ Morland’s paintings and drawings are therefore explicitly described as good investments because they were marketable through print reproduction. Intermediary figures in the London art market were indeed buyers at the auction. Together with the auctioneer John Greenwood Jr. (who bought three works in this sale), the name of the print-seller and publisher John Peter

⁴⁵⁴ “A Caution”, *World*, 17 January 1794.

⁴⁵⁵ “Drawings by the celebrated G. Morland, J. Rowlandson, &c.”, *World*, 15 April 1794. This exhibition, which took place at a Mrs Lay’s shop and which also included drawings by other contemporary artists akin to Morland, is addressed more fully in Chapter 2.

⁴⁵⁶ See “Celebrated Morland Gallery”, *True Briton*, 3 and 8 June 1793, and *Morning Post*, 4 June 1793; Christie’s, Orme, *Catalogue of the Genuine and Much-admired Collection* (8 June 1793), *Getty Provenance Index*® databases.

Thompson is given as the purchaser of ten works.⁴⁵⁷ The latter would become one of the most important agents in the diffusion of Morland's drawings during the second half of the 1790s into the 1800s.⁴⁵⁸

The exploration of Morland's artistic choices in exhibiting *The Farmyard* (Fig. 69) at the 1792 RA show carried out in the first section of this chapter has allowed us to see the multiple pictorial strategies deployed by the artist to create a broad market for his art. Morland's artistic strategies aimed at shaping a recognizable pictorial style which, in uniting different domains, could also reconcile different audiences and be suitable for exhibition within contexts at odds with each other. Simultaneously, Morland's 'tricks' helped him fashion for himself a unique artistic personality. The second section of this chapter has addressed the role played by new agents in the artistic field – collectors, auctioneers, dealers, art critics – in constructing meaning and value for Morland's art. The visual, rhetorical and textual strategies deployed to create a large audience for the artist's works have been investigated, especially within commercial enterprises involving the painter himself but in which 'screens' helped feign the artist's distance from the market to the benefit of his exceptional persona. Lastly, the discussion of print publishers' reproductions of Morland's works, whether or not conceived with the artist's direct involvement, has revealed to us the adaptability of Morland's 'brand' as well as its extreme and endless marketability even by agents in the field unconnected with the painter. The next chapter will further address Morland's creation of his 'brand' through an investigation of his portraits and self-portraits, exploring the visual fabrication of his unconventional persona.

⁴⁵⁷ Christie's, Orme, *Catalogue of the Genuine and Much-admired Collection* (8 June 1793), *Getty Provenance Index® databases*: The copy of this sale catalogue is the auctioneer's, and it is annotated with sellers, buyers, and prices.

⁴⁵⁸ John Peter Thompson was active between 1796 and 1811 from shops on Great Newport Street and 51 Dean Street. In the 1790s he worked in association with James Darling, from 1800 on his own.

In the Image of an Old Master: George Morland, Art History and the Making of a Modern Myth

The man who was so conversant with the character of a hog, must have been brought up in a pig-sty.

(John Hassell, *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Morland*, 1806)

George Morland's likenesses, produced and reproduced since his youth not only by the artist himself, but also (and especially) in the many portraits in which he is painted, drawn and engraved by other artists, witness issues of changing artistic identity around the turn of the nineteenth century in Britain. The polite and elegant figure described in the first portraits of Morland - typical of a previous generation of British artists, even if here made exceptional by sensibility and imagination - was soon joined by unconventional depictions of his persona. Morland's identity came to be increasingly conflated with his typical subject matter, to include hints of his eccentric lifestyle, however fictionalized or real, and to gesture towards parody. These images, more than the literary accounts, show the passages through which Morland's identity was invented, making clear how much that identity was the product of a carefully fabricated fiction. However, these images also question and overturn the reading of Morland's personality offered by previous scholarship. Indeed, the painter's complicity in the invention of his artistic identity through portraits can be seen here, and this invalidates the traditional idea of him as a manipulated subject.⁴⁵⁹ Morland seems to have been perfectly aware of the rules of the modern art world, where carefully crafting a distinct artistic personality was essential in order to emerge among numerous rivals. In illustrating the construction of Morland's modern persona first visually - through an examination of his portraits and self-portrait - and then textually - through a brief

⁴⁵⁹ In his first biographical accounts, Morland was described as an exceptionally precocious genius, but at the same time as naïve in his artistic and commercial choices. First his father and then his dealers and acquaintances allegedly manipulated him to make money out of his talent. Later studies perpetuated these assumptions, included the last monographic account on Morland by David Winter. The body of most recent scholarship published after Winter's dissertation has remained still partly influenced by this reading of Morland as a manipulated subject. See for example: Josephine Gear, *Master or Servants?: A Study of Selected English Painters and Their Patrons of the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (New York: Garland, 1977); Ellen G. D'Oench, *"Copper into Gold", Prints by John Raphael Smith, 1751-1812* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999); Karen Junod, *'Writing the Lives of Painters', Biography and Artistic Identity in Britain, 1760-1810* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

comparative analysis of his posthumous biographical constructions - this chapter recognizes the debt that persona owed to the literary genre of Old Masters' 'lives'. Furthermore, while Morland's portraits and self-portraits evidence the painter's shrewd use of art-historical sources to construct his myth, a comparative analysis of his posthumous biographies describes the struggles through which that myth was guaranteed a place in the history of modern art.

One of the first of many portraits to depict him may have been that produced by his father Henry Robert Morland around 1779 (Fig. 96, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven), when the artist was aged sixteen.⁴⁶⁰ In this striking half-length image, the figure of the young man is elegantly dressed in a white-linen cravat, a blue coat and red waistcoat (both embellished by golden buttons). The figure's chest and drawing board are seen from a three-quarter view, but his face turns frontally as if interrupted by the viewer, to whom he directs an intense gaze, pausing his activity for a moment, in a thoughtful attitude also suggested by the half-opened lips. The most impressive element of his clothing is the black broad-brimmed hat, from which tufts of shoulder-length brown hair fall in a disorderly fashion, and which overshadows the upper and left half of Morland's face in a chiaroscuro effect which increases the sensitive nature of this depiction.⁴⁶¹

The shadow cast across his eyes by his broad-brimmed hat recalls Sir Joshua Reynolds's first self-portrait, of some thirty years earlier (Fig. 97, c. 1747-9, National Portrait Gallery, London). Here Reynolds's raised left hand appears to shade his eyes from the

⁴⁶⁰ It is unclear whether the identification of the sitter in this portrait also dates from this time. In the years around his death, George Morland's popularity led to the multiplication of works on the market which were described, very likely in bad faith, as portraits of himself and/or of his wife, and even of his sister. See for example: Phillips, *A Catalogue of a Collection of Modern and Antient (sic) Pictures, by Various of the Most Eminent Masters of the English, Flemish, Italian and Dutch Schools, the Genuine Property of a Gentleman* (28-29 January 1800), Mr. Langdon (13 April 1803), Peter Cox, Burrell and Foster (7-8 May 1805), Messrs. Robins (28 April 1806), Mr. Christie (7-8 April 1807), European Museum (May 1809 and following days), *Getty Provenance Index® databases* (Sale Catalogs Br-A5766, Br-180, Br-332, Br-397, Br-474, and Br-666-A, indexed transcriptions). The history of this portrait can be reconstructed back in time till the 1904, when it was in Sir Thomas Glen-Coats's collection and known already as portraying the likeness of George Morland.

⁴⁶¹ See Richard Walker, *Regency Portraits*, 2 vols. (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1985), 1:347; J. H. Plumb, *The Pursuit of Happiness: A View of Life in Georgian England; An Exhibition Selected from the Paul Mellon Collection* (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 1977), p. 47.

bright Italianate light that seems to enter from outside the frame. Also, Morland's image and Reynolds's self-portrait show the two painters wearing their own hair, somewhat disorderly. Long hair was a normal hairstyle for young men but at the same time it seems here to suggest the spontaneity of juvenile passions. Indeed, in eighteenth-century culture wigs, or one's hair dressed to resemble wigs, restrained and regulated hair's fashion on every public occasion, and even children were not always exempt from wearing them.⁴⁶² Morland's father may well have had Reynolds's self-portrait in mind, not only because Reynolds was the most famous painter of his time, as President of the Royal Academy, but also because Henry Robert was personally acquainted with him, possibly selling his house (47 Leicester Fields) to him in 1760, shortly before being declared bankrupt.⁴⁶³ Reynolds's unusual gesture of shading his eyes has sometimes been interpreted by critics literally, as the employment of a contemporary artistic technique used to avoid distractions when painting an object, by observing it illuminated in a dark room.⁴⁶⁴ Nevertheless, Reynolds painted his self-portrait before or just after his arrival in Italy for the Grand Tour, the apex of a young man's education at that time (whether aristocrat or artist) and so this gesture was likely to carry a metaphorical meaning, and to represent his awareness of that journey as crucial to a successful career ahead.⁴⁶⁵ James Hall interprets it as the dramatization of "distance and absence, the difference between ambition and actuality".⁴⁶⁶ Hall argues that here Reynolds is experiencing a cultural kind of revelation, opened to him by the rich experience of the Italianate journey and represented by the bright Mediterranean light coming from outside the canvas.⁴⁶⁷ Like Reynolds, George Morland was at a crossroads in his career when his father's image was painted: he had been apprenticed

⁴⁶² Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 121.

⁴⁶³ Although Henry Robert Morland was likely to have been acquainted with Reynolds, the story about this sale is not confirmed. I found its first occurrence in George Dawe, *The Life of George Morland (1807)*, with an introduction and notes by J. J. Foster (London: Dickinsons, 1904). Henry Robert Morland was declared bankrupt in January 1762, and later he had to accept charity from the Society of Artists and the Royal Academy. See W. C. Monkhouse, rev., Kate Retford, "Morland, Henry Robert (1716/19-1797)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19281>; see also Joseph Farington, 15 June 1795, 10 July 1795, 28 July 1795, 8 July 1796, and 9 July 1796, in *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, eds. Kenneth Garlick, Angus Macintyre, and Kathryn Cave, 17 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1978-84), 2:353, 364, 371, 597, 599.

⁴⁶⁴ See Mark Hallett, *Reynolds: Portraiture in Action* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), p. 69.

⁴⁶⁵ See James Hall, *The Self-Portrait: A Cultural History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2014), pp. 166-167.

⁴⁶⁶ Hall, *The Self-Portrait*, p. 165.

⁴⁶⁷ Hall, *The Self-Portrait*, pp. 165-167.

to his father for two years, and two years later he would exhibit at the Royal Academy as an oil painter for the first time.⁴⁶⁸ Through the ennobling comparison with the self-portrait of the most successful artist of the age, who had been knighted by George III in 1769, Henry Robert Morland may have aimed at prefiguring a bright and successful career ahead for his son, perhaps similarly alluding to his 'genius'.

There were important artistic precedents for these devices in the art of the Old Masters. Reynolds may have been referring to works by Rembrandt such as *Old Man Shielding his Eyes* (Fig. 98, c. 1639, British Museum) and his series of self-portraits with shaded eyes in the medium of both painting and etching (for example, Fig. 99, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1629, British Museum), showing the interplay between his public and private personae. Furthermore, earlier self-portraits of Dutch artists had already employed the play of light and shadow, and in particular shadows cast on half of the face or sometimes on both eyes, to describe the artist as a figure of exceptional sensibility and introspection, and as a melancholic character.⁴⁶⁹ Perhaps in depicting this image of a young man with shaded eyes, Henry Robert Morland was concerned more with stressing the last aspect, namely his exceptional interiority. Here the chiaroscuro effect on the figure's face, instead of creating a pictorial mask as in Reynolds's self-portrait, serves to divide the artist's face into two halves. The upper, comprising of a shadow over his forehead and eyes, references the figure's optical and mental vision. His raised eyebrows offer an expression of sympathy in its eighteenth-century meaning, the exceptional imagination which allows the experience of other people's feelings. The lower half, made up of nose, chin, blushing cheeks, the shiny tip of the nose, the agleam bottom lip, and his bright and vibrant hair, reveals the figure's youth and promising future. A ray of light coming from the left emphasizes through chiaroscuro the description of his facial muscles, which seem liable to change position with imperceptible movements to reveal the wide range of emotions of a man of feeling.

⁴⁶⁸ Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts; a Complete Dictionary of Contributors and Their Work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904*, 8 Vols. (London: H. Graves and George Bell and Sons, 1905-6), pp. 294-295.

⁴⁶⁹ See Hallett, *Reynolds*, pp. 69-72.

If *George Morland at His Easel* (Fig. 96) is indeed an image of Henry Robert Morland's son, it was perhaps no coincidence that it bears similarities to this particular self-portrait by the most successful artist of the age. As suggested above, Reynolds's earliest self-portrait inserted itself in a solid tradition of Old Masters' self-portraiture, which stressed the artist's exceptional character. It alluded to the sitter's extraordinary genius and imagination, qualities which were seen as inextricably tied with Old Masters' personalities. Paradoxically, later in his career Reynolds would radically condemn this idea of the artist as an exceptional individual because of the natural gift of genius. This change of attitude was consistent with his position as the President of an institution founded on the idea that art could be taught. In his *Discourse VI* delivered to the Royal Academy's students some thirty years after, Reynolds would state: "The purport of this discourse ... is, to caution you against that false opinion, but too prevalent among artists, of the imaginary powers of native genius, and its sufficiency in great works".⁴⁷⁰ Consequently, Reynolds's later self-portraits would stress less these ideas of imagination and genius and more associations with culture and refinement, conveying an idea of art as the product of imitation and the copying of exemplary artworks. Not only is Reynolds's self-portrait with shaded eyes rare among the artist's production because of the gesture and facial expression suggesting artistic genius and imagination, it is also, significantly, the only one certainly attributed to him in which he preferred his artistic tools to the signs of the man of letters. Again this is an allusion to artistic qualities such as originality and personal inventiveness, more than to the practices of copying and imitating that Reynolds would encourage once he became President of the Royal Academy.⁴⁷¹ If the painting at Yale is indeed an image of George Morland, it shows how the father was tailoring for his son an artistic identity with imagination at its core by referring to the most imaginative artistic identity ever assumed by Reynolds during his whole career. And commentators would soon claim to be persuaded of Morland's identity as a genius and precocious young artist. His substantial presence with twenty-five exhibits at the penultimate Free Society of Artists' annual show three years later in 1782 gained him the following praise on the *Parker's General Advertiser and Morning Intelligencer*: "But the greatest proof of genius is in the works of Mr.

⁴⁷⁰ Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourse VI* (1774), in *Discourses on Art*, ed. Robert R. Wark (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 112-113.

⁴⁷¹ See David Mannings, *Sir Joshua Reynolds: A Complete Catalogue of His Paintings; The Subject Pictures Catalogued by Martin Postle* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 46.

Morland, jun. who I find is a very young Artist indeed! Yet has produced some excellent Landskips, which would not disgrace an old Artist".⁴⁷²

A larger version or copy of this portrait exists (Fig. 100, Christie's, 20 June 1969, lot 68), in which Morland is dressed in a slightly different way and in which his hand, emerging from the ruffled cuff of a fine white-linen shirt, holds a pencil and rests on the side of the drawing board, which here plays a larger role in the composition. This painting confirms what in the Yale painting is only suggested through the detail of a piece of paper seen protruding from the drawing board: the young artist is presented as a draughtsman. If these are images of George Morland, it is unsurprising to see him characterized thus: it is likely that Henry Robert Morland would shape his son's artistic beginnings by initiating him in this medium from a very early age, since practicing drawing was a quite common start in that period for the apprenticeship in this profession. Depicting a young artist (possibly his son) in a thoughtful attitude and in the activity of drawing, Henry Robert Morland conveyed the idea of precocious talent and imagination, especially since drawing had for long been associated with imaginative processes and with the individual styles of the Old Masters.⁴⁷³ Manifesting a precocious talent in this medium was indeed a recurrent pattern in biographies of great artists from the past.⁴⁷⁴

Perhaps Henry Robert Morland was also inspired by a recent painting depicting an artist's son in the activity of drawing. *A Boy Deliberating on his Drawing* (Fig. 101, c. 1766, Ulster Museum, Belfast) by Nathaniel Hone was exhibited at the 1766 Society of

⁴⁷² "To the Editor of the General Advertiser, &c.", *Parker's General Advertiser and Morning Intelligencer*, 14 June 1782.

⁴⁷³ In eighteenth-century English aesthetics, the medium of drawing was at the intersection of multiple meanings. On the one hand it was associated with sketching 'from life' and hence with accurate mimesis, on the other hand, because of its immediacy, it was believed to be the most spontaneous reflection of the artist's imagination. Academic training included copying Old Master drawings as examples of excellent 'manners', hence this medium was also associated with these prominent artistic precedents and consequently with changing notions of genius. I have discussed thoroughly the meanings of drawing within eighteenth-century aesthetics in Chapter 2. See Scott Wilcox, "Emanations of Genius", in *The Line of Beauty: British Drawings and Watercolors of the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Scott Wilcox, Gillian Forrester, Morna O'Neill, Kim Sloan (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 2001), pp. 9-11.

⁴⁷⁴ See for example the lives of Cimabue, Giotto, Leonardo, and Michelangelo in William Aglionby, *Painting Illustrated in Three Dialogues (sic) Containing Some Choice Observations upon the Art Together with the Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, from Cimabue, to the Time of Raphael and Michael Angelo. With an Explanation of the Difficult Terms* (London: John Gain, 1686), pp. 126-138-161-272.

Artists' annual exhibition and later in Hone's one-man show in 1775.⁴⁷⁵ The painting portrays Hone's younger son, Camillus, fashionably dressed and caught in a pensive mood while conceiving a sketch. He is set in a dark interior only partially illuminated by a ray of light entering from the left, which dramatically emphasizes Camillus's inspired and lively facial features. Camillus studied to become an artist under his father, and later he would become an accomplished miniature painter following his father's beginnings in this medium. In this half-length portrait he is only a child, and he is sitting on the left side of a table that occupies the foreground of the canvas, surrounded by books that make clear the association of drawing with learning and the activity of the mind. He holds a porte-crayon with a black crayon in his hand, and props his arm on a folder of drawings leaning transversely on a pile of books, as a drawing board. A taller pile of books on the right side is employed as a support for a small bronze sculpture, a classical female figure holding a laurel wreath, perhaps an allegory of the artistic fame which his father was prefiguring for him. The painting suggests that the young Hone will reach this fame thanks to his extraordinary imagination: not only his inspired and dreamy facial expression, but also the seventeenth-century Netherlandish landscape that is placed at his back, allude to an imaginative engagement with nature rather than to one mediated by learning.

George Morland would allude to ideas of sensibility and imagination in his own self-portrait from 1795, drawn when he was thirty-two years old and had already established himself on the London art world as a painter of rural genre scenes. It is at this point worth noting how the identity of a polite and refined individual which is emerging from the analysis of the early portraits and self-portraits of Morland differs strikingly from his dissipated and eccentric personality as described in literary accounts appeared just after his death. We will see later in this chapter how, even before these sources - anecdotes published in newspapers, and biographies recounting more exhaustively the painter's life - Morland's later portraits and self-portraits are responsible for the reputation of dissolute artist that the painter still enjoys in art historical discourses. Contrarily to these later images and to posthumous biographical

⁴⁷⁵ *Portrait of a Boy (Horace Hone) Sketching* (1766, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin) is another painting which has been associated with the canvas *A Boy Deliberating on His Drawing* exhibited at the Society of Artists in 1776.

constructions, in this half-length self-portrait in chalk (Fig. 102, National Portrait Gallery, London), the artist presents himself as a person in full control of his mental faculties, his body dignified in an upright pose, his eyes boldly challenging the viewer with a level gaze. Well-dressed and fashionable in coat, waistcoat and white-linen cravat, he seems to be a man who has earned his success and who is now in possession of a solid status. Yet, the blank background and the absence of signs of his profession reduce distractions and allow the viewer to focus more intensely on Morland's face. Having by now gained popularity as an artist, he could perhaps afford to present himself in the guise of a standalone subject without necessarily referring to his trade. Chiaroscuro effects emphasize Morland's facial features, which seems to constitute a complex and lively machinery for the expression of emotions. The flesh is made tangible by Morland's special employment of red chalk to outline cheeks, chin, ears, lips and nose. The portrait conveys the idea of the artist-sitter as one of those rare individuals whose range of emotions and ability to empathize were understood to surpass that possessed by average people, and whose interior qualities were thought to make him special and endowed of an exceptional sensibility.

This self-portrait follows the model of his father's own image (possibly drawn by Henry Edridge) in the suggestion of achievement and success, politeness and sensibility (Fig. 103, 1794-5?, British Museum).⁴⁷⁶ Here Morland's father appears in an environment which evokes an elite lifestyle: sitting on a fashionable Chippendale-style chair, Henry Robert's figure is placed slightly to the right of the drawing, on a terrace, a classical column framing the view on the left opening onto an Italianate garden described by a cypress and a small decorative structure. Morland's father is here presented as a prosperous man, dressed fashionably in a yellowish coat over a striped white waistcoat,

⁴⁷⁶ The British Museum acquired this portrait in 1870 from Colnaghi with a very large group of portraits, all purchased as images of the sitters rather than for their importance as fine art drawings. Hence, the identification of the sitter as Henry Robert Morland on the back of the mount must date at least from before 1870, but it is unsure whether it was made by Colnaghi or it was a record taken from a former mount or frame. By comparison, the identification of Morland's father with another portrait from circa 1795, a sketch of a man's face in profile, *Unknown Man Formerly Known as Henry Robert Morland* (National Portrait Gallery, London) and attributed to his son, is now considered untrustworthy. This attribution and the identity of the sitter for this work depends entirely on the inscription, and the signature seems not to be original. Curiously, this profile portrait resembles closely Thomas Rowlandson's portrait of John Raphael Smith from 1790, a black chalk drawing held by The Harvard Theatre Collection, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

perhaps made of silk or fine cotton, immaculate cravat and socks, blue breeches and a pair of fashionable low-heeled black leather shoes embellished by metal buckles at his feet. The plump belly hints at his wealth, and everything in this portrait serves to state his achievements, while showing no sign of his profession.⁴⁷⁷

Henry Robert Morland's restrained pose – his crossed legs, hands in his lap, and dignified facial expression – suggests elegance and politeness, including self-possession. In the weight given to the expression of feelings and emotions, Henry Robert Morland's portrait and his son's self-portrait differ. While Henry Robert's depiction communicates to the viewer an idea of restraint and decorum, and the ability to keep the expression of emotions under the control of a refined politeness, Morland's self-portrait gives a sense of a more direct and therefore 'sympathetic' personality. This feeling is enhanced by the half-length format and the focus on Morland's intense eyes. Another important difference between Morland's self-portrait, drawn in 1795, and his father's portrait, perhaps also from the same year, is in the hairstyles adopted by the two figures. While his father is shown in a wig of small proportions, the most fashionable type in the last decades of the eighteenth century, George Morland wears his hair cut very short in an unpowdered crop.

This choice of hairstyle was relatively unusual for a man of his age (thirty-two) and status. As Marcia Pointon has noted about eighteenth-century male portraiture: "men who wear their own hair and who appear in public places, that is in portraits, without a wig are defined by that absence".⁴⁷⁸ The uncovering of one's bare head could expose one to ridicule, or to charges of eccentricity, exceptionality or deviance.⁴⁷⁹ Wigs were loaded with meanings related to class and institutional roles, so the absence of a wig was perhaps meant to convey the intimate nature of Morland's self-portrait, as for

⁴⁷⁷ As noted above, Henry Robert Morland's portrait was acquired by the British Museum as part of a large group of portrait drawings and prints; some of them are clearly attributable to Henry Edridge. Although these differ slightly from Henry Robert Morland's portrayal, they deal in a similar way with facial expression and setting. All date from around 1794. I thank Kim Sloan, curator of British Drawings and Watercolours before 1880 at the British Museum, for her help with my research on this drawing, and the suggestion of its attribution to Edridge.

⁴⁷⁸ Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, p. 107.

⁴⁷⁹ See Marcia Pointon, "Dangerous Excrescences: Wigs, Hair and Masculinity", in *Hanging the Head*, pp. 107-140.

example in George Romney's self-portrait from 1782 (Fig. 104, National Portrait Gallery, London). Marcia Pointon has interpreted the omission of a wig here as underlining the intimate and domestic dimension of the portrayal, an attempt to describe Romney's interiority, revealed in the relaxed attitude he could have assumed in his domestic space, rather than his public persona.⁴⁸⁰ Furthermore, wigs were at this time particularly associated with masculinity, since the norm for women's hairstyles consisted in employing at least in part the owner's own growing hair, so the absence of a wig here reinforced the self-portrait's allusions to ideas of sensibility and domesticity, traditionally seen as feminine qualities.⁴⁸¹ In Morland's self-portrait this idea is reinforced by the medium employed: in the eighteenth century, chalk and pastel portraits came both to signify and to facilitate spontaneous sentimental attachments elicited by the culture of sociability, and were usually viewed in intimate and domestic settings.⁴⁸² Its significant size (47 x 33 cm) suggests that the work was intended for exhibition, perhaps in Morland's studio. There it might have been seen by his clientele, for whom the decision to wear his hair in short and disorderly locks would have suggested both Morland's proximity to everything that was natural and not construed, and that his art was the product in turn of spontaneity and sensibility.

In 1795, when Morland drew this self-portrait, a man's decision to wear his hair short also indicated an oppositional ideological stance. Short haircuts assumed radical political connotations in the 1790s, as John Barrell has recently argued. In January the liberal Lord Mayor and Foxite Whigs raised concerns in the Parliament about the impact of powdering on the grain supply, a relevant topic that year because of the threat of a particularly bad harvest. While they had aimed at banning the use of hair powder, a luxury particularly representative of higher classes' selfishness, the Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger reacted with an opportunistic political move, proposing the Hair Powder Act. This consisted in a bill of one guinea a year on any citizen who wanted to powder his or her hair. The radicals soon interpreted the new tax as an attempt of

⁴⁸⁰ See Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, p. 107.

⁴⁸¹ See Pointon, "Dangerous Excrescences", in *Hanging the Head*, pp. 107-140.

⁴⁸² See Ruth Kenny, "'Apartments that are not too Large': Pastel Portraits And the Spaces of Femininity in the English Country House", in *Placing Faces: The Portrait and The English Country House in the Long Eighteenth Century*, eds. Gill Perry, Kate Retford and Jordan Vibert, with Hannah Lions (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 144, 149, 150, 151, 156.

the government at increasing surveillance, by making citizens' political choices legible through dress and fashion. Also, the sum of one guinea per year made powdering unaffordable for many citizens of the middle and lower orders of society, while till then they could have recourse to it, at least occasionally. Questions were asked about the legitimacy of a bill that deprived access for many citizens to a share of the politeness and respectability implied by powdering.⁴⁸³ In turn, the adoption of an unpowdered style could represent a leveling of social differences, since the wig had been an immediate marker of status. Also, the cropped look recalled associations with the democratic ideals of the Roman republic.⁴⁸⁴ A wig was increasingly seen as a loyalist choice, while wearing your own hair was considered a statement of disapproval of Pitt and the War, as well as solidarity with the poor, especially if one cut one's hair short in a crop. In spring 1795 a Crop Club was founded at Lambeth, and that autumn the Duke of Bedford, a prominent member of the Opposition, held a "cropping party", in which his guests cut their hair as a protest against the War. Newspaper commentary in this year increasingly used political references to talk about the new fashion: the cropped style was compared to the hairstyle adopted by the Roundheads of the English Civil Wars, followers of Cromwell whose haircut contrasted radically with the long locks typical of the Cavaliers, or with the British Jacobins, punning on the new fashion of cutting the hair short (itself a 'fashion' in revolutionary France) and the cutting of heads with the guillotine.⁴⁸⁵ Furthermore, looking at this self-portrait through the lens of contemporary philosophical ideas of sensibility allows us to recognize Morland's decision not to wear a wig as a means of making his portrayal more intimate, highlighting his interior gifts as a man of feeling, and signalling his lack of interest in using a self-portrait as a gauge of his social status. Perhaps this hairstyle represents the first exterior marker of the modern artistic identity George Morland would develop further for himself.

⁴⁸³ See John Barrell, *The Spirit of Despotism: Invasions of Privacy in the 1790s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 145-209.

⁴⁸⁴ See Elizabeth Amann, *Dandyism in the Age of Revolution: The Art of the Cut* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), pp. 178-179.

⁴⁸⁵ See Amann, *Dandyism in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 185-189.

Around the same time, Morland painted another small canvas now known as *A Woman Called Ann, The Artist's Wife* (Fig. 105, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven).⁴⁸⁶ The full length format is a particularly suitable one to describe the comfortable lifestyle enjoyed by the sitter. As with Henry Robert Morland's portrait, it allows the artist to describe both her elegant clothes and the refined interiors of her house. The woman is sitting, cross-legged, on a fashionable striped sofa placed in a private domestic space, maybe a reading room, made comfortable by walls covered with fine wallpaper and a velvety green carpet on the floor. The privacy of this room is underlined to the viewer through the theatrical effect of an opened curtain on the left side of the canvas. The sitter is wearing a fashionable light pink gown and is wrapped in an embroidered ivory shawl. Around the generous neckline and the cuffs of her gown, the viewers can glimpse the precious lace of her shift. The woman's subjective qualities are here evidenced through her facial expression and gestures. She is smiling, her mouth open, while holding a piece of paper with her left hand, propped on the arm of the sofa, simultaneously drawing attention through her other hand to her writing. The upper half of her body is illuminated by a ray of light, coming perhaps from a hidden window behind the curtain, which further draws the viewer's attention to her expressive face and hands. The devices of the open mouth and of the letter suggest that the sitter has something important to communicate to the viewer, and if this is indeed a portrait of Morland's wife, these could be seen as artistic devices for describing her as a sociable and communicative person. The light illuminating the upper part of her body is theatrical in its circular shape, close to a modern spotlight, and it is juxtaposed with an inconsistent and similarly round area of light which covers part of the carpet, her foot, and a book leaning on one of the legs of the table placed beside the sofa. The woman, possibly Ann Morland, appears to have been interrupted in the act of composing a

⁴⁸⁶ The attribution of this painting to Morland's hand is controversial, and curators have sometimes suggested it to be by a follower, who would have derived its composition from Morland's *The Disconsolate and Her Parrot*. The latter was itself a subject picture for which Morland's wife was said to have modelled (the woman there sits in a similar posture but she is turned towards the left instead than towards the right). Moreover, the painting has been associated with a canvas "by Morland (?)" shown at the Royal Academy in 1880 and simply called *Lady with a Letter* (then owned by Samuel Addington). All these elements seem to indicate that this could be a subject picture for which Ann Morland had modelled, but which was not primarily meant to be a portrait of her. The history of the Yale canvas cannot be reconstructed before its acquisition by Mr. Mellon in 1965, when it was already known to be a portrait of Morland's wife. I thank Matthew Hargraves, Chief Curator of Art Collections and Head of Collections Information and Access at the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, for his advice on this and the other works held by the Yale Center for British Art.

letter, since on this small upholstered table covered with a fine blue velvet fabric we see an inkwell and quill, together with some more empty papers. These elements, together with the book, describe her as an educated and refined person. Everything in this portrait speaks of comfort, achievement, politeness and culture. If this is indeed a portrait of Morland's wife, it describes her as a domesticated wife, and as a respectable and comfortable woman thanks to the trappings of her husband's material success.

While for this painting the sitter's original identification as Ann Morland is uncertain, for another canvas entitled *Mrs George Morland* (Fig. 106, c. 1792-5, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London) it seems to be more reliable. This work may have been painted by Robert Muller in pendant with a portrait of George Morland that was reproduced in mezzotint by William Ward in 1805 and might be identified with the painting now in the Lady Lever Art Gallery (Fig. 107, c. 1792-5).⁴⁸⁷ Although that identification has been doubted (on slender grounds), we can still get a sense of the pendant pairing through visual comparison between the canvas at Dulwich and the engraving by William Ward which translates its original companion (Fig. 108, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven).⁴⁸⁸ They present a similar treatment of the sitters, both dressed fashionably, their clothes plausibly dating from the same period. In both cases, they describe elegant and urbane personalities each contrasted with an element of rusticity. For Ann Morland this is represented by the chunky pug dog sitting on her lap, for George Morland it consists in his drawing of a low life scene. Furthermore, when juxtaposed, the sitters would have faced each other. If *Mrs George Morland* had indeed been conceived in pendant with the portrait of her husband after which this engraving was taken, then it would be hard to interpret it as other than a portrait of the sitter, which had been privately commissioned from the painter by the couple together with the companion, to

⁴⁸⁷ The engraving, inscribed "Painted by Rob.t Muller", was published on 1 January 1805 by John Harris, Gerrard Street, Soho. The canvas in Liverpool is of the same size as that in Dulwich. The authenticity of the Liverpool painting has been doubted due to very minor differences of composition compared with Ward's mezzotint. See Alex Kidson, *Earlier British Paintings in the Lady Lever Art Gallery* (Liverpool: National Museums Liverpool, 1999), pp. 109-111.

⁴⁸⁸ The history of *Mrs George Morland* can be reconstructed back to 1911, when it was donated by Fairfax Murray to the Dulwich Picture Gallery, already without a pendant and already known as a portrait of Ann Morland by Robert Muller; see Peter Murray, *Dulwich Picture Gallery: A Catalogue; Sotheby Parke Bernet* (London: Philip Wilson, 1980), p. 84. The portrait of *George Morland* (Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight) was acquired by the museum in 1922, when it was transferred from the private collection of Lord Leverhulme, who had bought it in 1915. See Kidson, *Earlier British Paintings*, pp. 109-111.

be hung in their household. Indeed, the public might have been interested in buying a portrait of George Morland already during his lifetime, thanks to his exceptional personality as an artist, but it is hard to imagine a similar eagerness to buy one of his wife. The entry for Muller's portrait of George Morland in the catalogues of the European Museum, where it was exhibited from 1808 to 1814 together with fifteen works by Morland, describes the relationship between Muller and his sitter as a very close one: "portrait of George Morland ... executed ... by the late Mr. Muller, who was intimately acquainted with him" and "painted by his intimate friend Muller".⁴⁸⁹ This is no exaggeration. The pair could have met as early as in 1788, when Muller enrolled in the Royal Academy School, though it is unclear whether Morland was still attending classes there after his enrolment four years earlier.⁴⁹⁰ The two nevertheless knew each other by 1794, when the Royal Academy's records indicate they were both living in Gerrard Street. While at this date Muller already occupied rooms above John Harris's shop (28 Gerrard Street) Morland joined him there from 1797 until 1799.⁴⁹¹ Arguably Muller, Morland and the print publisher John Harris were all close business partners and friends.⁴⁹² John Harris commemorated Morland's death in 1805 by issuing Ward's engraving after Muller's portrait mentioned above.

Mrs George Morland (Fig. 106) describes an elegant woman, wearing a white high-waisted gown made of a soft material, perhaps satin. The neckline of her dress lets emerge the precious lace of the shift, and golden ribbons embellish her simple but fashionable clothing, one around her waist, just below her breast, and another used as a hairband. Ann Morland's grey hair is powdered and long, arranged in soft waves that gently frame her face and neck. The sitter's intense and inquisitive gaze is directed at the viewer; together with her flushing cheeks, which stand out particularly by

⁴⁸⁹ European Museum, *European Museum* (3 May 1808 and following days, and May 1812, dates unknown), in *Getty Provenance Index® databases* (Sale Catalogs Br-577, and Br-980, indexed transcription). The painting was listed in all the catalogues of the European Museum from 1808 until 1814 alongside a group of works by George Morland: see *Getty Provenance Index® databases* (Sale Catalogs Br-577, and Br-1223, indexed transcription).

⁴⁹⁰ Not much is known today of the author of these two paintings, Robert Muller, except that he exhibited twenty-nine portraits at the Royal Academy between 1789 and 1800. See Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts*, pp. 319-320.

⁴⁹¹ See Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts*, pp. 294-295 and 319-320.

⁴⁹² See Chapter 2 on the likely nature of the relationship between Harris and Morland, as well as their collaboration for the publication of the drawing book *Sketches by G. Morland* between the years 1792-1799.

comparison with her fair and delicate complexion, and the rosy lips, which are shut but seem to be curved in the hint of a smile, speak of the woman's sensitive and sociable qualities. The only element to contrast with this depiction of sociable politeness is the chunky pug dog on the woman's lap, which is said to have been painted by Henry Bernard Chalon, an artist specialized in sporting and animal subjects, who had attended the Royal Academy School in the same period as Morland and who was also his brother-in-law, having married one of Morland's wife's sisters.⁴⁹³ By this time in England the pug was well-established as fashionable lap dog of the wealthy – it became popular in the sixteenth century when one of them saved the life of William I of the Netherlands – but still some of its physical features, such as its chunky body and wrinkled head, were perceived as making it similar to another more aggressive breed, the mastiff, that in the eighteenth century was contrarily employed as a guard dog. The name 'pug dog' was also believed to be derived from the Latin word *pugnus* (fist), since the shadow of a fist was thought to resemble the shape of this dog's head.⁴⁹⁴ It could hence be suggested that the pug here represents a rough element opposed to Ann's elegant and immaculate clothing, that the sitter is yet perfectly able to keep under control.

Like his wife, Morland appears as a fashionable and sensible individual in his portrait by Muller (Fig. 108). Even in the reproduction's absence of colours, the painter's lively facial features are highlighted through an interplay of light and shadow, which describes their mobility according to the sitter's feelings and emotions. Morland is shown wearing his own hair, naturally shiny and wavy and is seen half-length, in profile, while his face turns to the viewer. The painter is wearing a coat opened over an elegant waistcoat and a neck cloth which is knotted on his breast in a sophisticated manner. The viewer has seemingly caught him while drawing with a *porte-crayon* on a piece of paper, placed to the far left of the image. A scene of low life, the drawing of a peasant, is visible on it, so again a contrasting element, speaking of the sitter's vicinity to the rural, is juxtaposed with an elegant and fashionable urban identity. In conclusion, both portraits include

⁴⁹³ In Sidney C. Hutchinson, "The Royal Academy Schools, 1768-1830", *The Walpole Society* 38 (1960-1962): pp. 147, 150, Morland is reported to have enrolled to the Royal Academy School in February 1784 and Chalon in October 1788. Henry Bernard Chalon's marriage with Sarah Ward is reported in a Ward's family tree found at the Witt Library, and has to be confirmed.

⁴⁹⁴ William Secord, *Dog Painting: A History of the Dog in Art* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 2009), pp. 66, 82.

something suggesting the couple's contact and knowledge of low life and of the countryside, but in a way to establish a distance, and to describe the dominion of the polite and refined sitters over a low subject matter.

The same cannot be said of *George Morland on His Hunter* (Fig. 109, 1794, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven), a picture said to be a portrait of the artist, which was painted by Thomas Hand, pupil and friend of the sitter, in the same years.⁴⁹⁵ If this is indeed a portrait of the artist, then it describes him in a very different relationship with the rural. Here Morland appears completely immersed in what could easily be taken for one of his sporting scenes. Whilst in the previous portrait he seemed to succeed in distancing his subject matter, here Morland's typical sporting painting prevails on the artist who created it in the first place. Indeed, the resemblance of this work by Thomas Hand with the kind of sporting scenes depicted by Morland is not surprising, since the pupil followed his master not only in the choice of subjects, but also in his brushwork. For this reason, his works have sometimes been wrongly attributed to Morland; he is believed to have helped his master with finishing some of his later paintings.⁴⁹⁶ Morland's earlier biographies by Collins and Dawe include the pupil Thomas Hand, the former mentioning his role as assistant in the finishing of his master's paintings, the latter especially remarking his inclination for Morland's amusements, and his participation in many of Morland's escapes to the countryside, when he was also said to have acted as a courier of his master's paintings to the city.⁴⁹⁷

Even when compared with the other images of the artist discussed above, for many of which the identification of the sitter was similarly unsure and slippery, this portrait

⁴⁹⁵ Again, it is unsure whether the identification of the sitter in this painting as George Morland dates from his lifetime. The history of this canvas can be reconstructed back to 1969, when it was sold by Ackerman to Mr Mellon and already known as a portrait of the artist. Formerly, the painting had been in Sir Harold Parkinson's collection of paintings by and of Morland, which was sold at Christie's on 20 June 1969. This collection also included a self-portrait of Morland and two portraits of him by his father, one as a boy, the other one as a young man (the first portrait described in this chapter). See Judy Egerton, ed., *British Sporting and Animal Paintings, 1655-1867: A Catalogue* (London: Tate Gallery for the Yale Center for British Art, 1978), p. 173.

⁴⁹⁶ L. H. Cust, rev. Matthew Hargraves, "Hand, Thomas (d. 1804)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ueaezproxy.uea.ac.uk:2048/view/article/12190>.

⁴⁹⁷ William Collins, *Memoirs of That Celebrated, Original and Eccentric Genius the Late George Morland, an Eminent Painter* (London: H. D. Symonds, 1806), p. 170; Dawe, *The Life of George Morland*, pp. 55, 67, 69.

stands out for the generalisation of Morland's features. The sitter is here seen from a slight distance, and he is portrayed through the conventional full-length portrait of the gentleman on horseback, seen in profile in the centre of the painting while sitting very upright on his white hunter, which he is holding by the reins, followed by two hunting dogs running and sniffing the smell of their prey. The liveliness and naturalistic rendering of the dogs contrast sharply with the stiff posture of the sitter and his horse, which in their finished treatment also differ from the painting's setting, realized in a style closer to Morland's broad brushwork. This might indicate that a different hand painted portrait and setting. The artist is wearing an elegant blue coat with a large red collar, embellished by golden buttons, on yellowish trousers and sportsman's boots. His clothing is completed by yellow gloves, an immaculate neck cloth and a large black hat worn on powdered hair, or perhaps a wig, tied at the back in a low ponytail. The portrait is set in a hilly rural landscape, framed by a tree in the right, the roof of a cottage half-hidden by a hill on the left, and a wooden footbridge in the centre foreground.⁴⁹⁸

Another portrait of George Morland which had appeared a few years earlier can be seen as another example of a tendency to conflate the artist with his typical subject matter. The cover of the drawing book *Sketches by G. Morland*, published by John Harris in seventeen instalments, the first of which was issued in January 1792, described an artist seated on the grass under a tree on the right, sketching two horses to the left. The image (Fig. 110, British Museum) was used as the title-page for a collection of prints after drawings by Morland, so we can presume that the figure drawing from nature was meant to represent the artist, even if here he is more unrecognizable than ever, being seen from a distance, with his features generically described.⁴⁹⁹ Indeed the techniques employed for this print, crayon-manner and soft-ground etching, were more appropriate for reproducing the effect of a rough drawing than for rendering a detailed scene. In this portrait Morland is dressed elegantly, in a way close to the portrait by Hand. He is similarly wearing a long coat with a large collar over a pair of sporting

⁴⁹⁸ In Egerton, *British Sporting and Animal Paintings*, p. 173, this portrait is said to have been painted by Hand when he accompanied Morland in a visit in Enderby, Leicestershire. The painter was apparently used to go there for hunting with Charles Loraine Smith, local esquire and amateur sporting artist; the information cannot be confirmed through primary sources.

⁴⁹⁹ In Chapter 2 I have examined this image under a different angle, in relation to the conception of the drawing book as a whole. I refer the reader to that chapter for a discussion of Harris's publication and for an additional point of view on this portrait.

trousers and boots, his outfit completed by a neck cloth and a large hat. Notwithstanding the similarities with the portrait by Thomas Hand in the treatment of the subject portrayed and in the analogous immersion of the figure in the countryside, the cover of John Harris' drawing book describes Morland engaged in a very different activity and in a diverse relationship with his rural surroundings.

First of all, here the painter is holding a sketchbook and beside him there is a small suitcase, perhaps containing the tools of his profession, making his figure close to the portrayal of a Grand Tourist drawing on the spot. This implies a much different relationship with the rural compared with the activity of hunting, which is a manifestation of distinction and domination of man over nature. In the painting by Hand, the sitter is at the centre of the scene, on horseback, upright on his hunter, in a commanding position, emphasized by his elevated standpoint within the landscape, on the top of a hill. This kind of portrait suggests a relation of ownership with the landscape, and it was particularly suitable for the portraiture of landowners, who wanted to include their possessions in their own image. Instead, in the cover of the drawing book published by Harris, Morland is sitting on the grass under a tree, on a level with the animals he is sketching from nature and on one side of the image, no longer in a position of centrality as regards his rural surroundings. Morland is conflated with the subject matter for which he was most known, though he is sketching a pair of horses, the noblest of the animals in the eighteenth-century hierarchy of animal painting. Perhaps Harris, in showing the artist in the activity of drawing horses from nature, was alluding to famous Old Masters who had employed a similar practice, for example Leonardo, who "loved all sorts of animals" and "had a great passion" for "horses", which he "used to draw ... by the life".⁵⁰⁰ Consistent with this early depiction of Morland's features as those of a refined individual in the cover of this drawing book, Harris would issue a polite version of the artist's portrait after his death, the engraving after Robert Muller's painting from the pendant discussed above (Fig. 108).

⁵⁰⁰ Aglionby, *Painting Illustrated in Three Dialogues (sic)*, p. 164.

The conflation of the artist with his subject matter is further developed in another drawing book cover, published for the first time one year after John Harris's. In January 1793 the first of three instalments composing a drawing book published by Daniel Orme and also entitled *Sketches by G. Morland* was accompanied by a cover bearing the artist's portrait (Fig. 111, circa 1793-4, British Museum).⁵⁰¹ As already suggested in Chapter 3, this was a popular and successful portrayal of the painter: it was used over and over again by both Daniel and his younger brother Edward, for reissuing the entire drawing book in 1799, and for other drawing books printed and reprinted till 1807 with the addition of only a few fresh sketches by the artist; it was even on a trade card and two draft trade card associated with Orme's firms.⁵⁰² The soft-ground etching reproduced the features of a rough sketch showing Morland leaning on a fence at right, drawing three pigs in a pigsty to the left. Except for the similar depiction of the artist in the act of sketching from nature, this portrait of Morland differs in many aspects from that on Harris' cover. Far from the elegance displayed there, with the artist resembling a Grand Tourist both in his attitude and in his outfit, here he could easily be mistaken for one of the farmers leaning on pigsties depicted in many of his works, were it not for the sketchbook and pencil in his hands. This cover described a much less refined version of Morland, careless of the polite habits that would have prevented a gentleman from approaching at a close range dirty animals such as pigs, even for the sake of correctly depicting them on paper. The portrait might have recalled famous Old Masters' personalities who had similarly lived in contact with nature and rusticity. The biography of Giotto was in this sense emblematic, since he had been a shepherd before being discovered by Cimabue, who observed him drawing on a stone while his sheep were feeding.⁵⁰³ Orme's cover suggested that Morland's talent was natural, as was Giotto's, who allegedly "never learned the way of doing it from any, but from nature".⁵⁰⁴ Also Leonardo was reported to have enthusiastically embraced rusticity when he invited a group of country people into his house to observe their gestures and behaviour and reproduce them in his works.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰¹ Daniel Orme's drawing book is discussed in Chapter 3.

⁵⁰² See note 448 in Chapter 3.

⁵⁰³ Aglionby, *Painting Illustrated in Three Dialogues (sic)*, p. 138.

⁵⁰⁴ Aglionby, *Painting Illustrated in Three Dialogues (sic)*, p. 138.

⁵⁰⁵ Cornelis De Bie, *The True Effigies of the Most Eminent Painters and Other Famous Artists That Have Flourished in Europe* (London: 1694), p. 11.

The portrait on Orme's cover also represented a further step in the conflation of Morland's artistic identity with the subjects for which he was most known among audiences. Indeed, while on Harris' cover he preserved some distance from his rural surroundings, and he was still described as a polite and refined professional, even if working outdoors, here he is further assimilated to his typical rustic landscape and transformed into one of the characteristic farmers inhabiting his works. Furthermore, contemporary audiences considered the animal with which Morland is portrayed in this image, the pig, as characteristic of his art. The pig had become Morland's distinctive signature since early in his career, when he repeatedly presented works which featured it prominently at the most important showcases of the London art world. Since his participation in the 1782 Free Society of Artists' (with, among the other works, *A Girl Attending Pigs*, unidentified) and 1790 Society of Artists' annual exhibitions (where he presented *A Sow and Pigs*, unidentified), Morland's name had been associated with works featuring pigs at centre stage. Posthumous descriptions of Morland's identity would conflate him completely with his pigs, as suggested by the quote at the beginning of this chapter.⁵⁰⁶ Unlike horses, with which Morland appeared on the cover of Harris's drawing book and which were considered noble creatures, pigs lay at the lowest level of the hierarchy of animals in eighteenth-century animal painting, and they were thought to be unworthy of depiction. And yet, Morland consistently shaped his persona around the association with this animal: although it is doubtful that the cover of Orme's book had been drawn by him, the artistic identity it suggested had been crafted with his complicity.⁵⁰⁷

The fierce competition resulting from the proliferation and expansion of modern exhibiting contexts such as the RA exhibition pushed artists to develop transgressive strategies to stand out from the crowd. Ambitious artists had to fashion unique personae, which would make them distinguishable from their competitors and recognizable by the public. Painters could not anymore all adhere to the standard

⁵⁰⁶ Algernon Graves, *The Society of Artists of Great Britain, 1760-1791, The Free Society of Artists, 1761-1783; A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and Their Work from the Foundation of the Societies to 1791* (London: George Bell and Sons and Algernon Graves, 1907), pp. 174-175. See Chapter 3 for contemporary critique on Morland's association with the depiction of pigs.

⁵⁰⁷ See Chapter 3 on Orme's drawing book which, unlike Harris's book, arguably did not see Morland's involvement.

artistic personality of the noble and intellectual artist that had been promoted by Reynolds via the Royal Academy. The very creation of an institution officially entitled to set precepts and norms for what an artist should be, set the conditions for a reaction among artists. New artistic personalities invented at the turn of the nineteenth century in Britain were often consciously shaped against academic artistic norms. Scandal was increasingly employed as a mechanism for gaining publicity, which explains Morland's association with an animal with such a transgressive potential as the pig. Richard Cosway and Henry Fuseli are examples of British painters from a generation prior to Morland's who similarly employed scandal to construct their reputations. A fashionable portraitist, Richard Cosway had shaped his wayward artistic personality through lifestyle choices: a close relationship with Radical transgressive patrons of the calibre of Richard Townley and the Prince of Wales, the marriage with a talented Italian artist and musician and the establishment with her of one of the most fashionable salons of London, his eccentric embracing of mysticism. All these exceptional aspects characterizing Cosway's personality and lifestyle resonated in his unsurprisingly numerous self-portraits, in which he alternatively portrayed himself as a flamboyant Macaroni, a refined courtier or a mystic.⁵⁰⁸ Henry Fuseli established his career as history painter by convincingly performing the persona of the wild genius: he made shrewd use of his extraordinary erudition and exotic origins, he expressed unconventional and modern views meant to provoke outrage and he chose sublimely grotesque and demonic subjects for his works. Born from a Swiss family of painters but directed to priesthood, Henry Fuseli was said to have developed ambidexterity to deceive his father and to practice drawing while simultaneously performing other activities. Fuseli's unruly character was famous: he once had a physical altercation with the son of Earl Waldegrave, to whom he was a travelling tutor in France; as a teacher at the RA, he regularly abused his pupils.⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁸ See for example: Richard Cosway, *Self-Portrait in Masquerade Dress*, c. 1770, Attingham Park, Shropshire; *Self-Portrait with Busts of Michelangelo and Rubens*, c. 1789, Fondazione Cosway, Lodi; *Mystical Self-Portrait*, Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts, c. 1805. See Stephen Lloyd, "Cosway, Richard (bap. 1742, d. 1821)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6383>.

⁵⁰⁹ See Martin Myrone, *Henry Fuseli* (London: Tate, 2001), pp. 6-15; D. H. Weinglass, "Fuseli, Henry (1741-1825)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-10254>.

Like these transgressive artistic precedents, Morland's shaping of his persona in association with his pigs helped the audience to remember his name. Furthermore, it recalled famous examples of eccentric Old Masters who loved animals, lending his works an immediate artistic legibility. The painterly profession was distancing itself from other artistic endeavours with more practical aims, and painters were being reimagined as 'geniuses' in the modern sense, that is as exceptional individuals endowed with unique interior qualities that they expressed in similarly unique artworks and lifestyles. In this sense historical biographies of exceptional artists, which established them as remarkable figures with lives as worthy of historical accounts as those of poets and statesmen, were extremely useful for painters in offering them a variety of models of eccentric personae. Stories from Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (1568) and Arnold Houbraken's *The Great Theatre of Dutch Painters* (1718-20) were increasingly translated and circulated during Morland's lifetime, and offered ready-made idiosyncratic artistic types, which British artists could use to invent their own exceptional personalities.⁵¹⁰ For example, like Morland, Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, known tellingly as 'Il Sodoma', was said to have kept all sorts of creatures as models in his house (for this reason named 'Noah's Ark'); an identical story to that told about Rosa of Tivoli.⁵¹¹

Orme's firm also played with the association between Morland's identity and the existing types of dissolute artistic personality fabricated for literary figures. In 1793, advertisements promoting the second opening of the Morland Gallery at Orme's shop highlighted the presence of "the celebrated Picture of the Death of the Poet Chatterton by Singleton".⁵¹² Among the one hundred and one paintings (mostly by Morland) contained in the catalogue of this exhibition at Orme's shop, only Henry Singleton's painting and canvases by Mather Brown were described at length, a hint of the

⁵¹⁰ See Karen Junod, "The Lives of the Old Masters: Reading, Writing, and Reviewing the Renaissance", *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 30, no. 1 (2008): pp. 67-82 for examples of British artists who shaped their artistic personae in the mould of Italian Old Masters. Many of the anecdotes and biographies narrated in Vasari's *Lives* and Houbraken's *The Great Theatre of Dutch Painters* appeared in English language texts in this period, although the books had not been yet translated in their entirety. See note 5 in the Introduction for further details on these publications.

⁵¹¹ On Old Masters who loved animals see Paul Barolsky, *A Brief History of the Artist from God to Picasso* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), pp. 61-62.

⁵¹² "Celebrated Morland Gallery", *True Briton*, 3 June 1793.

relevance they had had in shaping the character of this show.⁵¹³ I have suggested in Chapter 3 why Mather Brown's history paintings, focused on concepts of benevolence and Englishness that were also understood to inform Morland's paintings, gained importance in this exhibition. Singleton's painting instead depicted the tragic poet Thomas Chatterton, epitome of the artistic genius, who allegedly committed suicide because he was cruelly unrecognized by the literary establishment. The entry for this painting in the auction catalogue even included a quote from a "Poem on Epic Poetry" by William Hayley, describing with sentimentalism and morbid details the miserable scene of the poet's suicide in his cold and squalid attic. Chatterton was here said to have been "Stung to Madness by the World's Neglect"⁵¹⁴ and to have ended up hating Poetry for having reduced him to such a miserable state. By including this canvas in an exhibition of works by Morland, Orme suggested a parallel with Chatterton, as both artists seemed to be dedicated to the production of spontaneous and original works of the type neglected by the cultural establishment. Now lost, Singleton's painting of Chatterton was later published by Orme as a print in May 1794 (Fig. 112, British Museum). Here the body of the dead poet Thomas Chatterton lies on a straw bed, surrounded by his books, a phial of poison on the ground beside him, discovered by a woman and her child entering his garret. This was one of a series of stereotypical representations of writers leading a dissolute lifestyle with a visual archetype in Hogarth's *Distressed Poet* (Fig. 113, British Museum), a print from 1737 (after the original painting dating 1733-1735, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery) that summarized the impoverished conditions in which the iconic artist was forced to work. In his squalid attic, the artist is shown writing a poem on Poverty, while his wife mends his clothes and the milkmaid shouts at her, demanding payment.

Lifestyle manifestoes set in squalid attics of this sort were not unusual in association with contemporary literary figures but were a novelty for painters. In this and other aspects stands the modernity of Morland's last self-portrait, set in a cold and squalid

⁵¹³ A. T. P., ed., Daniel Orme, *A Catalogue of a Superb Selection of Paintings, Exhibiting by Mess. Orme & Co. at the Morland Gallery* (exhibition catalogue, London: 1793?), Catalogues Collection, 200.BM, National Art Library, London, p. 7.

⁵¹⁴ A. T. P., Orme, *Catalogue of a Superb Selection* (London: 1793?), National Art Library, London, p. 7.

attic which (as one of his obituaries would put it) “served him for every purpose”,⁵¹⁵ that is, both as a habitation and as a painter’s studio. *The Artist in His Studio with His Man Gibbs* (Fig. 114, c. 1802, Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery) stands out not only amongst the painter’s previous works in this genre but also amongst other contemporary self-portraits by British artists, for the unusual importance it gives to the setting of the painter’s activity. A dishevelled Morland is here surrounded by various objects alluding to both his art and his dissolute lifestyle. In Old Masters’ self-portraiture, the inclusion of a painter’s studio as a way to tackle problems of artistic identity and status and the challenges of representation was by no means unusual. Nevertheless, the visit to the artist’s painting room, a cliché of much self-portraiture, here seems to be reversed into a parody. The painter’s studio is only a squalid attic and the impenetrable eyes and shadowy expression which by now conventionally indicated a condition of artistic melancholy become a dumb look and a pathetic grimace, with Morland looking over his shoulder at us, showing no interest in greeting his guests.⁵¹⁶ Similarly, the high seriousness of art is diminished by its juxtaposition with cooking. Maulstick and palette in his hands, the artist at the easel is mirrored by his servant Gibbs holding pan and knife at the stove, as if painting was a mere means of fulfilling physical necessities. The parallel between painting tools and cooking equipment is reiterated through many little details, such as the chipped plate leaning on the fireplace which echoes the shape of Morland’s palette.

Yet the most novel elements in this self-portrait are the numerous details alluding to the artist’s lifestyle - particularly as they indicate this is a debauched one. Morland and Gibbs are wearing their coats, as if the artist could not afford to heat his painting room properly; a note “due 20” on the chimney-breast suggests he is in debt, and his outfit - consisting only of riding boots and a coat worn over his undergarments, a grubby knee-length shirt – speaks of poverty. While Gibbs’ cooking is fueled by kindling sticks and bellows, Morland’s painting seems to depend on less innocuous means, as is suggested by an empty bottle of gin and a discarded glass on the floor, as well as by his rosy

⁵¹⁵ “Poor George Morland”, *The Morning Post*, 4 May 1805.

⁵¹⁶ For examples of painters portraying themselves in a state of melancholy, see Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait*, 1658, Frick Collection, New York and Pieter Codde, *Portrait of a Man, Possibly a Self-Portrait of Pieter Codde*, c. 1630, Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

cheeks and slouched figure. The numerous paintings surrounding the artist indicate his renowned readiness to turn his hand to profit, and yet this self-mocking self-portrait suggests that it was insufficient to save him from poverty.

Morland's allusions to a dissipated lifestyle were an attempt at drawing attention by outraging the audience, a device he had employed before in his career. Apart from the iconic representations of genius poets starving in squalid attics seen above, this image also recalled a widely known moralizing print by Morland himself, *The Effects of Youthful Extravagance & Idleness*, published in 1789, which had used a bare attic interior as the proper setting for a morally reproachable lifestyle (Fig. 115, British Museum). This print describes a family – poor to the point of starvation if we judge from the skinniness of the dog at the man's feet – sharing the multipurpose space of a miserable cold garret. The moral was rammed home in a comparison with its pair, *The Fruits of Early Industry and Economy*, which shows a wealthy family in a refined interior, the deserved comfort of an industrious life (Fig. 116, British Museum).

Also, historical biographies of exceptional artists were again an important source for Morland's lifestyle as it is described in this canvas. In particular Morland was alluding to a form of prodigality recurrent in many Old Masters biographies published in English during the eighteenth century: for example, Philipp Peter Roos (Rosa of Tivoli) was known like Morland for his quick manner of painting, and for being often forced to work for ready cash because of his profligacy.⁵¹⁷ In 1805 William Collins's biography explicitly recognized the parallel between Morland and Rosa of Tivoli "not in merely what relates to their art, but in the most material circumstances of their lives".⁵¹⁸ Rosa of Tivoli's biography was therefore included in contemporary art historical texts which circulated widely, such as *The Gentleman's and Connoisseur's Dictionary of Painters* by Matthew Pilkington. The life of Rosa of Tivoli as it was recounted in this text is strikingly close to the biographical accounts which started to circulate on Morland just after his death. Rosa of Tivoli was also the son of an artist, and attributed since childhood with

⁵¹⁷ See Rudolf and Margot Wittkower, "The Pattern of Prodigality in the Low Countries and Artists' Conviviality", in *Born Under Saturn: The Character and Conduct of Artists; A Documented History from Antiquity to French Revolution* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963), pp. 215-21.

⁵¹⁸ Collins, *Memoirs of ... George Morland*, p. 182.

exceptional genius and imagination. He specialized in the depiction of landscape and cattle, which he sketched from nature. Marrying a beautiful woman, the daughter of the painter Giacinto Brandi, did not save him from his vices. He was constantly in debt for his lack of commercial know-how, while people around him were able to make a fortune thanks to his art.⁵¹⁹ Another famous artist said to have led a dissolute life was Perino Del Vaga, allegedly drawn into debt by alcohol and carnal pleasures, and said to have accepted low prices for his art, so that he worked incessantly in exchange for little money.⁵²⁰ Also, Adriaen Brouwer was described as a genius brought to poverty by his dissolute habits.⁵²¹ In 1817 Joseph Farington recounted a conversation with an unidentified acquaintance, expressing very clearly the modern idea of a conflation between artists and artworks, and equating Morland's dissolute lifestyle with that of Brouwer: "a want of integrity. ... was a draw back upon the pleasure derived from seeing the works of an artist however excellent. It was the case with *Morland*, & to look back, the same with *Brouwer (sic)*".⁵²²

Furthermore, in *The Artist in His Studio with His Man Gibbs* the modern idea of the painter's art as an expression of his life is taken to its extremes. The studio is dotted with objects alluding to the genres that had made Morland's name in the London art world. He was especially famous for his rural subjects; here finished and unfinished landscapes hang or lean on the wall behind him, and a cottage scene is placed on his easel. Various sketches are drawn on the wall over the chimney-breast, arranged in the same way as in a typical sheet from one of his drawing books. Even his sporting subjects are alluded to, since the artist is wearing sportsman's boots, another pair of which is leaning on the wall beside the fireplace. The two dogs stand for Morland's skills as animal painter, also reiterated by the farmyard painting hung next to the window, and the sketches of animals situated above the stove. Morland's signature pig appears in this canvas both pictorially - among the drawings on the fireplace wall, and in the

⁵¹⁹ Rev. M. Pilkington, *The Gentleman's and Connoisseur's Dictionary of Painters. Containing a Complete Collection, and Account, of the Most Distinguished Artists* (London: T. Cadell, 1770), pp. 523-524.

⁵²⁰ Aglionby, *Painting Illustrated in Three Dialogues (sic)*, pp. 350-51; De Bie, *The True Effigies*, p. 15.

⁵²¹ See De Piles, *The Art of Painting, and the Lives of the Painters ... To Which Is Added, an Essay Towards an English-School* (London: F. Nutt, 1706), pp. 306-307.

⁵²² Joseph Farington, 8 April 1817, in *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, eds. Kenneth Garlick, Angus Macintyre, and Kathryn Cave, 17 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978-1984), 14:4998.

farmyard painting to the artist's right - and through textual form, being alluded to in the note 'Hog Lane' written on the stove.

It is no coincidence that Morland's activity of painting in this canvas is mirrored by Gibbs cooking sausages: figuratively speaking, pork had filled Morland's belly throughout his career. For contemporary London audiences, the note 'Hog Lane' on the chimney-breast would have carried another more direct association. Hog Lane was a street of London situated near Westminster between the parishes of St. Martin in the Fields and St. Giles in the Fields.⁵²³ An ancient highway, it had a low reputation by the eighteenth century: in 1720, John Styrpe described it as an area "not very well built or inhabited".⁵²⁴ It was distinguished not only for its poor inhabitants, but also for the numerous pubs distributed along it, and hence, presumably, for the episodes of drunkenness which took place there.⁵²⁵ The street's association with debauched behaviors and pub life was ratified in art by William Hogarth, who employed it as the setting for *Noon* (Fig. 117, British Museum), one of four images from the series *The Four Times of Day*, published in 1738. By alluding to this 'Hog Lane' of dubious fame, Morland was further reinforcing the narrative of a dissipated and alcoholic lifestyle which informed his self-portrait.

Furthermore *The Artist in His Studio with His Man Gibbs* (Fig. 114) had a pair in Morland's now-lost "Sir Joshua Reynolds's Kitchen in Leicester Square, with a distant View of St. Martin's Church",⁵²⁶ which appeared as its pendant and previous lot in John Graham's sale of the painter's artworks on 4 May 1805, and which would have reinforced many of the canvas' meanings. This pairing would have compared Morland's persona with that of the first President of the Royal Academy in a wholly different fashion to that offered by Morland's father in the portrait painted in 1779 (Fig. 96, if

⁵²³ "Greek Street Area: Portland Estate, Crown Street, West side", in *Survey of London: Volumes 33 and 34, St Anne Soho*, ed. F. H. W. Sheppard (London: London County Council, 1966), p. 192, *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vols33-4/p192>.

⁵²⁴ John Styrpe, *A Survey of the City of Westminster*, book 4 of *A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster*, 2 vols. (London: A. Churchill, J. Knapton, R. Knaplock, J. Walthop, E. Horne, B. Tooke, D. Midwinter, B. Cowse, R. Robinson, and T. Ward, 1720), 2:87.

⁵²⁵ "Greek Street Area", in *Survey of London*, p. 192.

⁵²⁶ Messrs. Robins, John Graham (4 May 1805), *Getty Provenance Index® databases* (Lot 0105 from Sale Catalog Br-331, indexed transcription, notes by B. Fredericksen).

that was indeed intended as a portrait of his son). The correspondence between the artistic paraphernalia and the cooking equipment evokes much more earthly realities. If Morland's father had alluded to the possibility of his sitter being equated with Reynolds for his imaginative or perceptive genius, here the comparison is forged on the less sublime grounds of the belly, suggesting that even a famous and renowned artist like Reynolds worked in order to sustain his physical necessities. But while Reynolds had made a fortune in the lucrative genre of portraiture, Morland here seems to be disinterested in making art for money beyond that required to buy sausages. In this sense, the painting appears also as a statement of survival, in which Morland presents himself at work on his favourite subjects, able to sustain himself even in the bleakest conditions of life. He is shown working intensely on paintings of the kind neglected by the artistic establishment. Despite and because of his idiosyncrasies, Morland appears here as a heroic and proud painter ready to sacrifice his wellbeing, and even his life, for his art. A noose hanging from a nail over the fireplace perhaps alludes to suicide, given a heroicising spin by contemporary images of Chatterton's death.

The pairing would have also added further substance to the self-portrait's narrative of artistic fall. Allegedly Morland's father had once lived in the Leicester Square house later occupied by Reynolds, to whom he sold it in 1760 shortly before being declared bankrupt.⁵²⁷ The kitchen depicted in the pendant would have been that of Morland's childhood home had his father's fortunes not failed. The elegance possessed by even the humblest room in Reynolds' famously lavish house would likely have stood in contrast to the bare walls and rough wooden floor of Morland's studio. Contemporary viewers of the pendant pair would have immediately recognized the morality tale, analogous to images such as *The Effects of Youthful Extravagance & Idleness* and *The Fruits of Early Industry and Economy* (Fig. 115 and Fig. 116). And yet the comparison also reinforced the idea of Morland's creativity and power of invention, since here the artist - deprived of the inspiration offered by Reynolds's view of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, indeed turning his back to his own garret window - is still able to produce works

⁵²⁷ As I suggested in note 461, this story is unconfirmed, but we can presume that Morland and his collaborators circulated this anecdote to give substance to a romanticized narrative of artistic fall.

of art by relying on his imagination, placed as he is within his urban confines, far from the rural landscapes shown in his paintings.

The objects included in Morland's painting room speak to modern ideas of art as the expression of a painter's personality, and unravel the narrative of a new type of artistic lifestyle, as much a careful fabrication as the canvas itself. Whether made up, real, or both, the dissolute lifestyle performed by Morland in this self-portrait was a functional creation in the art world in which he was operating. The richness of detail and the high finish of this painting reveal the attention paid by Morland in its realization, and make it unlikely that he painted it while suffering from the "disorder in his right arm, the effect of intemperance"⁵²⁸ attributed to him by Joseph Farington in the last years of his life. Pierre Bourdieu argued that the bohemian artistic personality was an invention made by 'cultural producers' through performative statements aimed at promoting the existence of a mythic social reality that they were actually still in the process of creating.⁵²⁹ By drawing on multiple sources, as well as by playing with socially-acceptable moral values, academic rules on decorum, and the transgression of conventional artistic identities of the kind embodied by Reynolds, Morland offered a modern parable of artistic fall, to the profit of his own public profile. The canvas is rich in elements that mock the ideas of art and artist: the two caricature profiles of middle-aged men with large noses sketched on the studio's wall, to be seen as equivalents to the odd figures of Morland and his servant; the conventional melancholic features of the artist, here exaggerated; the parallel between painting tools and cooking equipment, which transforms art into a gross material activity. And by way of parody, Morland turns to the viewer, revealing himself as author of all this, his own mythology.

Of all Morland's portraits and self-portraits, none influenced the myth of Morland and his posthumous biographical constructions as much as this one, which was immediately recognized as the visual testament of his life and career. On 30 October 1804 a long obituary appeared in *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, announcing the death of the celebrated

⁵²⁸ Farington, 26 March 1797, in *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, 3:806.

⁵²⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), p. 56.

George Morland “whose uncommon genius as an artist did honour to his country, and will forever place him in the first class of painters”. The only painting mentioned was “a most admirable picture” of “His garret”. The article also reported that his “eccentricity ... led him into constant difficulties; he was immoderately given to drinking, which ruined his constitution, and accelerated his death” and that he “had often large sums offered to paint for foreigners and persons of distinction; but he ... would paint for none who did not hit upon his peculiar humour”.⁵³⁰ An article promoting John Graham’s sale commented on the presence of this self-portrait: “The peculiar interest of this singularly important picture, which the artist has left behind him as a lasting memorial of his character and manner of life, consists in displaying at one view, both his humility and humour. He was wholly destitute of pride, ambitious only of that fame he so justly acquired in faithfully copying nature”.⁵³¹ The canvas was auctioned for £65, one of the five highest bids of this sale (all made for paintings by Morland), a fact which reflected the enormous popularity enjoyed by the artist’s personality shortly after his death.⁵³² Stories associating this self-portrait with specific biographical facts of Morland’s life, with descriptions of his eccentric personality, or which employed it as an historical document without discussing how much of it was actually construed, served to multiply and reinforce the credibility of the myth of Morland as a dissolute artist. For example in his *The Life of George Morland*, published in 1805, George Dawe reported the canvas to have been painted in the lodgings of Morland’s wife in Paddington, before he was released by the King’s Bench.⁵³³ As recently as 1980, John Barrell employed it as the irrefutable evidence of “the price Morland ... paid for ... independence”.⁵³⁴

Images of Morland started to circulate much more extensively through the various prints published in the years immediately after the artist’s death, which determined an exceptional increase in his public celebrity. Morland’s posthumous portraits mirror the passages through which his visual identity as a modern artist had been created during his lifetime; they replicate the same dichotomy seen in the portraits dating before his

⁵³⁰ “Died”, *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, 30 October 1804.

⁵³¹ *The Morning Post*, 4 May 1805.

⁵³² Robins, Graham (4 May 1805), *Getty Provenance Index®* databases.

⁵³³ Dawe, *The Life of George Morland*, p. 88.

⁵³⁴ John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 97.

death. The more traditional artistic identity of a polite and refined individual, whose exceptionality resides mostly in his interiority, here begins similarly to be juxtaposed with a new type of artist, featuring an exterior exceptionality consisting in an unconventional lifestyle, an identity conflated with his art and involving an element of self-parody. The production of these posthumous images coincides and intersects with the publication of four early biographies on Morland, which appeared on the market between 1805 and 1807, and hence here we could argue a reciprocal influence between visual and literary depictions. Literary accounts of Morland's unconventional life – not only the four detailed biographical sketches, but also the shorter anecdotes that appeared in newspapers – appeared after the painter's death.⁵³⁵ With the exception of Farington, whose earlier anecdotes about Morland's disorderly lifestyle are symptomatic of the author's social and political conservatism, no other literary source describes him as an unruly personality before his death.⁵³⁶ It is nevertheless likely that Morland himself and his collaborators had started to circulate these stories in the London art scene much earlier than this date, in order to build a unique artistic identity that could serve the artist's distinction and appeal. Certainly, the associations between Morland's persona and that of idiosyncratic Old Masters or dissolute writers were actively encouraged by them when promoting the painter's works.

The first portrait of Morland to appear on the market after his death was by John Raphael Smith, who published his earlier painting of the artist (Fig. 118, 1792, National Portrait Gallery, London) just three months later. Almost contemporary with John Raphael Smith's exhibition of Morland's rustic and coastal scenes, which took place in his shop one year later, it is possible that this canvas was hung in this exhibition and

⁵³⁵ Curious stories about Morland's life began being published in newspapers after the artist's death: his rapidity in producing and retouching a painting for a pawnbroker during his stay in the King's Bench in exchange for a small sum of money; his offer to paint the sign of a bull for an alehouse on his road to Canterbury, where he had found himself penniless and needing something to drink and eat; the police search of his house in Hackney to find proof of his having forged banknotes, concluding with an apology and £20 note from the director of the bank. See "Friday's Post", *The Ipswich Journal*, 12 January 1805; "Anecdote of the celebrated late George Morland", *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 6 November 1804.

⁵³⁶ Farington's first negative comments on Morland's unconventional lifestyle date from 1797, when he wrote: "Morland has a venereal taint in his blood – which has certainly impaired his mind – it has broken out in different parts"; in 1804 he also wrote that, "Sir George [Beaumont] had today been told by Ward of Newman st. many particulars of the wretched depravity of the late George Morland, who married Ward's sister". In other passages Farington associated Morland with George Henry Harlow and Adriaen Brouwer, two painters seen as having negative morals. See Farington, 10 December, and 18 October 1797, in *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, 3:941, 907-908.

that the image was therefore well-known.⁵³⁷ As with the first type of portraits and self-portraits of the artist discussed above, this portrayal complies with the conventions of depicting a polite and refined professional artist. Morland is therefore shown at his easel, maulstick and palette in one hand, brush in the other one, and seated in a dark room whose refinement is suggested by the green leather armchair. The painter seems to have been interrupted by the viewer, to whom his face is turned even if the brush in his hand is still at the canvas, which features one of his marine scenes, depicting a fisherman standing in a boat. The artist is elegantly dressed in a brown jacket with high collar, a bright red waistcoat, and an immaculate and elaborately arranged necktie, his outfit completed by an element which may indicate his proximity with the rural, a pair of green breeches. Morland's intense dark eyes, his eyebrows, his lips curved in the hint of a smile, the lively complexion of his cheeks, all suggest he is a man of feeling. His hair is unpowdered and cut in a crop that could hint at his radical political views. All these elements are reproduced in the engraving published in 1805 (Fig. 119, British Museum), except that here the painter is seen from slightly further away and that the lack of colours reduces the liveliness of his facial features.

In the same year William Ward (Morland's brother-in-law and the engraver of many of his early works) produced his mezzotint after Robert Muller's earlier painted portrait, discussed above (Fig. 108). This image, which was published by John Harris, differs only slightly from John Raphael Smith's: again, Morland's elegant outfit and lively facial expression speak of refinement and sensibility, and the cropped and unpowdered hair could be read as a sign of his radical sympathies. Nevertheless, in Ward's mezzotint the artist seems to be slightly heavier and older than in Smith's engraved portrait, in line with Smith's tendency to prettify paintings when translating them in engraving, in order to make them more appealing to buyers.⁵³⁸ Furthermore, the painter in Ward's image appears closer to us drawing a scene of rustic low life. It is perhaps significant that the publishers of these two posthumous portraits of Morland, which similarly present him as a polite artist, even if engaged in the depiction of low subjects, were the painter's

⁵³⁷ However, this portrait is not mentioned in newspaper articles promoting Smith's solo exhibition of Morland paintings, or in his catalogue including those to be engraved by subscription.

⁵³⁸ See Ellen G. D'Oench on Smith's translation of Morland's paintings and this engraved portrait in *"Copper into Gold"*, pp. 157-163.

closest collaborators and friends. John Raphael Smith was the organizer of the only one among the private exhibitions of Morland's works to have seen the artist's involvement, while John Harris was the publisher of the sole drawing book conceived by the artist and not by artistic agents merely speculating on his successful 'brand'. By commemorating their colleague and friend through a conventional portrayal which did not allude to eccentric habits such as extreme dissipation or living with animals, these images suggest that Morland's supposed eccentricities were at least an exaggeration of reality.

In 1806, William Ward also engraved another portrait of Morland as a polite artist (Fig. 120, British Museum), this time in collaboration with two other people from among the deceased artist's friends: the picture dealer and writer William Collins, who published the print, and his eponymous son, then at the beginning of his artistic career. Collins Sr was the author of the first biography on Morland, the first edition of which had been published one year earlier. In it, Collins claimed to have been a close acquaintance of the artist and that, as one of Morland's last assistants, his son had been profoundly affected by news of his master's death.⁵³⁹ This biography indeed described Morland as having been regarded fondly by his friends and pupils, and as a man whose death was therefore a prompt for expressions of profound sentiment. The portrait was not inserted in the first edition of Collins' biography of Morland, which appeared as the second volume of a novel in three books entitled *Memoirs of a Picture*. This was probably a ploy to get ahead of rival authors, by interrupting the novel he was writing to include a sketch of Morland's life; in his haste to publish a biography before others could do so, Collins probably had no time to furnish the first edition with an engraved portrait. To publish a biography within the compass of a novel was very uncommon in that period, and it is telling that the closest contemporary example was Herbert Croft's *Love and Madness*, published in 1780, which by its third edition in 1800 had come to include much biographical information on the life of Thomas Chatterton.⁵⁴⁰ Since Morland's identity had been forged during his lifetime through parallels with this paradigmatic figure of genius, Croft's book may have been Collins' model for both

⁵³⁹ Collins, *Memoirs of ... George Morland*, pp. 136, 144, 147, 154.

⁵⁴⁰ See Herbert Croft, *Chatterton and "Love and Madness"* (London: J. Wright, 1800).

structure and content (to which, like Morland's other early biographies, this chapter will return).

Yet, in a following edition of this biography, issued in 1806 by the same publisher this time as an independent book, the portrait was inserted opposite the frontispiece.⁵⁴¹ Later advertisements promoting the publication explicitly referred to this "striking likeness" of the artist "engraved by his brother-in-law, W. Ward",⁵⁴² appealing to a public desire to know what celebrities looked like. In this half-length portrait, we see Morland turned to the right, his gaze nevertheless turned to the viewer, in a three-quarter pose expressive of independence and with a canvas portraying a coastal scene visible on an easel to the left. Morland is shown wearing a fashionable large-collared coat over a striped waistcoat and an elegant neckcloth in a tidy bow. As in the previous two portraits, his hair is unpowdered and loose, cut in a 'radical' crop. Below the image there is a commemorative inscription celebrating the deceased artist with these words: "Pure Natures darling Son, of Arts the pride,/Thy Works the test of ages, shall abide": Collins suggested that Morland's figure will forever be revered, and that his art will be able to transcend time and changes in taste. The idea that Morland deserved a permanent place in British art history indeed permeated Collins' biography, as we shall see later.

A more explicitly memorialising portrait is that engraved by K. Mackenzie and published by James Cundee in 1805 (Fig. 121, National Portrait Gallery, London). The inscription states that the (now lost) original drawing by Sophia Jones was produced in 1792.⁵⁴³ The rest of the print's composition explicitly inserts Morland into an afterlife dimension and is likely to have been drawn only after his death. In 1805, Cundee issued three prints after Morland's works, two of them engraved by John Scott, and all lettered in a similar

⁵⁴¹ The two editions mentioned are: William Collins, *Memoirs of That Celebrated, Original and Eccentric Genius the Late George Morland, an Eminent Painter*, Vol. 2 of *Memoirs of a Picture: Containing the Adventures of Many Conspicuous Characters; Including a Genuine Biographical Sketch of That Celebrated Original and Eccentric Genius, the Late Mr. George Morland*, 3 Vols. (London: H. D. Symonds, 1805); and William Collins, *Memoirs of That Celebrated, Original and Eccentric Genius the Late George Morland, an Eminent Painter* (London: H. D. Symonds, 1806).

⁵⁴² See *The Morning Post*, 30 September 1808.

⁵⁴³ Sophia Jones exhibited miniature portraits and figure subjects at the Royal Academy under her own name, and then as 'Mrs S Jones', between 1789 and 1812. In Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts*, p. 279.

style. These prints, together with the engraved portrait, are likely to have been conceived for insertion within the first edition of John Hassell's *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Morland*, which was published by the same firm only a few weeks later, at the end of November 1805.⁵⁴⁴ In the subsequent edition of Hassell's text, published in 1806, the three prints were inserted within the text, and the engraved portrait was set on the inside cover, facing the title-page featuring a view which seems almost to continue the image on the opposite side (Fig. 122).⁵⁴⁵ The engraved image of the artist can be better described as the portrait of a portrait: a canvas depicting the bust of George Morland rests on an easel standing before a mountain landscape. From within the fictive portrait, Morland glances at the viewer in a confident attitude, elegantly dressed with a white-linen cravat. Morland's outfit and short, unpowdered haircut recall other conventional images of him, especially his self-portrait dated 1795. On the one hand, this portrait preserves Morland's identity as a polite and refined artist, while on the other it displaces it in a rural landscape similarly to what seen before in Thomas Hand's oil portrait and in the title-page of John Harris's drawing books. However, here the landscape in which the artist's portrait is set is very different from Morland's typical works in this genre, especially in the rocky mountains, which convey the sublime and heroic associations appropriate for the celebration of a great artistic personality. Indeed, these mountains recall the work of Salvator Rosa, with whom Morland had often been compared for his similarly unconventional personality. On the left, a shepherd is seen in the distance walking his cattle along a path, down from the mountains. In the left foreground, alongside the maulstick, brushes and palette which allude to Morland's profession as a painter, lie a flute, panpipe and staff which serve to endow him simultaneously with the pastoral attributes of a shepherd (like a modern Giotto), and thereby indicate his being in touch with nature. Above, the highly mediated form of a portrait-within-a-portrait highlights the dual absence of the dead artist, while the fictive canvas seems to emanate rays of light, as if symbolising the fame and immortal reputation reached by the artist. The mournful willow tree and the passage of time suggested by its branches covering the portrait further indicates Morland's

⁵⁴⁴ This can be inferred from the illustrative content of the following editions, the close time-range between the publication of the engravings and that of the book, and the advertisements promoting Hassell's biography in November 1805, which draw attention to the inclusion of engravings in the text. No copy of the first edition of Hassell's book exists.

⁵⁴⁵ See John Hassell, *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Morland; with Critical and Descriptive Observations on the Whole of His Works Hitherto before the Public* (London: Albion Press, 1806).

posthumous consecration here as an artistic genius. In contrast with the mountain landscape within which Morland's portrait is set, the rural landscape illustrated in the following page, showing a cow seen from behind, lying on the grass in the foreground before a leafy tree which frames the composition, and a cottage visible in the distance among vegetation, appears closer to a typical Morland work. These two pages therefore offer us a contrast between the rocky mountainous landscape typically associated with genius and with the rigours of ascending to fame, and the kind of depiction which Morland had produced in order to get there: sketched, 'natural', describing no particular incident, yet full of artfulness. It's therefore fitting that the vignette view after Morland works hard to maintain both his distinctive calligraphic style and the crayon effect of drawing, while the frontispiece is a line engraving in a quite different style, unlike anything by Morland.

The posthumous portraits considered above describe Morland as a professional artist, seen at work or with the trappings of his profession, possessing politeness and refinement, with a suggestion of his radical political tendencies. In these portraits, Morland's exceptional interior quality of imagination is alluded either in the form of the artist's engagement with genre and landscape subjects (Fig. 119, Fig. 108 and Fig. 120) - suggestive of his creative and original engagement with nature - or through the reference to exceptional figures of Old Masters (Fig. 121, which evoked Salvator Rosa and Giotto). However, not all the posthumous portraits of Morland responded to the somewhat conventional type of artistic personality developed for him by some in the circle of his friends. As we shall see, other portraits mirrored the more unconventional characteristics with which the artist and his collaborators had associated his persona during the later part of his career. These images seem to comply with the growing cult of celebrity, as if Morland's personality was of interest to the public, less by virtue of his art than for his exceptional and unruly persona, and they represent the development of new artistic identities in Britain around 1800.

A rather different portrait by Sophia Jones (Fig. 123, 1805, National Portrait Gallery, London) is drawn in a medium (black pencil and chalk with touches of red) evocative of direct experience; Sophia Jones was an occasional neighbour of Morland, who

intermittently stayed in the area (between the Strand and Piccadilly) in which she lived. On one level, Jones's portrait simply reverses the direction of George Morland's self-portrait from 1795; apart from the direction of his pose, the sitter's cropped hair and elegant clothes remain the same. However, this reversal also involves Morland's personality, especially as evidenced by his facial expression. The gaze that in Morland's self-portrait was direct, honest and self-confident, here conveys a certain unease evident in the more pronounced eye-sockets, the different directions taken by his pupils, one veering to the left and the other challenging the viewer, and especially in the raised left eyebrow. Meanwhile Morland's lips are pursed, turning at either end into a kind of grimace. In both portraits, the sitter is set in empty space, but while Morland confidently occupies the centre of the image in his self-portrait, in Jones's drawing he is set substantially off-centre, leaving a large area of empty space to the right. In general, Morland looks crumpled, worn and dishevelled here, suggesting the effects of a life of dissolution and excess.

Just three months after the artist's demise, Edward Orme, younger brother of the Daniel Orme who had promoted a Morland Gallery in his shop in the years 1792-3, published a portrait of Morland (Fig. 124, British Museum) which also plays on Morland's reputed appetites and which, like Fig. 120 and Fig. 121, was employed to illustrate one of the earliest biographies of the artist, in this case Francis William Blagdon's *Authentic Memoirs of the late George Morland*, published by Orme in 1806.⁵⁴⁶ Allegedly after a self-portrait in the collection of his major collector, the auctioneer John Graham, this image seems more likely to have been obtained by modifying an authentic drawing by Morland to include a portrait of the artist himself (possibly based on Fig. 114). Indeed, the treatment of the artist's head is completely different from that of the rural setting, which was engraved by Thomas Vivares in the technique of soft-ground etching and crayon manner suited to the reproduction of the Morland drawing on which it is purportedly based. The painter is here shown sitting on a bench, next to a small rustic round table. His head turned to glance at the viewer, he rests one hand on his stick while with the other he holds the pipe to which he has presumably turned

⁵⁴⁶ John Roland Abbey, *Life in England in Aquatint and Lithography, 1770–1860: Architecture, Drawing Books, Art Collections, Magazines, Navy and Army, Panoramas, Etc. from the Library of J. R. Abbey; A Bibliographical Catalogue* (London: Curwen Press, 1953), p. 145, no. 208.1.

during a pause in sketching from nature; a notebook and porte-crayon lie abandoned on the table beside his hat and a small flagon which – like the larger mug behind him – presumably contains beer purchased at the Bell inn to the left, itself like the pig, the fellow pub-goer and the rustic setting beyond, a characteristic feature of his works.

As on the cover of its drawing book (Fig. 111), Orme's firm again played on Morland's association with pigs in this portrait, the animals around which he had built a unique artistic career and persona, by now recognizable as his brand. In so doing, Orme introduced an element of parody, recalling a similarly comical image of the artist, *George Morland in His Studio with His Man Gibbs* (Fig. 114), which it resembles in its depiction of the artist's face and in its composition. There the artist was seated and seen in profile on the right side of the picture. The two dogs in Morland's self-portrait are echoed by the dog and the pig in this print, and both the images present an array of scattered objects, some of which are similar (for example the small table with Morland's tools in figure 114, enlarged to become the table on which he is sketching in the print), some of which have been displaced (the palette which appears in the artist's hand in the painting, in the print leans unused against the bench). However, unlike the miserably stooped figure of his self-portrait, Morland appears in Orme's image to sit upright in a proud stance. Also Morland's face has been prettified, a confident and penetrating gaze taking the place of the comical expression of disappointment it had assumed in the painting. In his studio, Morland had been wearing a coat directly over his undergarments, testament to his poor financial conditions. In the print, his outfit is completed by sportsman's boots and trousers, resembling Hand's portrait of the artist on horseback or that as artist in the field on the cover for Harris' drawing book. But the main difference between the two portrayals lies in the environment of which the artist is part. Morland's self-portrait was set in his attic with rural landscapes leaning or hanging on the walls; in Orme's print, the artist has virtually entered one of these scenes, completely conflated with his typical subject matter.

These comical images are perhaps the most suitable point to end a narration of Morland's artistic identity as it was constructed through his portraits and self-portraits. Indeed, the almost grotesque persona that the artist assumes in his final self-portrait,

echoed in Orme's print, gestures towards the informed viewer, revealing itself to be a carefully fabricated fiction. The eccentric features that likened Morland's identity to existing types of artists are here exaggerated to the point of parody, the melancholic expression turning into a comical grudge in the painting, and the proud attitude of the artist drawing outdoors in the print made ludicrous by his juxtaposition with a pig. In both images, the artist is described as the author of his own myth.

In conclusion, Morland's portraits and self-portraits narrate the transition from an orthodox idea of the artist towards modern and unconventional artistic identities. These were shaped especially on the example of the eccentric lives of Old Masters, which at that time fascinated British readers and played a determining role in the emergence of the discourse on genius. Morland's portraits and self-portraits associating him with his typical subjects embody the modern idea of art as a direct expression of an artist's interiority, in a context where artist and artworks were increasingly conflated. Triggered by these visual examples of a modern artistic identity, the myth of Morland spread posthumously, especially through his four biographies, published just after his death. These literary sources, exceptionally numerous and rich in details for the time, soon eclipsed the role played by Morland's portraits and self-portraits in the construction of his public profile of unconventional artist. Perhaps this myth was Morland's most successful artwork, an enduring narration that survives.

Throughout this chapter and indeed throughout the whole thesis, the four biographies that were published over the three years after Morland's death (William Collins, *Memoirs of a painter*, Vol. 2 of *Memoirs of a Picture*, 1805; Francis William Blagdon, *Authentic Memoirs of the Late George Morland*, 1806; John Hassell, *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Morland*, 1806; George Dawe, *The Life of George Morland*, 1807) have only been alluded to. When mentioned, these books have been considered as a block; and indeed they can be recognized as akin in terms of portraying Morland as an exceptional and idiosyncratic character and of narrating the artist's existence through a series of curious and fictional anecdotes. On the one side this section, which proposes a comparative analysis of these texts, offers more ground for such affinity, by briefly suggesting how these books can be seen to have had a common source in the literary

genre of Old Master biography. This perspective is new inasmuch as previous studies on Morland's early biographical constructions have only suggested this dimension, but then have exclusively focused on these books' borrowings from the genres of novel and literary biography.⁵⁴⁷ Furthermore, the use made by Morland of art-historical sources for his visual construction of a modern artistic persona illustrated in this chapter finds a necessary conclusion in this section. Morland's myth as it was invented by the artist and his collaborators through portraits and self-portraits (as well as through other strategies enacted in the artistic field) was later perpetuated and enriched in literary accounts through (among the other sources of inspiration) a similar use of art-historical sources.

On the other hand, this section serves to problematize the simplified reading I have offered of these books, showing them as actually corresponding to very different position-takings within a modern artistic field. Morland's early biographical constructions can be read as 'weapons' in the struggles among agents (their authors) preoccupied to impose different visions of the art world, either by reasserting existing rules for legitimate belonging of works within the aesthetic realm or for proposing new, alternative ones. In this sense, these books can be seen in certain cases to express antithetical positions and to represent very diverse contributions not only to the construction and survival of the artist's myth, but also to the definition of the characters of the emerging British School as well as to the shaping of modern concepts of 'art' and 'artist' more generally. While the thesis' limitations allow only it to begin this ambitious examination of Morland's early biographies, this topic has scope for future research.

Various anecdotes and narrative strategies which recur in Morland's early biographies can be easily spotted as tropes and clichés typically found in Old Masters' lives. An anecdote frequently recounted in Morland's early biographical constructions corresponded to one of the most ancient clichés in the art-historical repertoire. In Blagdon's biography, Morland is said to use his artistic skills to deceive people around him: he drew spiders on his servants' bedroom walls or beetles on the floor so

⁵⁴⁷ Junod, *Writing the Lives*, pp. 176-200.

convincingly mimetic that his father would attempt to crush them.⁵⁴⁸ Dawe similarly recounts stories of Morland's hyper-realistic drawings: he would depict Henry Robert's precious crayons on the floor, so that the older painter would stoop to pick them up.⁵⁴⁹ Morland's purported mimetic skills are strongly reminiscent of those showed by Parrhasius and Zeuxis during the painting contest originally narrated by the elder Pliny and reported in many eighteenth-century British art-historical texts.⁵⁵⁰ To decide once and for all who was to be considered the best painter of ancient Greece, Parrhasius and Zeuxis 'duelled' to produce the best fresco, working on walls invisible to each other. The first work to be uncovered was Zeuxis's: behind his curtain appeared a fresco depicting a bowl of grapes, so realistically rendered to immediately attract a bird. But the outcome of the contest became clear when Zeuxis, trying to draw his rival's curtain, discovered the cloth itself to be Parrhasius's exceptional *trompe-l'œil*, so convincingly mimetic to have deceived even his fellow painter. In another passage from Dawe's biography, Morland is said to have drawn animals' heads by copying real ones which he bought at the butcher. Having once purchased an ox's head and forgotten about it: "the head became so putrid that the house was filled with the smell".⁵⁵¹ A similar story was recounted about Leonardo in William Aglionby's *Painting Illustrated in Three Dialogues (sic)* (1686). In order to invent the physiognomy of a fabulous animal for an artwork, Leonardo gathered in his room corpses of serpents, lizards, crickets, butterflies and grasshoppers; although "the stink of those dead creatures was intollerable (*sic*) in the room", it was apparently "not at all perceived by Leonardo", such was his engrossment in the work.⁵⁵²

As anticipated above, apart from similarly drawing on Old Masters' lives and describing Morland's life as that of an eccentric character, Morland's early biographical constructions are nevertheless very different books in terms of format, structure and style as well in terms of their approach to the artist and his production. While three of them are more sustained accounts, made up of various chapters or sections (Collins,

⁵⁴⁸ Francis William Blagdon, *Authentic Memoirs of the Late George Morland* (London: Barnard and Sultzter, 1806), p. 5.

⁵⁴⁹ Dawe, *The Life of George Morland*, p. 2.

⁵⁵⁰ De Piles, *The Art of Painting*, p. 68.

⁵⁵¹ Dawe, *The Life of George Morland*, p. 68.

⁵⁵² Aglionby, *Painting Illustrated in Three Dialogues (sic)*, p. 167.

Hassell, Dawe), Blagdon's text only consists of fifteen pages, merely introductory to the twenty-one engraved plates, its folio format especially conceived for the enjoyment of the illustrations. The compiler - author of many travelogues and a journalist for the *Morning Post* - also distinguished himself from the other Morland biographers in not claiming an acquaintance with the painter, a point on which the others instead profusely insisted, arguably to testify for the authenticity of their accounts and improve their books' sales.⁵⁵³ William Collins's claims have already been described; John Hassell, watercolour painter, engraver and drawing master, as well as the author of both illustrated travel books and texts teaching how to paint and draw, claimed to be one of the few colleagues that Morland would allow by his easel.⁵⁵⁴ Finally, George Dawe, who was to become a successful history and portrait painter, seemed to owe his own name to Morland, his father (also an artist) having been Henry Robert's pupil.⁵⁵⁵

While Collins's and Blagdon's books primarily focus on recounting Morland's eccentric life, Hassell's and Dawe's texts dedicate much more space to the discussion of his art, although from antithetical aesthetic positions. After the narration of Morland's life, Collins' book includes an appendix structured in four parts: a discussion of Morland's followers; another on the definition of genius; a comparison of Morland's biography with those of Teniers, Brouwer and Rosa of Tivoli, and a digression on the 'four ages of painting' (meaning the periods when art was thought to have excelled in the past, corresponding to ancient Greece, Augustan Rome, Italian Renaissance and eighteenth-century France, with the inclusion of an intermediate phase consisting in seventeenth-century Netherlandish genre and landscape painting). Collins's section on the 'four ages of painting' follows the preceding ones logically, although the link among the four parts is implicit. After examining Morland's followers and recognizing no heir to his skills among them, Collins goes on to speak of artistic talent as natural rather than acquired, thereby offering grounds for the recognition of Morland as a genius; subsequently,

⁵⁵³ Pollard, A. F., "Blagdon, Francis William (bap. 1777, d. 1819)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-2554>.

⁵⁵⁴ Cust, L. H., "Hassell, John (1767-1825)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-12556>.

⁵⁵⁵ Andreeva, G., "Dawe, George (1781-1829)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-7328>.

analogies are drawn between Morland and exemplary figures of Old Masters, in this period largely assimilated into discourses on genius. The digression on the 'four ages of painting' therefore can be seen to allude to the emergence of a fifth artistic era which would now blossom in Britain, and of which Morland is to be considered one of the first examples. The coherent character here envisioned for the emerging British school consisted in the naturalistic style embraced by Morland, heir to the landscape and genre tradition of the seventeenth-century Netherlandish school.

This idea of Morland as the acme of a Vasarian narrative of artistic achievement is articulated much more profusely and explicitly in Hassell's text. Following the narration of the artist's life, this text includes a section with individual descriptions of works by Morland, which the author has examined through their printed reproduction (unlike lists of this type in the other biographies, these commentaries are not drawn from previous exhibition or sale catalogues). Although Hassell's preface speaks of his writing style as suited to an enlarged audience, his language betrays ambition in its frequent recourse to Latin quotes and knowledgeable references to art-historical examples. Like Collins, although in a more elaborate way, Hassell declares Morland a natural genius. In the preface, he introduces this idea while also showing more awareness than any other Morland biographer about the literary genre he was contributing to. Comparing "the liberal and ingenious artist" to "the poetic genius, the celebrated statesman, the distinguished divine, the physician, orator and other characters of note", Hassell suggests that painters are as worthy as these important figures of biographical accounts. He then goes on to describe artists as "highly-exalted geniuses" who "whirl their refulgent orbs across the hemisphere of mind" and who "fascinate us by a sort of magical illusion".⁵⁵⁶ This idea of the artist as an exceptional individual endowed with supernatural powers is tinged with heroic tones and is applied directly to Morland in a later passage, where it is said that by the end of his life and notwithstanding his misfortunes, the artist would never cease to paint industriously, since he "still loved and idolized the art" (a passage reminiscent of the painter's mock-heroic portrayal in his studio, Fig. 114).⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁶ Hassell, *Memoirs of the Life of ... George Morland*, p. 2.

⁵⁵⁷ Hassell, *Memoirs of the Life of ... George Morland*, p. 42.

A few digressions explicitly mark Hassell as a conscious agent in the artistic field in which he was embedded as an artist himself, working in the same naturalistic genre as Morland. Hassell's book is interspersed with his own opinions on contemporary artistic debates and matters of petty artistic rivalry. For example, in one passage we find him condemning the Royal Academicians for their unjust treatment of James Barry (referring to the artist's expulsion from their ranks in 1799, due to criticism of his teaching). Here he also suggests that the establishment of a national collection accessible to painters, like the Louvre in Paris, would be desirable for the encouragement of the emerging British School.⁵⁵⁸ Elsewhere, Hassell criticizes Turner's "murky effects",⁵⁵⁹ while in another instance he accuses the fellow-engraver Francesco Bartolozzi of signing his pupils' work. Furthermore, Bartolozzi's pupils are here labelled as "emigrants".⁵⁶⁰ By contrast, Hassell speaks of Morland's style as "at once bold, original, and new".⁵⁶¹ Morland's art is described as representing a harmonious union in terms of content - "this unity Morland has happily introduced between man and beast"⁵⁶² – and in terms of audiences: "his pictures instantaneously struck, and equally delighted the correct eye of the connoisseur, as well as the uninformed spectator".⁵⁶³ After a digression on the various Italian schools of painting, Hassell places Morland in the line of the Venetian school (arguably because of the generic association usually made between Netherlandish genre art and the colourist tradition which had its origins in Venice).⁵⁶⁴ Throughout the book, Hassell insists on the comparison of Morland's art with that of Old Masters from the Vasarian canon, going as far as putting his works on the same level as those of Michelangelo and Raphael. He even identifies a precise analogy for Morland within this pantheon of artistic geniuses. Working in the line of the Venetian coloristic tradition, having remained in his native region and having made "Nature his guide" were for Hassell sufficient elements to call Morland: "literally a second Corregio".⁵⁶⁵ Made part of a Vasarian progress of artistic achievement, Morland is here presented as a leading representative of an emerging British school, inaugurating a new 'age of painting' able to revive the splendours of Renaissance Italy,

⁵⁵⁸ Hassell, *Memoirs of the Life of ... George Morland*, pp. 23-24.

⁵⁵⁹ Hassell, *Memoirs of the Life of ... George Morland*, p. 35.

⁵⁶⁰ Hassell, *Memoirs of the Life of ... George Morland*, p. 59.

⁵⁶¹ Hassell, *Memoirs of the Life of ... George Morland*, p. 46.

⁵⁶² Hassell, *Memoirs of the Life of ... George Morland*, p. 72.

⁵⁶³ Hassell, *Memoirs of the Life of ... George Morland*, p. 40.

⁵⁶⁴ Hassell, *Memoirs of the Life of ... George Morland*, p. 65.

⁵⁶⁵ Hassell, *Memoirs of the Life of ... George Morland*, p. 108.

its coherent character arguably recognizable in the naturalistic style he had chosen. In a later passage, Hassell further suggests that Morland's genius will resist time and that he will soon be entitled to "raise his head amongst the first artists of the British school, and exclaim with Corregio "ed lo anche son il pittore (*sic*)".⁵⁶⁶

By contrast, George Dawe's biography represents a position-taking antithetical to Hassell and Collins not only in relation to the myth of Morland as genius but also, arguably, because Dawe manifests a radically opposite way of envisioning the common characters that an emerging British school should possess. This is not surprising, considering that Dawe was to become a successful history and portrait painter and that, only two years after publishing this book, he would be elected a Royal Academician. After the narration of Morland's life, Dawe dedicates three chapters to Morland's art and methods of work. It is immediately apparent that Dawe aligned himself with official academic theory, in which genre subjects such as Morland's were at the bottom of the artistic hierarchy and which still considered his Netherlandish artistic sources as negative artistic paradigms. Morland's association with Netherlandish artists also produces in Dawe's biography the traditional equation of low subjects and debauched artistic lifestyles, and indeed this is the only one among Morland's early biographies which describes the painter as a womaniser. Not only is Morland's choice of genre condemned, but the repeated comparisons of his art with that of the Old Masters only serves to point up his inferiority. Dawe dismisses completely the idea of Morland as a natural genius - "his... excellence" being "not, as has been imagined, a natural endowment".⁵⁶⁷ Consequently, he also denies any role to his art in defining the characteristics of the emerging British school: "his example... cannot be expected to produce a permanent effect, as he does not possess sufficient merit to entitle him to rank as a great master".⁵⁶⁸ When commenting on Morland's art, Dawe blends criticism of Morland's low subject matter and loose manner (finish was an important requirement in academic doctrine) with words strongly reminiscent of William Marshall Craig's tirades against the painter's graphic style in the drawing books Craig published in

⁵⁶⁶ Hassell, *Memoirs of the Life of ... George Morland*, p. 109.

⁵⁶⁷ Dawe, *The Life of George Morland*, p. 3.

⁵⁶⁸ Dawe, *The Life of George Morland*, p. 99.

these years (1806-1815).⁵⁶⁹ Recognizing the pig as the animal which Morland introduced most often and most successfully in his painting, Dawe adds: “his touch was well adapted to the representation of its bristly hide and he seldom failed to depict the ... lazy character of the animal”.⁵⁷⁰ The indolent disposition of Morland’s favourite animal seems to percolate into his style, defined “slight and slovenly”, substituting “touch for truth” and ultimately reducing Morland to “a mere mannerist”.⁵⁷¹

While Hassell praises the ability of Morland’s art to reconcile audiences of different social and cultural standing, Dawe criticises the taste of a broad public whose aesthetic education was largely based on a knowledge of portraiture seen at public exhibitions. Dawe concluded that Morland was to be seen not as a genius but as a fraud: “his defects, seen through the glass of novelty, were considered as beauties; his want of variety and refinement was called simplicity; his carelessness was mistaken for freedom; and his errors in drawing, were admired as the characteristic irregularities of genius”.⁵⁷² Dawe’s ideas on Morland and his choice of genre reflected traditional academic positions that wanted an emerging British school to be founded on excellence in the genre of history painting. In hindsight, it is easy to recognize which authors’ position prevailed in the struggle to decide the fate of Morland’s figure (celebration or oblivion) and to establish the features which might characterize the rising British school more generally. In the end, as Morland seems to have always understood, there is no such a thing as bad publicity, so even Dawe’s negative portrayal arguably helped disseminate his myth. Nineteenth-century art-historical accounts would construct naturalism as the coherent character of the national school; in the later part of that century, Morland’s figure crystallized as that of the quintessentially English painter within British art-historical texts.⁵⁷³

⁵⁶⁹ A number of instalments from these publications are randomly bound in a book held by the National Art Library, London: William Marshall Craig, *Landscape Animals in a Series of Progressive Studies* (London: E. Orme, 1812). See Chapter 2 for a thorough discussion of William Marshall Craig’s criticism of Morland’s drawing style.

⁵⁷⁰ Dawe, *The Life of George Morland*, p. 105.

⁵⁷¹ Dawe, *The Life of George Morland*, p. 113-114-117.

⁵⁷² Dawe, *The Life of George Morland*, p. 118.

⁵⁷³ For the construction of naturalism as the coherent character of the English school, see William Vaughan, “The Englishness of British Art”, *Oxford Art Journal* 13, no. 2 (1990): 11-23. For nineteenth-century art-historical texts describing Morland as a quintessentially English painter, see: Allan Cunningham, *The Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, 6 Vols. (London:

Conclusion

This thesis has proposed a reassessment of the ‘myth of Morland’ as natural, naïve and rough genius, a myth which is masterfully embodied by his signature animal, the pig, and which has often been taken at face value in art historical accounts. Through an analysis of his paintings, drawings, prints and (self-)portraiture as well as contemporary discourse about Morland, this thesis has described this myth as an extraordinarily useful, modern creation of the artist himself, enacted in the crowded artistic field of late eighteenth-century London through conscious artistic choices (in terms of subject matter, media and style) as well as strategies of commerce and publicity, all with the aid and ‘screen’ of dealers and publishers. By this means, Morland and these other operators within the artistic field jointly participated in the transformation of economic and symbolic values for art.

By placing Morland’s persona and idiosyncratic works in this context, this thesis has sought to describe them as shrewd responses to a set of changes taking place in the British art world under pressure from modernity: an increasingly commercialized and competitive art scene; the rise of a broader public for art; the perceived need to establish a ‘British School’ of painting, and the inevitable comparison between contemporary British art and Old Master precedents (increasingly present both visually, through public displays and auctions, and textually, through the literary success of Old Master ‘lives’).

John Murray, 1829-33), 2:213-241. Cunningham’s text had been the most popular account on art history of the United Kingdom from 1829 to 1908. Although the title of Cunningham’s book suggests a broader focus, on the art of Britain rather than on English art, William Vaughan has noted how in shortened form the text was often called *Great English Painters*. Vaughan observes that historians of the art of the United Kingdom have indeed traditionally used the terms ‘English’ and ‘British’ as interchangeable, perceiving the cultural unity at the roots of all the communities of the United Kingdom to be “essentially English”. Consequently, Cunningham’s biographical pantheon can be seen as made up of quintessentially English painters. Morland is a representative example of them, not only because to him are dedicated almost thirty pages, but also because he embodies the ideals of nature and independence which imbue Cunningham’s nationalistic characterization of English art. In William Vaughan, “The Englishness of British Art”, *Oxford Art Journal* 13, no. 2 (1990): 11-23.

In engaging anew with Morland's artistic output in its entirety, as well as contemporary commentaries and archival material, this thesis has revealed four key types of artistic output in his *oeuvre*: his animal paintings, his drawings, their printed reproductions, and his (self-) portraits. Although the first three represent a substantial part of his production, neither they nor the portraits have previously been approached systematically. Through close readings of representative examples, this thesis has proposed a reconstruction of their contemporary meanings and significance, including their role in the construction of Morland's artistic persona.

The introduction considered the current position occupied by Morland and his art in British art history as curiously both ubiquitous and obscure – his image, as well as his 'mythical' biography, have been reproduced and perpetuated abundantly while his artworks have been confined to museums stores, obscured by problems of attribution, misconceptions of Morland's typical production and the limiting effect of biographical cliché upon their deeper examination. After an analysis of the existing literature on Morland as still influenced by his early biographies, the introduction proposed a reinterpretation of Morland's art and persona as products of a specific social and cultural context, and in particular of the late eighteenth-century London art world.

Chapter 1 turned to examine the most prevalent of Morland's painted subjects: farmyard animals. As this chapter argued, Morland's images of these animals, often seen on their own, adumbrate a progressive narrative: the sympathetic depiction of unknowable, lowly creatures of marginal utility, shown in a manner that proposes them as worthy of viewers' attention. Furthermore, these images accord with the message encapsulated in some of Morland's images of human and animal encounters which illustrate the negative effects of a modern capitalistic economy through the depiction of man's exploitation of animals. In turn, Morland's numerous paintings of butchers serve as a reflection on the artist's own painterly practice and his refusal to comply with conventional academic personae.

Chapter 2 examined Morland's drawings. Considering Morland's mobilization of the multiple and contradictory meanings attributed to drawings and sketches in this period, his reference to illustrious draughtsmen among contemporaries and Old Masters, and his invention of a distinct 'slovenly style', this chapter argued that the graphic medium played a pivotal role in the construction of his idiosyncratic persona. Furthermore, this chapter dealt with the diffusion of Morland's drawings through published reproductions, suggesting that Morland and his collaborators made shrewd use of the commoditable nature of his persona as native, natural genius.

Chapter 3 examined Morland's position in the modern exhibiting scene and the commercial art market, starting with an exploration of Morland's construction of accessible pictorial narratives through a close examination of one of his Royal Academy exhibits and the artistic decisions that entailed. This chapter then turned to examine the various visual, rhetoric and textual strategies enacted by Morland and his collaborators to deploy an expanded audience for his art. Commercial enterprises focused on the painter but conceived without his direct involvement were also interpreted as further proof of the extreme adaptability and marketability of Morland's 'brand'.

Chapter 4 offered an overview of Morland's numerous portraits and self-portraits as well as his early biographical constructions, all shown to be influenced by the idiosyncratic personae and anecdotes provided by English translations of Old Master 'lives'. In this chapter, a selection of Morland's portraits and self-portraits was shown to illustrate a transition from orthodox 'polite' artistic identities towards more unconventional ones, characterized by an increased conflation of the artist with his typical subjects, by allusions to eccentric lifestyles and by the inclusion of parodic elements which hint at those same identities' fictionality. As such, Morland's self-portraits indicate the artist's own agency in the invention of his myth. Morland's early biographies were then examined comparatively, as representative of antithetical position-takings in the struggles both to guarantee Morland a position in art history, and to decide the common features that should define the emerging British school and shape modern concepts of 'art' and 'the artist' more broadly. This chapter therefore analysed an early example of the modern mythology of the artist, showing the

circumstances through which this myth (which has played an important role in the history of art history as a discipline) emerged, demonstrating its historicity.

The deconstruction of Morland's work, his career and his mythology pursued by this thesis has offered a deeper understanding of his art, practice and persona, while placing him in relation to recent studies on aesthetic, cultural and historical trends in late eighteenth-century Britain. This thesis has opened the way for future research that might include Morland's relationship with animals' bodies, here treated in part but deserving further analysis in light of the recent turn to animal studies: Morland's identification with both the pig and the butcher, and especially with the pictorial depiction of farm animals and the consumption of their meat, all suggest that he reflected on his status as animal painter, as at once sympathiser, exploiter and consumer in relation to animal bodies within a commercial culture in which the tense relationship between sentiment and consumption was increasingly felt. Furthermore, as chapter 4 has suggested, Morland's biographies are complex and distinctive texts, deserving further examination within the context of the early historiography of British art more generally. As such, the reconsideration of Morland's art, career and mythology pursued in this thesis is intended to enhance our understanding of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century British art, resituating him as a pivotal figure within his field.

Appendix 1

Timeline of independent exhibitions and publications of George Morland's works, 1792-99

1 January 1792: First instalment of John Harris's *Sketches by G. Morland* published by Harris at 28 Gerrard Street, Soho.

9 April 1792: First opening of Daniel Orme's Morland Gallery at 14 Old Bond Street, opposite Stafford Street. Advertisements indicate it was still open in June 1792.⁵⁷⁴

1 March 1792: Second instalment of John Harris's *Sketches by G. Morland* published.

1 November 1792: Third instalment of John Harris's *Sketches by G. Morland* published.

19 November 1792: Second opening of Daniel Orme's Morland Gallery at the same address.

1 January 1793: Fourth instalment of John Harris's *Sketches by G. Morland* published. First instalment of Daniel Orme's *Sketches by G. Morland* published by Orme at the Morland Gallery, 14 Old Bond Street. First instalment of *Original Sketches from Nature by Various Masters* Published by Thomas Simpson, St Paul's Church Yard.

January 1793: Earliest possible opening date of John Raphael Smith's solo exhibition of Morland's rustic and coastal scenes at 31 King's Street, Covent Garden, according to Ellis Waterhouse.⁵⁷⁵ Advertisements indicate that the exhibition was open in May 1793.⁵⁷⁶

16 March 1793: John Harris's alerts in the *Morning Chronicle* that "an imitation of the above work [his *Sketches by G. Morland*] is now advertised without the authority of the artist, whose name they have thought proper to assume".

9 April 1793: Second instalment of *Original Sketches from Nature by Various Masters* published by Thomas Simpson.

1 May 1793: Second instalment of Daniel Orme's *Sketches by G. Morland* published.

31 May 1793: Closure of Orme's Morland Gallery.

⁵⁷⁴ "Pictures by G. Morland," *Morning Herald*, 11 June 1792.

⁵⁷⁵ See *A descriptive catalogue of thirty-six pictures, painted by George Morland* (dates unknown, 1793), in *Getty Provenance Index databases* (Sale Catalog Br-A5140a, indexed transcription, notes by Ellis Waterhouse).

⁵⁷⁶ *The Times*, 6 May 1793 and *Morning Chronicle*, 7 May 1793, both quoted in Ellen G. D'Oench, "Copper into Gold", *Prints by John Raphael Smith, 1751-1812* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 152 and footnote 36, ; see also, "The Arts", *The Diary; or, Woodfall's Register*, 30 May 1793.

1 June 1793: Fifth instalment of John Harris's *Sketches by G. Morland* published.

8 June 1793: Sale of Orme's Morland Gallery stock at Christie's, Paul Mall.

1 January 1794: Sixth instalment of John Harris's *Sketches by G. Morland* published.
Third instalment of Orme's *Sketches by G. Morland* published.

17 January 1794: "A Caution", *World*, reports "Mr. George Morland thinks it is his duty to inform the public, that several works having lately appeared, entitled 'Engravings from Original Sketches by George Morland', now thinks, in justice to the credit he holds, to assure them, very few of which are from his drawings, except those published by Mr. J. Harris, Gerrard Street, Soho".

24 March 1794: Seventh instalment of John Harris's *Sketches by G. Morland* published.

April 1794: Mrs Lay's exhibition of original drawings by George Morland, Thomas Rowlandson, Samuel Howitt and other celebrated modern artists at 121 Pall Mall, near Carlton House.

2 May 1794: Eighth instalment of John Harris's *Sketches by G. Morland* published.

1 September 1794: Ninth instalment of John Harris's *Sketches by G. Morland* published.

2 April 1795: Tenth instalment of John Harris's *Sketches by G. Morland* published.

1 February 1796: Eleventh instalment of John Harris's *Sketches by G. Morland* published.

1 March 1796: Twelfth instalment of John Harris's *Sketches by G. Morland* published.

1 January 1797: Thirteenth instalment of John Harris's *Sketches by G. Morland* published.

1 February 1797: Fourteenth instalment of John Harris's *Sketches by G. Morland* published.

Ca. 1 January 1798: Fifteenth instalment of John Harris's *Sketches by G. Morland* published.

1 February 1799: Sixteenth instalment of John Harris's *Sketches by G. Morland* published.

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