

# Ruskin's Turner

## The making of a Romantic hero

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[Turner] stands upon an eminence, from which he looks back over the universe of God and forward over the generations of men. Let every work of his hand be a history of the one, and a lesson to the other. Let each exertion of his mighty mind be both hymn and prophecy; adoration to the Deity, revelation to mankind.

John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol 1 (1843)<sup>1</sup>

[*Modern Painters*] said everything about Turner I ever felt, or even did not know I felt.

Pauline, Lady Trevelyan (1844)<sup>2</sup>

Art historians have refuted the idea of JMW Turner (1775-1851) as an embodiment of the embattled Romantic genius repeatedly and in detail. An immense amount of literature has appeared since the bicentennial celebration of the painter's birth, including catalogues raisonnés of his paintings, watercolours, and engravings, a collection of his letters, and several biographies, as well as specialized studies of his life and work. Major exhibitions have brought famous as well as unfamiliar works before a wide public. In addition, individual paintings have been analysed in relation to new questions, especially ones drawn from social and economic history.<sup>3</sup> All this scholarly activity has placed Turner firmly within the context of his period, and charted the development of his art.

One aspect of Turner's career, however, has not received the attention it deserves: John Ruskin's role in creating the modernist narrative that presents Turner as a Romantic hero. I will argue that the image of Turner as the maker of great and revelatory pictures, scorned by his contemporaries, finally recognized as a true genius after enduring a lifetime of hostility, was invented by John Ruskin (1819-1900). Beginning in 1843 with the first volume of *Modern Painters*, continuing through his publications of the 1840s and 1850s, and culminating in 1860 in the fifth volume of *Modern Painters*, Ruskin argued for a very particular interpretation of both Turner and his work. Study of the reviews Ruskin's writings received at the time of their publication reveals just how new and how objectionable these ideas seemed. Critics sharply contradicted his vision of Turner's life as well as his interpretations of the pictures. Even while other aspects of Ruskin's work won praise, his ideas about Turner remained highly contentious. When Walter Thornbury's *Life of J.M.W. Turner* appeared in 1862, it also was criticized fiercely by reviewers and by people who had known Turner, in part because of its dependence on Ruskin's ideas, but chiefly because of its many inaccuracies. By the late 1870s, however, when a revised edition of Thornbury's biography appeared and the Fine Art Society in London staged a major exhibition of Ruskin's collection of works by Turner, memories of the artist had faded, and Ruskin's authority as an art critic and Turner's greatest defender was immense. His deeply personal identification with the artist added to that authority, taken as proof of the correctness of his understanding. By the 20th century, his advocacy of Turner's genius had become one of the canonical episodes in the history of modernism.<sup>4</sup>

Like most Victorians, Ruskin first encountered Turner's work in the form of engravings, when he received the illus-

trated edition of Samuel Rogers's *Italy* in 1832 as a present for his 13th birthday. Its vignette illustrations remained an important part of Ruskin's conception of the artist for the rest of his life.<sup>5</sup> It was not until the next year that he saw Turner's oil paintings, when he visited the summer exhibition at the Royal Academy with his father.<sup>6</sup> In 1837, Ruskin received Turner's watercolour *Richmond Hill and Bridge, Surrey* (British Museum) as a birthday gift from his father, the first of many he was to own, and in 1844 he received *Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying – Typhoon Coming On* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; B & J 385), the first of only two oil paintings by Turner he would own, also as a gift from his father.<sup>7</sup> Ruskin met the artist in 1840 and visited Turner's own gallery about this time. During these years, he developed a personal relationship with the artist that, however, ended abruptly during the mid-1840s.<sup>8</sup> Although they were not close during the last years of Turner's life, the will named Ruskin one of the Executors of Turner's estate. Ruskin resigned from that position, but he did catalogue the more than 19,000 works on paper that entered the collection of the nation as part of the Turner Bequest.<sup>9</sup>

Ruskin first wrote about Turner's art in 1836, as a 17-year-old about to enter Christ Church, Oxford. Put into a 'black anger' by a review in the prestigious *Blackwood's Magazine* of Turner's exhibitions at the Royal Academy, he composed a lengthy letter to the editor.<sup>10</sup> In it, he defended Turner as 'a meteor, dashing on in a path of glory which all may admire, but in which none can follow: and his imitators must be, and always have been, moths fluttering about the lights, into which if they enter they are destroyed' (3:638). Touching on some of the arguments that were to appear in the first volume of *Modern Painters*, Ruskin defended the likeness of Turner's pictures to nature and to their subjects, the splendor of Turner's colour, his imaginative capacity, and his genius. The letter ends with memorable hyperbole about the periodical critics as 'innumerable dogs... baying [at] the moon:—do they think she will bate of her brightness, or aberrate from the majesty of her path?' (3:640)

On the advice of his father, Ruskin sent the unsigned manuscript to Turner before submitting it to the periodical. Turner's reply to 'J.R. Esq.' survives:

My Dear Sir

I beg to thank you for your zeal, kindness, and the trouble you have taken in my behalf in regard of the criticism of Blackwoods Mag of Oc[t] respecting my works, but I never move in these matters. They are of no import save mischief and the meal tub which Maga [ie, Blackwood's] fears for by my having invaded the flour tub.

[signature cut away]

PS. If you wish to have the Mans back have the goodness to let me know. If not with your sanctions I will send it to the Possessor of the Picture of Juliet.

The last sentence in the body of the letter is a humorous reference to the review in *Blackwood's*, in which Turner's painting *Juliet and Her Nurse* (Private collection; B & J 365) is described as 'models of different parts of Venice, thrown

higgledy-piggledy together, streaked blue and pink, and thrown into a flour tub'. The owner of the painting was Turner's friend and collector, Hugh Munro of Novar, to whom the letter may have been sent.<sup>11</sup> Following Turner's advice, Ruskin put his letter aside to work on other projects.

The reviews of Turner's art that so angered Ruskin belonged to a lively public discourse about contemporary art. Criticism about the visual arts first appeared in British periodicals during the 1760s, partly in response to the establishment of the Society of Arts in 1760 and the Royal Academy in 1768. Drawing upon a variety of sources, including the vocabulary of connoisseurship, art theory, and satire, writers created a language of art criticism that could entertain as well as inform a rapidly growing audience. By the early 19th century, at least a passing acquaintance with the visual arts was firmly established as an essential part of middle-class British culture. In response to this interest, many periodicals, from daily newspapers to weekly and monthly magazines, published reviews of the major art shows. A few periodicals entirely devoted to visual art also appeared, although it was not until the establishment of the *Art Journal* in 1839 (called the *Art-Union* until 1848) that one was able to survive for more than a few years.<sup>12</sup>

This was the critical discourse Ruskin joined with *Modern Painters: Their Superiority in the Art of Landscape Painting to the Ancient Masters* – joined quite literally, because the book appeared during the first week of May, just after the opening of the Royal Academy exhibition.<sup>13</sup> Conceived in the summer of 1842, when Ruskin again was outraged by negative reviews of Turner's paintings, the book was written in near-secrecy during the fall and winter and published under the nom de plume 'A Graduate of Oxford'.<sup>14</sup> Ruskin explained in the preface that the 'work now laid before the public originated in indignation at the shallow and false criticisms of the periodicals of the day' about Turner (3:3; 7:8). An essay became a book as one thought led to another, and the book ultimately became five volumes, published between 1843 and 1860. In no sense is any of them, even the first, a systematic analysis or even defence of Turner's work. Instead they contain sprawling and very personal arguments about art, nature, and, increasingly, society. As in Ruskin's other publications from the same period, however, Turner is always an important point of reference, even when he is not the explicit subject of discussion.

*Modern Painters* was noticed at once. The first reference to it may be a remark that appeared mid-sentence in a review in the *Spectator* of Turner's work at the Royal Academy: 'There may be some sublime meaning in all this, as we are told there is; but we must confess our inability to penetrate its profundity.'<sup>15</sup> Most of the major periodicals published reviews of it within the next six months.<sup>16</sup> The critics showed a surprising unanimity of opinion. Almost all of them praised the book as a valuable contribution to the literature about the fine arts. They also admired the beauty of Ruskin's prose. None the less, they objected to the extravagant language Ruskin used to criticize other artists, especially Old Masters, disagreed with his characterization of Turner, and vigorously objected to the way he interpreted Turner's pictures. These continued to be the major points of criticism made of Ruskin's writings about Turner for the next three decades.<sup>17</sup>

The first important review of *Modern Painters* appeared in June in the *Art Journal* (still called the *Art-Union*), published while the exhibition at the Academy was still open. The anonymous reviewer concentrated on two points. First, Ruskin's language was entirely inappropriate for any purpose:

[A] tone so coarse is not to be found in any of the newspaper notices, which we agree with him [Ruskin] in condemning. If he speak thus of one picture which he does not like [Daniel Maclise's *Hamlet*], we apprehend that, in going through an exhibition, his catalogue of vituperative epithet would not serve him. To what would the terms of his damnatory vocabulary descend in speaking of a really bad picture?

Secondly, the praise given to Turner's more recent paintings was unacceptable:

We yield to none in admiration of the works of the better period of this once really great artist; but we cannot accord to him qualities in his last works which do not therein exist, and which he had not the most remote idea of giving them—qualities which, in fact, it is in the power of no art to convey.<sup>18</sup>

The reference to earlier great works by Turner had begun to be a staple of exhibition criticism during the 1820s, usually referring to the classical subjects painted during the mid-1810s.<sup>19</sup> The idea that Ruskin found meaning in Turner's paintings the artist had not intended was made more frequently and more fiercely in later years, buttressed by the popular story that Turner himself had said the same thing (see below).

Many more reviews appeared during the fall and winter. That in *The Gentleman's Magazine* paid full tribute to Ruskin's accomplishments:

The author has a solid foundation in the broad and philosophical principles he applies to the art; while, in the very minute, exact, and delicate criticisms he delivers, he shows a practical and artist-like acquaintance with the details of the subject.... He also is an eloquent and impressive writer;... [who] can describe the captivating beauties of painting in the brilliant colour of poetic diction.

The opinions in the book 'are too profound to be refuted by a cavil, and too honest to be dismissed with a sneer'.<sup>20</sup> The opinions about Turner, however, were a different matter. The reviewer quoted Ruskin's descriptions of the painter as 'glorious in conception, unfathomable in knowledge, and solitary in power', and like 'the angel in the Apocalypse, and other similar persons, whom out of respect we shall forbear to mention'.<sup>21</sup> In the end, the reader must 'dismiss and forget the glowing descriptions and too partial comparisons he has read in this volume, and turn from the visionary splendour of the writer's page to the real colours and composition before him' in Turner's actual works of art in order to reach a fair opinion.<sup>22</sup>

A lengthy and much more partisan examination of the book appeared in October in *Blackwood's Magazine*, written by the curate, poet, and enthusiastic amateur artist, the Revd John Eagles (1783-1855), who regularly wrote art criticism for the periodical.<sup>23</sup> Eagles was a particular target of Ruskin's ire and remarked at the beginning of his review that the author came 'vauntingly up to us, with his contempt for us and all critics that ever were, or will be; we are all little Davids in the eye of this Goliath'.<sup>24</sup> In his discussion of the sections in *Modern Painters* about Turner, Eagles followed most other reviewers in finding Ruskin's elevation of the painter above all other artists astonishing and offensive. He too singled out the comparison of Turner to the angel of the Apocalypse, which he quoted in full:

[A]nd Turner – glorious in conception – unfathomable in knowledge – solitary in power – with the elements waiting upon his will, and the night and the morning obedient to his call, sent as a prophet of God to reveal to men the mysteries of his universe, standing, like the great angel of the Apocalypse, clothed with a cloud, and with a rainbow upon his head, and with the sun and stars given into his hand.

Suggesting with mock seriousness that this was blasphemy, Eagles then 'indulg[ed] in a small degree of justifiable ridicule'. How could this description be represented in a 'statue or painting of Mr. Turner for the Temple of Fame?'

How will they venture to represent Mr. Turner looking like an angel – in that dress which would make any man look like a fool – his cloud nightcap tied with ribbon riband round his head, calling to night and morning, and little caring which comes, making 'ducks and drakes' of the sun and the stars, put into his hand for that purpose? We will only suggest one addition, as it completes the grand idea, and is in some degree characteristic of Mr. Turner's peculiar execution, that, with the sun and the stars, there should be delivered into his hand a comet, whose tail should serve him for a brush, and supply itself with colour.<sup>25</sup>

Compared to the critical invective for which *Blackwood's* was famous, including very personal attacks on actual people, this passage does contain only a 'small degree' of ridicule.<sup>26</sup>

More interesting is Eagles's challenge to the way Ruskin interpreted Turner's pictures. In this review, he used the discussion of *Dido Building Carthage; or the Rise of the Carthaginian Empire* (National Gallery, London; B & J 131) as an example. It was first exhibited in 1815 and afterwards on display in Turner's own gallery, perhaps until the artist's death, and was by general agreement a grand painting from the days when Turner was great.<sup>27</sup> Eagles wrote:

[T]he foreground is occupied by a group of children sailing toy-boats, which he [Ruskin] thinks to be an 'exquisite choice of incident expressive of the ruling passion'. He, with a whimsical extravagance in praise of Turner, which, commencing here, runs throughout all the rest of the volume, says – 'Such a thought as this is something far above all art; it is epic poetry of the highest order'. Epic poetry of the highest order! Ungrateful will be our future epic poets if they do not learn from this – if such is done by boys sailing toy boats, surely boys flying a kite will illustrate far better the great astronomical knowledge of our days.<sup>28</sup>

The discussion of Turner's art then moved, as it did in so many reviews, to a more general assessment of Turner's career, based on Eagles's long memory of exhibited pictures.<sup>29</sup>

A lengthy review also appeared in the *Athenaeum*, written by the poet, playwright, and critic George Darley (1795–1846), who – like Eagles – was one of the critics explicitly attacked by Ruskin. He too objected to both Ruskin's language and his image of the artist. He likened the writing style to that of William Hazlitt: 'Boldness and brilliancy, bigotry amidst liberality, and great acuteness amid still greater blindness'.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, Ruskin used the same 'burlesque similitudes and ludicrous analogies' that he criticized in periodical criticism.<sup>31</sup> Darley also quoted the passage about the angel of the Apocalypse, asking rhetorically 'What more light-headed rhomontade could be scrawled, except upon walls, or hallooed, except through the wards, of Bedlam, than the annexed passage presents us?' Remarking that Ruskin's worship of Turner is not 'blasphemous because it is crack-brained', he ended his quotation with the conclusion to *Modern Painters*:

[Turner] stands upon an eminence, from which he looks back over the universe of God, and forward over the generations of men. Let every work of his hand, be a history of the one, and a lesson to the other. *Let each exertion of his mighty mind be both hymn and prophecy, – adoration to the Deity, – revelation to mankind.*<sup>32</sup> [Darley's italics]

Darley thought the reason for the extravagance of the language was clear:

Mr. Turner's doxologist, desirous that his last paragraph should out-do all the rest, yet exhausted by his antecedent efforts, has here wrought his eloquence up to an unnatural pitch; and hence cannot, in his paroxysm of panegyric, distinguish between genuine heartfelt praise and wild hallelujahs. He reminds us of a Whirling Dervish, who at the end of his well-sustained reel falls, with a higher jump and a shriller shriek, into a fit.<sup>33</sup>

The images of Turner the reviewers objected to – especially as the angel of the Apocalypse or as a maker of hymn and prophecy – express Ruskin's vision of the artist as a Romantic hero. Blessed with extraordinary genius, he was persecuted by a cruel world which properly appreciated neither the man nor his talent. This conception determined Ruskin's views in every respect. Genius assured Turner's position 'upon an eminence, from which he looks back over the universe of God and forward over the generations of men'. The same idea of the artist determined Ruskin's method of reading Turner's pictures. Since, as works of genius, they were by definition 'both hymn and prophecy', the pictures inevitably became 'a history of [the universe of God] and a lesson to [the generations of man]'. Ruskin's conception of 'lesson' was very specific. A 'revelation to mankind', this lesson expounded the grandest of prophetic messages from even the humblest material. Although inclined to find symbolic meanings in all art, Ruskin assumed that he would find them in the work of a prophet. Finally, critical hostility, of which Ruskin made much, proved that the painter was superior to his time. It also gave Ruskin his role as defender of misunderstood greatness.

The stance Ruskin adopted in *Modern Painters*, of an isolated critic defending an embattled artist, is the same one he had used in his letter about Turner to *Blackwood's* as well as in one of his earliest works of criticism.<sup>34</sup> This was an essay written for his Oxford tutor in the same year, 1836, an impassioned, even intemperate defence of Sir Walter Scott, Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, and Lord Byron against:

Quaker ladies shaking their heads at us, old maids their sticks at us, crabbed old gentlemen their fists at us, and ugly (by courtesy plain) young ladies their tongues at us. Here's a pretty mess we have got into! Gruff, shrill, squeaking, whistling – the voices of multitudinous discord astonish our nerves: 'How false! how untenable! how shocking! how immoral! how impious!' (1:359)

To mention Byron's *Bride of Abydos* caused the

dust and ashes of criticism [to] become living before our eyes, and a murmur of indignation arises from the multitudes of crawling things. But the name hath touched us with its finger, and our brain is burning, our heart is quivering, our soul is full of light.

Byron was a great poet, Ruskin explained, because he was a 'most miserable man', his poetry 'wrung out of his spirit by that agony'. (1:372–3) None of this greatness, however, was apparent to 'these dogs that bay [at] the moon, these foul snails that crawl on in their despicable malice,... these Grub Street reptiles...' (1:375)

In the conception of the artist, attitude toward the periodical critics, and use of extravagant emotional language, *Modern Painters* resembles these two essays from 1836. In the interim, however, Ruskin had read Thomas Carlyle, who provided him with a larger intellectual framework for these ideas.<sup>35</sup> The first reference in his diary to Carlyle appeared in 1841, when he noted reading *On Heroes and Hero-Worship*, a series of lectures published in 1840.<sup>36</sup> It was from them, according to his admirer and biographer WG Collingwood, that Ruskin received the idea of his mission in life: 'To tell the

world that Art, no less than other spheres of life, had its Heroes; that the mainspring of their energy was Sincerity, and the burden of their utterance, Truth.<sup>37</sup> Carlyle's *Past and Present*, published in 1843, also influenced him.<sup>38</sup>

*Modern Painters* presents Turner as a Carlylean Artist-Hero. The importance of 'sincerity' and 'truth' and the ways in which Turner conquered a world that treated him badly follow Carlyle's development of the hero in its various iterations. Although each lecture discussed a different manifestation of the type, 'at bottom the Great Man, as he comes from the hand of Nature, is ever the same kind of thing... [and] only by the world's reception of them, and the shapes they assume, are they so immeasurably diverse'. The first characteristic of Carlyle's heroic man is 'sincerity, a deep, great, genuine sincerity', a sincerity 'that does not depend on himself; he cannot help being sincere!' Further, 'his utterances are... a kind of "revelation"... It is from the heart of the world that he comes'.<sup>39</sup> Regardless of the way he expresses himself, 'he will read the world and its laws'. His ultimate purpose is to 'reveal that... sacred mystery which he more than others lives ever present with... without consent asked of him, he finds himself living in it, bound to live in it'.<sup>40</sup> In all of these ways, Ruskin's Turner fits the type.

Ruskin also was influenced by Carlyle's belief in the essential role played by the unconscious in the process of creation.<sup>41</sup> This is most fully expressed in the second volume of *Modern Painters*, which appeared in 1846. In a discussion about the imagination, Ruskin wrote:

[T]here is in every word set down by the imaginative mind an awful under-current of meaning, and evidence and shadow upon it of the deep places out of which it has come. It is often obscure, often half-told; for he who wrote it, in his clear seeing of the things beneath, may have been impatient of detailed interpretation: but, if we choose to dwell upon it and trace it, it will lead us always securely back to that metropolis of the soul's dominion. (4:252)

The 'clear seeing of the things beneath' is Carlyle's 'revelation... from the heart of the world', but the 'awful under-current of meaning', the 'shadow', reflect Ruskin's own approach to interpretation (see below).

The reviews of the second volume of *Modern Painters*, at least in so far as they concerned Turner, mostly repeated the objections that had been made about the first. The critic in the *Athenaeum*, again George Darley, wrote that Ruskin's 'style of eloquence too much resembles a newspaper critic's for our taste. Indeed, were we not told our author was an Oxonian, we should conjecture him one of those clever young gentlemen called Reporters'. Periodical criticism, however, 'does not, like his, pretend itself a seraphic hosanna superior to all mockeries, buffooneries, and farce. Could the foulest-mouthed Journal disembody against his idol, Mr. Turner, less respectful and reckless language than his own against certain ancient masters [?]'<sup>42</sup> In fact, 'his writings greatly resemble the paintings of his god-pictorial; they are full of Turnerisms turned into words – beauties, garish brilliancies, incomprehensibilities and absurdities, all mingled together'. But, 'notwithstanding what we have said, and left unsaid,... the book before us serves perusal, deserves praise.... let us recommend... this very perturbative volume'.<sup>43</sup>

Even respectful reviews, such as that about both volumes that appeared in the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, criticized what Ruskin said about Turner. Again, Ruskin's interpretation of the children sailing boats in the foreground of *Dido Building Carthage* was singled out as 'fantastical and trivial. A group of children may sail toy boats in places by no means

maritime, as we have seen them doing in the Cockney Arcadia of Hampstead Heath'.<sup>44</sup> Far more serious was how 'our author appears to us to be wilfully and perversely blind to great and glaring defects in the painter'. Turner 'is the slave of crochets, and of fantastical ambitions to achieve manifest impossibilities'. The pictures Turner exhibited at the Academy that year demonstrated – once again – 'gross instances of the falsehood into which [his] deficiencies betray him'.<sup>45</sup> Several pages about the paintings end with the remark that it is to be 'lamented that the Oxford Graduate should have been dazzled by the fantastic lights of this eccentric painter'.<sup>46</sup>

On 19 December 1851, Turner died, and the lively critical discourse about him and his art suddenly came to an end. Without the regular appearance of pictures in exhibition, the reviewers no longer had reason to write about him. Now it was Ruskin who brought the subject of Turner into the public arena. The most important works were the third lecture in *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, delivered in Edinburgh on 15 November 1853, and published in 1854 (12:102-33); the third and fourth volumes of *Modern Painters*, published in 1856 (5:1-417; 6:1-466); a series of books about pictures in the Turner Bequest that appeared between 1856 and 1859 (13:81-388); and, finally, the fifth and final volume of *Modern Painters* (7:1-460), published in 1860. The various catalogues of the Bequest present Ruskin's views about Turner in a relatively systematic fashion, but it is the last volume of *Modern Painters* that provides some of the best-known set-pieces about the artist. Especially Ruskin's comparison of the boyhoods of Giorgione and Turner became famous at once (7:374-81).

By the 1850s, Ruskin's ideas had become well enough known to be referred to as 'Ruskinism'. An early use of the term occurred in 1851, when *Something on Ruskinism* appeared, a poem and an essay criticizing Ruskin's writings about architecture, with only scattered references to Turner.<sup>47</sup> Periodical reviewers more and more often treated several publications at once, or conceived of his writings as a whole. In many articles, especially those that appeared in the most intellectually prestigious periodicals, Ruskin's ideas about Turner continued to be attacked vigorously. Among the best known of these summary evaluations are two very long, very negative articles that appeared in 1856, one in the *Quarterly Review* by Elizabeth, Lady Eastlake (1809-1893) [see the article by Tom Devonshire Jones elsewhere in this number of *The British Art Journal*], an art historian and critic as well as wife of Sir Charles Lock Eastlake, the President of the Royal Academy, and the other in the *Edinburgh Review* by the music, art, and theatre critic (mostly for the *Athenaeum*) as well as writer, Henry Fothergill Chorley (1808-1872). Defences of Ruskin in the face of these scathing attacks appeared a few months later in the *National Review* and the *Westminster Review*, the latter article by George Eliot.<sup>48</sup>

The objections were several. First, many expressed incredulity at Ruskin's claim that he had rescued Turner from scorn and isolation. One of the most forceful statements was made by Charles Robert Leslie, a painter and friend of Turner's, who wrote that Ruskin's lecture at Edinburgh:

... draws a touching picture of the neglect and loneliness in which Turner died. This picture, however, must lose much of its intended effect when it is known that such seclusion was Turner's own fault. No death-bed could be more surrounded by attentive friends than his might have been, had he chosen to let his friends know where he lived. He had constantly dinner invitations, which he seldom even answered, but appeared at the take of the inviter or not as it suited him. His letters were addressed to him at his

house in Queen Anne Street; but the writers never knew where he really resided.<sup>49</sup>

Periodical critics agreed. One wrote that 'Turner commanded and received large prices for the productions of his pencil; his works were constantly before the eye of the public; and he died at an advanced old age'.<sup>50</sup> Chorley remarked: 'Strange as it may seem to Mr. Ruskin, Turner has his English appreciators and his English public prior to the year 1846.' Further, he added, the artist 'not only lived to see his fame rise above vulgar criticism, but in the course of a long life, he realised a large fortune by his works. There was no cruel neglect'. Several critics suggested that it was Ruskin who needed Turner and not the reverse. Chorley was one of them: 'Mr. Ruskin owes a great deal more [than Turner could owe to him] to the celebrity he has contrived to borrow from so great an artist as Mr. Turner.'<sup>51</sup> A critic for *Blackwood's Magazine* was disgusted: 'His fulsome adulation of Turner is simply ridiculous. Turner's fame owes as much to Mr. Ruskin as Shakespeare's does to Mr. Charles Kean.'<sup>52</sup>

Reviewers argued that Ruskin was creating an 'apotheosis of Turner', for which he 'erect[ed] a pile of dead painters' coffins on which to rear up his statue. The temple which he builds for the idol of his imagination he would have surrounded with railings, like the King of Dahomey's Palace, and on every rail the skull of a dead rival'.<sup>53</sup> This destruction of the reputation and work of other painters, often using extremely negative language, still seemed as objectionable as what Ruskin thought about Turner. If, wrote Walter Thornbury in the *Athenaeum*, Ruskin simply said that 'though honest, vigorous, and dewy, [Constable] took a restricted parochial view of English nature, and was conventional and dull in texture and treatment', the reader could accept his opinion. Instead, he 'rails in this wholesale, intolerant, foolish way'.<sup>54</sup> Ironically, it was the same Walter Thornbury who published the biography of Turner so dependent upon Ruskin just two years later.

Disagreement with Ruskin's interpretations of the pictures, suggested by some critics during the 1840s, became vociferous. Thornbury was blunt: '[Ruskin] sits down and invents thoughts on buildings and pictures.... Turner was never so much a Turnerite as Mr. Ruskin'. His readings depended upon his 'supersubtle, sophisticated, fantastic [mind, which is] fond of small and intricate threads of allegory'.<sup>55</sup> In a review of the fifth volume of *Modern Painters*, FG Stephens sharply criticized the meaning Ruskin found in the titles of Turner's pictures:

The opinion, so gratuitous, that Turner's choice of titles for his pictures, so frequently taken from Greek mythology, had more in it than meets the eye, and was poetically connected with his knowledge of Greek traditions, would amaze that marvellous artist.<sup>56</sup>

The idea that Ruskin was not just wrong, but that he found things in Turner's pictures that the artist had not intended, gained support from an often-repeated anecdote. Various contemporaries claimed to have heard Turner remark that Ruskin 'knows a great deal more about my pictures than I do. He puts things into my head, and points out meanings in them that I never intended'.<sup>57</sup> Ruskin addressed the rumor in the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*: 'Foolish people are fond of repeating a story which has gone the full round of the artistical world, that Turner, some day, somewhere said to somebody (time, place, or person never being ascertainable), that I discovered in his pictures things which he did himself not know were there.' If this was true, Ruskin concluded, it was because Turner 'neither was aware of the value of the

truths he had seized, nor understood the nature of the instinct that combined them'. (6:274-5) The story was flatly denied by Ruskin's friend the Revd William Kingsley who, in an appendix to the seventh edition of the catalogue of the Fine Art Society exhibition, noted that 'No greater nonsense can be uttered than the story of Turner's saying that Mr. Ruskin saw things in his pictures that he himself had not thought of.... [I]t must have been invented for the purpose of disparaging both Turner and Ruskin by some one who knew neither'. A note by Ruskin appeared at the bottom of the page: 'I'm so glad of this bit. Nothing ever puts me more "beside myself"... than this vulgar assertion' (13:585-6). In fact, it was repeated by people who knew both men.

This difference between Ruskin and his critics consists of more than the interpretation of specific details in particular pictures. It lies in the basic method of understanding them. What Ruskin took to be intended subject, opening through a reading of symbols to a larger sphere, most art critics understood as rhetorical. This point of view was not the result of a change in Turner's pictures in his last years or the superficiality of exhibition reviews. The approach had been present since the 1810s, articulated by some of the most perceptive observers of the art. Rather than interpret the Carthaginian pictures of the mid-1810s as allegories of modern Britain, for example, almost all critics took the subjects to be evidence of Turner's artistic ambition. The reviewer for the *Sun*, almost certainly the veteran journalist and editor John Taylor (1757-1832), used the language of traditional art criticism when he wrote that *Dido Building Carthage* 'is in the grand style, and the effects produced correspond with the classical dignity of the subject'. The reviewer for the *St. James's Chronicle*, using a different vocabulary, described its greatness in terms of effect rather than style: 'The eye rests but a moment on [the painting] before its transcendent qualities completely occupy the mind, and it is felt to be one of those sublime productions which is seldom met with'.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, *The Decline of the Carthaginian Empire* (Turner Bequest, Tate Britain; B & J 135), exhibited in 1817, was 'an ideal composition upon a larger scale'. In it, wrote another critic, Turner 'embodied the whole spirit of Virgil's poetical description of the event, its awful grandeur, and solemnity of effect'.<sup>59</sup>

Even the most literary of the exhibition reviewers – William Hazlitt, say, or William Thackeray – or sophisticated, sympathetic viewers such as the artists John Landseer and William Henry Pyne (both of whom also knew Turner personally) did not suggest a symbolic interpretation for these works. Again and again, critics insisted that 'like Claude, Turner takes a subject from mythology or ancient history as a mere name to produce'.<sup>60</sup> Some found particular titles pretentious, suggesting ambitious claims that the pictures did not fulfill. In 1814, the critic for the *St. James's Chronicle* attacked Turner's *Dido and Aeneas* (Turner Bequest, Tate Britain; B & J 129): 'To attach such a pompous name... to a picture in which a few little and vilely drawn figures are scattered over the foreground of a landscape, deserves strong reprobation'.<sup>61</sup> Other titles seemed arbitrary, without any relationship to what could be seen in the work. In 1828, *Dido Directing the Equipment of the Fleet, or The Morning of the Carthaginian Empire* (Turner Bequest, Tate Britain; B & J 241) was called just 'a fancy title to a fancy picture'. In 1836, the reviewer for the *Spectator* wrote that *Juliet and her Nurse* 'might as well have been called anything else'. In 1843, Thackeray declared about his humorously garbled version of the title of *Light and Colour (Goethe's Theory) – the Morning after the Deluge – Moses Writing the Book of*

*Genesis* (Turner Bequest, Tate Britain; B & J 405), 'This may not be the exact title, but it will do as well as another.' In the next year, a critic for *The New Monthly Magazine* described Turner's 'labels' as 'ludicrously unmeaning'. Finally, in 1849, a critic remarked in the *Art Journal* that Turner 'follows as nearly as he can the "good old plan" of [Sir Walter] Scott – that of selecting titles, which shall, merely as titles, convey nothing to the... reader.'<sup>62</sup>

The fundamental difference between the two approaches can be seen in the responses to *The Fighting Temeraire, Tugged to Her Last Berth To Be Broken Up* (Turner Bequest, National Gallery, London; B & J 377). The painting, almost universally praised when it was shown at the Academy in 1839, went on view in Turner's Gallery after the close of the exhibition.<sup>63</sup> Many of those writing during the 1850s, including Ruskin, had seen the painting at the Academy, and some had written about it at that time, and so the discussion can be said to have extended over two decades. Typical of the overwhelmingly positive reviews it originally received is one that appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*:

There is something in the contemplation of such a scene which affects us almost as deeply as the decay of a noble human being. It is impossible to gaze at the remains of this magnificent and venerable vessel without recollecting, to use the words of Campbell, 'how much she has done, and how much she has suffered for her country.' In his striking performance Mr. Turner has indulged his love of strong and powerfully-contrasted colours with great taste and propriety. A gorgeous horizon poetically intimates that the sun of the *Temeraire* is setting in glory.

The reviewer for the *Athenaeum* went even further in the direction of a symbolic reading, although specifically identifying it as a 'fanciful mode of interpretation':

A sort of sacrificial solemnity is given to the scene, by the blood-red light cast upon the waters, by the round descending sun, and by the paler gleam from the faint rising crescent moon, which silvers the majestic hull, and the towering masts, and the taper spars of the doomed vessel, gliding in the wake of the steam-boat – which latter (still following this fanciful mode of interpretation) almost gives to the picture the expression of such malignant alacrity as might benefit an executioner.<sup>64</sup>

Both of these critics, like most of their colleagues, made the process of association central to their reading of the painting. They began with 'contemplation' of the 'remains of this magnificent and venerable vessel' and then went on to the details and colour that they felt enhanced the sentiment of the picture. Nearly all of the reviewers mentioned the sunset as an appropriate symbol for the *Temeraire*, and many remarked on the poignant juxtaposition of the grand masted ship with the steamboat. Only in the interpretation of the colour was there some disagreement. The critic for the *Morning Chronicle* noted that the 'gorgeous horizons poetically intimates that the sun of the *Temeraire* is setting in glory'. For the *Athenaeum*'s reviewer, by contrast, the light added a 'sort of sacrificial solemnity to the scene'. In both cases, however, the process of reading the picture is the same. The viewer muses on an inherently suggestive theme, with his or her reflections directed by a few details in the picture. The emphasis is not on a particular interpretation of each element, but rather in the pleasure of being aware of the way in which one thing suggests another. It is less the final result – any sort of fixed meaning – than the process of viewing that delights. This is the approach by which the picturesque had been defined some 50 years before.<sup>65</sup>

Ruskin's approach was decisively different. He considered the *Fighting Temeraire* a central work in Turner's career. The

most important discussions of it occur in three places in *Modern Painters* and in a single extended description in *Notes on the Turner Gallery at Marlborough House, 1856*. In the former, he called the painting, along with *Slavers* and *Juliet and her Nurse*, perfect works, equal to works by Phidias or Leonardo, 'incapable... of any improvement conceivable by human mind'. (3:248) As in *Slavers*, the colours of the *Fighting Temeraire* are symbolic. Turner chose the 'deeply crimsoned sunset' sky, the colour of blood, to indicate the 'circumstances of death, especially the death of multitudes' (6:381). Furthermore, according to Ruskin, the work had personal meaning for Turner. It represented the fulfillment of a vow made while he was a small boy playing among the ships of the London harbor:

Trafalgar shall have its tribute of memory some day. Which, accordingly, is accomplished – once, with all our might, for its death; twice, with all our might, for its victory; thrice, in pensive farewell to the old *Temeraire*, and with it, to that order of things. (7:379)

It is with these remarks that Ruskin made the painting into something other than a suggestive representation of a contemporary subject. To liken a crimson sunset to blood, and thus read the painting as a scene of death, goes beyond the associative pleasures of the picturesque. The reviewer for the *Athenaeum* also called the light 'blood-red', but for him the colour only gave a solemn mood to the scene – and even that was offered after due apology for 'this fanciful mode of interpretation'. Ruskin, by contrast, charged the colour with specific meaning. By indicating the 'circumstances of death', it becomes a key that turns one thing into another. Rather than enhance pictorial elements with additional resonances, Ruskin transformed them. With proper interpretation, the hidden meaning becomes manifest. It is the result and not the process that matters.

The linking of Turner's painting to a childhood vow is also an interpretative act that transforms the picture. First, the vow itself is Ruskin's invention. Three pictures of Trafalgar, representing the death of Nelson, the battle itself, and the retirement of the ship, constitute his only evidence of Turner's promise. In fact, the histories of the paintings make it clear that they are not related.<sup>66</sup> The idea of a motivating vow changes the nature of the painting, however. Instead of being a response to a contemporary subject of obvious patriotic and poetic appeal, the *Fighting Temeraire* becomes a profoundly personal statement. Turner, a great man himself and (in Ruskin's view) already nascent in his greatness as a boy, paid a 'tribute of memory' to a great event in British history. It is, then, a work created from a nexus of historical and personal forces, and it results from Turner confronting the greatness of another. The actual historical circumstances of the particular paintings play no role at all.

The more extended description of the *Fighting Temeraire* in *Notes on the Turner Gallery* reveals Ruskin's method of interpretation even more clearly. The analysis begins with an explanation of the picture as the last one Turner 'ever executed with his *perfect power*' – when his execution was still 'as firm and faultless as in middle life'. This evaluation opens the way for the first of Ruskin's transformations of the work. In his view, Turner's 'period of central power', opened with *Ulysses Deriding Polyphemus – Homer's Odyssey* (Turner Bequest, National Gallery, London; B & J 330), exhibited at the Academy in 1829, and closed with the *Fighting Temeraire*. Paired by Ruskin, the two pictures become symbols of Turner's biography. Each is, 'in all the circumstances of its subject, unconsciously illustrative of his own life in its triumph'.<sup>67</sup> As the 'unconsciously' indicates, Turner's inten-

tion is not an issue here. But it is typical of Ruskin's approach that this limitation neither changes the course of his argument nor lessens its passion. His discussion goes on:

I do not suppose that Turner, deep as his bye-thoughts often were, had any under meaning in either of these pictures: but, as accurately as the first sets forth his escape to the wild brightness of Nature, to reign amidst all her happy spirits, so does the last set forth his returning to die by the shore of the Thames: the cold mists gathering over his strength, and all men crying out against him, and dragging the old "fighting *Téméraire*" out of their way, with dim, fuliginous contumely.

This section ends with an additional reason for Turner to have had a special emotional engagement with the subject: 'Sympathy with seamen and ships' had been 'one of the governing emotions in Turner's mind throughout his life'. Furthermore, it was 'the last of a group of pictures', 'all illustrative of one haunting conception, of the central struggle at Trafalgar'. (13:168-70) Thus, by implication at least, the childhood vow mentioned in *Modern Painters* appears again.

The second half of Ruskin's discussion explains the picture as 'the most pathetic that was ever painted' of a subject 'not visibly involving human pain'. Only at a few points does the description suggest what the painting actually shows. '[T]hose sides that were wet with the long runlets of English life-blood, like press-planks at vintage, gleaming goodly crimson down to the cast and clash of the washing foam' might be read as an imaginative interpretation of the reddish glow cast by the sunlight. Similarly, the 'pale masts', mentioned by many reviewers of the picture, 'stayed themselves up against the war-ruin, shaking out their ensigns through the thunder, till the sail and ensign drooped – steep in the death-stilled pause of Andalusian air, burning with its witness-cloud of human souls at rest'. One of the concluding sentences is: 'Never more shall sunset lay golden robe on her, nor starlight tremble on the waves that part at her gliding' (13:170-72). At no point, however, is the description clearly linked to specific visual details found in the painting.

Although Ruskin's method begins with an associative process, it ends by transforming that process into something else. Without a clear sense of the object or view that inspired his thoughts, we cannot participate in a leisurely exploration of the subject. Instead, emphasis shifts to the conclusion of the process and, with this change, interpretation becomes meaning. Without the flexibility implied by a sense of process or the suggestion of alternate readings, Ruskin's explication becomes the single, true understanding. Furthermore, we cannot challenge it, since his interpretative description has effectively replaced the object of analysis.<sup>68</sup>

Ruskin's interpretation also appears in his telling of Turner's biography, as in the famous description of Turner's boyhood, which appears in the last volume of *Modern Painters*:

Near the south-west corner of Covent Garden, a square brick pit or well is formed by a close-set block of houses, to the back windows of which it admits a few rays of light. Access to the bottom of it is obtained out of Maiden Lane, through a low archway and an iron gate; and if you stand long enough under the archway to accustom your eyes to the darkness you may see on the left hand a narrow door, which formerly gave quiet access to a respectable barber's shop, of which the front window, looking into Maiden Lane, is still extant... A more fashionable neighbourhood, it is said, eighty years ago than now – never certainly a cheerful one... [O]f things beautiful, besides men and women, dusty sunbeams up or down the street on summer mornings; deep furrowed cabbage-leaves at the greengrocer's; magnificence of oranges in wheel-barrows round the corner; and Thames' shore within three minutes' race.

None of these things very glorious; the best, however, that England, it seems, was then able to provide for a boy of gift. (7:375-6)

In spirit and in fact, Ruskin's account contrasts sharply with the presentation of Turner's childhood that appears in biographies published during the 1850s. One, published in 1860, conveniently summarizes the most important earlier authors, all of whom had known Turner:

Some ninety years ago, when Covent Garden was a fashionable part of the town, it was famed for its *perruquiers*, or hair-dressers, and dealers in articles of dress and personal ornament, and the streets were crowded with carriages at shopping hours.... There is evidence of this celebrity in the sign of the *White Peruke*, in Maiden-lane, at which lodged Voltaire, who was in England three years.

As you proceed through Maiden-lane, near its west end, on the right hand, opposite the CyderCellars, (opened about 1730,) is a small paved place, with an arched entrance, named Hand-court; and here, at the corner of the court, in the house No. 26, lived William Turner, who "dressed wigs, shaved beards, and in the days of queues, top-knots, and hair-powder, waited on the gentlemen of the Garden at their own houses, and made money by his trade, then a more flourishing profession than that of a hair-dresser of the present day."...

When, or in what way, the young Turner first evinced a love for art, no one has told us.... [W]hen asked, as he [the father] often was, "Well, Turner, what is William to be?" he would reply, with a look of delight, "William is going to be a painter." He was, accordingly, provided with watercolours and brushes, and the father was proud to show his customers the boy's coloured drawings. He soon evinced skill beyond these boyish exercises, and was employed to colour prints by John Raphael Smith, the crayon-painter and mezzotinto engraver, who lived in Maiden-lane, and next in King-street, Covent Garden. Another of Smith's *colourers* at this period was Thomas Girtin... and from him it was that Turner acquired his love for landscape-painting.<sup>69</sup>

Timbs added that the artist Thomas Stothard 'went one day to Turner, the hair-dresser's shop in Maiden-lane to get his hair cut, when the barber remarked to him in conversation, "My son is going to be a painter"'.<sup>70</sup> The sense of community, of parental support, of connections to a larger world into which Turner could advance, are so persuasive in Timbs's account that it is a surprise to encounter Ruskin's version of this same period in Turner's life in an appendix at the end of Timbs's book.<sup>71</sup> Ruskin's dark tale has none of the sense of possibility, none of the human dimension, of the biographies of the 1850s. The addition of Ruskin's famous set-piece, however, is evidence of how quickly it gained an audience and replaced the older account.<sup>72</sup>

Ruskin's views received new attention after the publication of Walter Thornbury's *Life of J.M.W. Turner* in 1862.<sup>73</sup> His ambition, Thornbury wrote, was 'to paint the man as I really believe he was; an image of gold with clay feet'. To that end, he wove eye-witness accounts, letters, stories, bits of history, and overblown descriptive passages into a rambling and wildly unreliable tribute to the late, great Mr. Turner. There is no question that Ruskin is a central figure in Thornbury's book. The author emphasized both Ruskin's approval of the project and the help he gave along the way. In his preface, Thornbury stated the hope that:

My views of Turner's life may agree with those held by the great exponent of his genius.... I have sought not to put him on a higher or a lower throne than that whereon the genius of his great exponent has already placed him, but rather to gather fresh proofs of his genius from the records of his personal history.<sup>74</sup>

Revealingly, Thornbury won a remarkable degree of approval from Ruskin. Although Ruskin called work 'dreadful' in a letter to his father, particularly lamenting its travesty of factual accuracy, he added that 'in Thornbury's view of the man, the book is better than I expected'. (13:554n1) What Ruskin meant, clearly, is that Thornbury closely followed his own descriptions of Turner. Thus, for example, the biography quoted a passage from *Modern Painters* about Turner's nature – exactly the kind of characterization that had been criticized so severely:

Imagine what it was for a man to live seventy years in this hard world, with the kindest heart and the noblest intellect of his time, and never to meet with a single word or ray of sympathy, until he felt himself sinking into the grave. From the time he knew his true greatness, all the world was against him. He held his own but it could not be without roughness of bearing and hardening of the temper, if not of the heart. No one understood him, no one trusted him, and everyone cried out against him.

This image – of a 'soul [tempered by the chills of life] into stuff harder than steel', as Thornbury wrote at another point – appears throughout his biography, with and without the sanction of Ruskin's words.<sup>75</sup>

Thornbury also followed Ruskin in discovering proof of Turner's alienation from the world in the subjects of his paintings. The complicated themes of his late works resulted from disgust and despair at the way in which he was treated. Had he been encouraged in his early work, Turner would have continued producing accessible pictures. Instead, he created a new style: 'Wonderful proofs of [Turner's] power, [the late paintings] had a value of riddles, experiments, and prophecies.' They reflected his 'peculiar love of mystification which [was] the result of suspicious reserve'. The names and subjects of his late works were intended to 'puzzle and tease the public'.<sup>76</sup>

Finally, like Ruskin, Thornbury invented episodes in Turner's life. Here, however, the effect is very different. While Ruskin's inventions transform Turner into an embodiment of the great artist, Thornbury's rarely rise above the level of gossip. For example, Thornbury quoted Ruskin's famous – and fictitious – description of Turner's discovery of his vocation as a landscape painter: 'At last, Fortune wills that the lad's true life shall begin.'<sup>77</sup> Thornbury, by contrast, introduced a series of unhappy love affairs into the painter's life. Clues in the writing sometimes alert the reader to this process of invention. Episodes in Thornbury's biography are introduced by phrases such as 'With the eye of the imagination, we must pierce... the darkness' or 'We must imagine'.<sup>78</sup> Many other times, however, the incidents are woven seamlessly into the text. This is one of the most frustrating aspects of the biography for modern historians.

Thornbury's *Life of J.M.W. Turner* appeared in November 1861 and was reviewed almost immediately in the *Athenaeum*. Other periodicals followed. All of the major reviewers harshly criticized the contradictions, repetitions, and unsupported allegations that riddle Thornbury's narrative. The critic for the *Athenaeum*, for example, stated that the author 'unwisely attempted to emulate in language that period of the great painter's career when sobriety and taste were cast to the winds, and when that which was florid, extravagant, incomplete and experimental (albeit poetical) took their place'.<sup>79</sup> The account in the *Quarterly Review*, written by Lady Eastlake, was even more negative. After noting that Thornbury had published at least nine books and numerous articles during the time he claimed to have devoted to Turner, she continued:

But whatever may be the merits of Mr. Thornbury's other produc-

tions, his 'Life of Turner' is simply the most deplorable piece of book-making that has ever fallen in our way. In a certain sense, indeed, Mr. Thornbury's account of his operations may be correct, for the book does exhibit something of the spirit of research of a Paris chiffonier, who goes about with his basket and picks up every bit of filth and tinsel that comes in his way; but for any really accurate investigation of facts worthy to be known, for any useful judgments upon facts that are ascertained, we must not look to Mr. Thornbury.<sup>80</sup>

The reviewers further observed, as they had about Ruskin's books, that the facts of Turner's career did not substantiate Thornbury's image of persecuted genius. Ironically, Thornbury himself provided plenty of contradictory evidence with his many stories about Turner's fame, fortune, and friends.

Critics had no doubt that Ruskin provided the authority for Thornbury's interpretation. The critic for the *Athenaeum* wrote:

It has been the fashion of late to speak of Turner as one neglected till a powerful and poetical advocate compelled the public to attend to his excellencies,— What are the facts? Only the recorded praise of contemporaries from the very moment he took rank among them!— Only one hundred and forty thousand pounds amassed during his lifetime!

The review in the *Quarterly Review* reiterated this: 'It is a favorite doctrine both with Mr. Ruskin and Mr. Thornbury, that Turner was deeply wronged by the world, and that on the world his faults ought to be charged. We express our entire disbelief of such a theory.'<sup>81</sup> Since factual substantiation of their image of Turner was impossible, Ruskin and Thornbury resorted to what a reviewer for *Blackwood's* called 'webs of cunning argument and specious pleading'. Ruskin's command of language gave him an extraordinary advantage:

Mr. Ruskin, himself a man of genius, knows how to envelop the doubtful soul [of Turner], which, indeed, he declares plainly he did not understand, in the mist and rosy vapours of the celestial gift which accompanied it... But when daylight and facts are poured cold and killing upon the visionary picture – when luckless Mr. Thornbury puffs aside those splendid mists... all unaware of the havoc he is making, [he] reveals that shabby reality below.<sup>82</sup>

The response to the lengthy critique in the *Athenaeum* is astonishing: a stream of angry letters from Thornbury's sources denying the validity of the information attributed to them. The respondents include such figures as the publisher Lovell Reeve, the collector and industrialist Henry M'Connell, and Turner's engraver and old friend John Pye. All categorically denied the truth of an assortment of facts and stories found in the book. On 11 January 1862 Thornbury's solicitor informed the readers of the *Athenaeum* that his client would be unable to answer any of the accusations because he was traveling in Egypt. On 22 February the magazine published a long letter of explanation from Thornbury which, however, only heightened the ire of his critics. On 18 March the editor announced that 'this very disagreeable correspondence should now cease', although there were still more unpublished letters of protest.<sup>83</sup>

Subsequent biographers of Turner continued to complain that Ruskin – and with him, Thornbury – twisted the historical facts, but they did not ignore his writings. It is revealing that Dutton Cook called the chapter about Turner in his book *Art in England. Notes and Studies*, published in 1869, 'Turner and Ruskin'. After repeating the charge that Turner had said Ruskin 'knows a great deal more about my pictures



than I do', and disputing Ruskin's presentation of the artist's life in many respects, Cook said about *Modern Painters*: 'A more imposing monument to Turner's memory than is afforded by this book, with all its defects, can hardly be [imagined]. It is '[e]mpirically a great work – a noble jewel in the crown of art literature'.<sup>84</sup>

Two events in the late 1870s consolidated Ruskin's authority as Turner's greatest interpreter. The first was that a revised edition of Thornbury's biography appeared in 1877. It received little notice in the press, certainly nothing like the earlier outpouring of criticism, and what notices there were assumed Ruskin's authority. A review in the *Literary World* explained:

The original edition... was undertaken with the approval of Mr. Ruskin, the great interpreter of Turner's artistic work, and received his commendation when completed... Mr. Ruskin has so occupied the field in his surpassingly eloquent expositions of Turner's work that the very idea of rivalry is almost an absurdity, and, of course, Mr. Thornbury did not dream of it. His object was to present the man to the thousands who have learned to admire the artist... How poor Turner lived, with what industry he laboured, what great works he accomplished, and yet how great a wreck and failure his life in some respects was, is recorded in these pages by Mr. Thornbury... [E]veryone who takes an interest in art ought to be acquainted [with this book].<sup>85</sup>

The second event was the major exhibition in 1878 of watercolours by Turner, organized by Ruskin from works in his own collection and held at the Fine Art Society in London. The show, which ran from March through the summer, was seen by thousands of viewers, and its catalogue ran through many printings. Although Ruskin's breakdown in February of 1878 prevented him from finishing the entries before the exhibition opened, he was able to do so by summer, when a revised edition of the catalogue appeared.<sup>86</sup> His text, which combines new writing about the specific works in the show with lengthy quotations from *Modern Painters*, reiterates his vision of Turner's art and life. About *Bergamo* (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford), for example, an early drawing dating from Turner's years of collaboration with Thomas Girtin in the Monro Academy, Ruskin wrote:

This wonderful little drawing is the earliest example I can give of the great distinctive passion of Turner's nature; the one which separates him from all other modern landscapists, – his sympathy with sorrow, deepened by continual sense of the power of death... Turner alone works in a grief he would escape from, but cannot. (13:415)

In Ruskin's view, Turner and his art changed dramatically about 1825. This is explained in the entry for *Sunshine on the Tamar* (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford), the first work in Ruskin's fifth group, titled *Reality. England Disquieted*:

But a time has now come when he [Turner] recognizes that all is not right with the world – a discovery contemporary, probably, with the more grave one that all was not right within himself. Howsoever it came to pass, a strange, and in many respects grievous metamorphosis takes place upon him, about the year 1825. Thenceforward he shows clearly the sense of a terrific wrongness and sadness, mingled in the beautiful order of the earth; his work becomes partly satirical, partly reckless, partly – and in its greatest and noblest features – tragic (13:433-34).<sup>87</sup>

Ultimately, the public was to blame: 'When they see, gathered now together in one group, examples of the drawings in which the calamitous change is expressed most clearly, the public may perhaps see how in the deepest sense their own follies were the cause of all that they blamed, and of the infinitely greater all that they lost' (13:435).

Even if the emotional engagement with Turner revealed in this catalogue is not greater than it is in Ruskin's other writings, it is more poignant. Not only were the pictures owned by Ruskin, tangible evidence of his devotion to the painter, and presented framed, as it were, by Ruskin's words about them, but the show included pictures by Ruskin. These pictures formed, wrote the reviewer for the *Athenaeum*, 'a tolerably complete art-autobiography, delineating the author's progress in drawing from an early period of his life to the present day... [In] a highly characteristic and in many respects intensely pathetic "catalogue"[, t]he artist writes of himself, his aims, motives, powers, and temporary successes and failures'.<sup>88</sup> In addition, the show opened under the shadow of Ruskin's illness, which was reported widely in the press. Partly in response to it, the Fine Art Society organized the purchase of the Alpine watercolour Ruskin had written about wanting more than any other, but which his father had not allowed him to buy. This was presented to him in June, when he had recovered sufficiently to be able to receive the gift.<sup>89</sup> Taken as a whole, then, the show at the Fine Art Society was an extraordinary tribute to Ruskin's lifelong commitment to Turner, and its catalogue a compelling and accessible restatement of Ruskin's vision of the artist.

By the end of the 1870s, even strongly worded objections by well-informed writers were unable to counteract the influence of Ruskin's ideas.<sup>90</sup> Philip Gilbert Hamerton's biography, which appeared in 1879, devoted a chapter to the subject of Ruskin and Turner. Although full of respect for Ruskin, Hamerton observed that 'the enthusiasm of his young admirer seemed excessive to Turner, who constantly tried to prevent him [Ruskin] from writing'.<sup>91</sup> He likened Ruskin's claims about Turner to the 'calculated artifice' of Macaulay and Carlyle, where 'the appeal to the feelings is founded upon a fiction'.<sup>92</sup> W Cosmo Monkhouse, whose biography appeared three years later, began with a protest against Thornbury, who had access to information that had been lost in the intervening years. And 'Mr. Ruskin, who might have helped so much, has contributed little to the life of the artist but some brilliant passages of pathetic rhetoric. Overgrown by his luxuriant eloquence, and buried beneath the *débris* of Thornbury, the ruins of Turner's Life lay hidden till last year'. Although Hamerton had begun the job of a proper life, Monkhouse continued, he 'left much [work] to be done'.<sup>93</sup> In 1905, WL Wyllie repeated the now-familiar protests:

Unfortunately, in his zeal and energy, Ruskin has been carried far beyond the truth, and gives us a fabulous Turner – about as unlike the real man as can be. To make out that Turner was a neglected genius, and that the noblest intellect of his time never met with a single word or ray of sympathy – that all the world was turned against him – is simply absurd. When we come to descriptions of the pictures, we meet such words as the following: 'J.M.W. Turner is the only man who has ever given an entire transcript of the whole system of nature.' This is impossible nonsense.<sup>94</sup>

In summary, Wyllie wrote:

This is very beautiful writing [by Ruskin], but [it] is not the truth. Turner had many to teach him. His father gave him every possible help. His fellow painters were full of admiration for his work, and he had many staunch friends to the last. I think my readers will agree with me, that he lived a prosperous and fairly happy life, and that his end was by no means miserable, but such as he himself would have wished.<sup>95</sup>

Even when illness prevented Ruskin from undertaking major new projects, his ideas about Turner continued to be very vis-

ible. Some of his earlier writings appeared in new editions.<sup>96</sup> The most famous word-pictures, especially about Turner's paintings, were quoted and read by many who never looked at the actual books. For some, such as Oscar Wilde, he simply had become the more important artist:

Who cares whether Mr. Ruskin's views on Turner are sound or not? What does it matter? That mighty and majestic prose of his, so fervid and so fiery-coloured in its noble eloquence, so rich in its elaborate symphonic music, so sure and certain, at its best, in subtle choice of word and epithet, is at least as great a work of art as any of those wonderful sunsets that bleach or rot on their corrupted canvases in England's Gallery; greater, indeed, one is apt to think at times.<sup>97</sup>

After Ruskin's death in 1900, ET Cook and Alexander Wedderburn began the monumental project that became the 39 volumes of the Library Edition of the *Complete Works of John Ruskin*. Just as Ruskin's words framed Turner's water-colours in 1878, so the words and choices of the two editors framed Ruskin's works. His image of Turner as an isolated artist, rescued and properly interpreted by Ruskin, was not contradicted, and the criticism it had received was minimized, when not ignored altogether.<sup>98</sup>

I would like to thank Allen Staley, Professor Emeritus, Columbia University, for his instruction and wise counsel during my years as a graduate student, and his continued interest in my work. I also am grateful to Professor Ching-Jung Chen, City College of New York, CUNY, who suggested important revisions to this article. My research was partially funded by a grant from the PSC-CUNY Professional Development Fund.

1 All references to Ruskin's writings are to ET Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, eds, *The Complete Works of John Ruskin. Library Edition*, 39 vols, London, 1903-12. This quotation is from 3:630-1. All subsequent citations will follow the quotation in the text.

2 Raleigh Trevelyan, *A Pre-Raphaelite Circle: The Life of Lady P.J. Trevelyan, and Her Friends*, London, 1978, p28.

3 An up-to-date guide to this literature can be found in the bibliography of Ian Warrell, ed, *J.M.W. Turner*, exh cat., National Gallery of Art, Washington., DC, 2007. The basic resource for all Turner research is Martin Butlin and Evelyn Joll, *The Paintings of J.M.W. Turner*, rev edn, 2 vols, New Haven and London, 1984. Their catalogue number is cited in my text as 'B & J' after the first mention of each painting.

4 The most eloquent exposition of this view of Turner is surely Lawrence Gowing, *Turner: Imagination and Reality*, exh cat., The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1966. This view appeared most recently in many of the newspaper reviews of the Turner exhibition circulating in America in 2008. See, for example, Lance Esplund, 'Nature Painted with Force. Turner's Magnificence Shines at Met', *The New York Sun*, 3 July 2008 (<http://www.nysun.com/arts/nature-painted-with-force/81221/>): 'Turner is a visionary, a romantic, and an expressionist . . .'

5 Tim Hilton, *John Ruskin*, New Haven and London, 2002, p24. For Ruskin's description of it, see *Praeterita*: 'I had no sooner cast eyes on the Rogers vignettes [by Turner] than I took them for my only masters' (35:79). See, for example, the discussion in the first volume of *Modern Painters*, which begins 'Neither in his actual views of Italy has Turner ever caught her true spirit, except in the little vignettes to Rogers's poems' (3:242-3).

6 Ibid, p38.

7 Ibid, p53, p77, and Luke Herrmann, *Ruskin and Turner*, New York, 1968, pp19-20. For Ruskin's memories of first seeing and owning original works by Turner, see 35:252-6.

8 Ian Warrell, 'Learning from Turner', in Robert Hewison et al, *Ruskin, Turner and the Pre-Raphaelites*, exh cat., Tate Gallery, 2000, p65. For Ruskin's account of meeting Turner, see 35:305. What happened to alter their relationship has been the subject of much speculation. See Hilton, op cit, pp101-2 and pp403-4.

9 For a complete account of this complicated history, see Ian Warrell, *Through Switzerland with Turner: Ruskin's First Selection from the Turner Bequest*, exh cat., Tate Gallery, 1995, pp21-30.

10 Ibid, pp38-40. For the phrase 'black anger', see 3:xviii.

11 John Gage, ed, *Collected Correspondence of J.M.W. Turner, with an Early Diary and a Memoir by George Jones*, Oxford, 1980, letter 202, pp160-1.

12 Helene E Roberts, 'Art Reviewing in the Early Nineteenth-Century Periodicals', *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, no 19 (March 1973), pp9-20. I discuss this material in a monograph about the development of art criticism in Britain during the late 18th and early 19th centuries (forthcoming).

13 Ruskin's close relationship to contemporary art criticism and critics is discussed by Hewison, "'The Beautiful and the True'", in

Only in the past few decades, using the extraordinary amount of research that has been made available about both Turner and Ruskin, has it been possible fully to appreciate how passionate but also how partial Ruskin's view of Turner is. A student when he first met the 65-year-old artist, Ruskin quite naturally saw Turner in Victorian terms. His choice of the great paintings, his constant reference to the engravings as a standard of excellence, his method of interpreting the pictures, and, finally, his view of the man, all make sense within a Victorian context.<sup>99</sup> As important is the idea that Ruskin's interpretations fashion Turner into what Tim Hilton called 'a scattered and unstable self-portrait'.<sup>100</sup> Read in reverse, as it were, looking at Ruskin's view of Turner for the insights it provides about Ruskin rather than about Turner offers a compelling approach to the writings. Certainly it is one that must be taken into account by any scholar of Turner.

Hewison et al, pp14-5.

14 Hilton, op cit, pp69-73.

15 *Spectator* (13 May 1843), p451.

16 For a discussion of the responses it received, published as well as private, see 3:xxxv-xliii. A letter in the *Art-Union*, vol 5 (July 1843), p197, from 'An Admirer of Turner', an early reference not mentioned in Cook and Wedderburn, op cit, makes the same points as the reviewers. Ruskin's published replies to reviews are collected in 3:641-61.

17 For a study of the reviews of *Modern Painters*, although not with Turner as the focus, see Lester Dolk, 'The Reception of Modern Painters', *Modern Language Notes*, vol 57, no. 8 (December 1942), pp621-26; and JD Jump, 'Ruskin's Reputation in the Eighteen-Fifties: the Evidence of the Three Principal Weeklies', *PMLA* vol 63, no. 2 (June 1948), pp678-85.

18 *Art-Union* vol 5 (June 1843), pp151-2.

19 Looking back to Turner's earlier work for evidence of his greatness first became common during the late 1820s (and paintings from just a few years earlier often looked better in retrospect). See, for example, *John Bull* vol 7 (27 May 1827), p165: 'When we look back some twenty or five and twenty years standing, . . . it really makes us sick . . . to see so sad, so needless a falling off.' Reviewers also sometimes predicted the greatness of a work in the future. See, for example, the *Sun* (7 May 1816), about the two views of the Temple of Jupiter Panellenius (B & J 133 and B & J 134) at the Academy: 'These two pictures are like two new guineas, fresh from the Mint, yellow, shining, gorgeous and sterling; but, unlike the said coins, they will be improved in worth by age, and be more valuable in 1916 than in 1816.' Interestingly, the measure of worth is financial value rather than artistic reputation. On this important issue, see the article by

Ian Warrell, 'Dopo Turner ancora Turner. Indagine sulle origini dello stile maturo dell' artista' in Marco Goldin, *Turner e gli impressionisti*, exh cat, Museo di Santa Giulia, Brescia, 2006, pp53-63.

20 *Gentleman's Magazine* ns vol 20 (November 1843), pp451-52.

21 Ibid, p454.

22 Ibid, p467.

23 Although Ruskin's attacks severely damaged Eagles's reputation for modern readers, he actually was a competent reviewer with traditional views. For a more reasonable contemporary assessment, see John Lewis Roget, *Notes and Memoranda Respecting the Liber Studiorum of J.M.W. Turner, R.A.*, London, 1879, p35: 'Eagles... [was a] thoughtful and agreeable, but now [ie, 1879] old-fashioned, writer on art.'

24 *Blackwood's Magazine* vol 54 (October 1843), p484.

25 Ibid, p492.

26 An interesting analysis of the invective found in the anonymous reviews in *Blackwood's* and its role in the creation of an authorial presence is Peter T Murphy, 'Impersonation and Authorship in Romantic Britain', *ELH* vol 59 (1992), pp625-49.

27 For a thorough attempt to establish which paintings were exhibited when, see Selby Whittingham, 'Turner's Second Gallery', *Turner Society News* no. 42 (November 1986), p10.

28 *Blackwood's Magazine* vol 54 (October 1843), p489.

29 Ibid, p491.

30 *Athenaeum* (3 February 1844), p105.

31 Ibid, p107.

32 Ibid, p105.

33 Ibid, p106.

34 This same point is made in Sheila Emerson, *Ruskin. The Genesis of Invention*, Cambridge, 1993, pp161-63.

35 Ruskin referred to Carlyle's immense influence on his writing in 5:427 and 12:507, among other places. An interesting discussion of

- Carlyle's influence on Ruskin is Nick Shrimpton, "'Rust and Dust': Ruskin's Pivotal Work", in Robert Hewison, ed, *New Approaches to Ruskin*, London, 1981, pp51-67.
- 36 Van Akin Burd, ed, *The Wymington Letters. John Ruskin's Correspondence with Margaret Alexis Bell and the Children at Wymington Hall*, London, 1969, pp67-68.
- 37 WG Collingwood, *The Life of John Ruskin*, rev edn, Boston and New York, 1902, p84, with the influence of Carlyle's *Heroes* mentioned again on p88. For the argument that Ruskin took Turner as his artist-hero, see Robert Hewison, 'Conclusion' in Hewison *et al*, op cit, p276.
- 38 Hilton, op cit, p314.
- 39 Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, Archibald MacMechan, ed, Boston, 1901, p49; and pp51-52 ('The Hero as Prophet').
- 40 *Ibid*, p91, p92 ('The Hero as Poet').
- 41 For a discussion of the influence of Carlyle on Ruskin, and the differences between the ideas of Carlyle, Ruskin, and Coleridge, see George P Landow, *The Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin*, Princeton, 1971, esp p326, p389.
- 42 *Athenaeum* (25 July 1846), p766.
- 43 *Ibid*, p767.
- 44 *The Foreign Quarterly Review* vol 37(1843), p382.
- 45 *Ibid*, pp398-99.
- 46 *Ibid*, p402.
- 47 *Something on Ruskinism; with a 'Vestibule' in Rhyme, by an Architect*, London, 1851, p42, p43.
- 48 *Quarterly Review* vol 98 (December 1855-March 1856), pp384-433; *Edinburgh Review* vol 103 (April 1856), pp535-57; *National Review* vol 3 (July 1856), pp80-106; and *Westminster Review* ns vol 9 (1856), pp625-33.
- 49 Tom Taylor, ed, *Autobiographical Recollections, by the late Charles Robert Leslie*, Boston, 1860, p136. Other people who heard the lecture also criticized the accuracy of Ruskin's stories about Turner. See, for example, the letter printed in *Athenaeum* (10 June 1854), p720.
- 50 *Blackwood's Magazine* vol 75 (June 1854), p753 (review of Ruskin's *Architecture and Painting*).
- 51 *Edinburgh Review* vol 103 (April 1856), p538, p540.
- 52 *Blackwood's Magazine*, vol 87 (January 1860), p43 (review of *Elements of Drawing*).
- 53 *Athenaeum* (27 May 1854), p651.
- 54 *Ibid* (28 May 1859), p703.
- 55 *Ibid* (28 May 1859), p704.
- 56 *Ibid* (30 June 1860), p879.
- 57 Lovell Reeve, quoted in Alaric A Watts, 'A Biographical Sketch', in *Liber Fluviorum; or, River Scenery of France*, London, 1857, p xlvi. It also was reported as fact in Timbs, op cit, p367, and WL Wyllie, *J.M.W. Turner*, London, 1905, p101. For artists, see George Richmond, 13:275, as well as Alexander Brodie, ed, *The Reminiscences of Solomon Hart, R.A.*, London, 1882, p48: "Turner confessed to me, that Mr. Ruskin often credited him with motives that never actuated him." Collingwood, op cit, p192, discussed the question with characteristic tact.
- 58 *Sun* (16 May 1815); and *St. James's Chronicle* (11-13 May 1815).
- 59 *Literary Gazette* vol 1 (1817), p249; and *Repository of Arts* ns vol 3 (1817), p348. For a recent analysis of the similarities in the way two contemporaries of Turner understood one of his paintings, see Luke Herrmann, 'J.M.W. Turner's *Pope's Villa at Twickenham*. A Case Study', *The British Art Journal*, VIII, 1 (Summer 2007), pp20-23.
- 60 *Art Journal* vol 9 (November 1847), p368.
- 61 *St. James's Chronicle* (21-24 May 1814).
- 62 *Press-Cuttings*, Victoria & Albert Museum, vol 6, p1687; *Spectator* (28 May 1836), p516; *Pictorial Times* (27 May 1843), quoted in William M. Thackeray, *Critical Papers in Art*, London, 1904, p202; *New Monthly Magazine* vol 72 (June 1844), p252; and the *Art Journal* vol 11 (1849), p167.
- 63 There has been extensive art historical research devoted to this painting. See especially Judy Egerton, *Turner: the Fighting Temeraire*, exh cat, National Gallery, London, 1995; and Richard L. Stein, 'Remember the Temeraire: Turner's Memorial of 1839', *Representations* vol 11 (Summer 1985), pp165-200.
- 64 *Morning Chronicle* (7 May 1839); and *Athenaeum* (11 May 1839), p357.
- 65 The literature on the picturesque is considerable. For an important discussion about its influence on art criticism specifically, see Helene E Roberts, "'Trains of Fascinating and Endless Imagery': Associationist Art Criticism before 1850", *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Special Issue in Honor of Walter Houghton, vol 10 (September 1977), pp25-32.
- 66 See B & J 58 and 252.
- 67 For an extended discussion of how the painting symbolized Turner's own life, see 13:136.
- 68 This point was made by Collingwood, op cit, p192: "[Ruskin] read into pictures of Tintoret or Turner . . . a meaning or a moral which he so vividly communicated to the reader as to make it thenceforward part and parcel of the subject, however it came there to begin with. It is useless to wonder whether Turner, for instance, consciously meant what Ruskin found in his works'.
- 69 John Timbs, *Anecdote Biography: William Hogarth, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough, Henry Fuseli, Sir Thomas Lawrence, and J.M.W. Turner*, London, 1860, pp309-10. Since Timbs compiled his information from earlier sources, his book provides a useful summary of the first biographies of Turner, especially John Burnet, *Turner and His Works*, [with] *The Memoir*, by Peter Cunningham, London, 1852, and Watts, op cit.
- 70 *Ibid*, pp318-9.
- 71 *Ibid*, pp380-2.
- 72 Notable exceptions are Ralph Nicholson Wornum, *The Turner Gallery: a Series of Sixty Engravings from the Principal Works of J.M.W. Turner. A Memoir and Illustrative Text*, London, 1861, and Philip Gilbert Hamerton, *The Life of J.M.W. Turner, R.A.*, London, 1879, pp14-28.
- 73 Walter Thornbury, *The Life of J.M.W. Turner, R.A.: Founded on Letters and Papers Furnished by his Friends and Fellow Academicians*, 2nd edn, London, 1877, rpt London, 1970.
- 74 *Ibid*, p xv. Other such references appear throughout the Preface, ppxi-xiv. According to Thornbury, he wrote his biography of Turner supervised by Ruskin – "very much like working bareheaded under a tropical sun!" (M Clare Loughlin-Chow, 'Thornbury, (George) Walter (1828–1876)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed HCG Matthew and Brian Harrison, Oxford, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27341> (accessed July 13, 2008).
- 75 *Ibid*, p310 and p343. This particular passage (12:133) offended others, including Hamerton, op cit, pp325-26, who called it 'deeply pathetic' – but untrue.
- 76 *Ibid*, pp338-39; and p309.
- 77 *Ibid*, p97, quoting Ruskin (7:375), and pp41-43.
- 78 *Ibid*, p33, and p12.
- 79 *Athenaeum* (16 November 1861), pp643-46.
- 80 *Quarterly Review*, vol 111 (April 1862), p470.
- 81 *Athenaeum* (16 November 1861), p643, and *Quarterly Review* vol 111 (April 1862), p470.
- 82 *Blackwood's Magazine* vol 91 (January 1862), p34.
- 83 *Athenaeum* (7 December 1861), pp765-66, (14 December 1861), p808, (1 March 1862), pp296-97, (8 March 1862), pp331-32, (11 January 1862), p51; (22 February 1862), p260; (15 March 1862), p363.
- 84 Cook, op cit, pp336-37.
- 85 *Literary World* (15 June 1877), pp372-73.
- 86 Hilton, op cit, 673-74.
- 87 For various suggestions in modern scholarship that such statements refer more to Ruskin than to Turner, see below, note 100. Ruskin himself referred to the likenesses between what he supposed to be Turner's mental condition and his own. See, for one among many examples, Van Akin Burd, ed, op cit, p280 (Letter No. 118, 9 March 1861): "Turner broke down altogether just at this time of his mental progress. . . & I'm so like him."
- 88 *Athenaeum* (22 June 1878), p803.
- 89 Hilton, op cit, pp673-75. Ruskin wrote about the present in a Preface dated June 5, 1878 (13:488). The watercolour is illustrated and discussed in Hewison *et al*, op cit, cat. no 112, p129.
- 90 Peter Bayne, 'Studies of English Authors, No. 1, John Ruskin', *Literary World* (19 April 1878), pp250-51, represents an interesting attempt to reconcile Turner's professional success with Ruskin's claim that he defended the artist against vicious attack by limiting Ruskin's explanation to Turner's reputation during the 1840s.
- 91 Hamerton, op cit, p315.
- 92 *Ibid*, p324.
- 93 William Cosmo Monkhouse, *Turner*, London, 1882, p v.
- 94 WL Wyllie, *J.M.W. Turner*, London, 1905, p103.
- 95 *Ibid*, op cit, pp144-45.
- 96 Hewison, ed, p195; and Hewison *et al*, p271.
- 97 Oscar Wilde, 'The Critic as Artist—Part I', in Isobel Murray, ed, *Oscar Wilde: The Major Works*, Oxford, 2000, p262.
- 98 Hilton, op cit, pp xxviii-xxix, suggests some of the weaknesses of the Library Edition. A good example is the presentation of the reviews of the first volume of *Modern Painters*. It provides a comprehensive list, but organizes and summarizes the reviews so as to minimize the negative ones and give undue prominence to minor but positive ones (3:xxxv-xliii).
- 99 Ian Warrell discusses this in relation to Turner's sexually explicit drawings in 'Exploring the "dark side". Ruskin and the Problem of Turner's Erotica', *The British Art Journal*, VI, 1 (Spring 2003), pp5-14.
- 100 Hilton, op cit, ppxxi-ii as well as p300, p656, p707. See also Dinah Birch, ed, *Ruskin on Turner*, Boston, 1990, p9 and p16; and Dinah Birch, 'Elegiac Voices Wordsworth, Turner, and Ruskin', *The Review of English Studies*, ns vol 50, no. 199 (August 1999), p344.