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THE SUBLIME RIVALRY OF WORD AND IMAGE: TURNER AND RUSKIN REVISITED

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> 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 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, not merely because its equal beauty is more enduring, but on account of the fuller variety of its appeal, soul speaking to soul in those long cadenced lines, not through form and colour alone, though through these, indeed, completely and without loss, but with intellectual and emotional utterance, with lofty passion and with loftier thought, with imaginative insight, and with poetic aim; greater, I always think, even as Literature is the greater art.
>
> —Oscar Wilde, *The Critic as Artist*

WHILE MUCH ATTENTION has been lavished upon the positive and ultimately profitable relationship between Ruskin and Turner, the closeness of their association has served to obscure a more subtle dynamic between the author and the painter in their respective quests for expression. Both Turner, who considered himself a poet as well as a painter, and Ruskin, an accomplished draughtsman who illustrated his own writings, were actively involved in forging new connections between word and image, and in breaking down the barriers between genres embraced by earlier generations. Turner and Ruskin each turned to the sister art both for inspiration, and importantly, for a means of supplementing what each perceived to be the insufficiencies of his own medium. For Turner, painting's concrete, mimetic nature was at odds with his desire to communicate abstract ideas, while for Ruskin, language's abstract and conventional nature fell short of our visual experience of the world and failed adequately to address our visual powers of thought, memory, and imagination. Yet as Turner tried to infuse his painting with poetry and Ruskin tried to render his prose visual, they nonetheless remained acutely aware of the *gap* between words and images. And if Turner and Ruskin readily acknowledged their intergeneric borrowings from the sister arts, implicit within their formulations of "poetic painting" and "painterly prose" is the subtext of the *paragone,* an age old rivalry between painters and poets for representational or expressive superiority.

Indeed, as Wilde astutely observes in the quotation above, there is a decidedly competitive — if seldom remarked — edge to the relationship between this pair of artists that is manifested in an ongoing comparison between their modes of representation, both in terms of their aesthetic appeal and in their effect upon an audience. From their earliest manifestations, the tensions between painting and poetry were rooted not only in the aesthetic but in the political, as artists contended for representational hegemony, seeking to dominate both an audience and each other while struggling to attain a higher position within the socio-artistic hierarchy. The painter had consistently been relegated to the lower rank, considered an artisan rather than an artist based on the physical nature of his labors. Moreover, the painter's mode of representation — the mimesis of the material world — was considered inferior to the more intellectual endeavors of the author or the musician, and he was in turn associated with ignorance, illusion, and base imitation. In the ancient world, painting was considered more of a craft than an art and thus denied a muse; by the middle ages the seven liberal arts were defined as grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music, while painting was notably excluded, classified instead among the mechanical arts, along with navigation, hunting, and agriculture. Over the course of the centuries, painters and their defenders would struggle to gain a place for painting among the liberal arts, asserting its noble and intellectual nature, while simultaneously seeking to raise the painter from the status of artisan to the more elevated position of artist, a creator rather than a mere imitator.

Thus, although it was Alberti who first coined the idea of a *paragone* in *De Pictura* (1435) as a comparison between the arts, it was Leonardo's formulation of the *paragone* as a *competition* between painting, poetry, and music that gained immediate and long-term popularity with artists and critics alike. Attempting to usurp poetry's aesthetic hegemony and claim a place for painting among the liberal arts, Leonardo ranked the arts according to the senses through which they are perceived. Since painting appeals to the eye, the closest link between the *sensus communis* and the exterior world, he claims it is superior to poetry and music which are experienced by hearing, "a lesser sense . . . less noble than sight" (23). The synthetic and simultaneous nature of painting affords it a greater impact on its audience, while, moreover, the visual image is more "truthful," more "harmonious," and more "realistic" than verbal description. Words, for Leonardo, are at odds with experience because they can only recount over time something that was perceived in a single instant; whereas a painting is viewed "instantaneously, just as natural things are seen . . . the works of the poets must be read over a long span of time" (23). Anticipating Lessing's distinctions between the spatial and temporal arts, Leonardo maintains that poetry's linear development in time makes it at once less effective and less realistic than painting's synthetic representation in space.

Even more fundamental to his argument is the painter's *power* over his audience, the crux of his representational superiority over the lesser art of poetry. Turning the visual art's traditional shortcoming into an advantage, the Renaissance master boasts that it is in fact the painter's ability to reproduce the illusion of concrete reality that allows him to dominate both his viewer and his rival, the poet. "So much greater is the power of a painting over a man's mind," Leonardo maintains, "If the poet says he can inflame men with love, which is the central aim in all animal species, the painter has the power to do the same, and to an even greater degree, in that he can place in front of the lover the true likeness of that which is beloved, often making him kiss and speak to it. This would never happen with the same beauties set before him by the writer" (26). Painting's visual realism and by extension its dominance extend from the human form to landscape and in a passage that will resonate in the competition between Turner and Ruskin invoked below, Leonardo compares the experience of nature in the different media. Beginning with the premise that "the natural beauty of the world . . . can only be appreciated through the sense of sight," he argues:

> And if in this respect the poet also wishes to call himself a painter, why do you not take up the descriptions of such places by the poet, and stay at home without subjecting yourself to the excessive heat of the sun? . . . But your soul would not enjoy the benefits provided by the eyes, windows of its dwelling, and it would not receive the images of pleasant locations; it would not see the shady valleys irrigated by the play of winding rivers; it would not see the various flowers. . . . But if a painter in the cold and harsh wintertime set before you the same or similar landscapes as those in which you once took your pleasures beside a spring, you will be able to picture yourself again as a lover with your beloved in flowery meadows, beneath the sweet shade of verdant trees. Will you not obtain a different pleasure than from hearing the poet's description of such effects? (32)

Directly attacking the poet's pretensions to visual evocation and "word painting," Leonardo again bases his evaluation of art on its qualities as a simulacrum of the real world and denies the poet access to "the benefits provided by the eyes." Whereas the painted image might excite further images in the mind of the viewer, based on memory and imagination ("you will be able to picture yourself . . . "), words pointedly lack this ability within Leonardo's formulation. The dialectic between representation and reality, between words and images, and between the immediate experience of the artwork and the perceiver's memory and imagination will play a central role in both Turner's and Ruskin's own formulations of the *paragone,* most notably in their visual and verbal evocations of landscape and "natural beauty."

Despite the Renaissance polymath's greatest efforts, painting continued to be dominated by poetry within the aesthetic hierarchy throughout the centuries to follow, consistently denigrated as "artisanal" rather than intellectual due the physical nature of its production and subject matter. Baroque and neo-classical artists and their defenders penned countless tracts, pamphlets and discourses on the theoretical bases for painting's inclusion among the "noble arts" in elaborate variations on the theme *ut pictura poesis,* and the painter's quest for intellectual legitimacy reached a crescendo in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries in England. Sir Joshua Reynolds, who influenced not only Turner but the vast majority of English painters of the period, defined a serious artist as one "who enlarges his understanding by a variety of knowledge, and warms his imagination with the best productions of ancient and modern poetry" (50). In his famous Third Discourse, delivered at the Royal Academy in 1770, Reynolds deliberately turned

Leonardo's formulation on its head, insisting, "it is not the eye, it is the mind, which the painter of genius desires to address," while further maintaining that it is neither its realism nor its ability to fool a viewer, but rather the *idea* "which gives to painting its true dignity, which entitles it to the name of a Liberal Art, and ranks it as a sister of poetry" (50). Implicit in this call for poetic inspiration is the admission of poetry's aesthetic superiority — painting must reject a purely mechanical reproduction of nature and strive to elevate itself to the level of its more cerebral rival. Even Martin Shee's prototypical *Rhymes on Art* (1805), subtitled "The Remonstrance of a Painter," in attempting a defense of English painting cedes the dominance of English literature both in its form and in its content, and Andrew Wilton attests "it seems to be inevitable that in England the visual arts should always take second place to literature" (*Painting* 26).

In response, perhaps, to this contemporary aesthetic hierarchy as well as to his personal predilections, Turner became known as a particularly "literate" artist early in his career, painting scenes after Ovid, Virgil, Milton, Pope, Scott, Byron, Thomson, Goethe, etc. and illustrating the works of many of these same authors in intricate and evocative vignettes.[1] Moreover, beginning in 1798, Turner began including verse in the exhibition catalogue alongside, or in place of, the titles of his paintings, and of the approximately 200 oil paintings that Turner exhibited in his lifetime, more than 50 had poetic epigraphs, half of which the artist composed himself.[2] His earliest use of literary quotation was relatively straightforward: readily identifiable passages from Thomson's *Seasons* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* accompanied five out of his ten submissions to the Royal Academy's Spring Exhibition, and initially these efforts reflected the painter's desire to lend further authority to his own work, to amplify or specify his meaning, and to capitalize on the further associations that the poetry might entail. Yet from the very beginning of Turner's incorporation of literary allusion into the experience of his paintings, there is an underlying tension between word and image and a subtle struggle for ultimate authority. Inverting the classical genre of ekphrasis, where the work of visual art inspires a poem or descriptive passage, here the poetry, which existed before the painting, either inspires the work of visual art, or in a more interesting twist, is taken out of the context of its own original sense to give new meaning both to the painting and to its own words. Hence the written word is at the service of the painted image, not vice versa. The inclusion of the printed poetic text in conjunction with a specific painting necessitated a juxtaposition of the acts of reading and viewing, and a back and forth movement between words and images that Ruskin would later exploit in his own ekphrastic forays and provides an early but emblematic model for Turner's theory of the language of images and the generation of meaning in a visual text.

Almost immediately after the Exhibition of 1798, Turner, no longer content with the words of others, began to try his own hand at poetry and from 1800 until his last exhibition in 1850 he continued intermittently to use his own poetry as a gloss to his paintings. Neither a gifted nor a fluent poet, Turner soon earned a reputation as "poetaster, pessimist and public laughing stock" during his lifetime, and even today *The Fallacies of Hope,* a long philosophic poem on which he worked throughout his career, is regarded as a "strange, inchoate and amorphous collection of scraps" (Wilton, *Painting* 13), while his writings in general are dismissed as "banal" and "devoid of any literary merit" (Ziff 193). In light of his lack of talent and the difficulty with which he composed, Turner's persistence in creating his own poetry underlines the importance of the sister art in his own self-definition as an artist, and his desire not only to use poetry, but to outdo it as well, making his a composite art that obviated the poet entirely. From the outset of his ekphrastic experiments, Turner consistently revised, edited, misquoted, and misattributed the poems he cited, ofttimes presenting an eccentric hybrid somewhere between the original poet's creation and Turner's own. While this has traditionally been explained through carelessness, ignorance, or even his possible dyslexia, when seen in conjunction with his own compositions and his later use of words and intertexts, Turner's early reworkings of the poems of undisputed masters may also be interpreted as his subtle assertion of the painter's power and prowess. Notable examples of this competitive bent include two early paintings — *Thomson's Aeolian Harp* (1809) and *The Fall of an Avalanche in the Grisons* (1810) — which were based on episodes from Thomson's poetry, but were accompanied in the catalogue by Turner's *own* poetry rather than the verses that inspired them. Clearly inferior to Thomson's lines and to his own painting, Turner's poetry bespeaks a twofold motivation. First, in keeping with his theory that the sister arts "spring from the same well," Turner believed that the best gloss on any painting would be an identically inspired poem, for the two function as complementary expressions of a single idea. Fundamental, however, to these literary forays is the underlying desire for generic superiority and Turner's ambitious quest to arrogate some of the poet's prestige and expressive power to himself and his artform.

While his poetry represents one manifestation of Turner's competition with his artistic sibling rival, a series of lectures delivered at the Royal Academy in his capacity as Professor of Perspective reveal further aspects of the painter's response to the *paragone.* Turner's lectures on perspective, which he began in 1811 after four years of intensive preparation, coincide with his most prolific years of poetic composition, while his readings in aesthetics during this period exposed him to a wide array of theoretical polemics on the intersections and distinctions between the arts. The lectures, given to fellow Academicians and students, are striking in the degree to which Turner defines his own art in terms of and against poetry. Punctuated with frequent reference to poetry, poets and language, and to the differences between poetic and painterly representation, Turner's perspective lectures represent the imbrication of contemporary aesthetics with his own fascination and contention with the power of words. In implicit accord with Lessing's *Laocoön* in his generic definitions, Turner variously laments painting's inability to portray abstractions, movement, and time — all of which he notes poetry could capture with relative ease. He typically observes: "The Painter's beauties are definable while the Poet's are imaginary as they relate to his associations . . . He [the poet] seeks for attributes or sentiments to illustrate what he has seen in nature . . . But the painter must adhere to the truth of nature" (53v).[3] Thus, while the painter is limited to concrete representation, the poet has the advantage of suggestion and connotation, closely linked by Turner to the generation of symbolic meaning. In the same lecture the painter complained, "One word is sufficient to establish what is the greatest difficulty of the painter's art: to produce wavy air, as some call the *Wind* . . . To give that wind . . . [the painter] must give the cause as well as the effect and without which he would be nothing . . . with mechanical hints of the strength of nature perpetually trammeled with mechanical shackles" (50v–49v). Unlike Lessing, however, Turner sees these difficulties not as necessary limitations but as a personal challenge, and returns again and again in his lectures to poetry as an expressive paradigm for the painter.

Yet even in these early talks, a competitive undercurrent emerges, as Turner attempts to establish painting's equality with poetry, even as he himself highlights its expressive disadvantages. In a characteristically rambling manner, he reflects on the relation between the sister arts: "Painting and Poetry, flowing from the same fount mutually by vision, constantly comparing Poetic allusions by natural forms in one and applying forms found in nature to the other, meandering into streams by application, which reciprocally improved reflect and heighten each other's beauties like . . . mirrors" (qtd. in Wilton 10). Mutually inspired by vision (thus implicitly privileging the visual arts), painting and poetry represent for Turner different formal means of expressing a single idea. The water imagery, which will play an important role in Ruskin's own *paragone,* graphically illustrates a theory of reciprocal reflection and ultimate fusion into a single stream. Turner's metaphor pivots on difference within sameness, and while poetry and painting mirror one another, creating a hybrid more beautiful than either one alone, individually they vie for formal perfection, "constantly comparing" their responses to natural forms. The fundamental differences between poetry's allusive, non-representational form, which can only evoke and never really show, and painting's entirely representational form, limited to mimesis of the concrete and physical, will haunt both Turner's Perspective Lectures and his artistic production. The search for a visual vehicle to express abstract ideas will motivate and inform both his incorporation and his ultimate renunciation of poetry within his painterly aesthetic.

Indeed, if many of his theoretical lectures take the form of a plea for equality between the arts ("He [the painter] should be allowed or considered equal in his merits and having conquered his difficulties of method should be considered to have produced what is exclusively *his own*" [51v–50v]), others specifically assert painting's superiority or poetry's shortcomings. While Turner's talks are filled with myriad quotations and references to classical and contemporary poets (Milton, Pope, Thomson, Akenside), his fourth Royal Academy Lecture of 1812 includes a subtle but unmistakable critique of Milton's *L'Allegro* and the failures of the poet's imagery. Specifically encouraging the painter *not* to look to Milton's verse for his inspiration, Turner contends:

> To commence with the pastoral, the trees in *L'Allegro* are generally admitted as beautiful in conception, admirably contrasted, full of incident and Pastoral simplicity. But graphically considered upon the dismemberment of the whole into parts, we find that two Oaks, carrying even a dignity and greatness in drawing (tho their tops are bald with dry antiquity), contrast too forcibly [with] the peaceful cottage. There, towers and battlements and tufted trees, where lies the Cynosure of neighboring eyes, depicted, convey grandeur and its concomitant power. While russet lawns (and) fallows grey, shallow brooks and River wide, Mountains on whose breast the labouring clouds do often rest offer jewels of poetic beauty. But ask if it can collectively be considered a pastoral poetic picture, or a poetic pastoral depiction. . . . Natural formations of hill, dale, vales, turrets, towers and trees [are] pictorial merits with impracticability or natural incongruity.[4]

Thus, what works in a poem, addressed from the poet's to the reader's imagination, may not necessarily succeed when translated into concrete reality, and Turner's deconstruction of the verbal image into its constituent visual parts illustrates his belief that the "most elegant, most interesting . . . allusions in Poetry often fail in representation" (qtd. in Ziff 200). The painter, then, may look to poetry for theoretical inspiration, but not practical, and although poetic allusion may frequently flounder when transcribed directly into painting, the painter himself can and should compose his *own* verse to accompany an image, for Turner ultimately believed "We cannot make good painters without some aid from poesy" (qtd. in Gage 205). As poetry could evoke both the abstract and the concrete through the associative powers of the imagination, Turner sought a way for painting to surpass its physical limitations and depict ideas as well as objects, beating poetry at its own game. In other words, if poetry could be visual, painting ought to be able to be conceptual and abstract. While the seeds of this idea are present in the first decades of the century, it is not until Turner's late period, during the 1840s, that he comes fully to realize this goal, while continuing his constant dialogue with language.

Complementing his use of poetry and allusion was Turner's creative use of titles as a means of expanding the potential for non-representational signification in his painting. The interpretive response engendered by poetic allusion or citation opened up myriad possibilities for his own expression, and rapidly the clear and explanatory function of his poetic titles, where the verses closely reflected the painting's content, gave way to more obscure rapports between word and image that necessitated the spectator's active intellectual participation to bridge the gap. This indirection took a number of forms, including the deliberate misquotations discussed above, as well as titles that had little apparent connection to the painting at hand. In *Regulus* (1828) the eponymous hero is nowhere to be seen, nor is Hannibal in *Snow Storm: Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps* (1812); *Apullia in Search of Appullus vide Ovid* (1814) incorporates a character (Apullia) entirely absent from Ovid's text, while *Boccaccio Relating the Tale of the Bird Cage* (1828) refers to a nonexistent episode in the *Decameron.* His use of obscure allusion and false citation served not only to confound and annoy the critics, but also to enlist the viewer in a dialogic movement between text and image and between reading and viewing. Thus, continuing in the vein of his poetic misquotations, which relied on the viewer's recognition of the slips, Turner developed a technique of titling which further depended on the active participation of the viewer to reconcile the deliberate discrepancy between words and the images they purported to reflect. The viewer *qua* reader must imagine forth what the poetry promises but the painting lacks, be it characters (Regulus, Hannibal, Ulysses), temporal nuance (*Venice, Evening, going to the Ball; Morning, returning from the Ball, St. Martins*), or movement (*Waves Breaking on a Lea Shore; Rain, Steam and Speed — the Great Western Railway; The Fall of an Avalanche in the Grisons*).

At the heart of Turner's sibling rivalry with the sister art then lay his unending search for access to the realm of abstract meaning, and nowhere is this more clearly played out than in his efforts to portray the aesthetic category of the sublime. As principally defined by Burke, the sublime during Turner's day was most often attributed to a scene of natural grandeur which produced in the mind of the viewer the feelings of both astonishment and fear, leading in turn to the contemplation of God's illimitable power. The sublime, in nature or in art, was evoked by vastness, magnitude, infinitude, eternity, privation, difficulty, and above all obscurity in every sense of the word, for ultimately the sublime remained intimately associated with the unknowable, and was experienced not through understanding, but through imagination and vicarious identification. Although the original experience of the sublime was almost inevitably visual, its artistic rendering, which could produce an equally vivid sublime experience, was not necessarily so. Indeed, poetry,

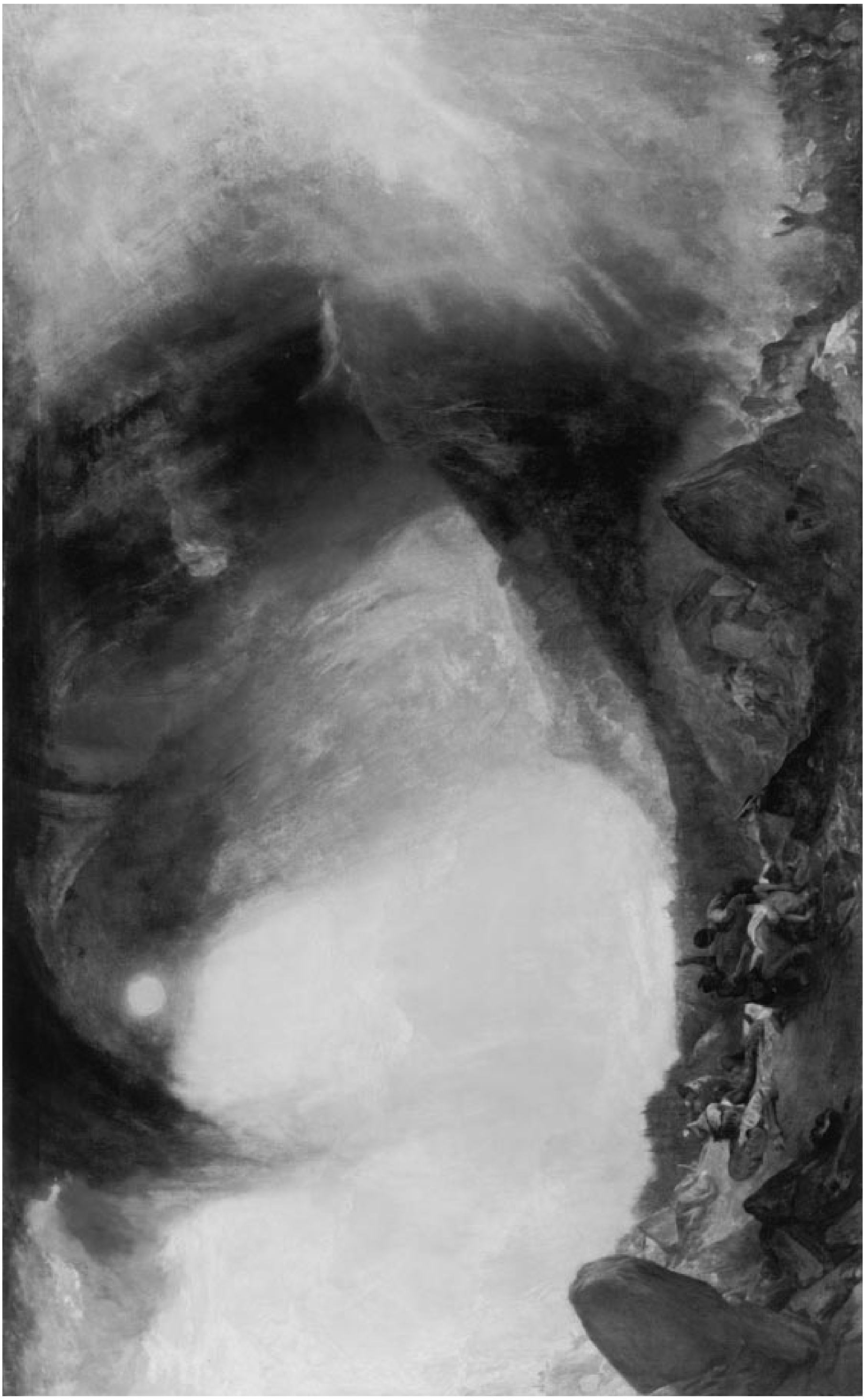

Figure 7. J. M. W. Turner, *Snow Storm: Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps*, 1812. Oil. Courtesy of Tate Gallery, London 1999.

which had only to excite or suggest ideas in the reader's imagination, was considered by Burke to be the preferred artistic medium to portray the sublime, for "poetry[,] with all its obscurity, has a more general as well as a more powerful dominion over the passions than the other art" (61). Conversely, painting's clarity, precision and "realism" were considered inimical to the sublime's orientation toward vagueness, obscurity and confusion; if visual representation was linked to demonstration, the sublime demanded nothing more than suggestion.

For Turner, supremely aware of the limitations of his medium, the sublime offered an opportunity to experiment with abstraction, obscurity, and confusion, stretching painting's dominion from visual representation to poetic suggestion. In his sublime canvases, access to the realm of the abstract took two distinct forms: the verbal, primarily through titles and accompanying quotations, and the visual, in terms of increasing formal abstraction that signified metaphorically. Turner's "verbal" sublime, generated through the dialectic between words and images, is typical of his earlier work, and may be seen in such tableaux as *Snow Storm: Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps* of 1812 (Figure 7). At first glance, the canvas shares much with contemporary treatments of the sublime, using typical themes (storms, mountains, battle, death) and techniques of scale to communicate the force of nature in the face of human frailty. Yet Turner supplements the specificity of the painted image — the readily identifiable soldiers, rocks, mountains, sun and storm — with metaphor, a feat achieved through the juxtaposition of his own verse with the image, allowing the spectator to read obscurity and abstraction back into the concrete evocation of the physical scene. Turner cites here for the first time his own poem, *The Fallacy of Hope,* a text he worked on for many years and would continue to use frequently in conjunction with his own paintings. The quotation conjoined with the painting begins "Craft, treachery and fraud . . . " — abstract concepts that can be read back into the image but which the artist would have difficulty portraying directly. The poem continues, "still the chief advanced, / Look'd on the sun with hope; — low, broad and wan," allowing the sun to become symbolically associated with hope, while reference to an ill-fated crossing of Italian borders evokes Napoleon as well as Hannibal, opening up the double register of metaphoric meaning.[5] The full title, *Snow Storm: Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps,* privileges the power of nature over humanity, for indeed, as noted above, Hannibal is not readily identifiable, and this sublime thematic is reflected in the vast scale of the painting (57.5 × 93.5) which dwarfs both the viewer and the figures in the image — soldiers and elephants alike — who are dominated in every sense by landscape and weather. In this way, Turner draws his viewer's attention to the symbolic sense of the sun and snow, reinforcing the futility of the endeavor and the "fallacy of hope." His quasi-paradoxical pairing of sunshine and a snowstorm joins opposing, generally mutually exclusive elements in a single artistic entity.[6] Turner's inclusion of poetry and literary allusion in his painting, yoking traditionally antithetical forms into a new hybrid, may be seen as an extension of the same principle. For in each case the artist initially appears to acknowledge the power of nature or poetry at the expense of humankind/painting, but ultimately the canvases present instead an assertion of the painter's powers of fusion and dominance. The tension between incompatible elements, and the recognition of that tension or incompatibility, become integral in the generation of meaning in these paintings, just as the conflicting visual and verbal messages require an act of translation on the part of the reader/viewer. For it is only through the active synthesis of meaning by the reader, who applies concepts put forth in the poem or title to the painting, mentally bridging the lacunae between what she sees and what she reads, that Turner's abstract import can be reached. *Hannibal* thus aspires to sublime astonishment and terror both in its natural imagery and its poetic suggestion.

However, in Turner's later treatment of the sublime, this relationship between word and image takes a dramatic shift, as the painter tries to insert his very imagery into the realm of sublime expressive abstraction, rising above the referentiality of words with ever more obscure suggestion. Indeed, as Turner endeavors to demonstrate how visual imagery can communicate as well as, if not better than words, form and narrative become one signifying entity and painting constitutes its own language of color, light, and facture. Focusing on the work of art as *process* or *experience* Turner introduces a series of technical and narrative devices to his craft in order to surpass inherent generic limitations. In his desire to reproduce the experience of the sublime in his viewers, Turner often employed enormous canvases, as seen in *Hannibal* above, confronting the spectator with a large, almost overwhelming scale that was entirely unexpected in English landscape painting and echoed humanity's relationship to nature on a physical, as well as a metaphysical level. Through the use of watercolor, both on its own and even in his oil paintings, Turner attempted to render his sublime paintings more atmospheric and to make the feeling of infinite vastness more palpable. By using small hatched strokes to portray solid masses and broad washes of color to evoke the ethereal spaces of limitless depth, Turner endeavored to construct the opposing qualities of mass and space into a literal equivalent on paper or canvas.[7] Compositionally one finds the structure of the spiral or vortex at the center of many of Turner's most powerful sublime scenes as a means not only to express the chaos of the storm, but to pull the viewers physically into the action of the scene and guide our eyes to the matrix of nature's overwhelming power.

Perhaps most revolutionary was Turner's effort to evoke the mystery, confusion, and obscurity that Burke had called for by abandoning a precise rendering of a scene for a more openly expressive composition that reflected an emotional rather than a literal truth. As Turner moved toward this expressive abstraction late in his career, he sought to reproduce the experience of incomprehensibility in his spectator, enabling painting to suggest and mystify as well as represent. Thus, in one of his most famous sublime images, *Snow Storm — Steam Boat off a Harbour's Mouth Making Signals in Shallow Water, and going by the Lead. The Author was in the Storm on the Night the Ariel left Harwich* (1842) (Figure 8), we find a shifting dialectic between exhaustively explanatory words and obscure, almost incomprehensible images. The swirling vortex of the storm dominates the composition, indicating the chaos and power of the elements through the active application of color to canvas, giving movement and energy to an inherently static medium. The steamboat, figuring prominently in the title, is merely suggested, the harbor is not evident. In a letter to Ruskin, it was reported that Turner claimed he had in fact lashed himself to the mast of the boat during the snowstorm, and the painting reflected his direct experience of the sublime fury. However, twentieth-century scholars have established that no ship called *Ariel* existed during this period in Harwich, and that Turner had not visited the East coast in over twenty years. If indeed the tale of Turner's voyage is apocryphal, then Turner, as self-proclaimed "Author" of a fictitious Ariel, alludes not inappropriately to *The Tempest,* while implicitly aligning himself with Shakespeare. Similarly, reference to being lashed to a ship's mast can only recall Ulysses and the Sirens, which evokes both

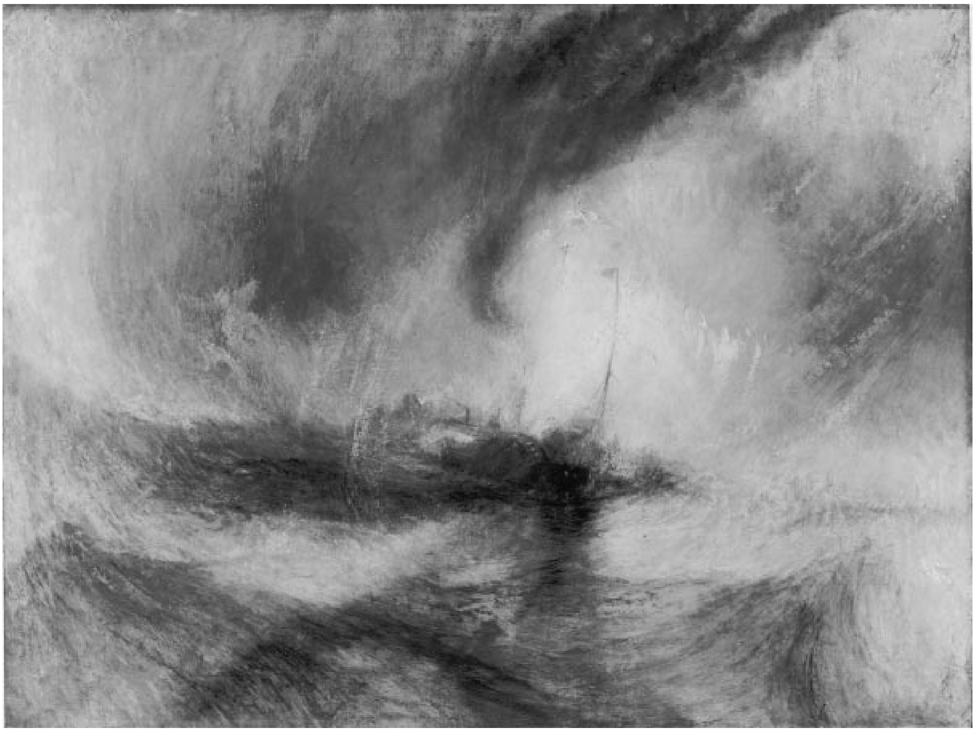

Figure 8. J. M. W. Turner, *Snow Storm – Steam Boat off a Harbour's Mouth Making Signals in Shallow Water, and going by the Lead. The Author was in the Storm on the Night the Ariel left Harwich*, 1842. Oil. Courtesy of Tate Gallery, London 1999.

Homer and Turner's own canvases after the blind poet, including *Ulysses deriding Polyphemus* of 1829. Here, in an image based not on a classical or contemporary literary source, but on his *own* fiction, Turner arrogates the poet's title for himself as *painter,* for indeed, there is no verse to accompany the image, only the fiction of the title. In other words, in his claim of authorship, he is identifying his painting not as painting, but as poetry — a work of imaginative creation, that is, importantly, far more obscure, difficult, suggestive, and ultimately poetic and sublime, than the descriptive and factual words of the title. As Richard Read rightly contends, "the abstract power of the image and the banality of its title are set to reverse Edmund Burke's erstwhile pronouncement that 'language is a more obscure and therefore more sublime medium than the visual image'" (320). Turner thus directly challenges poetry's hegemony, claiming the right to poetic and sublime expression for the painter as well as the poet and asserting the superiority of the image over the word for access to abstraction.

While Turner's role as a painter-poet is by no means unique (*e.g.,* Michelangelo, Girodet, Dante Gabriel Rossetti), the juxtaposition of verse with his canvases reflects an attitude toward words and images as potential complements *and* competitors that will also characterize Ruskin's writings. The gradual transformation of Turner's use of words as semiotic supplements to his images, and the movement from explanation to obfuscation, reflect an increasing sense of mastery and competition that Ruskin, consciously or unconsciously, will echo in his prose. If Turner looks to language as an expressive paradigm that can overcome the limitations of visual communication, Ruskin will invert the process, seeking the direct immediacy of the image in his prose. Yet as each artist at one level finds a superior form of expression in a synthetic hybrid that combines the abstract qualities of words with the concrete attributes of images, he ultimately asserts the primacy of his own genre in its ability to subsume the qualities of the other. As Turner will posit a painting that can communicate abstract ideas *without* words, Ruskin will formulate a prose that can make the reader see, even in the absence of pictures.

Ruskin's art criticism and his aesthetic theory in general are informed by an awareness of language's expressive insufficiencies and by a desire to render words at once more effective and more akin to the human thought processes. Like Turner, he specifically complained of his own medium's shortcomings in terms of the strengths of the sister art, and defined the operations of the mind, memory, and imagination in almost exclusively visual terms. In a diary entry from 1849, describing a visit to the Louvre, the young critic noted, "The first distinct impression which fixed itself upon me was that of the entire superiority of Painting to Literature as a test, expression and record of the human intellect, and of the enormously greater quantity of Intellect which might be forced into a picture — and read there — compared with what might be expressed with words" (qtd. in Trickett 6). In a similar vein, he lamented in *Modern Painters* "how difficult it is to express or explain, by language only, those delicate qualities of the object of sense, on the seizing of which all refined truth of representation depends" (3: 253), later adding "Words are not accurate enough, nor delicate enough, to express or trace the constant, all-pervading influence of the finer and vaguer shadows . . . " (3: 308). But if words fall short in reproducing experience and sensation, the very nature of their failure may ultimately be construed as an artistic advantage, at least within Ruskin's formulation of art and specifically the compact between artist and audience. For the author of *Modern Painters,* "The object in all *art* is not to *inform* but to *suggest,* not to add to the knowledge but to kindle the imagination. He is the best poet who can by the fewest words touch the greatest number of secret chords of thought in his reader's own mind, and set *them* to work in their own way" (1: 441–42). Again, like the painter of *Snow Storm* and *Hannibal,* Ruskin will criticize his own form of expression only to turn around and privilege its very limitations at the expense of the sister art, and the obscurity and suggestion (not coincidentally envied by Turner) that prevent precise evocation of specific sensory experience, may also be construed as aesthetic advantages, as they allow the reader/viewer to produce his or her own associative image within the eidetic imagination.

Ruskin's competitive prose surfaces sporadically throughout the five volumes of *Modern Painters,* but is particularly striking in his evocations of Turner's deliberately difficult and competitive sublime canvases.[8] In turning first to Ruskin's response to Turner's *Snow Storm – Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth,* which appeared in *Modern Painters I* (1843), we find the neophyte critic's own eloquent efforts to mirror Turner's technique at a number of levels, not the least of which is a preliminary assertion of his own visual-verbal challenge. Following several pages of dramatic evocations of Turner's paintings of stormy seas (*Longships Lighthouse, Land's End* and *Laugharne Castle*), Ruskin launches into a lengthy description of the effect of a gale on the sea, making no mention of a specific canvas. He begins by claiming the inconceivability of the scene, asserting, "Few people, comparatively, have ever seen the effect on the sea of a powerful gale continued without intermission for three or four days and nights; and to those who have not, I believe it must be unimaginable, not from the mere force or size of surge, but from the complete annihilation of the limit between sea and air" (3: 569). In this opening sentence, Ruskin lays out the sublimity of the experience without labeling it as such, highlighting the force, magnitude, inconceivability, confusion, and danger. However he will follow this conceit of ungraspability with an evocation that will, through the power of his own prose, allow his reader to imagine the unimaginable and experience, rather than simply recognize, the sublime. Although the passage is long, I will quote it in its entirety, for its impact is cumulative. As John Rosenberg notes, "like some vast, inexhaustible fountain, the passage cannot be compressed, only cut off" (180). Ruskin thus expounds:

> The water from its prolonged agitation is beaten, not into mere creaming foam, but into masses of accumulated yeast, which hang in ropes and wreaths from wave to wave, and, where one curls over to break, form a festoon like a drapery from its edge; these are taken up by the wind, not in dissipating dust, but bodily, in writhing, hanging, coiling masses, which make the air white and thick as with snow, only the flakes are a foot or two long each: the surges themselves are full of foam in their very bodies, underneath, making them white all through, as the water is under a great cataract; and their masses, being thus half water and half air, are torn to pieces by the wind whenever they rise, and carried away in roaring smoke, which chokes and strangles like actual water. *Add to this,* that when the air has been exhausted of its moisture by long rain, the spray of the sea is caught by it . . . and covers its surface not merely with the smoke of finely divided water, but with boiling mist; *imagine* also the low rain-clouds brought down to the very level of the sea, as I have often seen them, whirling and flying in rags and fragments from wave to wave; and finally, *conceive* the surges themselves in their utmost pitch of *power, velocity, vastness* and *madness,* lifting themselves in precipices and peaks, furrowed with their whirl of ascent, through all of this chaos; and *you will understand that there is indeed no distinction left between sea and air*; that no object, nor horizon, nor any land-mark or natural evidence of position is left; that the heaven is all spray, and the ocean all cloud, and that you can see no farther in any direction than you could see through a cataract. *Suppose* the effect of the first sunbeam sent from above to show this annihilation to itself, *and you have the sea picture of the Academy, 1842, the Snowstorm,* one of the very grandest statements of sea-motion, mist, and light, that has ever been put on canvas, even by Turner. Of course *it was not understood*; *his finest works never are: but there was some apology for the public's not comprehending this*, for few people have had the opportunity of seeing the sea at such a time, and when they have, cannot face it. To hold by a mast or a rock, and watch it, is a prolonged endurance of drowning which few people have courage to go through. To those who have, it is one of the noblest lessons of nature. (3: 569–71; emphases added)

In this remarkable passage, Ruskin borrows Turner's fictionalizing device and inserts the reader directly into the storm, as if we were the painter lashed to the mast, yet he does not mention *any* aspect of the painting *per se,* nor does he signal that he is describing a painting and not a real scene until the very end of this extensive paragraph. In keeping with Turner's own competitive edge, Ruskin displaces the painting altogether, creating his own fiction of a real storm, just as the painter did, but generating his own images, through words not pigment, for the reader to synthesize within the visual imagination. Although

Turner's painting is admittedly hard to decipher, the steam ship at the center of his stormy, swirling vortex is unmistakable, yet Ruskin makes no mention of this or any other narrative elements within the composition. Privileging the experience over the imagistic mimesis, he gives us the *feeling* of the storm directly, without reference to Turner's interpretation of it, just as in his evocation of Turner's famous *Slave Ship* directly following these lines, he does not mention the human bodies tossed into the sea that dominate the central section of the canvas, except in a brief footnote. Ruskin seems to suppress the human element, relied on by the painter, for direct access to the natural sublime.

Stylistically, the passage enacts the tumultuous chaos of the storm with its choppy yet lyrical rhythms ("which hang in ropes and wreaths from wave to wave . . . whirling and flying in rags and fragments from wave to wave") and its violent lexicon ("annihilation . . . agitation . . . beaten . . . writhing . . . torn to pieces . . . chokes and strangles, etc.). We are plunged into the surging swells of the storm unmediated by human figures or constructs — there is only a series of vivid, experiential images of water, snow, and smoke which communicate the sublimity of the blizzard to all of the senses. There is an emphasis on verbs of movement — writhing, whirling, flying, lifting — yet participles are privileged and most of the regular verbs are passive, pointing to an even greater power orchestrating this sublime symphony. Ruskin's prose focuses on the *feeling* of Turner's canvas, where all is confusion and unrestrained power, threatening perhaps to overwhelm us. In keeping with the painter's metaphoric aspirations, the author subordinates physical fact to abstract idea, as the storm becomes a Ruskinian allegory of God's divine and mysterious ways.

At the beginning of the third sentence, Ruskin marks a stylistic transition and addresses himself directly to the reader. Abandoning his assertion at the beginning of the passage that the scene must be "unimaginable," he now assumes that the reader is doing just that — synthesizing images of the cataclysmic sea in the eidetic imagination and experiencing the sublime firsthand. The imperative "*Add* to this . . . " not only emphasizes Ruskin's role as director of the process, but stresses its progressive nature. Here Ruskin exploits language's linearity — usually seen as a disadvantage in the description of a unitary image — the better to communicate the illimitable motion of the thrashing sea, and to highlight what the painter could hint at but never portray. The instructions continue with "imagine . . . conceive . . . suppose," all of which mean "visualize" for Ruskin, and the scene at the end of the paragraph will in fact *be* Turner's *Snow Storm* — "suppose the effect of the first sunbeam sent from above to show this annihilation to itself and you have the sea picture of the Academy, 1842, the Snowstorm." Yet this vivid seascape will be the exclusive product of the dialectic efforts of author and reader, working together to form an image, the painting remaining *in absentia,* and not, it must be added, much missed, for it is the emotion or feeling of sublimity, and not its concrete representation, that both Ruskin and Turner strive for, each vying to render his own medium at once more obscure and more suggestive.

The annihilation of limits between the opposing elements of sea and air that Ruskin iterates at the beginning and end, may thus be extended to represent, metaphorically, the obliteration of distinctions between words and images as well. If Turner could avail himself of the author's mantle, Ruskin could become a painter, with the help of a synthesizing reader, and if *Snow Storm* could arrogate the abstract expression of the sublime poets, Shakespeare and Homer, *Modern Painters* could delve into the realm of ephemeral, dynamic images, outstripping the painter's frozen moment with movement itself. Yet if generic boundaries blur here, it is not with equal expressive success. In a final assertion of poetic power, Ruskin closes his evocation by drawing the reader's attention to the fact that Turner's painting "was not understood" by the public, nor does Ruskin blame them, claiming "there was some apology for the public's not comprehending this . . . for few people have had the opportunity of seeing the sea at such a time." Turner's language, his forays into abstract expression, must be *explained* in words for the general public to understand them. The contrast between Ruskin's art and Turner's is thus apparent — although he began his own depiction of *Snow Storm* presuming his reader had never seen such a sight, at the end she has seen, experienced and understood it. The same uninitiated viewer standing before Turner's brilliant canvas might understand it only perhaps if she had read Ruskin's passage, bar her having actually been strapped to a mast in a storm. While remaining sincere in his appreciation of Turner's painting, Ruskin subtly invokes the strength of language to evoke images while undermining painting's claim to abstract linguistic expression.

Ruskin's response to Turner's sublime undergoes profound transformations in the course of the 13 years that separate the appearance of *Modern Painters I* in 1843 from *Modern Painters IV* in 1856. In turning finally to Ruskin's discussion of Turner's *Pass of Faido* in volume IV, we will find a shift in focus from the external manifestations of sublimity to an internal landscape and the state of a human consciousness when confronted with the ungraspable, as Ruskin himself grappled with doubt on the path to "unconversion" some two years later.[9] In a chapter entitled "Of Turnerian Topography," Ruskin contrasts "topographic" and "poetic" drawing, the former based on literal facts,

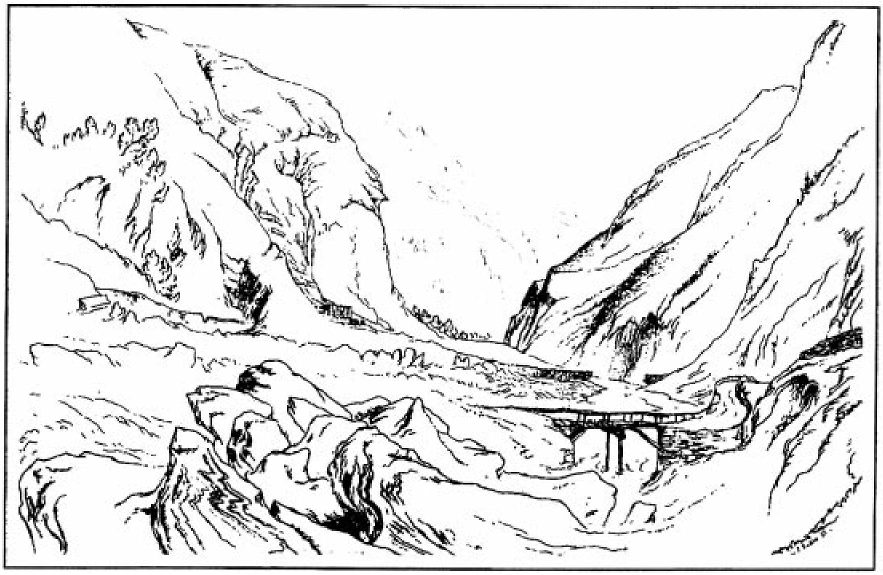

Figure 9. John Ruskin, "Pass of Faido (lst Simple Topography)." Engraving, from *Modern Painters. The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn. Library Edition. (London: George Allen, 1903). 6: between 34 and 35.

the latter on imaginative impression, both equally “truthful.” First he gives a simple topographical etching of the Pass of Faido (Figure 9) which provides the straightforward facts of the scene, and accompanies the image with his own “topographical” prose — flat, factual, unadorned, and decidedly unimaginative. The description makes continual reference to the engraving included within the text, forcing the reader to move back and forth between his words and the image, in a manner not unlike Turner’s own poetic additions to his paintings, though here there is a direct and clear correlation between the two representations. Yet Ruskin concludes, “There is nothing in this scene, taken by itself, particularly interesting or impressive. The mountains are not elevated, nor particularly fine in form, and the heaps of stones which encumber the Ticino present nothing notable to the ordinary eye” (6: 35). In a striking movement away from his sublime evocations in Volume I, where God was the implied author of nature’s sublimity, the spectator merely an awed and overwhelmed observer, Ruskin here indicates that sublimity is as much a product of the perceiver as of the perceived. While the actual Pass of Faido is unremarkable in its configuration, the *experience* of emerging into it after having traversed the Mont St. Gothard, is sublime, due to the associations and visual impressions the traveler would have sustained in the course of the journey. It is not what is there, but how it relates to and reflects what is in the viewer’s memory, that lends it its impact:

> In reality, the place is approached through one of the narrowest and most sublime ravines in the Alps, and after the traveler during the early part of the day has been familiarized with the aspect of the highest peaks of the Mont St. Gothard. Hence it speaks quite another language to him from that in which it would address itself to an unprepared spectator: the confused stones, which by themselves would be almost without any claim upon his thoughts, become exponents of the fury of the river by which he has journeyed all day long; the defile beyond, not in itself narrow or terrible, is regarded nevertheless with awe, because it is imagined to resemble the gorge that has just been traversed above; and although no very elevated mountains immediately overhang it, the scene is felt to belong to, and arise in its essential characters out of, the strength of those mightier mountains in the unseen north. (6: 35)

Here he indicates that the landscape presents a visual “language” which “speaks” metaphorically to the spectator, that is, through resemblance and not directly. The linguistic trope is striking, for not only does it highlight the symbolic nature of the experience, but the necessity of interpretation. Indeed the meaning generated by the visual language depends on the personal associations of the *destinataire,* while the signifiers are polysemic, meaning different things to different viewers. The sublimity of the Pass of Faido (both in life and in art) arises not from what is there, but precisely from what is *not* there. In keeping with an aesthetic of the unsaid, here we have an aesthetic of the unseen.

If nature has its language, so too does the painter, and if the topographic artist transcribes verbatim, Ruskin’s “poetic painter” communicates the metaphoric or symbolic sense of what he has seen, “the far higher and deeper truth of mental vision” (6: 35). The goal of the imaginative artist will be to reproduce not the external reality, but his own internal, subjective experiences and impressions, “producing on the far-away beholder’s mind precisely the impression which the reality would have produced, and putting his heart into the same state in which it would have been, had he verily descended into the valley from the gorges of Airolo” (6: 35–36). Where in earlier presentations of the sublime, Ruskin minimized the artist's craft, privileging the transparency of his truthful representation of nature, here he focuses on the tangential relationship between art and reality. Turner's painting is sublime precisely because it does *not* imitate the natural scene.

Ruskin's reader is put into a new position in relation to the sublime, as the critic's prose shifts from evocative to explanatory; from performative to collaborative. If earlier the word-painter tried to render his words transparent and summon forth the images of the turbulent sea, here he consistently draws our attention to technique, creation, process. Where images dominated in the *Snow Storm,* words and language take over in the *Pass of Faido* as the operative metaphor. The reader cannot escape the awareness that this is art, not reality, a product of a human sensibility and not a natural occurrence. Ruskin demythologizes, even deconstructs, the work of art, showing the reader exactly how Turner came to compose his watercolor, taking the original scene and "modifying it into something which is not so much the image of the place itself, as the spirit of the place" (6: 36). He analyzes Turner's *Pass of Faido* (Figure 10), also included within the text, in comparative terms, contrasting the sublime image with the topographical, which had illustrated how the spot *really* looked. The reader must once again participate in the text, comparing the two images and the matching prose to come to a conclusion as to the alterations. Ruskin catalogues Turner's adjustments to the scene in terms of scale, power, and danger, highlighting the sublime as *construction:*

> . . . observe that the whole place is *altered in scale,* and brought up to the general *majesty* of the *higher* forms of the Alps. It will be seen that, in my topographical sketch, there are a few trees rooted in the rock on this side of the gallery, showing by comparison, that it is not above

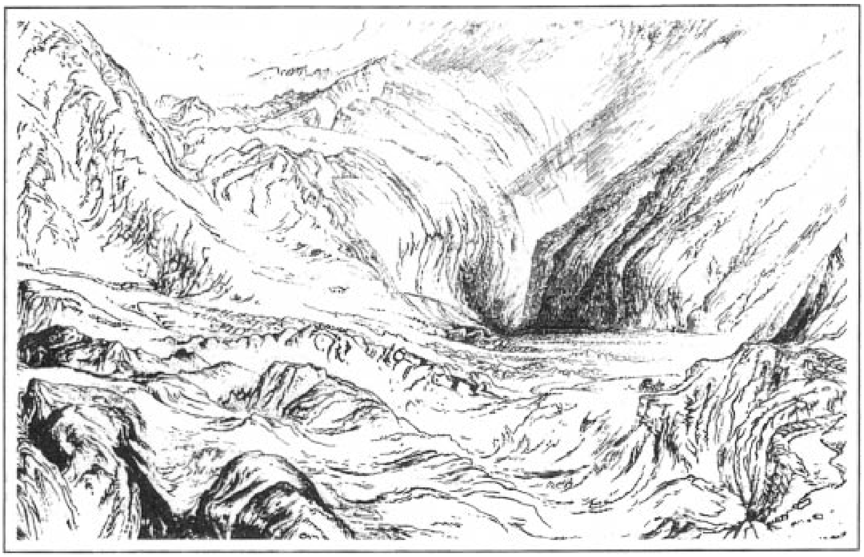

Figure 10. J. M. W. Turner, "Pass of Faido (2nd Turnerian Topography)." Drawing engraved by John Ruskin, from *Modern Painters. The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn. Library Edition. (London: George Allen, 1903). 6: between 34 and 35.

> four or five hundred feet high. These trees Turner cuts away, and gives the rock a *height* of about a thousand feet, *so as to imply more power and danger* in the *avalanche* coming down the couloir.
>
> Next he raises, in a still greater degree, all the mountains beyond, putting three or four ranges instead of one, but uniting them into a single *massy* bank at their base, which he makes overhang the valley, and thus reduces it nearly to such a *chasm* as that which had just passed through above, so as to unite the *expression* of this ravine with that of the stony valley. A few trees, in the hollow of the glen, he feels to be contrary in spirit to the stones, and fells them, as he did the others; so also he feels the bridge in the foreground, by its slenderness, to contradict the *aspect of violence in the torrent*; he thinks the torrent and avalanche should have it all their own way hereabouts; so he strikes down the nearer bridge, and restores the one farther off, where the *force* of the stream may be supposed less. Next, the bit of road on the right, above the bank, is not built on a wall, nor on arches high enough to give the idea of an Alpine road in general; so he makes the arches *taller,* and the bank *steeper,* introducing, as we shall see presently, a reminiscence from the upper part of the pass. (6: 36; emphases added)

The changes that Ruskin draws our attention to were not a self-conscious decision, he seems to indicate, they are simply a transcription of Turner's memory of the *experience,* the *feeling* of the place, and the imposing mountains, steep gorge, and rushing torrent *symbolically* represent the actual Pass of Faido. We come to read the mountains and river as emotional equivalents rather than absolute realities, for Turner has transformed an unspectacular scene into one of sublime feeling, and the power, majesty, danger, magnitude, and violence are products of the artist's imagination, his reaction to the scene, and not products of the landscape itself. By highlighting Turner's imposition of sublimity on a scene that is not "particularly interesting or impressive," Ruskin shifts his and our focus inward. This is a landscape of the mind.

Finally, in a departure from his previous treatment of Turner's sublimity, Ruskin acknowledges the human figures included in the canvas. Abruptly shifting from intellectual analysis to imaginative identification, Ruskin places himself and the reader in the painting, and finally we experience the Pass of Faido not as a geographic locale, or even as a work of art, but as an emotional reality. Using the inclusive "we," Ruskin inserts us into the tiny stagecoach in the image and creates an imaginary journey through Turner's valley:

> The torrent was wild, the storms were wonderful; but the most wonderful thing of all was how we ourselves, the dream and I, ever got here. By our feet we could not — by the clouds we could not — by an ivory gates we could not — in no other wise could we have come than by the coach road. One of the great elements of sensation, all the day long, has been that extraordinary road, and its goings on, and gettings about; here, under avalanches of stones, and among insanities of torrents, and overhangings of precipices, much tormented and driven to all manners of makeshifts and coils to this side and the other, still the marvelous road persists in going on, and that so smoothly and safely, that it is not merely great diligences, going in a caravannish manner, with whole teams of horses, that can traverse it, but little postchaises with small postboys, and a pair of ponies. And the dream declared that the full essence and soul of the scene, and consummation of all the wonderfulness of the torrents and Alps, lay in a postchaise with small ponies and postboy. (6: 38–39)

Ruskin returns to a rhythmic, poetic, highly evocative prose as he seeks to reproduce the feeling of Turner's canvas and the impression it has made on his mind, mirroring what

Turner was trying to reproduce with his own metaphoric language of sublime scenery. As in the earlier descriptions of the Turnerian sublime, there is an emphasis on movement — that which the painter cannot portray, only suggest — as the road becomes Ruskin's focal point. He repeats the verb "going" three times, as the road's twists and turns represent movement through both time and space, forward progress "all the day long" taking us through the landscape. But we have moved from spectators to participants — we no longer watch the sublime thrashing of the waves from a distance, we experience the movement of a postchaise down a narrow ravine, and where we were external to the action of the scene in *Snow Storm,* we are inserted within the very image of the *Pass of Faido.* The mental experience, as represented by the double interiority of being inside the carriage inside the painting, overtakes the physical. The avalanches, torrents, and precipices have an entirely different aspect from the window of our carriage than they do from the vantage point of Turner's painting and Ruskin turns them into an experience that the reader can synthesize. Rather than describing what we would see, Ruskin conspicuously avoids visual evocation, instead suggesting the feeling of the voyage. The sublimity will thus arise from the reader's *own* imagination — we will produce our own visions of the menacing mountains and rushing river, guided of course by the artist, but nonetheless personal and interior, for Ruskin now defines a *perceiver's* sublime.

In terms of the *paragone,* Ruskin has brought Turner back to the central focus, yet by the end of the passage it is not the painting as reproduced in the text, but the imaginative experience of the painting via Ruskin's prose that brings it to life. It is not incidental that the most powerful, poetic and evocative passage in the entire section devoted to the *Pass of Faido* pertains to an event — the *trip* of the coach through the valley — that did not, indeed could not, occur in the painting. As Ruskin demonstrated in his analysis of Turner's own method of composition, it is not so much what is there, as much as what is *not* there, or what we project into the scene, that is vital. Language, with its inherent expressive lacunae, allows for this projection in a way concrete images never can, and Ruskin's prose in the postchaise scene is deliberately *non*-visual, and in this way supremely visual, for the reader can and will synthesize her own vivid personal images of the sublime journey. If for Ruskin, the internal image is finally superior, or at least richer, more expressive, and more significant than the external image in its simultaneous definiteness and relativity, then words may triumph in the quest for sublimity as they can, with the active participation of the laboring imagination, stimulate the production of the most moving images.

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NOTES

1. See Piggott's *Turner's Vignettes* for further discussion and examples of Turner's book illustrations.
2. Lindsay's *The Sunset Ship* provides the only complete anthology of Turner's poetry published to date. Wilton's *Painting and Poetry* includes transcriptions not only of Turner's *Verse Book* (composed 1805–10) but of poems included in the margins of his sketchbook as well. Wilton also provides an invaluable catalogue of many of Turner's paintings paired with the verses that originally accompanied them.

3. Unless otherwise indicated, quotations from Turner's Perspective Lectures are taken from the fragmentary but revealing notes in his Perspective Sketch Book of 1809 (Turner Bequest CVIII) and will be designated by page numbers from the manuscript only. The lecture notes are found on pages 53a–48a and page numbers run in reverse order, following Turner's composition. Due to the difficulties in transcribing the painter's handwriting and spelling, there have been many discrepancies in the interpretation of these passages and the citations in this essay are based on the author's own.
4. See Turner's Perspective Manuscript, British Library, Add. MS 46151N, p. 8v.
5. The full quotation accompanying *Snow Storm: Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps* reads as follows:

> Craft, treachery and fraud — Salassian force,
> Hung on the fainting rear! then Plunder seiz'd
> The victor and the captive, — Saguntum's spoil,
> Alike become their prey; still the chief advanc'd,
> Look'd on the sun with hope; — low, broad and wan;
> While the fierce archer of the downward year
> Stains Italy's blanch'd barrier with storms.
> In vain each pass, ensanguin'd deep with dead,
> Or rocky fragments, wide destruction roll'd.
> Still on Campania's fertile plains — he though,
> But the loud breeze sob'd, 'Capua's joys beware'!
>
> *M.S. Fallacies of Hope*
> (qtd. in Wilton, *Painting and Poetry* 180)

6. For further examples of Turner's coupling of fire and water see *Fire at Sea* (c. 1835), *The Fighting Temeraire* (1838), *Peace—Burial at Sea* (1841) and *Snow Storm—Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (1842).
7. For further discussion of Turner's sublime techniques see Wilton's *Turner and the Sublime.*
8. Ruskin's treatment of the sublime as an aesthetic category underwent major transformations between the appearance of the first and second volumes of *Modern Painters.* In *Modern Painters I* he refuted Burke's distinctions between the sublime and the beautiful, insisting that they were simply different manifestations of the same emotion, and refused to acknowledge fear or terror as elements of the sublime. By 1846, when volume 2 appeared, Ruskin had reversed his stance and in an unpublished chapter "On the Connection of the Beautiful with the Sublime" (4: 369 ff) he distinguished the two experiences as unique and aligned himself with Burke's view of the role of terror, again contradicting his original claims. The very fact that this and several other explorations of the sublime were written but *not* included in *Modern Painters* is indicative of Ruskin's desire to demonstrate, rather than explicate, this aesthetic category, and to allow the reader to experience it through the imaginative rather than the analytic or cognitive capacities.
9. As Rosenberg observes, "In the early volumes of *Modern Painters,* Ruskin focused his superb gifts of observation and articulation upon clouds, seas, and mountains. In middle life, however, the sense of divinity he had felt in nature began to fail him, and his interest shifted from the actual Alps to the mountains of his own mind. To scale those yet more perilous peaks, he perfected a subtler instrument of prose which registers the very pulsations of thought . . . reading Ruskin's later works expands one's awareness of consciousness itself" (179).

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