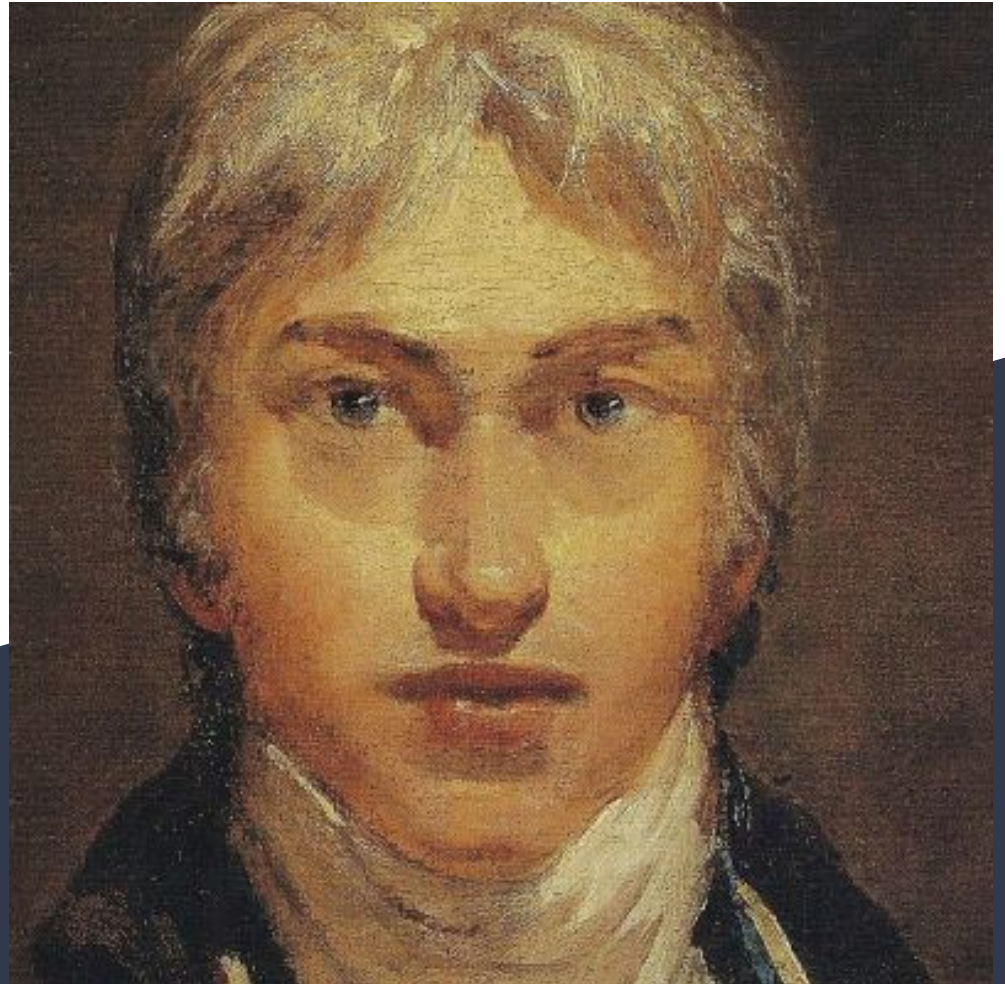


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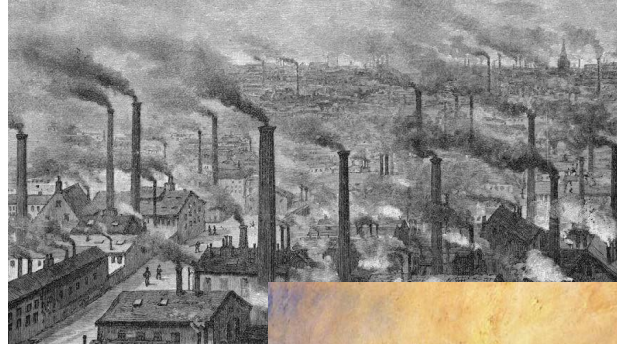
TURNER

and the Sublime



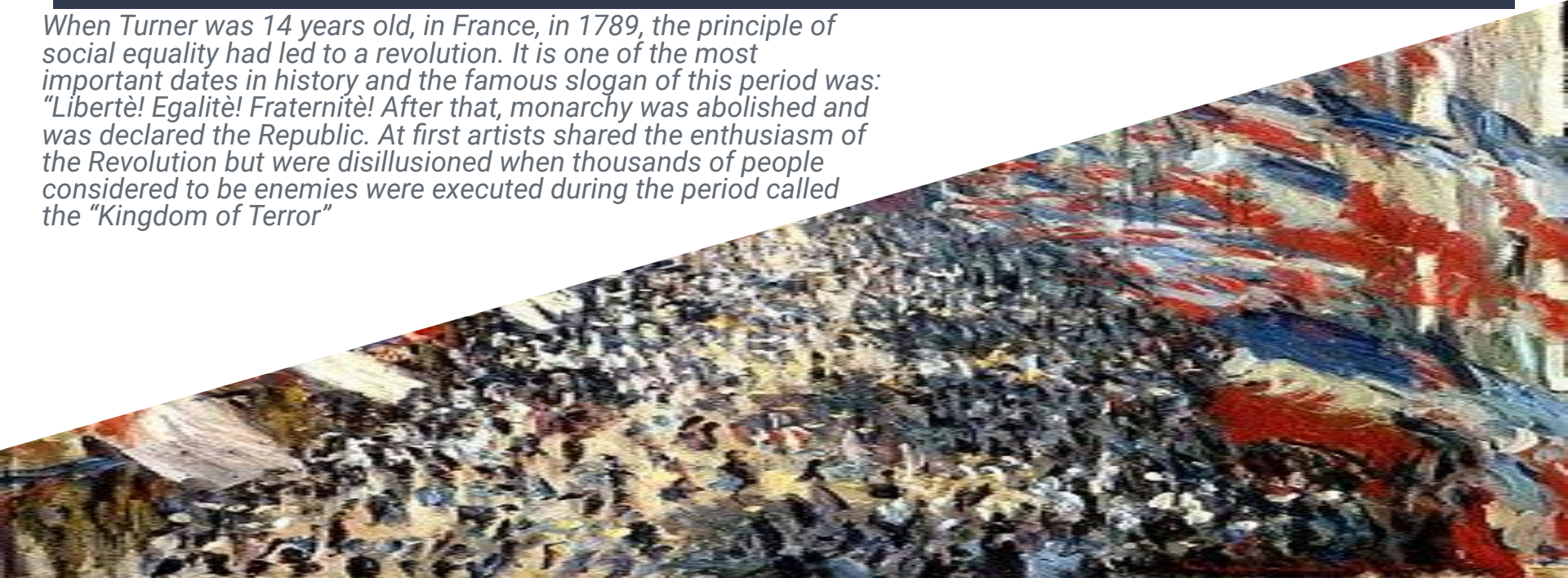
Historical context: industrial revolution

William Turner was born in 1775 in London so he fits fully in the period of the industrial revolution, which begins in 1750. While many of his colleagues ignore these changes, Turner manifests social reforms through his art. One example is "Great Western Railway"(1844, National Gallery,Londra) which evokes the rapid social transformations through strong diagonals, contrasts of light and dark and tumultuous brushstrokes. The work contains the three words: **RAIN-STEAM-SPEED**, commendation of progress that runs fast.



Historical context: The French Revolution

When Turner was 14 years old, in France, in 1789, the principle of social equality had led to a revolution. It is one of the most important dates in history and the famous slogan of this period was: "Liberté! Egalité! Fraternité! After that, monarchy was abolished and was declared the Republic. At first artists shared the enthusiasm of the Revolution but were disillusioned when thousands of people considered to be enemies were executed during the period called the "Kingdom of Terror"

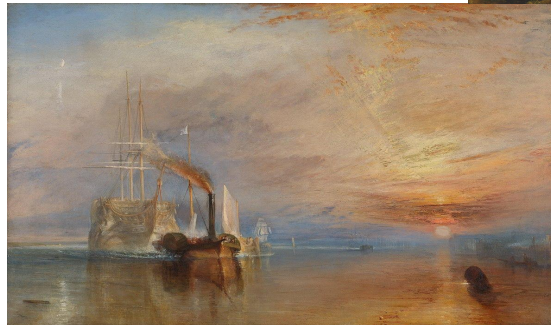


Historical context

The French Revolution

The works created during the french revolution are:

- **Snow Storm:** Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps (1812) = there are parallels between Hannibal and Napoleon and between the historic Punic and Napoleonic wars.
- **The Fighting Temeraire (1838-1839)** = this was a warship that had been the victorious and had won during the battle of Trafalgar.
- **childe Harold's pilgrimage (1823)** = in this painting Italy is represented as a garden of Eden.



Historical context

ROMANTICISM

Romanticism was an attitude that influenced music, literature, architecture and art in the 18th to 19th mid centuries.

Tuner was one of the most representative English painters of this period, he emphasized effects of light, atmosphere and colors to poetry creating a dynamic natural world.

He placed human beings in many of his works, on one hand to indicate his affection to humanity, on the other to underline his vulnerability against the sublime nature.

early life

- Turner was born on 23rd April 1775 in Maiden Lane, London
- his father was a wig maker
- he was raised without a maternal figure
- his father introduced him to Arts, paintings and watercolors
- in 1870 he went to Kent, place where he gained lots of impressions and emotions
- in his 20s he tried to enter the Royal Academy of Arts
- during this period he started to present his works to the public.



His Art: the beginning

- He was a **LANDSCAPIST** and at first he only used **WATERCOLORS** to paint.
- Initially he painted picturesque views and architectural subjects that he saw during his sketching tours over Britain; Tintern's Abbey and Wye valley in Wales were his favourite subjects in that period.
- He was inspired by the **BIBLE** and **MYTHOLOGY**.
- His main aim was to elevate the landscape and to put it at the same level as the other paintings, like genre painting, historical and political painting and portraiture.



William Turner, Keelmen Heaving in Coals by Moonlight 1835

Turner and his travels

He visited France, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland and Italy.

Turner was inspired to a great extent by what he saw on his travels, like mountains and lakes.

He was inspired by history and literature as well as nature.

On his journeys he was in the habit of making rapid *pencil sketches*.





The last painting: *"Norham Castle, Sunrise"*

1845, olio su tela, Tate Britain.

LATER LIFE

As Turner grew older, he became more eccentric.

In 1829 his father died and this caused in him great depression.

He never married but had two relationships, one with an older widow, Sarah Danby and had two daughters and another with Sophia Caroline Booth .

In 1845 he began to live in squalor and poor health and died of cholera in his home, in Cheyne Walk in Chelsea, on 19 December 1851 at the age of 76. He was buried in St Paul's Cathedral in London.

He left a fortune equivalent to \$8 million to friends, relatives and charities leaving many of his paintings to the nation.

Most important works

William Turner started painting his masterpieces during the first half of 1800. The main features of his works are:

- fast and whirling brushstrokes;
- use of watercolors;
- natural setting (sea setting);
- presence of Sublime.



Rain, Steam and speed By William Turner



1844, Oil on canvas, 91x122cm, National gallery, London

- William Turner's painting Rain, Steam and Speed immortalizes the first English steam train. The artist painted the engine that drags the convoy passing over the iron bridge of the Thames.
- The colors are used by the artist to best represent their luminosity through combinations of contrasts of clarity and complements. The river can be seen below, colored in ochre and brown. The sky is represented by shreds of blue.
- What is striking is his ability to represent the effects that the reflections of light and the atmospheric elements produce on the landscape.

The Fighting Temeraire By William Turner

*"It is a work of great effect and
felling, and worthy of Turner,
when he was Turner"*

The Fighting Temeraire in an oil painting by William Turner in 1838 and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1839. The painting represents an old warship carried to scrapping by a small steamship. The Temeraire in the face of its mortality, contemplates its glorious past.





(1840. Oil on canvas, 91x122cm. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts)

THE SLAVE SHIP

- Turner was inspired by a real news story to make this work. In fact In 1781, the captain of a slave ship inbound to Jamaica, called the Zong, had ordered 132 slaves to be thrown overboard when drinking water was running low. This incident went to court, and the trial that ensued gained wide public attention, building support for the abolition of slavery. Although the trial was doomed to be inconclusive, it was a pivotal catalyst in the movement towards British abolition.
- a distant and infinite sunset, hot, red, drops its rays into the sea during a storm, whose epicenter is getting closer and closer. Far in the landscape can be seen the masts of the ship, with the sails closed to avoid taking full force on the storm, colored as the same red color of the sky, similar to the color of human blood. In the part of the painting closest to the observer, in perspective, hands and bodies floating in the stormy water can be glimpsed: they are probably the slaves, chained and thrown into the sea to defraud the insurance, flanked by terrifying sea monsters and numerous fish of the sea, rushed to eat their bodies, which emerge from the illuminated waters.

Snow storm:Hannibal and his Army crossing the Alps



- It is a very big picture: 145×236,5 cm
- It is a historical work, that represents the event of Hannibal crossing the Alps
- This painting represents the uselessness of human actions compared to the power of nature
- The main character is the sky that covers most of the canvas
- The dominant colors are gray and blue, but in the background there is the yellow light of the sun
- Turner's technique to give a sublime vision of nature, poured stains of color on the canvas
- The painting makes the viewer feel distressed and fascinated at the same time

Rain, steam and speed



- This is one of Turner's masterpieces in which water, sky, land and man made industrialization come together.
- The painting illustrates an oncoming train in the countryside during a summer rainstorm.
- We can see a little person on a boat
- The frame is characterized by a haze atmosphere
- The colors are used to represent their brightness through combinations of contrasts.
- It shows how the industrial dimension could mix with the natural and atmospheric one.