

SEMINAR 9

J. M. W. TURNER: KEY CONCEPTS & IDEAS

- considered by most critics the greatest British painter in history
- was an inveterate technical experimenter
- his stay at Petworth House was one of the most formative events in his career
- watercolour was central to his art
- was fascinated by elements such as light, water and fire
- a precursor of modern European art
- his importance appreciated only after his death (e.g. by the French Impressionists)
- later in his life invented a secret identity for himself to avoid uncomprehending critics

VOCABULARY TO DESCRIBE TURNER AND HIS PAINTINGS

- to pursue one's vision with tremendous stubbornness
- to struggle to fit in at the beginning of one's career
- insults levelled at a painter
- to prompt a barrage of criticism from uncomprehending critics
- early, Dutch-influenced seascapes
- to be particularly adept at sth
- pictures of destruction and apocalypse
- to pretend to be a painter of grand narrative history
- a huge disturbed vortex of paint
- the endless twinkle of light on water
- to examine and ponder the phenomenon of light
- light's function was not to model form – form existed to give reality to light
- to import the effects of watercolour into oil painting
- to pour scorn on someone's artistic work
- to live out of the public life in secret
- to pass oneself off as an admiral
- to liberate oneself from the hostile world of critics
- to be purged of story, anxiety, and academy
- to see the universe as a succession of inexplicable events taking place in an uncertain void of indefinite origin