

Ruskin on Imagination: A *Via Negativa*

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THIS ESSAY RELATES RUSKIN'S "PATHETIC FALLACY" for the first time to his theory of the ideal as it develops in the course of the early volumes of *Modern Painters*. Tracking, through these volumes, a progression of ideas rather than a set critical position, it reads, in their sequence, the growth and direction of Ruskin's version of realism. Beginning in *Modern Painters I* with a theory of art centered on the ideal, Ruskin is led, not through a break from, but through an intensification of, the key emphases of his own theory, to the rejection of idealism in the framing of "pathetic fallacy" in *Modern Painters III*. Analogous to the *via naturaliter negativa*, the path through nature to its negation, famously shown in Wordsworth's poetry by Geoffrey Hartman,¹ in Ruskin we might discern the opposite trajectory, through the ideal to its negation. The end point of that trajectory is his great realist manifesto, "Of the Pathetic Fallacy," premised on an irreducible moral relation between self and other. At that end point, Romantic imagination is superseded by a new emphasis on feeling, and Ruskin's departure from his Romantic precursors is fully and finally achieved.

The various aspects of Ruskin's thought that comprise his realism have been ably and extensively treated in the existing scholarship; in particular, his turn from Romanticism in the explication of pathetic fallacy is well established.² This scholarship, now of many decades' standing, continues to define our current understanding of Ruskin's aesthetics. My justification for revisiting these topics is the attempt to draw them together into a more complete conceptual picture. Taking my cue from Thomas Pfau's recent powerful advocacy of the hermeneutic method in humanistic enquiry,³ my recourse is to conceptual analysis rather than historical or biographical contextualization. Such analysis, in this far more bounded study than Pfau's, follows his lead in taking the form of an intellectual genealogy, or explorative source study. My title recalls Hartman, not to suggest an exact template, but to point up an analogy for Ruskin's turn from his intellectual sources, a turn directed by the very allegiances from which he departs. The

conceptual logic of Ruskin's progression from a Romantic to a post-Romantic aesthetics has rarely been set out as such. Nowhere is that progression shown to be, as I shall show it here, a transition from imagination to feeling.

I retain the term "feeling" deliberately, in place of the more modish "affect," to eschew the emphasis on the noncognitive so frequently associated with affect, and so contrary to Ruskin's own usage.⁴ Although the topic of feeling in Victorian realism has been the subject of widespread critical scrutiny in the past, the primacy of feeling in Ruskin's realism in particular, with its decoupling or dissociation from imagination as the condition for that primacy, has hardly been fully acknowledged, largely because of the centrality of the paradigm of "seeing" in the classic accounts of Ruskin's realist view. The dominance of that paradigm, securely established by seminal works such as John D. Rosenberg's *The Darkening Glass* (1961), Patricia Ball's *The Science of Aspects* (1971), and Robert Hewison's *The Argument of the Eye* (1976), has impeded the adequate discrimination of other aspects of Ruskin's aesthetics in subsequent reexaminations up to the present day. Alexandra Wettlaufer, for instance, recalls Rosenberg's characterization of Ruskin as "eye-driven, even photoerotic,"⁵ to argue that Ruskin's "belief in the visual capacities of mind, memory and imagination" led him to develop a "visual prose" that sought "to convince his readers, by making them *see*."⁶ Even those recent studies that set out explicitly to correct or complicate the assumption of the mimetic basis of Ruskin's aesthetics, leave undisturbed the primacy of visibility in his account of artistic perception and so fail to nuance the non-ocular constituents of that account. Thus Peter Garratt's valuable investigation of his "epistemological aesthetic" merely subsumes "feeling" into a larger "subjectivity" integral to Ruskin's empiricism, while Aleksandra Piesecka prioritizes "imagination" as the nonmimetic element of Ruskin's "seeing."⁷

One consequence of the specific neglect of feeling is that the manifestly religious content of Ruskin's "seeing" still overshadows the recognition of his humanism in the early volumes of *Modern Painters*. Stephen Cheeke's insightful new study, *Transfiguration* (2016), is the latest to address "the nature of the link between seeing and believing" in Ruskin's thought,⁸ taking visibility as the common core of his aesthetic and religious responses. To match the long-standing emphasis on seeing with a complementary emphasis on feeling is to add detail to the complex relations between Ruskin's religious and humanistic proclivities. For George Eliot, who shares his Evangelical heritage, the narrative of the turn from religion to humanism, in which realism emerges as the humanistic mode *par excellence*, is more or less straightforward. This easy correlation of realism and humanism, or equivalently,

the convenient antithesis of religion and humanism, is precluded in Ruskin's case. A fresh analysis, emphasizing anew a humanistic tendency present in his realism from the very start, but without detriment to its religious purport, will contribute, I believe, to a more nuanced understanding of his position with respect to the wider movement from a Romantic to a post-Romantic aesthetics (and ethics) in the first half of the nineteenth century.

As Pfau implies, the renewed recognition of a relational rather than an atomizing route from the subject of enquiry to its intellectual sources validates an attitude of enquiry that is similarly relational, in a way seldom conceded by the kind of approach where the subject, confined to the specificities of its historical moment, remains irrevocably alienated from the enquirer. In scholarship from the late twentieth century onward, the attention to context (in historical studies), or to larger systems of linguistic signification (in formal and structural analyses), has tended either to de-emphasize the content of literary texts, or, more damagingly, to expose their "bad faith": to expose, that is, as disingenuous and ideologically suspect, their avowed or attempted implementations of the particular values associated with "Romantic idealism," say, or "Victorian realism." My case for the continuing pertinence of this particular set of literary-historical categories attends to the critique of what we still call "Romanticism" (however fenced off by disclaimers), conducted by the immediate successors to the Romantic writers, in the writing most immediately influenced by theirs, and thus most insistently confronting the problematics of its own ethical origins. By tracking Ruskin's reevaluation of the Romantic models that he inherits, I hope to show, not bad faith, but its opposite: an aspiration towards moral possibility, neither spurious nor disingenuous, nor wholly irrelevant to us today.

IDEAL BEGINNINGS

That Ruskin is centrally concerned with the ideal in *Modern Painters I* (1843) is indicated at the outset, in his Preface to the first edition, where he declares his purpose to vindicate "the most exalted truth, and the highest ideal of landscape that this or any other age has ever witnessed" (3:4).⁹ My mapping of the negative trajectory of his idealism begins with recalling an important but neglected Romantic precursor, William Hazlitt. In his new "Preface" to the second edition of *Modern Painters I* (1844), Ruskin propounds for the first time, and to silence his detractors, a theory of the ideal, formulated in retrospect to justify the principles of criticism already asserted in the body of his text. The cardinal principle of this theory—that the ideal is constituted from the real, rather than surpassing or superseding it, as posited by Joshua Reynolds—exactly echoes the fundamental tenet of

Hazlitt's, explicitly developed as a counter to Reynolds's and set out in his *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article "On the Fine Arts" (1816) and his collection of essays, *Criticisms on Art* (1843), the latter published posthumously in the period between the first and second editions of *Modern Painters I*.

The full textual basis of my case for the influence of Hazlitt's theory of art on Ruskin's has already been published,¹⁰ and I recur to it here merely to emphasize Ruskin's closeness, at this point, to his nearest Romantic forebear in art criticism and theory. The resemblance between the "particular form" of Hazlitt's ideal and the "specific form" of Ruskin's is notable. Hazlitt's writings on art provide Ruskin with theoretical support for a notion of the ideal that, contrary to Reynolds's, is not only compatible with, but constituted from, specific and detailed particulars. As Hazlitt puts it in the *Criticisms*, in his essay "On the Elgin Marbles," "the *ideal* is only the selecting a particular form, which expresses most completely the idea of a given character or quality."¹¹ In turn Ruskin writes in his 1844 "Preface,"

... the violation of specific form, the utter abandonment of all organic and individual character of object . . . is constantly held up by the unthinking critic as the foundation of the grand or historical style, and the first step to the attainment of a pure ideal. Now there is but one grand style, in the treatment of all subjects whatsoever, and that style is based on the *perfect* knowledge . . . of the specific characters of the given object, be it man, beast, or flower" (3:25)

For Ruskin, as for Hazlitt before him, the particular or factual is retained in the details of the ideal. The emphasis on detail, critical to Ruskin's thought from the outset, becomes increasingly pronounced in the course of *Modern Painters*, this growing emphasis being already the notable development from the first to the second volume. The symbiosis of particular and ideal, initially posited by Hazlitt, points the way to the mutual sustenance of a synonymous pairing, truth and beauty. Ruskin's first extended treatment of this mutuality is in the "Preface" to the second edition of *Modern Painters I*. In *Modern Painters II* (1846), the mutuality is focal.

In their introduction to *Modern Painters II*, Ruskin's magisterial editors, Cook and Wedderburn, call attention to Ruskin's "diversion from 'ideas of truth' in the first volume to 'ideas of beauty'" in the second (4:xix). Yet although such a change is perceptible in the terms of Ruskin's enquiry, it is hardly so in the content. The insistence on the particular—the criterion of "truth"—is not abated, but accentuated in the treatment of the ideal in *Modern Painters II*. Ideal beauty, here, to a greater extent than in the "Preface" to *Modern Painters I*, consists in the preservation, not the sacrifice, of individual detail. The ideal, as it is defined in the second volume has to encompass, for instance, the "misfortunes" of the wild oak, "gnarled, and leaning, and shattered, and rock-encumbered," and, in the human form, "the evidences

of sorrow," "of past suffering," and "of past and conquered sin" (4:170, 186). The commitment shown in this development is still to "ideas of truth," not divergent, but inseparable, from "ideas of beauty."

The heightened emphasis on individual detail in *Modern Painters II* goes hand in hand with a shift in focus, from landscape to the human form. In his first essay at theorizing the ideal in the 1844 "Preface," Ruskin is already drawing on his own (and possibly Hazlitt's) observations of the Elgin marbles, applying to landscape what he learns about the idealizing of the human form.¹² Inevitably, as he describes it in a letter to an Oxford friend, the Rev. H. G. Liddell (12 October 1844), "As soon as I began to throw my positions respecting the beautiful into form, I found myself necessarily thrown on the human figure for great part of my illustrations; and at last, after having held off in fear and trembling as long as I could, I saw there was no help for it, and that it must be taken up to purpose" (3:668–69). As it progresses, step by step, from "typical" to "vital" beauty, *Modern Painters II* proceeds from landscape to plant and animal life and finally to man. The human figure is the summit of Ruskin's theorizing in this volume, the increased stress on individuality and detail being part of the logic of a progression towards a more overtly humanistic end. By contrast to the lower life forms, "in investigating the signs of the ideal or perfect type of humanity, we must not presume on the singleness of that type" (4:183–84), so that the ideal form of the human being, as Ruskin presents it here, is also the most varied and realistic, with all the "signs of hard struggle and bitter pain upon it" (4:186).

This intensification of individuality is not yet, however, at the expense of ideal character. On the contrary, Ruskin stipulates a *wholeness* that is composed of multitudinous detail, such that the creativity of the artist and the truth of nature, imaginative vision and empirical fact, beauty and truth, are mutually sustaining: "details alone, and unreferred to a final purpose, are the sign of a tyro's work, . . . details perfect in unity, and contributing to a final purpose, are the sign of the production of a consummate master" (3:32). Drawing from Romantic sources—quite apart from my argument for Hazlitt, the influence of Wordsworth and Coleridge, in particular, has been long and well established¹³—Ruskin's theory in *Modern Painters II* contains a recognizably Romantic commitment to unity, which is also, for him, a religious commitment. "Hence," in the chapter "Of Unity, or the Type of the Divine Comprehensiveness," "the appearance of separation or isolation in anything, and of self-dependence, is an appearance of imperfection; and all appearances of connection and brotherhood are pleasant and right, both as significative of perfection in the things united, and as typical of that Unity which we attribute to God" (4:92). And again, "of that which is thus

necessary to the perfection of all things, all appearance, sign, type, or suggestion must be beautiful, in whatever matter it may appear" (4:94).

Even here, however, where the criterion of unity is made most explicit, religious idealism is in characteristic alliance with Ruskin's developing realism. Thus he prefers the term "comprehensiveness" to "unity," "because unity is often understood in the sense of oneness or singleness, instead of universality" (4:92); both "comprehensiveness" and "universality," retain, instead of obliterating, individuality. Furthermore, Ruskin makes variety the necessary condition of the highest form of unity, the "unity of Membership" or "Essential Unity, which is the unity of things separately imperfect into a perfect whole" (4:95). Although he is careful to clarify that variety is not in itself necessarily beautiful, but only when it composes a whole (4:96–97), nonetheless, a certain weight attaches, in this context, to the attributes of variety, separation, or distinction, as prerequisites of his highest "Essential" unity. In effect, Ruskin's version in *Modern Painters II* of the Coleridgean "unity-in-multhood" grants rather more consideration than Coleridge does to the real constituent of that ideal whole.

REAL DEVELOPMENTS

By the time, ten years later, Ruskin publishes *Modern Painters III*, the insistence on particularity or, synonymously, the commitment to what is "real," already pronounced in the first two volumes, is entrenched. Continuing to treat the ideal, Ruskin finds that the "purist ideal," where the painter or author depicts only what is good, "produces a childish form of art," one that lacks the "harder realities" (5:104, 106). The "naturalist ideal," by contrast, "is that central and highest branch of ideal art which concerns itself simply with things as they ARE, and accepts, in all of them, alike the evil and the good" (5:111). The commitment to "reality" gains strength with long sustenance, so much so that in the symbiosis of real and ideal, hitherto unproblematic, a certain tension begins to be conspicuous.

Ruskin's affinity with his Romantic precursors is evident, for instance, in his sustained focus, carried over from *Modern Painters II*, on imagination, in his value descriptors, "great" and "noble" for art, and in his prizing of the "unity," "harmony," and "wholeness" of various works of art and literature. Poetry is "the suggestion, by the imagination, of noble grounds for the noble emotions" (5:28); equally, the "characteristic of great art is that it must . . . be produced by imaginative power" (5:63). Representing "things as they are," the associative imagination "accepting the weaknesses, faults, and wrongnesses in all things that it sees, . . . so places and harmonizes them that they form a noble whole" (5:111). In this last comment, Ruskin reflects

the Schlegelian version of “Romanticism,” as famously distinguished from Schiller’s by A. O. Lovejoy in his *Essays in the History of Ideas* (1948).¹⁴ Ruskin’s assertion of the whole-making tendency of the associative imagination exactly corresponds to the Schlegelian position, where the ideal consists of a multitudinous reality, perceived or constituted as a unified whole.

Pulling away from this promotion of a totalizing view, however, is Ruskin’s intensifying realism. Already, in *The Stones of Venice* (1851–53), a key bridge text published between the second and third volumes of *Modern Painters*, the criterion of unity, still retained, is considerably de-emphasized, as the full force of Ruskin’s eloquence is turned on the defense of imperfection as the indicator both of the individuality of a work of art, and its religious and aesthetic value.¹⁵ In the critical chapter on “The Nature of Gothic,” individuality (or particularity) and imperfection are inextricably linked, attesting mutually to the humanistic insight of the Christian religion: “Christianity having recognized, in small things as well as great, the individual value of every soul . . . confesses its imperfection” (10:189–90), and, more categorically, “no architecture can be truly noble which is *not* imperfect” (10:202).

The idea that execution must always fall short of conception, that the perpetual endeavour of the artist is for a perpetually unrealizable ideal, is a tenet familiar, of course, from Romantic thought. As Friedrich Schiller describes him, the modern or “sentimental” poet “is constantly dealing . . . with reality as boundary and with his idea as the infinite.”¹⁶ An English version of the same idea may be found, among a variety of more canonical Romantic texts, in Hazlitt’s essay, “The Indian Jugglers” (Shelley’s *Defence of Poetry* is a better-known example), where the essayist both lauds and rues the necessary imperfection of an art, here, essay writing, that remains infinitely perfectible in comparison with the achievable, if limited, perfection of the jugglers’ skill.¹⁷ Like Schiller, Hazlitt celebrates the loftiness of the aim, even as he remains dissatisfied with the execution, recognizing in both the condition of humanity. Crucially, however, Ruskin departs from his Romantic forebears in his delight in such imperfection.¹⁸ Imperfection is the attribute of beauty, attesting to the larger vision of the artist, certainly, but also grounded in the very condition of human life, which is transitory, incapable of the stasis of perfection:

. . . imperfection is in some sort essential to all that we know of life. It is the sign of life in a mortal body, that is to say, of a state of progress and change. Nothing that lives is, or can be, rigidly perfect; part of it is decaying, part nascent. . . . to banish imperfection is to destroy expression, to check exertion, to paralyse vitality. All things are literally better, lovelier, and more beloved for the[ir] imperfections . . .

. . . neither architecture nor any other noble work of man can be good unless it be imperfect . . . (10:203–4)

The contrast with the demand for perfection in *Modern Painters II* is pronounced. Ruskin's praise of imperfection in *The Stones of Venice*, although here still compatible with idealization, potentially undermines it. If the commitment to—or at least the wish for—magnitude in the artist's vision might be called Romantic or idealistic, then the emphasis on, and more importantly, celebration of, the artist's limitation is recognizably realist. The distinction may be no more than a nuance, but it is a critical one. The pleasure in the actual, because it expresses the reality of human life, instead of dissatisfaction with its failure to express the ideal, is another ground on which Ruskin's realism and humanism coincide, gradually deviating, in so doing, from Romantic idealization.

In *Modern Painters III*, these fissures between real and ideal in Ruskin's thought have become nearly unbridgeable. The declaration that "the painter who has a natural disposition to dwell on the highest thoughts of which humanity is capable" is of a higher order than "he who represents the passions and events of ordinary life" (5:48), although not negated, is destabilized by the warning that "the habit of disdaining ordinary truth, . . . gradually infects the mind . . . the pursuer of idealism will pass his days in false and useless thoughts" (5:100). In *Modern Painters II*, the "ism" that Ruskin had expressly disdained was "realism";¹⁹ now, it is "idealism" that has the pejorative ring. His growing concern with the ordinary carries with it a criterion of practical use and a regard for the matter-of-fact that tend against the easy conformity of real and ideal: "the man of true invention, power, and sense will . . . set himself to consider whether the rocks in the river could have their points knocked off, or the boats upon it be made with stronger bottoms" (5:100); the great artist is "He who habituates himself, in his daily life, to seek for the stern facts in whatever he hears and sees" (5:124).

The attachment to fact in turn underwrites Ruskin's tenet of distinctness in art, a tenet directly antithetical to that of obscurity, so frequently the quality of the Romantic sublime: "in general all *great* drawing is *distinct* drawing; for truths which are rendered indistinctly might, for the most part, as well not be rendered at all" (5:60), and again, "generally speaking, all haste, slurring, obscurity, indecision, are signs of low art, and all calmness, distinctness, luminousness, and positiveness, of high art" (5:61).²⁰ Indeed, "distinct drawing" sums up not only Ruskin's prescription for art, but his own expository practice, which throughout is taxonomical, presenting categories, subcategories, and subsubcategories in a complex classification of humanity and the forms of art. That is, Ruskin's prose—like Hazlitt's, his own artistic medium—aspires to just that clarity and discriminated detail that it praises in art.²¹

ABSOLUTE ALTERITY

By tracking the growing importance of detail in Ruskin's aesthetics, we elicit a logic of progression, from the theory of the ideal in the first two volumes of *Modern Painters* to the formulation of pathetic fallacy in the third. Developed into a criterion of distinctness, the attention to detail, itself in nowise at odds with an idealistic vision, drives Ruskin's great critique of characteristically Romantic modes of thought and expression in the famous chapter, "Of the Pathetic Fallacy." Retaining, in *Modern Painters III*, an emphasis on unity as a criterion for art, Ruskin nonetheless makes the unifying tendency of the artist open to check or critique.

In *Modern Painters II*, where the commitment to imagination is still largely unquestioning, Ruskin's treatment of it is correspondingly idealistic in its tenor. The criterion of unity and the exaltation of imagination go hand in hand. The associative imagination is "the grandest mechanical power that the human intelligence possesses" (4:234) because it produces the highest form of unity, the "Unity of Membership (the essential characteristic of greatness)" (4:236). In the chapter "Of Unity," again, "all appearances of connection and brotherhood are pleasant and right," "in whatever matter they may appear (4:92, 94). But in the exposition of pathetic fallacy in *Modern Painters III*, although all such "appearances" are still "pleasant," some at least are not "right." Ruskin's target is this untruth. Setting its beauty aside, he deems it categorically a fault. Without sacrificing wholeness in his theory of art, he precludes the sacrifice of the part to the whole; without abating the insistence on unity as a quality of the artistic work, he imposes certain important restrictions on the artist's license to unify.

In *Modern Painters III*, imagination remains most "Romantic," that is, permissibly lofty, unifying, and independent of the factual or material reality, when it expresses religious or extrahuman truths; when its subject is human or secular, Ruskin's attitude to it is most realistic and critical. Thus imagination is given its freest rein in the treatment of the "grotesque ideal": ". . . grotesque idealism has been the element through which the most appalling and eventful truth has been wisely conveyed . . . No element of imagination has a wider range, a more magnificent use, or so colossal a grasp of sacred truth" (5:134). The exaltation of the imagination by asserting its grasp of, or participation in, religious truth, is among the strongest indications of Coleridge's legacy in Ruskin's view of imagination. Ruskin's preference for the medieval griffin to the classical, for instance, because the first shows, by means of imagination, "the unity of the human and divine natures" (5:147), closely resembles Coleridge's view, reiterated throughout his writings, of exactly such a unity, elicited by imagination.²² But even—

and indeed, all the more—in the treatment of religious subjects, Ruskin, unlike Coleridge, remains watchfully aware of the imagination's falsity, so much so that the "religious ideal" is usually a false ideal and "on the whole," "religious art [has] never been of any service to mankind" (5:85). Emptied of reality, that is, the ideal creations of the imagination become emptied, too, of human value.

Such departures from reality—the imagination's falsehoods—are found to spring from its tendency to project the self on to its object. In the chapter "Of the Pathetic Fallacy," Ruskin proclaims his resistance to the unifying and totalizing habit of the Romantic poets ("the second order of poets," as he classes them), a habit that produces an elision of the distinction between self and world.

...when Dante describes the spirits falling from the bank of Acheron "as dead leaves flutter from a bough," he gives the most perfect image possible of their utter lightness, feebleness, passiveness, and scattering agony of despair, without, however, for an instant losing his own clear perception that *these* are souls, and those are leaves; he makes no confusion of one with the other. But when Coleridge speaks of

The one red leaf, the last of its clan,

That dances as often as dance it can,

he has a morbid, that is to say, a so-far false, idea about the leaf: he fancies a life in it, and a will, which there are not; confuses its powerlessness with choice, its fading death with merriment, and the wind that shakes it with music. (5:206–7)

Ruskin sets Dante's ability to maintain the distinction between object and self against Coleridge's tendency to unify. This preservation of distinction is also a preservation of detail, a commitment to the mundane particularity of the part that precludes its submergence in the whole that is conceived by the encompassing self. The attention to detail is moral, because it checks egotism, such a check being fundamental to any realist project. In his explication of the pathetic fallacy, then, we find Ruskin's version of realism, premised on an alterity that is absolute and unalterable:

So, then, we have the three ranks: the man who perceives rightly, because he does not feel, and to whom the primrose is very accurately the primrose, because he does not love it. Then, secondly, the man who perceives wrongly, because he feels, and to whom the primrose is anything else than a primrose: a star, or a sun, or a fairy's shield, or a forsaken maiden. And then, lastly, there is the man who perceives rightly in spite of his feelings, and to whom the primrose is for ever nothing else than itself—a little flower, apprehended in the very plain and leafy fact of it, whatever and how many soever the associations and passions may be, that crowd around it. (5:209)

Ruskin's realism ("perceiving rightly") is contained in this last combination, of feeling and detail. The feeling preservation of detail attests to the control or containment of the self: the self at work within an enabling limitation, enabling, that is, of moral agency. The implication here is not only that feeling is contained, but also that only in so being, does it become outwardly directed; directed, that is, towards an other.

Thus the emphasis on particularity or detail in Ruskin's theory of the ideal becomes, in his critique of the pathetic fallacy, a demand for the separation of the self from the object of its perception, a separation enabled only by the scrupulous self-control that recognizes absolutely the condition of otherness. Such a separation promotes a relation between self and other, without the absorption of the second in the first. Crucially, then, for Ruskin, the aesthetic quality of unity in the artist's creation, often required or celebrated in *Modern Painters III*, has to be relational rather than self-centered. His most famous literary concept has its origins, as we have seen, in a version of the ideal, constituted of detailed particulars, present in his aesthetics very nearly from the outset. In the first two volumes of *Modern Painters*, the role of the unifying imagination in constructing that ideal is critical. As Ruskin's critique of imagination develops from *Modern Painters III* onwards, so too does his critique of its ideal constructions. Above the totalizing view of imagination, one that brings about the unity of self and world, or self and other, he sets the relational view, where self and other remain separate, but connected. The amalgam of feeling and detail, whose premise is an outward-looking self, allows for the retention of subjectivity within the mimetic or referential view of art so frequently expressed by him and otherwise nearly impossible to explain away.²³

As Ruskin explains it, pathetic fallacy—the self-centered rather than relational view—pertains specifically to our perceptions of nature or landscape, but insofar as it shows the self's view of an other, its ethical implications extend not only to the natural world, but also to the social world, the world of other human beings. To Ruskin's Romantic forebears, the unity produced by the artist is moral, in that it effects a relation between mind and nature, self and world; this relation is also called, by the Romantics, "sympathy" (although our modern usage might put it closer to "empathy"). For the realist, such a unity, produced from and by the imagining self, is no more than egotistical, always absorbing the world or "other" into the self. Thus Ruskin rejects the imagining of other as self, upholding, instead, the recognition of alterity, of other *as* other. His combination of feeling with detail circumvents the traps of "subjective" and "objective"—the terms against which he registers so strong a protest at the opening of the chapter—to satisfy his criterion of "truth."

To the widespread recognition that Ruskin's formulation of the pathetic fallacy represents an anti-Romantic turn,²⁴ we might add, at this juncture, a useful comparison. The perception that he indicts as "pathetic fallacy," using Coleridge as his example, is not only a characteristic aspect of Romantic practice, it is also expressly upheld as a value in the judgment of literature by Hazlitt, Ruskin's forebear in criticism. In the opening lecture, "On Poetry in General," of his *Lectures on the English Poets* (1818), a work listed in Dearden's catalogue of Ruskin's library,²⁵ Hazlitt draws on Shakespeare to illustrate exactly the tendency that Ruskin was to deplore a generation later: the tendency of the imagination, under the influence of passion, to spill out of itself and absorb the world around it. What Ruskin censures, Hazlitt praises: "when he [Lear] exclaims in the mad scene, "The little dogs and all, Tray, Blanche, and Sweetheart, see, they bark at me!" it is passion lending occasion to imagination to make every creature in league against him."²⁶ Again, in a later essay in *The Plain Speaker* (1826), Hazlitt returns to this "over-weening importunity of the imagination,"²⁷ making it the particular mark of Shakespeare's genius that he so finely and copiously illustrates such importunity:

So when Othello swears "By yon *marble* heaven," the epithet is suggested by the hardness of his heart from the sense of injury; the texture of the outward object is borrowed from that of the thoughts; and that noble simile, "Like the Propontic," &c. seems only an echo of the sounding tide of passion, and to roll from the same source, the heart.

("Sir Walter Scott, Racine, and Shakespear")²⁸

The contrast with Ruskin is marked. Comparing "[t]he Jessy of Shenstone, and the Ellen of Wordsworth," Ruskin finds that the first, prone to pathetic fallacy, is a weaker character than the second, going on to conclude that "the pathetic fallacy is powerful only so far as it is pathetic, feeble so far as it is fallacious" (5:218–20). But to Hazlitt, whose examples, Lear and Othello, are, unlike Ruskin's, forcefully masculine, this kind of egotistical assertion attests unequivocally to the strength of imagination, with no trace or suggestion of feebleness, and it is stamped with authenticity, not falsehood. In the difference between the two configurations, Hazlitt's and Ruskin's, of the relations between egotism, truth, and imaginative power, we find further confirmation of the nature and extent of Ruskin's move away from his Romantic antecedents.

EMPOWERING LIMITS

In *Modern Painters II*, truth is the characteristic of imagination. Thus in the chapter on the associative imagination, "imagination never deigns to

touch anything but truth; . . . where there is appearance of falsehood, the imagination has had no hand" (4:247), and in the following chapter, on "imagination penetrative," again, the imagination is the faculty "the base of whose authority and being is its perpetual thirst for truth and purpose to be true. It has no food, no delight, no care, no perception, except of truth" (4:284–85). Indeed the whole section on imagination ends on this note: "the essence of the faculty . . . we have found in its three functions, Associative of Truth, Penetrative of Truth, and Contemplative of Truth; and having no dealings nor relations with any kind of falsity" (4:313).

By contrast, Ruskin's point of departure in *Modern Painters III* is the imagination's tendency to falsehood, his critical effort directed towards distinguishing its use from its abuse, its healthy from its diseased operation. The dominant topic of his first five chapters is, in his own words, "the principal modes in which the imagination works for evil" (5:102). Occasionally reverting to his earlier, more reverential stance—"in all that the imagination does; if anything be wrong it is not the imagination's fault, but some inferior faculty's" (5:145)—Ruskin still stipulates that "the imagination hardly ever works in this intense way, unencumbered by inferior faculties" (5:147). Critics and biographers have plausibly linked this ambivalence to Ruskin's growing involvement in practical projects for social reform, including the Working Men's College at Oxford.²⁹ The diseased or fallacy-prone imagination, as he explains in his analysis of the false ideal, is self-centered, solipsistic and dangerously antisocial (5:99–101).³⁰

If "truth" is the single overriding value to which Ruskin adheres across *Modern Painters*, then so far as it is divested of truth, the imagination is divested of value. Ruskin's growing ambivalence towards imagination is matched by his greater recourse to feeling as the test of truth. In *Modern Painters II*, feeling and imagination are inseparable—the feelingless part . . . is Fancy's, . . . the sentient part . . . is Imagination's (4. 293)—at the same time, imagination is Ruskin's primary focus, and the more weighted with value in his analysis. At this stage, his fundamental distinction in judging art and artists is between the absence and presence of imagination, where in *Modern Painters III*, he begins by first of all separating the feeling from the unfeeling perception, poets from those who are not poets at all. Although the synonymy of imagination and feeling might still be argued from this later classification (so that "feeling" and "unfeeling" might be said to equate to "imaginative" and "unimaginative"), they pull apart in *Modern Painters III* because they are not identically invested with "truth."

In Ruskin's formulation of the pathetic fallacy, the basis of fallacy could, at first glance, be located squarely in the "feelings" to which he refers: "All

violent feelings have the same effect. They produce in us a falseness in all our impression of external things which I would generally characterize as the ‘pathetic fallacy’” (5:205). But as he goes on to make clear, these “feelings” are themselves true; it is the imagination that they stimulate which is false. “Truth” necessarily belongs, then, not to imagination, but to “feeling.” The epithet “pathetic” in “pathetic fallacy” acknowledges the truth of feeling that is discernible even where imagination is false. “So far as we see that the *feeling* is true, we pardon, or are even pleased by, the confessed fallacy of sight which it induces” (5:210).³¹ True feeling produces a false imagination, a “fallacy of sight”; that truth might be still upheld as a value, where the falsehood may not.

In *Modern Painters II*, truth of feeling had been part of the (necessary and given) truth of imagination. But in the chapter “Of the Pathetic Fallacy” in *Modern Painters III*, although it might still be maintained that “all true and deep emotion is imaginative” (4:287), this emotional truth does not imply imaginative truth. The impulse of the emotionally charged imagination, unless checked, is to fallacy rather than truth. Militating against the confidence of Ruskin’s declaration, in his discussion of the penetrative imagination in *Modern Painters II*, that “all egotism, and selfish care, or regard are, in proportion to their constancy, destructive of imagination” (4:287), the pathetic fallacy attests that the imagination, under the influence of intense emotion, turns egotistical, collapsing the distinction between self and world or other. As a result, throughout Ruskin’s explication of the pathetic fallacy, imagination very nearly disappears, replaced by “feeling” as the determining criterion of “greatness”:

For, be it clearly and constantly remembered, that the greatness of a poet depends upon the two faculties, acuteness of feeling, and command of it. A poet is great, first in proportion to the strength of his passion, and then, that strength being granted, in proportion to his government of it; there being, however, always a point beyond which inhuman and monstrous if he pushed this government, and therefore, a point at which all feverish and wild fancy becomes just and true. (5:215)

Ruskin’s proviso, whereby emotional intensity permissibly circumvents self-government so as to transform “feverish” fancy into truth, all the more makes the point about the primacy of feeling over imagination in his celebrated formulation.

Ruskin’s decoupling of imagination and feeling has passed without notice in the numerous critical analyses of the pathetic fallacy, and indeed of *Modern Painters* more generally, from the earliest to the most up to date. Consequently, the relational and outwardly directed propensity of feeling has been entirely neglected. In George Landow’s magisterial study, for instance,

“pathetic fallacy . . . is a matter of emotional distortion and projection” and “feeling [is] the province of imagination.”³² Conflated with imagination, Ruskin’s feeling becomes too thoroughly identified with egotism. In Robert Hewison’s analysis of the pathetic fallacy, again, “the egoistical feelings of one’s own mind, . . . seek to impose themselves on everything around them,”³³ and a similar conflation of imagination and feeling is manifest in Elizabeth Helsinger’s contention that “Ruskin attacks the self-projecting heart.”³⁴ Even Peter Garratt, rightly asserting in his important recent study that for Ruskin, “Truth . . . cannot be sought in isolation from thought and feeling,”³⁵ conflates thought, imagination, emotion, and sense experience in the single category of selfhood or subjectivity. To Garratt, whose analysis, based on *Modern Painters I* and *II*, nonetheless assumes an unvarying stance across all five volumes of Ruskin’s opus, this stance—that subjectivity is fundamental to artistic perception—has to be elicited against the grain of an aesthetic program that more overtly argues for self-concealment. But if we nuance the sequential progression from one volume to the next, especially across the decade that separates the first two from the third, as a development or transition in the course of which imagination becomes gradually detached from feeling, we might better integrate the commitment to a self-conditioned “truth” with the strong controls, both limiting and enabling, under which Ruskin insists the artistic self must operate.

Limits and limitation are at the heart of Ruskin’s humanistic view. In *Modern Painters II*, where moderation or “self-restrained liberty” is that attribute of beauty that is “the girdle and safeguard of all the rest” (4:138, 139), the language of limitation is still compatible with the demand for perfection. In *The Stones of Venice*, as I have shown, perfection is set aside and the imperfection of a work of art celebrated, because it is an expression of human limitation. In the critique of pathetic fallacy in *Modern Painters III*, the self, recognizing its limits, becomes, through that recognition, a moral agent, able to direct its feelings outward so as to overcome imaginative distortion.

In this respect, George Landow’s use of the attribute “limiting” in his observation that “although Ruskin, like many other romantic theorists, continually emphasizes the need for intensity of emotion, he . . . desire[s] to avoid the dangers of a limiting subjectivity” is somewhat misleading.³⁶ Identifying feeling wholly with inwardness in his discussion of the pathetic fallacy, Landow finds that Ruskin’s emphasis on intensity of emotion is incompatible with his desire to avoid a “limiting subjectivity.” But Ruskin’s own language in the chapter “Of the Pathetic Fallacy” invites us to characterize such fallacy as the expression of an *unrestrained* subjectivity. Not the

self that is prone to fallacy, but the self that surpasses it is limited, because it is restrained; furthermore, its perception, retaining feeling, remains conditioned by its selfhood. In the same vein as Landow, a recent commentator, Rob Breton, treating Ruskin's pathetic fallacy in a recent essay as belonging to a more widespread Victorian emphasis on emotional repression, polarizes self-restraint and self-expression, and so misses the self-expression that is enabled by self-restraint: the empowerment of the self by the recognition of its limits.³⁷

The critique of imagination entailed by Ruskin's insistence on the limits of subjectivity or selfhood underwrites, then, not only his famous paradigm for artistic perception, "seeing," long a commonplace in Ruskin scholarship, but also a complementary emphasis, "feeling," whose moral weighting has been consistently overlooked. By attending to that emphasis, we are directed not only to the epistemological grounding of Ruskin's aesthetics, so ably set out by Peter Garratt, but also and crucially to what Garratt neglects, its moral bearing. For Ruskin, the perception of God in the works of nature is inseparable from the celebration of human limitation: the limitation that at once enables outwardly directed feeling and demands the curtailing of imagination. Hence the mutuality of his religion and his humanism, more usually treated as antithetical in the major critical studies. Patricia M. Ball, for instance, presenting Ruskin's pathetic fallacy as a move away from what she calls the Romantics' "creed of humanization,"³⁸ towards art as a means to religious revelation, misses the tenaciously humanistic commitment from which the notion of pathetic fallacy derives. Robert Hewison, again, arguing in Ruskin, "the concept of the imagination as a predominantly visual faculty"³⁹ distinguishes between the "objective" imaginative perception of the order of God and its distortion by "subjective emotion": "If he [Ruskin] was to uphold the objectivity of imaginative perception, subjective emotion had to be put in its place"; "the poet's subjective emotions interfered with his perception of the order of God."⁴⁰ Subsequently, in his *Romantic Ecology*, Jonathan Bate contrasts Wordsworth's humanism with Ruskin's religious emphases, attributing to Ruskin the view that "[t]he pathetic fallacy is a substitute for the religious belief that had been destroyed by the Enlightenment."⁴¹ Although Bate recognizes that for Ruskin, "[i]ntensity of passion may transform a fallacy into a strength" and "strength of feeling gives value to a way of seeing that in scientific terms is fallacious,"⁴² he treats that "feeling" as wholly religious, a feeling for God, rather than a means to a moral relation between self and other. Kenneth Daley also emphasizes Ruskin's "theological bias" and his faith in a transcendent truth as fundamental to his formulation of the pathetic fallacy.⁴³ And most currently, Rob Breton finds

that “[t]he pathetic fallacy is a deeply religious concept,” premised upon a Victorian emphasis on the repression of feeling.⁴⁴ Contrary to these positions, I have shown in this essay that Ruskin’s relocation of value in feeling, which is relational, from imagination, which is egotistical, is a vital aspect of a realism that is also, and regardless of its religious propensity, profoundly humanistic.

Oddly enough, although Ruskin’s critique of the pathetic fallacy has been widely linked to the increasingly social tenor of his critical vision at the time, the specifically social and humanistic implications of that critique remain underdeveloped in conceptual terms. The unity produced by imagination, or rather the illusion of such a unity, is identifiable as part of the Romantic imagination’s will to power, its tendency to absorb to itself, objects outside of it. This political aspect of imagination—its ideological thrust—is emphasized by Hazlitt in the well-known comments on *Coriolanus* in *Characters of Shakespear’s Plays*,⁴⁵ and again, in his remarks on the powerful imagination in the *Table-Talk* essay, “The Indian Jugglers”: “To impress the idea of power on others, they must be made in some way to feel it. . . . it must subdue and overawe them by subjecting their wills.”⁴⁶ Hazlitt’s language makes clear that the imperative of the Romantic imagination, in its denial of difference, is, in being egoistic, also political and imperialistic.⁴⁷ By contrast, Ruskin’s “feeling,” required, in the construction of relation, not to obliterate but preserve distinction, to maintain plurality rather than impose unity, may be categorized as a social response. In a period, that is, in which his interests are increasingly shifting from the aesthetic to the social, Ruskin seeks to substitute for the political impulse of the Romantic imagination, the social impulse of feeling. He himself pinpoints the summer of 1860 as the climactic point at which the shift occurs, “when I gave up my art-work and wrote this little book [*Unto this Last*].”⁴⁸ But as I have shown, the basis of that shift is already present in his exploration of the ideal nearly two decades previously, and its progress is inscribed in his theory of art and imagination as it develops through the first three volumes of *Modern Painters*.

In his still indispensable essay, “Ruskin on the Imagination” (1979), to which my own title intentionally alludes, Michael Sprinker identifies Ruskin’s unease with a Romantic imagination that is “a manifestation of . . . man’s inexorable will to power over reality.”⁴⁹ In Sprinker’s searching examination, Ruskin’s theory of imagination, committed, despite this unease, to a Romantic aesthetics, remains fundamentally contradictory, “at once a theory of mimesis and a theory of the phantasm, a theory of representation and a theory of fiction.”⁵⁰ The inconsistencies in Ruskin’s view of imagination cannot be entirely wished away. But Sprinker’s conclusion may be

substantially qualified if we separate, rather than merge, as he does, the versions of imagination contained in the second and third volumes of *Modern Painters*. *Modern Painters III*, published, as I have said, nearly a decade after *Modern Painters II*, offers a corrective to the model of imagination set out in the preceding volume. From here onward, the exposure of the imagination's illusions—the illusions since named “the Romantic ideology” by Jerome McGann⁵¹—becomes a central endeavour of Ruskin's realist project.

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NOTES

- 1 Geoffrey Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry 1787–1814* (Yale U. Press, 1964), 33–48.
- 2 See for instance, Patricia M. Ball, *The Science of Aspects: The Changing Role of Fact in the Work of Coleridge, Ruskin, and Hopkins* (London: Athlone Press, 1971), esp. 75–80; Harold Bloom, “Ruskin as Literary Critic,” in *The Ringers in the Tower: Studies in Romantic Tradition* (U. of Chicago Press, 1971), 169–83; Robert Hewison, *John Ruskin: The Argument of the Eye* (Princeton U. Press, 1976), 73; Elizabeth K. Helsinger, *Ruskin and the Art of the Beholder* (Harvard U. Press, 1982), 47ff.
- 3 See Thomas Pfau, *Minding the Modern: Human Agency, Intellectual Traditions, and Responsible Knowledge* (U. of Notre Dame Press, 2013).
- 4 See, for instance, Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg in their introductory chapter to *The Affect Theory Reader*: “. . . affect . . . is the name we give to those . . . visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing.” G. J. Seigworth and M. Gregg, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader* (Duke U. Press, 2010), 1.
- 5 John D. Rosenberg, *The Darkening Glass: A Portrait of Ruskin's Genius* (1961; Columbia U. Press, 1980), 4.
- 6 Alexandra K. Wettlaufer, *In the Mind's Eye: The Visual Impulse in Diderot, Baudelaire and Ruskin* (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Rodopi, 2003).
- 7 Peter Garratt, *Victorian Empiricism: Self, Knowledge, and Reality in Ruskin, Bain, Lewes, Spencer, and George Eliot* (Fairleigh Dickinson U. Press, 2010), 71; Aleksandra Piasecka, *Towards Creative Imagination in Victorian Literature* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2014).
- 8 Stephen Cheeke, *Transfiguration: The Religion of Art in Nineteenth-Century Literature Before Aestheticism* (Oxford U. Press, 2016), 16.
- 9 All quotations from Ruskin are taken from *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E. T. Cook and A. Wedderburn, 39 vols. (London: George Allen, 1903–12). References are by volume and page.

- 10 See my essay, "Hazlitt, Ruskin, and Ideal Form," *PQ* 81.4 (Fall 2002), 493–503. Prior to this essay, a more tentative suggestion of Ruskin's debt to Hazlitt is made in William C. Wright's "Hazlitt, Ruskin, and Nineteenth-Century Art Criticism," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 32.4 (Summer 1974), 509–23.
- 11 William Hazlitt, *Criticisms on Art*, ed. by his son, 2 vols. (London: John Templeman, 1843–44), 1:250–51.
- 12 See Natarajan, "Hazlitt, Ruskin, and Ideal Form," esp. 495–99.
- 13 In their notes to *Modern Painters II*, Cook and Wedderburn point out "how closely Ruskin had read Wordsworth before writing this volume; there are references also showing his familiarity with Coleridge" (4:390), and the appendix to the volume includes an extended discussion of Wordsworth and Coleridge in a letter from Ruskin to the Rev. W. L. Brown (4:390–93). Among the numerous studies of Ruskin's Romantic influences, Ball's *Science of Aspects* offers the most detailed parallels between Ruskin's thought and Coleridge's. The treatments of Wordsworth's influence on Ruskin are especially abundant: Helsing's *Ruskin and the Art of the Beholder* is perhaps the most thoroughgoing; other important analyses include Jonathan Bate, "The Moral of Landscape" in *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1991), 62–84, and Dinah Birch, "Elegiac Voices: Wordsworth, Turner, and Ruskin," *RES* 50.199 (August 1999):332–44.
- 14 See A. O. Lovejoy, "Schiller and the Genesis of German Romanticism" in *Essays in the History of Ideas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1948), 207–27, esp. 220–27.
- 15 Ruskin frequently refers to *The Stones of Venice* in *Modern Painters III*; as he explains, "I am not sorry occasionally to refer the reader to that work, the fact being that it and this are parts of one whole" (5:130).
- 16 Friedrich Schiller, *On the Naïve and Sentimental in Literature*, trans. H. Watanabe-O'Kelly (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1981), 42.
- 17 William Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe, 21 vols. (London and Toronto: J. M. Dent, 1930–34), 8:77–89.
- 18 Francis O'Gorman has persuasively located what he calls the "aesthetics of failure" in *The Stones of Venice* in the biographical context of Ruskin's personal anxieties and his Christian upbringing. See Francis O'Gorman, "Ruskin's Aesthetics of Failure in *The Stones of Venice*," *RES* 55.220 (2004): 374–91. My argument here is for another, more conceptual derivation. Ruskin's celebration of imperfection in *The Stones of Venice* not only acknowledges human fallibility, but also upholds individuality, and in so doing attests as much to his Romantic as to his Christian origins.
- 19 See, for instance, his definition of realism as "the studious production" of "Unideal works of art" (4:165) or his insistence on distinguishing "Imaginative Verity" from "realism" (4:278).
- 20 Burke explicitly lists obscurity as an attribute of the sublime. See Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), ed. Adam Phillips (Oxford U. Press, 1990), 54–55.

- 21 Patricia M. Ball insightfully identifies Ruskin's abandonment of his ambitions as a poet with his rejection of Romanticism, showing how he turns, in his prose, "to a kind of writing . . . in which they [that is, 'pure facts'] can receive a full acknowledgement"; Ball, *Science of Aspects*, 58.
- 22 To take only one instance, in *The Statesman's Manual* (1816), the unity of human and divine is found in the imagination's "symbols": "the Imagination" . . . [is] that reconciling and mediatory power, which . . . gives birth to a system of symbols, . . . consubstantial with the truths, of which they are the *conductors*." S. T. Coleridge, *Lay Sermons*, ed. R. J. White, vol. 6 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Bollingen series no. 75 (Princeton U. Press, 1987), 29.
- 23 Peter Garratt, for instance, contending that the empiricism of the mid-Victorian period, Ruskin's included, far from asserting the possibility of absolute or objective knowing, accepts that knowledge is necessarily self-conditioned, has to argue, in so doing, against Ruskin's prescriptions for a mimetic art.
- 24 See for instance, Ball, *Science of Aspects*, esp. 75–80; Bloom, "Ruskin as Literary Critic"; Hewison, *John Ruskin*, 73; Helsinger, *Ruskin and the Art of the Beholder*, 47ff. In the light of such well-known studies, the identification of Ruskin with Romanticism in a 2007 collection of essays, *Ruskin in Perspective*, is somewhat puzzling; see esp. the essay by Paul March-Russell, which refers to "the English romantic tradition embodied by Ruskin." March-Russell, "Ruskin, Herbert Read and the Neo-Romantic Imagination," in *Ruskin in Perspective: Contemporary Essays* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 101.
- 25 See James S. Dearden, *The Library of John Ruskin* (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 2012), 153.
- 26 Hazlitt, *Works*, 5:5.
- 27 Hazlitt, *Works*, 12:343.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 344.
- 29 See, for instance, Cook and Wedderburn's "Introduction" to *Modern Painters III*, 5:xxxviff.
- 30 This attitude to imagination in *Modern Painters III* belies Aleksandra Piasecka's conclusion that "Ruskin's concept of imagination works on the fundamental assumption that it is the most truth-telling faculty possessed by man" (Piasecka, *Towards Creative Imagination in Victorian Literature*, 33).
- 31 The still persistent tendency to use the phrase "pathetic fallacy" indiscriminately for all attributions of human emotion to the natural world, without regard to sincerity or authenticity, contravenes Ruskin's original usage of the term, as J. D. Thomas pointed out more than half a century ago. See J. D. Thomas, "Poetic Truth and Pathetic Fallacy," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 3.3 (Autumn 1961): 342–47.
- 32 George P. Landow, *The Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin* (Princeton U. Press, 1971), 381.
- 33 Hewison, *John Ruskin*, 72.

- 34 Helsinger, *Ruskin and the Art of the Beholder*, 49.
- 35 Garratt, *Victorian Empiricism*, 81.
- 36 Landow, *Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin*, 386.
- 37 Rob Breton, "John Ruskin's Juvenilia and the Origins of the Pathetic Fallacy," *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 22 (Spring 2013): 17–36.
- 38 Ball, *Science of Aspects*, 49.
- 39 Hewison, *John Ruskin*, 70.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 71, 73.
- 41 Bate, *Romantic Ecology*, 76.
- 42 *Ibid.*, 75, 79.
- 43 Kenneth Daly, *The Rescue of Romanticism: Walter Pater and John Ruskin* (Ohio State U. Press, 2001), 7–8.
- 44 Breton, "John Ruskin's Juvenilia," 20.
- 45 Hazlitt, *Works*, 4:214–15.
- 46 Hazlitt, *Works*, 8:85.
- 47 Among others (see also Michael Sprinker, below), Alison Hickey explicitly makes this point, that the Romantic imagination, whether celebrated or denigrated by its critics, may be described as "imperial," insofar as it is presented as "a mental appropriation of the landscape for the mind's own purposes" or a "'fitting' of the external world to the . . . self." As she explains, ". . . I use the term 'imperial' broadly, to refer to a kind of imagination that appropriates, incorporates, assimilates, permeates, infuses difference with unity." Alison Hickey, *Impure Conceits: Rhetoric and Ideology in Wordsworth's "Excursion"* (Stanford U. Press, 1997), 132, 133. Hickey focuses specifically on the working of the (Wordsworthian) imagination upon nature, but her comments are generally applicable to the Romantic imagination, whether exercised upon nature or other selves. Indeed my quotation from Hazlitt's essay "On Genius and Common Sense" closely resembles the quotation from Wordsworth that Hickey offers in support of her characterization of the imperial imagination: "Genius [is] the application of powers to objects on which they had not before been exercised, or the employment of them in such a manner as to produce effects hitherto unknown. What is all this but an advance, or a conquest, made by the soul of the poet?" William Wordsworth, *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W. J. B. Owen and J. W. Smyser, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974); qtd. in Hickey, *Impure Conceits*, 216.
- 48 See E. T. Cook, *The Life of John Ruskin*, 2 vols. (London: George Allen, 1911), 2:2.
- 49 Michael Sprinker, "Ruskin on the Imagination," *Studies in Romanticism* 18.1 (Spring 1979): 118.

50 Ibid., 120.

51 Jerome J. McGann, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (U. of Chicago Press, 1983).