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## John Ruskin, via Elizabeth Gaskell, and the working classes

Francis O’Gorman

In the Preface to the first edition of *Mary Barton* (1848), Elizabeth Gaskell lays out her well-known purposes in writing a tale of Manchester working-class life. She wished, we read, ‘to give some utterance to the agony which, from time to time, convulses this dumb people; the agony of suffering without the sympathy of the happy, or of erroneously believing that such is the case.’<sup>1</sup> The novel, as a literary form, here, is to function as a radical contribution to social relationships, enabling at its best sympathy to cross classes from the ‘happy’ reader to the agonised character in a way not so readily seen—we are asked to assume—in actual life. Fiction offers imaginative insight, it is proposed, and, in turn, persuades the reader that they have understood something of the sufferings of a class to which, most likely, they do not belong. And this, for Gaskell, is emotional work primarily—what fiction can do is move. Certainly, the Preface declares, Gaskell has behind her no direct manifesto or a set of political ideas somehow encoded into narrative. ‘I know nothing of Political Economy, or the theories of trade’, she remarks in the Preface: ‘I have tried to write truthfully; and if my accounts agree or clash with any system, the agreement or disagreement is unintentional.’<sup>2</sup> Now that is in part a pitch to make sure that she does not alienate readers who *do* have ideas about Political Economy and who are more thoroughly political. But those words also more plainly confirm, as I have said, that Gaskell’s fiction is intended not to make a case but to invite readerly connections of sympathy through the work of the imagination.

But an author intending not to make a case does not mean that readers will avoid case-making themselves. Turning literature into argument, including political argument, is, after all, a persistent critical habit. Writing for nothing less than the British Library, Professor John Sutherland declared of *Mary Barton*’s assertion—via John Barton—that the rich should know

more of the poor: ‘Marx and Engels would have agreed with this 100 per cent’.<sup>3</sup> This is a mischievous statement. Left hanging, it allows the reader to assume that in some meaningful way Gaskell was unknowingly Marxist, or that her political outlook is, more generally, to be uncomplicatedly aligned with the radical left—and that is it. Also worth noting, it should be added, is that Sutherland says in the same introduction that ‘Gaskell took a Christian view’<sup>4</sup> of the plight of the working classes in the years before the great Chartist debacle. Elizabeth Gaskell was, of course, a Unitarian, which, since Christianity is, by definition, Trinitarian, means a description of her ‘Christian view’ is only evidence of Professor Sutherland’s indifference, one must assume, to the gap between Unitarianism and, say, the Nicene Creed.

Gaskell is not alone in being a Victorian who is primarily available to modern academia by redaction. The simplification of her politics into the uncomplicatedly leftist, and the misreading of her religion, are local examples of the two most popular forms of modern redaction more amply: the re-reading of politics and of faith (or, in the latter case, usually the not-reading-at-all). My example in the present essay of this critical and cultural phenomenon is an extreme one: the fate of John Ruskin (1819-1900). The redaction by modern readers of his life and work, particularly in relation to matters of politics and religion, is peculiarly emblematic of the contemporary terms on which the Victorians are now often, though not exclusively, read. In the case of Ruskin we have a detailed example that can serve, I propose, as a reminder of what has happened more generally to authors from the nineteenth century (to say nothing of writers and artists from other periods) as they move into the priorities of the contemporary academy. Gaskell is included in this and, indeed, I shall return to her at the end. But that return will be, in fact, to make a rather different point. For Ruskin and the author of *Mary Barton* share, if they have disagreements, the same interest, I think, in the work of words to connect, potentially, the reader to the troubles of ordinary working life. Much of Gaskell’s 1848 Preface, indeed, could stand over a few luminous moments of Ruskin’s most sympathy-intense writing, one of which I conclude with.

To the matter of redaction.

The posthumous conversion of John Ruskin into a figurehead for, and often enough a founder of, socialism began early. And this is to say nothing, yet, of that conversion beginning in his own lifetime. ‘His social theories seem to me’, said no one less than the writer and academic, A.C. Benson (1862-1925), in 1908 in an article on ‘The Influence of Ruskin’ in *The Bookman*,

to be to a great extent sound and fruitful; of course they are obscured by whimsical and minute fancies: but his altruism, his views of work, of civic duty, of individual rights, to mention a few points, closely correspond to, if they are not responsible for, a good deal of modern so-called socialism, and are likely to have an even [more?] extended influence.<sup>5</sup>

Ruskin is hardly a champion of what Benson calls ‘individual rights’. His attention was far more on responsibilities. But the broader point is clear—or almost clear. Benson can associate some elements of Ruskin’s thinking with modern socialism—altruism, work, citizenship—as a matter of apparent congruence. But the real relationship is, as this paragraph admits, harder to describe. Benson in turn has to evade being too emphatic about any direct issue of cause and effect: Ruskin’s views ‘closely correspond to, *if they are not responsible for ...*’. ‘If’ relieves Benson of the necessity of establishing exactly what the connection is. There is a large conceptual problem here, not confined to Benson. That is the trouble of understanding exactly how influence works in general, or assessing if instances of what look like influence are merely coincidental.<sup>6</sup> And often enough, the claim of ‘being influenced by’ involves not reading and being inspired by a writer’s ideas, but re-reading or even mis-reading them. Or looking only for portions, taken out of context, which we agree with.

What a legacy is understood to be can be far from what the legatee meant. This is notably the case with Ruskin and particularly with his politics and his faith. He survives in our contemporary culture through some notable acts of redaction (as indeed do many Victorian writers, artists, and

thinkers). The Christian Ruskin, for example—through all his changes of perspective, confidence and troubles involved in the history of his religious life—has revealingly almost wholly disappeared from contemporary celebrations of his bicentenary. The secularisation of his ideas had begun almost from the beginning of his writing career. But the bicentenary confirms just how successfully the centrality of Ruskin's faith to his life has now been erased. In the York Art Gallery's bicentenary exhibition, *Ruskin, Turner, and the Storm Cloud* (April to June 2019), for instance, no mention was made of Ruskin's religious views, even though they were pivotal, not least, to his championship of J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851) as the greatest Christian painter of landscape. On a more local scale, it was noteworthy that, on one explanatory board, the illness of Rose La Touche (1848-75), the young woman whom Ruskin had once hoped to marry, was partly evidenced, the York curators proposed, by the seriousness with which she took Christianity.<sup>7</sup>

The environmental Ruskin—the alleged pioneer through the lectures of *The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century* (1881) of contemporary arguments about climate change—is a currently prominent further example of this secularisation. We have heard much this year of Ruskin and pollution (including in the York exhibition), of his anticipation of one of our great contemporary crises, but we have heard almost nothing of his conclusion at the end of the first lecture of *The Storm-Cloud* that the trembling plague-wind afflicting northern Europe would have been comprehended in the ages of faith as unequivocal evidence of God's displeasure. Ruskin is supposed to be, according to some modern commentators, a pioneer of environmental awareness.<sup>8</sup> But what he actually said was that nature's suffering was a consequence of profanity. 'Remember', Ruskin says at the end of the first lecture (as printed):

for the last twenty years, England, and all foreign nations, either tempting her, or following her, have blasphemed the name of God deliberately and openly[.]

This is the root cause of what contemporary readers like to imagine is Ruskin's anticipation of the modern topic of climate change. Reviewing the York exhibition in the *TLS* on 23 May, Nancy Campbell observed how Ruskin's views had not been welcomed by Victorian scientists, but '[i]n our own time', she said, 'with the skies full of hazardous particulate matter, Ruskin's environmental warnings seem prescient' (p. 19). Campbell's line is now the standard approach but it can only work by omitting the central point Ruskin was making. Ruskin is 'prescient', apparently, but his actual argument which Campbell, symptomatically cannot admit, is a form of re-imagined Apocalypse literature, not so much prescient but deeply rooted in the wisdom of the Judeo-Christian scriptures.<sup>10</sup> It is worth, perhaps, adding a gloss: Ruskin's proposition that England and all other nations had 'blasphemed' refers to his shock at the irreverence of modern physical sciences that concerned themselves, as he perceived it, with a secular, material world. Reverent science, working like Turner's eye on the natural world, always understood that, first and foremost, nature was a gift from God for man's instruction and delight.

The eco-Ruskin or the 'Green Ruskin' is currently the most visible recasting of the author of *Modern Painters* (1843-60) in ways that make him available, apparently, to contemporary readers who are mistrustful of that which is not 'prescient' or 'relevant' to their own concerns. But it is, to return to the main subject of this paper, with Ruskin's conversion into a socialist—perhaps, as Benson is on the verge of proposing, an actual architect of the early twentieth-century Labour party<sup>11</sup>—that the twentieth and twenty-first century business of redacting Ruskin in political terms most prominently began.

Ruskin, as he said himself in *Praeterita* (1885-9), was, in fact, like his father before him, 'a violent Tory of the old school' (xxxv.13). Of course, he could say provocatively different things about his politics: that he was, not least, a 'Communist of the old school—reddest also of the red' (xxvii.116) as he remarked in letter 7 of *Fors Clavigera* for July 1871. But these rhetorical manoeuvres did not compromise the essential roots of his, and his father's, Tory convictions and

the fact that, crucially, he aligned himself with *the old school*. A different conception both of Ruskin's contemporaries' understanding of Toryism and of Communist is at work here. Ruskin could, on occasions, align himself with the radicals, or at least sound as if he is so aligning himself, not primarily because he was inconsistent but because he shared, though for very different reasons, their hatred of *laissez-faire* economics.<sup>12</sup> That is, not least, his sense of what being a 'Communist of the old school' is intended, however eccentrically, to mean. His tools against *laissez-faire* were sharply different from the radicals in their hierarchical, medieval basis. But they were at least tools against a shared foe. In 1879, to give but a single example from a life-long commitment, Ruskin described the most 'radical cause' of resistance to his ideas for the redemption of Great Britain via a return to medieval values and structures as 'the doctrine, preached for the last fifty years as the true Gospel of the Kingdom, that you serve your neighbour best by letting him alone; except in the one particular of endeavouring to cheat him out of his money' (xxx.15).<sup>13</sup> Ruskin did not falter in this seemingly never-to-be-won argument against the free marketeers. Yet the periodical alignments with the aims of the radicals have rarely been read attentively and that misreading continues to support the more general view—such as Benson's—that Ruskin really was a left-wing thinker. So when Ruskin College Oxford declares, as it does to-day, on its webpage: 'Named after John Ruskin, a radical pioneer of socialist thought, the college was founded at a time of real ferment in political and educational thinking',<sup>14</sup> the College gives us a man who was not John Ruskin.

Nicholas Shrimpton, developing an argument made by Ruskin's biographer, Tim Hilton, has luminously examined Ruskin's political affiliations with major strands of a now almost forgotten, but once important, political strand of nineteenth-century party politics: the Ultra Tories. He was simply what he said he was: a violent, i.e., an extreme, Tory *of the old school*. But many readers have not wanted to hear this. Stuart Eagles, for example, has recently demonstrated the extent of the socialist appropriation of Ruskin even during his life-time in the detailed study, *After Ruskin: The Social and Political Legacies of a Victorian Prophet, 1870-1920* (2011), a book which, in legitimately

concentrating on an element of Ruskin's reception, might have more energetically indicated the extent to which it was an analysis of mis-reading rather than merely of transmission. (I bypass the question here whether transmission always involves a level of misreading: certainly, in the case of Ruskin, the re-appropriation is strikingly a transformation rather than a re-emphasis.) Ruskin was, as Shrimpton notes, no actual source of socialist orthodoxies. He was, for example, '[u]ntouched by concepts such as surplus value, alienation, class struggle, or dialectical materialism'.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, Ruskin never voted in a political election as he disapproved of democracy, preferring the ancient, Homeric concept of strong leaders who had a natural right to rule; he had no time for trade unions; he prioritised the wise use of income not its re-distribution. Ruskin did have a concept of nationalisation but it was only for public land (a starting point for the initial intentions of the National Trust as a land owner, as distinct to what the Trust, a distinctively Ruskinian word, later became: a manager of stately homes). And, indeed, it was the wise management of land—a notion essential to the Ultra Tories as Robert Hewison's valuable essay on this topic has underlined<sup>16</sup>—and the opportunities such wise management provided for healthier and more industrious labour, which were central to the purposes of the Guild of St George, which in essence Ruskin founded in 1871.

The proper stewardship of the earth, its transformation into productivity and order, is the most obvious element of Ruskin's Ultra Toryism. And that Toryism has, for Ruskin as for others, its roots, as I have already implied, in medievalism. A strong component of the politics of the Guild, most notably, derives—as Ruskin's politics did more generally—from his long-held regard for the power and responsibilities of rulers from the ancient Mediterranean. But this regard was, from Ruskin's earliest reading of Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), revitalised by his Götzism, his belief in medieval conceptions of princely leaders, beneficent absolute rule, and the faithful duty of land labourers, and armies, who were nobly commanded. Even the name, 'the Guild of St George', which was originally intended to be the more obviously knightly, 'St George's Company', proclaimed, along with its emblem of St George from Carpaccio, Ruskin's



land management and education project as rooted in the recovery of the medieval: a kind of political counterpart to the Gothic Revival. The Guild, in this respect, was the summation of a life-time's entrancement with the stability the old world had apparently offered that was, apart from anything else, the broadest topic of *The Stones of Venice* (1851-3).

It is perhaps worth pausing on *The Stones* for a moment because despite the politics that it implicitly endorses, one chapter had a particularly visible role among readers who thought Ruskin could be co-opted to their leftist convictions. I mentioned at the beginning that the conversion of Ruskin into a socialist sympathiser was not merely a posthumous phenomenon but one that commenced while he was still alive. The following is the most extreme example. The central chapter of the central volume of *The Stones of Venice*, 'The Nature of Gothic', is a dazzling account of the medieval stone carver as a man able fully to express himself and his pleasures in the natural world, and in the God that made it. This still stirring chapter famously seemed to no less than the writer and designer William Morris (1834-96), who moved between various forms of socialism, sometimes inflected by Marxism, as 'one of the very few necessary and inevitable utterances of the century'.<sup>17</sup> By this Morris meant the necessity of the socialist utterance: Ruskin, he averred, had articulated in that chapter the great truth that man once did, and, so far as Morris was concerned, once again could, take pleasure in labour. This, Morris said, had been hinted at by other socialists—Robert Owen (1771-1858) and Charles Fourier (1772-1837), for instance. But Ruskin had stated the possibilities of reviving pleasure in work—which for Morris could only be obtainable within the medievalist/communist utopia envisaged in the dream of *News from Nowhere* (1890)—in far more persuasive terms than anyone before him. And so Morris's beautifully produced Kelmscott version of 'The Nature of Gothic' offers us a man hoping that joyful labour—unalienated labour in Marx's terms—could return. All that Morris has to do is make sure the reader does not know *how* Ruskin envisaged the return of pleasurable labour. And his principal strategy for this is ruthless. First, Ruskin's Christianity and Ultra Toryism is unmentioned in Morris's Introduction and second, far more effectively, the reader

does not know of either because Morris, ruthlessly, reproduces nothing else from *The Stones* except that one chapter. We are asked to judge an apparently political ideal wholly outside its context.

Now it is true, and Morris is making the most of this, that Ruskin sounds in passages from ‘The Nature of Gothic’ unusually liberal in his account of the pleasures of the freely creating working man. Ruskin almost never uses the term ‘liberty’ except with scorn. He cares far more about duty, fulfilment, and the blessings of hierarchical order. But he is tempted, it might seem, into an enthusiastic account of the freedom of medieval stonemason in this chapter as he is nowhere else. ‘[G]o forth again’, Ruskin writes, somewhat carried away, it might be, by the attraction of his medievalist vision,

to gaze upon the old cathedral front, where you have smiled so often at the fantastic ignorance of the old sculptors: examine once more those ugly goblins, and formless monsters, and stern statues, anatomiless and rigid; but do not mock at them, for they are signs of the life and liberty of every workman who struck the stone; a freedom of thought, and rank in scale of being, such as no laws, no charters, no charities can secure; but which it must be the first aim of all Europe at this day to regain for her children.

(x.193-4)

But if we think Morris is right to imagine that this is some kind of proto-socialist vision we could hardly be more wrong. Ruskin does not mean liberty in the sense that men, like Morris, did, persuaded as they were that what existed between classes was not harmony but war. Ruskin means that the carvers had, as he sees it, a freedom to exult in the works of God by carving in the Gothic manner. What powerfully Ruskin is doing here in fact is not political but theological and denominational: he is trying to make the medieval stonemasons of Catholic Europe into Protestants. And this is of a piece with elsewhere in *The Stones* as, for instance, he endeavours to claim, with some considerable sleights of hand, the Catholic gothic of Venice as really true

Protestantism. Certainly, *The Stones* turns the Basilica di San Marco more generally into a Protestant edifice not least by proclaiming that what the mosaics do is to preach the Gospel. ‘Never’, he asserts, ‘had city a more glorious Bible’ (x.141). The primacy of scriptural teaching renders, in turn, San Marco safe for what Ruskin calls the ‘Protestant beholder’ (x.27). Insisting on the stone masons’ mental freedom to worship in and through their work, Ruskin, in the same spirit, is imagining them liberated not from tiring labour but from what elsewhere in the dramatically anti-Catholic *Stones* he calls the ‘yoke of that slavish religion [of Rome]’ (ix.424). He privileges liberty in imagining their work because it is a displaced way of celebrating them as freed from the tyranny of priests and doctrines and able to relate directly to God, as if they were, after all, Protestants *avant la lettre*. This writing is easy to (mis)read but in Morris’s edition it is pretty much impossible to do anything other than that. Anti-Catholic polemic is transformed by Morris into the appearance of socialist optimism by a sleight of hand greater even than Ruskin’s transformation of San Marco into an Evangelical chapel.

This ‘socialist Ruskin’, then, is a remote from the core motivations and allegiances of Ruskin’s actual politics and purposes, though modern critics and curators have as much difficulty with the Ultra Tory Ruskin as they do with the Christian Ruskin.<sup>18</sup> And there is another, broader context for the non-socialist John Ruskin that needs to be borne in mind before directly considering Ruskin’s views on, and his writerly representation of, the working class, a topic which in different ways proved, as differently today, a flash point for the whole culture’s sense of itself as a society.

That other broader context is the general story of Ruskin’s relationship with his audiences. This can, alas, be roughly summed up as a succession of disappointments. Disappointment began early and proved a persistent pattern—or at least a pattern that Ruskin told us was persistent. The story of the dashing of hopes, of the discovery of the limits of Ruskin’s words, properly begins with the first edition of the first volume of *Modern Painters* in 1843. This huge project would, in the end, reach five volumes and conclude only in 1860. Ruskin’s primary purpose was to defend J.M.W. Turner from critics who thought his art fundamentally unrealistic.

Ruskin not only argued the opposite but discerned in this realism Turner's uniquely faithful interpretation of the natural world. *Modern Painters* was in turn to claim him, as I have said, as a great Christian painter, a culmination of a long line from the *Quattrocento* onwards, luminously and reverently depicting and, as it were, being exegetical of, God's second book of revelation. Ruskin's Preface to the first edition is a young man's work, confident in his assumption that, by the grace of God, what was true would prevail. 'But when *public* taste seems plunging deeper and deeper into degradation day by day,' Ruskin said,

and when the press universally exerts such power as it possesses to direct the feeling of the nation more completely to all that is theatrical, affected, and false in art; while it vents its ribald buffooneries on the most exalted truth, and the highest ideal of landscape, that this or any other age has ever witnessed, it becomes the imperative duty of all who have any perception or knowledge of what is really great in art, and any desire for its advancement in England, to come fearlessly forward, regardless of such individual interests as are likely to be injured by the knowledge of what is good and right, to declare and demonstrate, wherever they exist, the essence and the authority of the Beautiful and the True.

(iii.4)

Yet, in this starting point of the history of Ruskin's disappointing audiences, it rapidly proved that the Beautiful and the True were not so easy to accept. Even by the somewhat defensive (and very long) Preface to the Second Edition, just one year later, Ruskin—though still maintaining that his words would ultimately be accepted—had to admit some 'regret [of] my hasty advance' (iii.8). Now this pattern belongs to the much darker and deeper story of what would become Ruskin's lifelong puzzlement with the place of evil in God's world, the defeat of high purposes, and the existence of sadness even amidst great beauty. But more locally the shift from the first to the second Preface sets the template, so to speak, for a recurrent problem with audiences.

To sum this up. Ruskin finds the audience both for his defence of Turner and his exploration of the Christian virtues of the Gothic unexpectedly inattentive. In the use of Gothic, for instance, for banks, chimneys, and drapers' shops, he finds only evidence in the early 1870s that he has been misread in the 1850s or rather, like Campbell considering *The Storm-Cloud*, partly read (see the Preface to the Third Edition (1874), ix.11). In 1860, he has become so convinced that modern culture is unable to understand what he has to say on art and architecture—unable to move beyond its primary concern with 'getting on' and the science, as he noted in *Unto this Last* (1860) 'of getting rich' (xvii.43)—that he shifts public concentration to social matters. But *Unto this Last* itself—four essays on political economy that promote the possibilities of a noble merchant against the self-seeking certainties of *laissez-faire*—is quickly curtailed by its editor (at least, this is the story Ruskin himself tells). He is not, it appears, being attended to here either.

During the 1860s, Ruskin tries new audiences, including one of school children in *The Ethics of the Dust* (1866) and lecture audiences across the kingdom. He changes audiences and he also changes topics: from political economy, to crystallography, to Greek myths of Athena. He then accepts the position of Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford in 1869, the first such appointment. With this, he endeavours to reach a new audience—and also to expand it. Ruskin repeats his lectures, giving them once to the undergraduates and then again to the 'bonnets', the young women not at this point able to study in the University.<sup>19</sup> Ruskin's effort to reach these two audiences nevertheless, as he admits later, falls, at least to his own mind, flat. By 1884, as his second and final tenure in the post came to an end with his resignation, Ruskin mournfully expressed the 'disappointment and surprise which, on reviewing the results of my lecturing and working here for upwards of twelve years, I feel in being forced to the sorrowful confession that not a single pupil has learned the things I primarily endeavoured to teach' (xxx.532). It was a peculiarly dispiriting comment but it was also part of Ruskin's consistent sense of himself, or at least a consistent part of his self-narration, as a man charged with a responsibility that was mysteriously stalled or blocked. Ruskin ran into some trouble with his gifts of Turners to the

University, too, and more generally his plan for a Drawing School, though consequential, could not have been said to have thoroughly disseminated his distinctive views on art education through the University. It is no doubt a good thing that Ruskin never learnt of the effective suspension of the position of Ruskin Master of Drawing in the University from 2010 onwards though there is something peculiarly apt about this as a comment on the troubled relationship Ruskin had with his own *alma mater*.

Sensing a lack of reach even from the earliest months of the tenure of his professorship, Ruskin turned to promptly yet another new audience: the ‘workmen and labourers’ of Great Britain addressed in the letters of *Fors Clavigera* (1871-84), letters which in effect became the quirky monthly bulletin of the Guild of St George. The workman came into his thoughts, in other words, primarily because his middle and upper-class undergraduate audience, and his fellow dons, were not, he perceived, listening.

Ruskin had been directly concerned with working men earlier in his life, for sure. He taught for a while at the new London Working Men’s College, with what might seem on the surface the unlikely allegiance of the Christian Socialist F.W. Maurice (1805-72), though both men shared, as an article in *The Examiner* on 8 January 1859 phrased it, a sense that they were ‘affected by the fear that they were not discharging themselves of the responsibilities imposed upon them by their education’.<sup>20</sup> Disseminating that education was one practical result of a shared concern. Ruskin’s task in Red Lion Square, where the College began, was to teach drawing and his aspiration—as his aspiration remained throughout his life for all men and women—to improve their education in such a way as to make them more effective, and to enjoy more, the work God had determined for them. And this remained part of the aspiration of the Guild when it came into existence in the early 1870s. But the larger context of changing audiences sketched here reminds us that Ruskin’s turn back to ‘workmen’, as I have said, in such explicit and extended terms, is in part a compensatory hope against his disappointment in Oxford and, more amply, another gesture of optimism in the face of repeated disenchantment. If the undergraduates of

Oxford would not listen—preferring, Ruskin thought, the river—then perhaps, in the early 1870s, this distinctive category of the ‘workmen and labourers of Great Britain’ would?

Ruskin’s ‘workmen and labourers’, from whom so much was to be expected, were not simply ‘the working class’ in any usual definition. They included those who, plainly, worked, at whatever they did. Ruskin as a writer is of this group himself, as are other men who came to lead various projects under the auspices of the Guild: his museum curator at Walkley, for instance, his land stewards at Barmouth and Bewdley, and, say, George Allen (1832-1907), his publisher at that point in Orpington (Allen had once been Ruskin’s pupil at the Working Men’s College). The category of workman did not, nevertheless, exclude a more familiar definition of the working class. Indeed, it was to such ordinary men that the Guild theoretically offered opportunities—like, again, the Working Men’s College had—for education in their particular job, together with the hope of labouring on retrieved land that was to be made productive once again. Education, it is worth underlining, was not, as I have already implied, an agent of class mobility, an idea for which Ruskin had not only no time but profound theological and ontological objection. (He noted, yes, that aristocracy of manner and mind could be found in non-aristocratic classes and *vice versa*, but actual cross-class movement was wholly contrary to his sense of what a stable culture was.) When he remarked of the Guild in *Fors* of July 1876 that part of its purpose was the ‘preserving in political strength of the population of these islands’ (xxviii.638), Ruskin did not mean some form of revolutionary power for any class—Blanche Atkinson was right to see the Guild as in essence counter-revolutionary<sup>21</sup>—but the decent maintenance of class responsibilities and coherence. In this, again, he is certainly no prophet of later socialism.

‘The first condition under which [education] can be given usefully,’ Ruskin said characteristically in Letter XVI on ‘Education’ in *Time and Tide, by Weare and Tyne: Twenty-five Letters to the Working Man of Sunderland on the Laws of Work* (1867),

is that it should be clearly understood to be no means of getting on in the world, but a means of staying pleasantly in your place there. And the first elements of State education should be calculated equally for the advantage of every order of person composing the State. From the lowest to the highest class, every child born in this island should be required by law to receive these general elements of human discipline, and to be baptized—not with a drop of water on its forehead—but in the cloud and sea of heavenly wisdom and of earthly power.

(xvii.397).

Here is Ruskin's Götzism expressed in one of his many accounts of a harmonious hierarchy, where duties and responsibilities are known, and which are underpinned by the State. Perhaps such an idea—which is hardly unique to Ruskin in the nineteenth century—lay behind the conception in the United Kingdom (or, rather, Wales and England) of secondary modern schools (in relation to direct grant grammar schools) in terms of state provision of education after the Second World War. This would not be surprising as Ruskin's ideas also lay behind the ideas in the 1940s, not least Sir William Beveridge's important 1942 report *Social Insurance and Allied Services* for expanding the welfare state (those ideas, it goes without saying, were nothing to do with contemporary objections to what has come to seem to many as a benefits culture.<sup>22</sup>) The proposals for the remodelling of secondary education around the same time emerged principally from the renewed 'One Nation Conservatism' of the Conservative President of the Board of Education Rab Butler (1902-82) and his 1944 Education Act. Certainly, the comprehensive school project, so important to Labour educational policy, which was expanded in the later twentieth century, could not be further from Ruskin's sense of the mission of education, as Rab Butler also proposed, as targeted to an individual's sphere in life: to improve them within it, not move them into the distress and discomfort of being beyond it.

The targeted nature of education for the working stone mason was part of the purposes of Ruskin's Walkley Museum, a museum that was—and still is, in effect, as its collection is now in



the Sheffield Millennium Gallery—one of the most enduring achievements of the Guild.<sup>23</sup>

Ruskin's comments on the educational ambitions of the museum are a local, but lucid, example of the way in which he understood education as, ideally, acting in harmony with the, at least in principle, determining of human order by God. The 'Sheffield Art Gallery', Ruskin said in his 'General Statement Explaining the Nature and Purposes of St. George's Guild' (1882) about Walkley,

[...] will show only such examples of the art of Sculpture as may best teach the ordinary workman the use of his chisel, and his wits, under such calls as are likely to occur for either in the course of his daily occupations.

(xxx.56-7)

To use education as an agent of 'social mobility', a concept that comes into being in our modern sense of it, according to *OED*, only in 1906, was not only to destabilise a society, even a state, but also in essence blasphemous. Education as a means of 'getting on', or 'going up', was a defiance of a God-given plan, a rejection of duty and bequest.

My overall narrative, so far, is of Ruskin's efforts to find sympathetic audiences, and his repeated confusion about a world that so unevenly responded to the words Ruskin believed himself chosen, and required, to teach. So a natural question following on from what I have so far said would be: what did Ruskin think of the response of the workmen of Great Britain to the adjurations of *Fors*? How, indeed, *did* they respond? Or, perhaps more importantly, how did Ruskin represent their response? The first thing to say is that Ruskin, of course, did not make life easy for his readers—and he did not intend to. Even laying hold of a copy of *Fors* was not straightforward: it could only be obtained by direct address to George Allen in his workshop at Orpington. And each letter, from the first, was seven pence (£2.65 in to-day's value, as calculated simply by the Retail Price Index), so not exactly cheap. Ruskin's style in these letter, moreover,

was far from immediately accessible and at times was impenetrable. He is allusive, incomplete, changeful, and his sources are often obscure or mercurial (a Lancastrian recipe for goose pie, for instance). As the letters continued beyond their first year, and the Guild became a real thing, the appendices of the letters began to fill up with correspondence with Guild members, accounts, and official statements relating to the management of Ruskin's new and increasingly complicated project(s). So the reader could be faced in any one edition with a demanding, almost proto-Modernist allusiveness in the body of Ruskin's writing and then, in small print, the daily details of a land management and education scheme. It was not an instantly appealing combination however used readers of the nineteenth century were to reading demanding publications—Cobbett, Carlyle, the essays of the quality quarterlies.

But the second thing to say is that there was a difference between Ruskin's Götztist planning for the Guild and his actual management of it. 'The object principally and finally in my mind in founding the Guild', Ruskin declared in his 'Master's Report: 1885', crisply defining the Ultra Tory, medievalist vision of land management,

was the restoration, to such extent as might be possible to those who understood me, of this feeling of loyalty to the Land-possessor in the peasantry on his estate, and of the duty, in the Lord, to the peasantry with whose lives and education he was entrusted.

(xxx.94)

But if this was at least coherent (and that is not necessarily the same as credible) as an intellectual proposition, it was dogged by difficulties in practice. The Guild started with thirty-two members; by 1884 the records listed fifty-seven. Ruskin noted, even in a meeting of the Guild that year, that 'apparent success might seem slow' (xxx.89) but he was still convinced by something of the same, much disappointed, faith that had prompted the first publication of *Modern Painters* I: the Guild was, he said, looking to future rather than present successes, and it was 'contrary to the

laws of Nature that any good work done with good intention should fail, but the time when it should bear fruit was appointed by their Father in Heaven' (xxx.89). This was Ruskin's best reassurance to members of the Guild when everything did not seem to be proceeding at the pace to which they aspired. The Guild had hardly become the national movement of recovery that Ruskin had, more than a decade before, asserted that it might be.

And, more practically still, there were serious issues with Ruskin's direct involvement with the Guild. Recent work by Mark Frost on Ruskin's actual management of the organisation, particularly in relation to those real workmen who believed they had been hired contractually by Ruskin to carry out some particular function—usually in terms of manual work on land in the Guild's possession—has shown just how bad Ruskin was at leading this body. And how, alas, unsympathetic he could be to individual members of the working classes who believed they were going to make a living from being employed by him. Ruskin, as Frost reveals him in *The Lost Companions and John Ruskin's Guild of St George: A Revisionary History* (2014), tended to dismiss details of the day-to-day functioning of the Guild, even if the details related to a man or a woman's subsistence, just as he would dismiss the requirement, from the Board of Trade, to hold annual public meetings to discuss the running of the Guild and its accounts (see the Master's Report for 1881, xxx.31-2). Ruskin's poised assertions about the completion of the Guild's work being assured but in the hands of God could hardly have been the encouragement that unpaid labourers wanted to hear as Ruskin endeavoured, as he said in the Master's Report for 1885, to stop the peasantry 'allowing themselves to be betrayed into Socialism' (xxx.95).

There is difficulty, then, in Ruskin's direct relationship with the working man and woman. As a philanthropist and political writer, he is hardly alone in that. But his aspirations remained, however compromised in practice, to be of service. In his last active years, Ruskin remained hopeful that the category of working man and woman that best suited his Ultra Tory sense of how society should be structured, the peasantry, could still offer something innocent and dutiful as a model for the modern world. Some of the men and women who lived in Coniston and/or

worked at Brantwood, Ruskin's Lake District home from 1871, offered him hope that there remained vitality and integrity in England's ordinary people. In writing, Ruskin envisaged that such people could still offer, too, a connectedness with the earth, an instinctive Christian faithfulness, and a kind of spontaneous or natural artistry. The texts gathered in volume xxxii of *The Library Edition* with the title 'Studies in Peasant Life' include Ruskin's introductions to Francesca Alexander's *The Story of Ida: Epitaph on an Etrurian Tomb* (1883) and her edition of *Roadside Songs of Tuscany* (1885), which Alexander translated and illustrated. They were the last of his literary figurings of a kind of Götztist world he was still struggling to produce in practice: a world of content labour, reverence, and shared traditions, and one free from the political economists' certainty that 'getting on', and breaking out of classes, was the rightful ambition of all under capitalism.

The history of Ruskin and working men and women is one, in essence, of optimism. A hope, to the end, despite the rejection or at least the perceived rejection of what Ruskin understood to be his calling among a host of audiences, that one group of people—the peasants—might be the living survivors of the medieval world. And in turn they might be the basis for the return of Great Britain (and other countries, perhaps) to what Ruskin conceived as its proper state. But there is one final way of thinking about Ruskin and the working man or woman which needs to be recognized, which is entirely different from expressing just how remote he was from later forms of socialism. And that is to note how Ruskin as a writer, as distinct from a thinker, gave his readers imaginative access to ordinary working existences. And this, it seems to me, is the most interesting element of Ruskin—who is a writer first and foremost—and his relationship with what George Eliot (1819-80) would call the 'hidden life', the existences of those who rest in 'unvisited tombs'.<sup>24</sup>

Setting aside Ruskin's political conceptions, his Ultra Tory context, and his ambitions for the redemptive power of the ordinary working peasant, he shares with, in particular, Eliot and Elizabeth Gaskell—as well as other nineteenth-century realist novelists—a remarkable literary

ability to bring ordinary, and usually sorrowful, experiences into prose. We are back now, to the world of *Mary Barton* and its Preface. There is in Ruskin's writing an eye-catching capacity to recreate moments of such existences like, perhaps, Turner's hints of the nature of ordinary lives in many of his canvases, often at the edge or on a margin. Think, for instance, of the stationary couple—are they mother and child?—on the right of *The New Moon* or *I've lost My Boat, You shan't have Your Hoop*, exhibited first in 1840 and now in Tate Britain. These Turner-like moments in Ruskin's prose remind us that he is not only a man with a political concept about how ordinary lives might be lived but a writer with deft imaginative ability to provide his readers with, to provoke his readers with, a kind of living tableau, a momentary (imagined) glimpse of lives beyond more substantial narration.

Imaginative insight into sorrowful ordinariness is, I think, part of what Ruskin—who never wrote a novel—could do and in this part of Gaskell's Preface speaks of him too. Ruskin, like the novelist, could offer his readers occasionally the possibility of cross-class sympathy, an acknowledgement at once of the distance between the author and his subject but also that distinctively nineteenth-century sense that words could go where politics found it harder. He is not asking his reader to think that such figures should be the whole substance of writing and to a large degree the emotional force of such passages only works when we recognize that though we can sympathise with ordinary people through imaginative recreation in prose we must also remain grateful that we are not those people. Ruskin knows this. But the moments of imaginative penetration or of recreation are remarkable all the same when words allow meetings between different kinds of people that actuality does not, or rarely does. Ruskin's envisaging of unheroic lives are not moments of political theory (a term *OED* finds first in 1752) but of a literary recognition of the only imaginable sadness of an individual. He is at his most interesting, as a writer rather than a thinker, in relation to the working class, when he sets theories and principles aside and allows language to depict, like Turner, a scene. There are many examples, not least from *Fors*, but perhaps this is the most memorable, from Chapter 2, 'The Lance of

Pallas', of *Modern Painters* V (1860).<sup>25</sup> Here, Ruskin—like Cobbett on the move or Dickens at night in front of St Martin's in the Fields<sup>26</sup>—meets an ordinary man, a watercress collector. And his description is one of those in which Ruskin comes most nearly in print, after his unconversion in 1858, to envisaging a world in which God's purposes are either radically foiled or perhaps, even, absent. In one sense, theologically, this is very uncharacteristic Ruskin—perhaps even a near-secular Ruskin that many readers would prefer to-day. But it is characteristic in one way: the passage—and I reproduce the whole, though it is long—is representative of his periodic ability to envisage the lives of others in language, as if his primary purpose is more like a painter's: to leave us with a view. 'I was reading but the other day', Ruskin begins,

in a book by a zealous, useful, and able Scotch clergyman, one of these rhapsodies, in which he described a scene in the Highlands to show (he said) the goodness of God. In this Highland scene there was nothing but sunshine, and fresh breezes, and bleating lambs, and clean tartans, and all manner of pleasantness. Now a Highland scene is, beyond dispute, pleasant enough in its own way; but, looked close at, has its shadows. Here, for instance, is the very fact of one, as pretty as I can remember—having seen many. It is a little valley of soft turf, enclosed in its narrow oval by jutting rocks and broad flakes of nodding fern. From one side of it to the other winds, serpentine, a clear brown stream, drooping into quicker ripple as it reaches the end of the oval field, and then, first islanding a purple and white rock with an amber pool, it dashes away into a narrow fall of foam under a thicket of mountain ash and alder. The autumn sun, low but clear, shines on the scarlet ash-berries and on the golden birch-leaves, which, fallen here and there, when the breeze has not caught them, rest quiet in the crannies of the purple rock. Beside the rock, in the hollow under the thicket, the carcass of a ewe, drowned in the last flood, lies nearly bare to the bone, its white ribs protruding through the skin, raven-torn; and the rags of its wool still flickering from the branches that first stayed it as the stream swept it down. A little lower, the current plunges, roaring, into a circular chasm like a well, surrounded on three sides by a chimney-like hollowness of polished rock, down which the foam slips in detached snow-flakes. Round the edges of the pool beneath, the water circles slowly, like black oil; a little butterfly lies on its back, its wings glued to one of

the eddies, its limbs feebly quivering; a fish rises and it is gone. Lower down the stream, I can just see, over a knoll, the green and damp turf roofs of four or five hovels, built at the edge of a morass, which is trodden by the cattle into a black Slough of Despond at their doors, and traversed by a few ill-set stepping-stones, with here and there a flat slab on the tops, where they have sunk out of sight; and at the turn of the brook I see a man fishing, with a boy and a dog—a picturesque and pretty group enough certainly, if they had not been there all day starving. I know them, and I know the dog's ribs also, which are nearly as bare as the dead ewe's; and the child's wasted shoulders, cutting his old tartan jacket through, so sharp are they. We will go down and talk with the man.

Or, that I may not piece pure truth with fancy, for I have none of his words set down, let us hear a word or two from another such, a Scotchman also, and as true hearted, and in just as fair a scene. I write out the passage, in which I have kept his few sentences, word for word, as it stands in my private diary:—  
'22nd April (1851). Yesterday I had a long walk up the Via Gellia, at Matlock, coming down upon it from the hills above, all sown with anemones and violets, and murmuring with sweet springs. Above all the mills in the valley, the brook, in its first purity, forms a small shallow pool, with a sandy bottom covered with cresses, and other water plants. A man was wading in it for cresses as I passed up the valley, and bade me good-day. I did not go much farther; he was there when I returned. I passed him again, about one hundred yards, when it struck me I might as well learn all I could about watercresses: so I turned back. I asked the man, among other questions, what he called the common weed, something like watercress, but with a serrated leaf, which grows at the edge of nearly all such pools. 'We calls that brooklime, hereabouts,' said a voice behind me. I turned, and saw three men, miners or manufacturers—two evidently Derbyshire men, and respectable-looking in their way; the third, thin, poor, old, and harder-featured, and utterly in rags. 'Brooklime?' I said. 'What do you call it lime for?' The man said he did not know, it was called that. 'You'll find that in the British "Erba,"' said the weak, calm voice of the old man. I turned to him in much surprise; but he went on saying something drily (I hardly understood what) to the cress-gatherer; who contradicting him, the old man said he 'didn't know fresh water,' he 'knew enough of sa't.' 'Have you been a sailor?' I asked. 'I was a sailor for eleven years and ten months of my life,' he said, in the same strangely quiet manner. 'And what are you now?' 'I lived for ten years after my wife's death by picking up rags and bones; I hadn't much occasion afore.' 'And now how do you live?' 'Why, I lives hard

and honest, and haven't got to live long,' or something to that effect. He then went on, in a kind of maundering way, about his wife. 'She had rheumatism and fever very bad; and her second rib grow'd over her hench-bone. A' was a clever woman, but a' grow'd to be a very little one' (this with an expression of deep melancholy). 'Eighteen years after her first lad she was in the family-way again, and they had doctors up from Lunnon about it. They wanted to rip her open and take the child out of her side. But I never would give my consent.' (Then, after a pause:) 'She died twenty-six hours and ten minutes after it. I never cared much what come of me since; but I know that I shall soon reach her; that's a knowledge I would na gie for the king's crown.' 'You are a Scotchman, are not you?' I asked. 'I'm from the Isle of Skye, sir; I'm a McGregor.' I said something about his religious faith. 'Ye'll know I was bred in the Church of Scotland, sir,' he said, 'and I love it as I love my own soul; but I think thae Wesleyan Methodists ha' got salvation among them, too.'

Truly, this Highland and English hill-scenery is fair enough; but has its shadows; and deeper colouring, here and there, than that of heath and rose.

(vii. 268-71)

That is Ruskin at his most uncertain about the purposes of God's world. It is, as I say, not characteristic in that respect. But the passage is an indication that at times he was ready to make literary introductions to ordinary lives and to leave them for the reader as evidence of a world that, at his lowest point, Ruskin could not persuade himself that he understood. This is far from socialism—or any -ism, in fact. It is experience without much of a heartening or explanatory theory—perhaps without any at all. But the narration is, at the same time, even at this tormented point in Ruskin's life, attention. It is, as Gaskell would say, the giving of 'some utterance to the agony which, from time to time, convulses this dumb people; the agony of suffering without the sympathy of the happy, or of erroneously believing that such is the case'. Ruskin had for the most part a strong, Ultra Tory sense of how the working class might be made better and happier. Gaskell's religion and her class involvement, her sense of class position, would profit from as much re-thinking as Ruskin's in modern conceptions: a more careful scrutiny of how



contemporary political and secular opinions have been grafted on to her life and her work, as well as on to his. Ruskin profits, as Gaskell does, from such reconsideration, and we see a clearer picture, where the difficulties and tensions have to be perceived from a new—or rather, an old—angle, and thus gain in historical substance and credibility. That John Ruskin has become an icon for socialism is one of the oddest pieces of reception history of any nineteenth-century thinker. But whatever the case, even at the nadir of his theological convictions, his writing is still peculiarly available—as Gaskell’s was—as evidence of a human being grappling with the great problem of the poor and bringing them before the reader with emotional clarity and what Elizabeth Gaskell would call emotional ‘truthfulness’.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> [Elizabeth Gaskell], *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life*, 2 vols (London: Chapman and Hall, 1848), i. vii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/an-introduction-to-mary-barton>, last accessed 11.xii.19.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> ‘The Influence of Ruskin’, Hall Caine, John Carter, Dennis Hird, John Beattie Crozier, *et al.*, *The Bookman*, 35 (October 1908), pp. 26-34 (p. 27).

<sup>6</sup> There is some attention to this problem in Francis O’Gorman, “‘Influence’ in the Contemporary Study of the Humanities: The Problem of Ruskin”, *Carlyle Studies Annual*, 28 (2013), pp. 5-29.

<sup>7</sup> These points are taken up in greater detail in Francis O’Gorman, ‘Ruskin Today’, *Art and Christianity*, 98 (2019), pp. 2-4.

<sup>8</sup> Cf., also, ‘Ruskin, Science, and the Environment’, day conference in the Oxford Museum, 8 February 2019 and the Houghton Library’s ‘Green Sage: John Ruskin as a Proto-Environmentalism’ colloquium, 29 March 2019.

<sup>9</sup> All references to Ruskin are to the *Library Edition of the Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: Allen, 1903-12) and are to volume then page number.

<sup>10</sup> For a full consideration of *The Storm-Cloud* from this perspective, see Chapter 11 of Michael Wheeler’s *Ruskin’s God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>11</sup> An often cited observation, even now on the home page of the Ruskin Society (<http://theruskinsociety.com/>, last accessed 20.v.19), is that in 1906 Ruskin’s *Unto this Last* (1860) was the most cited book among the parliamentary Labour Party as influential in their thinking on economics. For the origin of this, see ‘Character Sketches: 1. The Labour Party and the Books that Helped to Make it’, *The Review of Reviews*, 33 (June 1906), pp. 568-82. It is noteworthy that this claim immediately prompted recognition of the mis-readings that Ruskin’s work needed in order to be judged as supportive of the Labour Party. See, for instance, the statement of ‘The Intellectual Condition of the Labour Party’, *The Monthly Review* (November 1906), pp. 17-34 that, despite his apparent influence, Ruskin ‘disclaims with reiterated emphasis any sympathy with the doctrines which go by the name of Socialism’ (p. 17). Of course, it must be stressed that the nature of that Labour Party in 1906 was markedly different from the contemporary party.

<sup>12</sup> I by-pass here any consideration of forms of Victorian economic practice that were not *laissez-faire*. Ruskin is, to an extent, one of the figures responsible for a dominant, though now much challenged, assumption in the twentieth century that *laissez-faire* was the prevailing assumption of economic governance in the nineteenth. For one of the most important reassessments of this, see Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought 1795-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991).

<sup>13</sup> A powerful argument about the medievalist convictions of Ruskin's economics is to be found in Nicholas Shrimpton, 'Economic, social, and literary influences upon the development of Ruskin's ideas to *Unto this last* (1860)', unpublished Oxford DPhil thesis, 1976.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.ruskin.ac.uk/about-us/our-history/>, last accessed 10.v.19.

<sup>15</sup> Nicholas Shrimpton, 'Politics and Economics' in Francis O'Gorman, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to John Ruskin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 116-29 (p. 117).

<sup>16</sup> "A violent Tory of the old school": Ruskin and Politics', Chapter IV of Robert Hewison, *Ruskin and His Contemporaries* (London: Pallas Athene, 2018). Chapter XIII, '“You are doing some of the work that I ought to do”': Ruskin and Octavia Hill', provides an illuminating account of Hill's agreement with Ruskin over land management and the formation of the National Trust, and also of the Trust's subsequent divergence from this early commitment.

<sup>17</sup> William Morris, 'Preface' to the Kelmscott Edition of John Ruskin, 'The Nature of Gothic' (London: Allen, 1892), p. i.

<sup>18</sup> There are, of course, exceptions. Robert Hewison's "A continual Gospel": Reading the Stones', Chapter 8 of *Ruskin on Venice: The Paradise of Cities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), is an excellent account of the Protestant re-working of the Basilica (though has nothing to say about the liberated stone masons).

<sup>19</sup> This dimension of Ruskin's work at Oxford is rewardingly examined in Dinah Birch, 'Ruskin's "Womanly Mind"', *Essays in Criticism*, 38 (1988), pp. 308-24.

<sup>20</sup> 'The Rev. F. D. Maurice and Mr Hughes on Working Men's Colleges', *The Examiner*, 8 January 1859, pp. 24-5 (p. 24).

<sup>21</sup> Blanche Atkinson (1847-1911), member of the Guild, made this point in 'Ruskin's Social Experiment', *The Leisure Hour* (March 1897), pp. 289-96 (p. 289). At the same time, she also, on the same page, claims Ruskin as a socialist.

<sup>22</sup> This point is more fully explored in Francis O'Gorman, 'John Ruskin and Contemporary Economics', *Ruskin Review and Bulletin*, 10 (2014), pp. 4-10.

<sup>23</sup> The Walkley Museum itself has been digitally reconstructed by Dr Marcus Waithe, University of Cambridge, and can be seen on <https://www.ruskinatwalkley.org/>, last accessed 11.xii.19.

<sup>24</sup> George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life*, 4 vols (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood, 1872), iv.371.

<sup>25</sup> I am grateful for discussions over several years with Alan Davis on this chapter from *Modern Painters* and to Dr Bernard Richards for more recent observations.

<sup>26</sup> See Charles Dickens, 'Night Walks', *An Uncommercial Traveller* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1841), pp. 186-99.