

Love and Justice: John Ruskin's Theory and Practice of Charity

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## **Abstract**

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John Ruskin was a philanthropist as well as a critic, both activities informed by strong moral principles. Ruskin's charity was extensive in its form and type of beneficiaries, ranging from donations of material objects, such as drawings and mineral specimens, to schools to financial support for his pupils and friends. Ruskin scholarship has presented many different aspects of Ruskin's charitable mind and practice, yet his practice is nonetheless always treated as a partial aspect of the life of the polymath. This thesis takes Ruskin's charity as its research focus and aims to draw an integrated and broader picture of his particular approach to charity through an investigation of the ideas, motives and dynamism of his activities. It also hopes to depict Ruskin's complexity and fluidity in his approach to charity, emotions and human relationships.

The thesis uses several methods to achieve its objectives. First of all, Ruskin's primary texts are analyzed in order to dig more deeply into his theoretical understanding of charity. These are contextualized against his religious and family background, to show how both underpin the shaping and reshaping of his ideas. Subsequent chapters then take the form of case studies, to explore Ruskin's application of theory to practice. Each case-study casts a light on different periods, modes and interests of Ruskin's life, for example, by analyzing letters exchanged between him and his beneficiaries, which vividly illustrates the dynamism of Ruskin's charitable practice and relationships. In so doing, this thesis will advance our understanding of Ruskin's theory and practice of charity in a long history from the nineteenth century through to the present day: Ruskinian charitable enterprises are now flourishing worldwide, within and outside the UK, as Ruskin's legacy.

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## Textual Notes and Abbreviations

Italics in a quotation are assumed to be in the original unless otherwise mentioned.

All quotations from Ruskin's works, unless stated otherwise, refer to *The Library Edition of the Works of John Ruskin*, edited by E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, Allen, 1903-1912, 39 vols, and are cited as volume and page number only: for example, (7: 205). The works cited in this thesis are separately listed from the other sources in the Works Cited/Consulted. Introductions to each volume by Edward Tyas Cook are cited as volume and page number only: for example, (30: xxi). The introductions quoted in this thesis are listed in "other sources" section, under his name, in the Works Cited/Consulted.

The archived materials of Ruskin Library, Lancaster University, are cited as series and number only: for example, (MS 28).

*BD*: Ruskin, John. *The Brantwood Diary of John Ruskin*. Edited by Helen Gill Viljoen, Yale UP, 1971.

*Diaries*: Ruskin, John. *The Diaries of John Ruskin*. Edited by Joan Evans and J. Howard Whitehouse, Clarendon P, 1956-59. 3vols.

*ERL*: "Ruskin and Egbert Rydings: Letters." *Mannin: A Journal of Matters Past and Present Relating to Mann*, edited by Sophia Morrison, vol. 2, no. 3, Manx Society, May 1914, p. 165.

*FL*: *The Ruskin Family Letters: the Correspondence of John James Ruskin, His Wife, and Their Son, John*. Edited by Van Akin Burd, Cornell UP, 1973. 2 vols

*LOH: Life of Octavia Hill.* Edited by Emily S. Maurice, MacMillan, 1913.

*OH: Octavia Hill: Early Ideals.* Edited by Emily S. Maurice, George Allen, 1928.

*RL: "Ruskin - Rydings Letters." Mannin: A Journal of Matters Past and Present Relating to Mann,* edited by Sophia Morrison, vol. 2, no. 7, Manx Society, May 1916, p. 407.

*Ward: John Ruskin's Letters to William Ward.* Short biography by William C. Ward and introduction by Alfred Mansfield Brooks, Marshall Jones, 1922.

*WL: The Winnington Letters: John Ruskin's Correspondence with Margaret Alexis Bell and the Children at Winnington Hall.* Edited by Van Akin Burd, George Allen, 1969.

## **Introduction**

In 2019, two exhibitions celebrated the year of John Ruskin's bicentenary, one at Two Temple Place in London and the other at the Millennium Gallery of Museums Sheffield. Both beautifully showcased Ruskin's lifelong efforts in improving the arts, education, economy and environment of the nineteenth century. Such efforts were made not only through his writings and public lectures, but through his donations of collections such as those now displayed at the Millennium Gallery, his teachings, as well as his financial support for workers, schools and societies. In the 1850s, Ruskin, as a teacher of the Working Men's College, was generous enough to donate drawing materials and books to the college. In the 1860s, he attempted to support George Cruickshank financially by asking him to make drawings. The 1870s saw Ruskin's famous roadmaking at Oxford and his foundation of a museum in Sheffield alongside the agricultural and industrial enterprise of the Guild. John Ruskin is mostly known as an art and social critic, but these episodes show him a "philanthropist" as his followers recognized (Collingwood 191; *Ward* 10). This thesis will explore the theoretical and practical aspects of Ruskin's charity by analyzing his ideas and motives, as well as the dynamic and sometimes conflicted relationships with his beneficiaries. I will argue that his approach to charity was not only underpinned by his commitment to the moral principles of love and justice he valued, but also complicated through his unsettled interests and emotions. This introduction is intended to sketch the historical and family context of Ruskin's charity for my main discussion and to trace Ruskin scholarship on this specific topic.

## **Historical and family context of Ruskin's charity**

The long nineteenth century when Ruskin lived was the age of reform, marked



by increasing protests against the strains and imbalance in society. This age was characterized by the expansion of capitalism, individualism and laissez-faire on one hand; on the other, there increased the ways of addressing social evils including poverty that those Zeitgeists had generated. Although the nineteenth century, which this thesis targets, is often depicted as the age of social misery in many ways, it is important to recognize the long history of such social ills, and the equally long history of attempts to alleviate it. From as early as the sixteenth century, the English government had been involved in addressing poverty and crime in the form of establishing laws, whereas parishes as secular administrative units undertook more direct and pragmatic provisions through local rates (Jordan 77-98). However, the issues were far more extensive than they were able to cover. In response to the problems of sickness and poverty in the big cities, “charity, particularly after the Reformation, attempted to avoid the critical situation and justify the government by establishing hospitals and orphanages, in accompany with churches and administrations” (Kanazawa, *Modern* 4). As Prochaska states, “Until the twentieth century philanthropy was widely believed to be the most wholesome and reliable remedy for the nation’s ills . . .” (“Philanthropy” 357). The role charity played in social development was especially pronounced in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The importance attached to charity was reinforced by the evangelical revival and the rise of religious Dissent, more and more friendly societies and Sunday schools had been established.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, charitable activities exemplified by district visits and charity bazaars became popular, encouraging women’s participation in the public sphere and opening up “an alternative to marriage” for women (Elliott 11). Charity was a socially and politically important phenomenon during

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<sup>1</sup> The correlation between the evangelical revival and charity has been mentioned by Jay (179) and Prochaska (*Women* 8). As for this relation, I will examine in further detail in Chapter 1 as the background of Ruskin’s charity.

Ruskin's lifetime.

The strong tie between Ruskin and charity was informed not only by the spirit and fashion of the Victorian age, but also shaped through family heritage. The account book of his father John James Ruskin documents Ruskin senior's support of orphans, schools and churches under the title "Charity & Gift" (MS 28-31). Ruskin must have been conscious of John James's role as a benefactor as well as his generous mind. As Tim Hilton notes, "John James Ruskin's regular gifts were maintained by his son. But the younger Ruskin, not saying more than was necessary to either his mother [or] the family lawyers, began to expand his philanthropy" (*Later* 109). Even though the younger Ruskin may not have kept accounts as systematically as his father, a good deal of material including passbooks (MS 113-15, 134) and letters with his valet Charles Augustus Howell (B 1) records Ruskin's lifelong philanthropic work. Such records even give us an impression that Ruskin might have been even more vigorous in philanthropy than his father. In the first chapter, I will spotlight this genealogical aspect and argue that his family background played a crucial role in forging Ruskin's mindset towards charity.

### **Ruskin scholarship and charity**

Ruskin scholarship has presented different aspects of Ruskin's charitable mind and practice. However, few critics have treated his charity as the main focus of research, either depicting it as biographical facts or locating it in his larger educational enterprise. Biographies old and new have demonstrated the extent of Ruskin's charity, while emphasizing different characteristics. His contemporary biographer, W. G. Collingwood, in *The Life of John Ruskin* (1893), emphatically referred to Ruskin's "philanthropic instincts" (149) that led him to engage in teaching at the Working Men's College. More

recently, the biographer T. Hilton, though not foregrounding Ruskin's philanthropic mind as much as Collingwood, describes Ruskin's dedication to charity in detail, ranging from his charity towards relatives and friends, including Octavia Hill for her housing projects, to support for strangers, including "a shop-boy who wished to become an artist" (*Later* 66, 109). Dinah Birch's "Ruskin and Women's Education" traces Ruskin's gendered approach to his charitable donations, and his support for Winnington Hall and other girls' schools in the context of women's education. Likewise, Sara Atwood's *Ruskin's Educational Ideals* (2011) and Chiaki Yokoyama's *John Ruskin's Education of Working Men* (2018) illustrate his charitable aspect as part of his larger educational scheme (Atwood 61-66, 154-57; Yokoyama 54-55). Although these studies teach us a great deal about the extensive nature of Ruskin's charity, his practice is nonetheless always treated as a partial aspect of the life of the polymath.

This thesis takes Ruskin's charity as its research focus and aims to draw an integrated and broader picture of his particular approach to charity by bridging its theoretical and practical realms. For my analysis, I will focus on three aspects of Ruskin's charity. First of all, I examine how Ruskin interpreted charity as a concept. As Hewison remarks, "Ruskin had long believed that action was the necessary outcome of thought" (*John* 167). Ruskin's charitable actions must have been the "outcome of thought" or representation of ideas, without which we hardly understand his practices. However, few studies have examined Ruskin's theories of charity in closer detail except Shusaku Kanazawa's work "Charity and Ruskin" that analyzed Ruskin's attitude towards discriminate/indiscriminate charity. We must then explore the ideas and theories in which his actions were rooted. We will look at this aspect of Ruskin's charity particularly in Chapter 1.

Another aspect that this thesis looks at is Ruskin's motives and the background for his charity, including his religious convictions, which must themselves be situated

against a larger context of Victorian beliefs and attitudes. As Prochaska explains, “the peculiar configuration of events taking place in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries heightened and redirected British philanthropic impulses” (*Voluntary* 21).

Likewise, how did his broader social environment and personal background of his family and education fashion and direct Ruskin’s charity both at theoretical and practical levels? What motivated Ruskin into active participation in charity? My analysis will unravel how Ruskin’s background and motives played a crucial part in shaping and reshaping his views and practice of charity.

The third, and final aspect that we need to explore is Ruskin’s approach to charitable practices, in all its dynamism and complexity. As Kanazawa notes, “Philanthropy is a phenomenon comprised of two camps of givers and receivers, each of which consists of complex elements” (*Modern* 13). It is understandable to suppose that for Ruskin, who valued human relationships throughout his life, the relationships between providers and receivers should account for the larger part of his concerns in charity. How did he construct his relationships with beneficiaries? Investigating this will allow us to assess his approach to charity at a practical level, and to gauge how closely his practice aligned with - or diverged from - his ideas and motives.

This thesis will use several methods to deal with these questions. While my first chapter examines Ruskin’s theories of charity in a broader context, each subsequent chapter takes the form of a case study, offering close readings and detailed analysis of particular relationships and specific charitable practices. Although choosing a few limited examples from the wide-ranging instances of Ruskin’s charitable practice would seem to offer a partial view, this thesis rather hopes to draw a holistic picture of his charity by presenting and highlighting various approaches (individual or institutional, educational, material or financial) and spheres of interest (art, natural science, or social science). The approach to Ruskin’s charity in this thesis owes much to *Ruskin’s*

*Struggle for Coherence* (2006) edited by Keith Hanley and Rachel Dickinson, where all the chapters approach Ruskin in different ways, but together contribute to understand him as a whole.

For each smaller section of this thesis, I will analyze a selection of primary texts, mainly Ruskin's works and correspondence with his beneficiaries such as workers, pupils and colleagues. The close reading of these texts, with attention to the language, precise wording and tone, reveals a great deal of Ruskin's complex mindset and approach to charity. In addition, to contextualize Ruskin's concept and practice, I will highlight biographical and historical backgrounds including the influence of family, transformation of religious conviction, and conventions and practices in nineteenth-century society. These backgrounds consistently shaped, developed and counteracted his ideas, attitudes, arguments and activities over charity. My major focus is primary sources such as diaries and letters exchanged among his family and friends as well as other sources including journals. These sources scaffold the analysis and interpretation of the main approach of close reading by providing specific frameworks and contexts.

## **Chapter outline**

The opening chapter aims to depict Ruskin's broad concept of charity, mostly chronologically, referring to his shift of interests and religious convictions. I seek to draw together insights from across his writing career – particularly relevant passages from *Modern Painters* (1843-60), *Unto This Last* (1862), *Munera Pulveris* (1872) and *Fors Clavigera* (1871-84).<sup>2</sup> His religious background, his transforming and seemingly

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<sup>2</sup> The essays collected in *Unto This Last* were originally published in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1860. Likewise, the essays in *Munera Pulveris* were first issued in the *Frazer's Magazine* in 1862-63, as "a Sequel to Papers which appeared in the 'Cornhill Magazine'" (17: 119).

never settled convictions, and the family legacy of charitable practice will be also highlighted. Along with his own concepts, his views on contemporary modes of and beliefs relating to charity will be examined. By providing a close look at his wide-ranging comments on charity, this chapter unravels Ruskin's particular approach to charity both within and beyond the common lexical definition of "charity."

The second chapter aims to examine the extent to which Ruskin actually applied his concept in his own relationship with the workers.<sup>3</sup> I illustrate his practice of charity in relation to work and to the master-worker relation where Ruskin saw the cause of the modern misery of poverty. He suggested that the origins of social evils lay in unaffectionate and unjust relationships between master and worker as well as the idle poor's exploiting the hard working through claiming reliefs. As a way of exploring one example of his relationship with one particular worker, I will probe the detailed lively interactions between Ruskin and Octavia Hill. My case study will offer close readings of correspondence exchanged between Ruskin, Hill, and their wider circle. By focusing on a female artisan, the gendered aspects of his approach to charity will be also explored.

Chapter 3 targets Ruskin's more public and broader engagement which included teaching activities and donations either material or financial. I will take as my case study Winnington Hall, a girls' school in Cheshire which Ruskin was involved in from 1859 to 1868, revealing more official and experimental ways of practicing charity in the realm of education, particularly in his interest in teaching geology in relation to morality. The chapter also explores the integration and conflicts between Ruskin's ideal ways of practice for pupils and the course of action of the school including the "public" and

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<sup>3</sup> In this thesis, in order to highlight Ruskin's master-worker relation expressed in *Unto This Last*, the term "workers" are used as those employed, being juxtaposed with masters who hire them. Therefore, the term "workers" here covers is broader than "the working class." Since Ruskin contextualized this relation mainly in art production, the "workers" in Chapter 2 refer to artisans.

“institutional” interests and restrictions. *The Winnington Letters* (1969), the letters exchanged with pupils and school mistresses, and *The Ethics of the Dust* (1866), his written work based on his conversations with pupils, will be the target of analysis to present the dynamism of practice. Through this, the chapter will demonstrate Ruskin’s approach to charity in the form of his “art of spending” and cultural philanthropy.

The fourth and final chapter investigates his practice of charity in his own project, the Guild of St. George as a body of its members with himself as a Master. It was the integrity of embodiment of his theory and its roots can be found in his past practices, including his own employment of workers and involvement in educational institutions including Winnington Hall. Although the Guild itself engaged in different schemes such as Wandel Pond Cleansing and Hinksey roadmaking, the chapter targets Ruskin’s, not the Guild’s, involvement in its schemes and members. My case study here showcases Ruskin’s involvement in the establishment and development of St. George’s Museum and his relationship with one of the Guild members, Egbert Rydings, who managed St. George’s Woollen Mill at Laxey, Isle of Man. In so doing, the chapter attempts to present the final, if not definite, form of his extensive practice of charity, arguing that it operated in contradictorily organic and rigid ways, simultaneously united and dispersed.

In a concluding section, I will sketch the influence of Ruskin on our contemporary world. 2019 does not only celebrate the bicentenary of Ruskin’s birth but allows us to recognize his legacy anew in the twenty-first century. His concept and practice of charity, intersecting with mainstream Victorian practices, looks beyond the conventional definitions of charity. The dynamism of charitable movements in the nineteenth century has transformed itself into the present system of social welfare merged with governmental support. In the whirling tide of reform, Ruskin’s charity has survived with its universal qualities of moral feeling. The legacy can be now traced in a

number of existing organizations and museums such as the Guild of St. George, the Big Draw and Ruskin Mill Trust, some of which can be traced back to him directly, others which have been inspired by him. It is worth re-reading his concept of charity and re-evaluating his practices, recognizing the ways in which they have been flourishing in culture, environment, and people's lives, from the nineteenth century to the present day.



## Chapter 1: Ruskin's Concept of Charity

How did Ruskin define charity? As I will show, it had a very specific meaning for Ruskin. He tended to provide his own interpretation of abstract concepts, using language in a very distinct sense for particular purposes. For example, in *Modern Painters* II (1846), Ruskin interprets the term "Aesthetic" as signifying "mere sensual perception of the outward qualities and necessary effects of bodies," different from the common understanding of "aesthetic" as dealing with "the impressions of beauty" (4: 42). Instead of adopting the term "Aesthetic," he introduces the Greek word and concept "Theoria," by apologetically claiming that for his present purpose of explanation, "no term can be more accurate or convenient" (4: 42). In *Fors Clavigera* in 1871, too, he might have confused the readers by attaching several meanings to the title, "Fors" meaning "Force, Fortitude, and Fortune," and "Clavigera" meaning "the Club-bearer," "the Key-bearer" and "the Nail-bearer" (27: 27-28). These episodes reveal that Ruskin, versed in Latin, Greek and etymology, frequently posed questions over existing terms and concepts, and this leads us to wonder how Ruskin interpreted "charity."

My emphasis on the importance of understanding Ruskin's own, highly specific interpretation of charity differs from that of previous critics. Ruskin's charitable practices have long been the subject of discussion and research. In his early *The Life of John Ruskin*, Collingwood, Ruskin's student and biographer, highlighted the crucial importance of understanding Ruskin's "philanthropy." For Collingwood, it was the social aspect of Ruskin's efforts for reform, particularly exemplified by his involvement with the Working Men's College, which deserved to be emphasized, and he defined these as "philanthropic" efforts rather than "charity" (149, 191). T. Hilton's recent biography, on the other hand, emphasizes Ruskin's benevolent feelings and practical support for those in need of pecuniary aid. T. Hilton describes such support for a widow,

a shop boy, George Cruickshank and Octavia Hill as “charities” (*Later* 109), the plural form of “charity” which corresponds to the fourth definition offered by the Oxford English Dictionary: “Benevolence to one’s neighbors, especially to the poor; the practical beneficences in which this manifests itself,” to be more precise, “Acts or works of charity to the poor” (“Charity” n4). While acknowledging the importance of the concept to Ruskin, T. Hilton uses the words “philanthropy,” “generosity” and “benevolence” interchangeably with “charity” (*Later* 109). Such descriptions of Ruskin’s charitable practice pay attention to its different characteristics and aspects, but do not fully analyze how Ruskin *himself* understood the concept of charity. As I touched on in the introduction, there has, as yet, been little research which attempts to analyze the specificity and detail of Ruskin’s attitude, with the exception of work by Kanazawa. His research, “Charity and Ruskin,” has brought to light Ruskin’s thoughts and attitudes towards charity as almsgiving (financial relief). Through the comparison between Ruskin’s comments on charitable practice and the common understanding of it in the nineteenth century, it spotlights Ruskin’s distinctive understanding of discriminate charity based on his idea of justice and beauty. Similarly, I argue that we need to consider the ways in which Ruskin defined, understood and carried out charity.

The different words used by Collingwood and T. Hilton to illustrate characteristics of Ruskin’s charity – “philanthropy,” “generosity,” “benevolence” – interestingly suggest the fluidity and multiplicity of the concept. In fact, there is often discussion over the definition of charity among researchers in the area, especially concerning the possible distinction with “philanthropy.” Some claim that the two words “were used interchangeably” in the nineteenth century with the meaning of “love of one’s fellow man, an inclination or action which promotes the well-being of others” (Prochaska, “Philanthropy” 360n9, 360; see also Kanazawa, *Modern* 3). Others slightly distinguish “charity” from “philanthropy,” suggesting that the former has deeper

religious connotations (Checkland 2; Elliott 12).<sup>4</sup> In response to these divergent definitions, Adam opens up a new discussion by warning about the interchangeable use of words such as “philanthropy,” “charity” or “benevolence” without specific definitions (4). Choosing the term “philanthropy” as an example of such potentially ambiguous terms, he urges clarification of “what we mean when we use the term,” set against an awareness of “the variety of concepts and possible definitions” according to the context, approach and period of time (Adam 4). We require, therefore, an understanding of the term and concept in the particular context in which it is used by an individual. To understand the charity of Ruskin as an individual, we need to pose these questions: first “how did *he* interpret charity?” and then “how did his personal circumstances and broader social backdrop generate contexts where his charity was formed and reformed?”

This chapter, by probing these questions, attempts to examine Ruskin’s concept of charity. I explore, but also challenge, the lexical definitions and broader nineteenth-century understanding of the concept, arguing that in order to broaden our understanding of Ruskin’s charity, we need to examine his interpretation of the concept in detail. As the Oxford English Dictionary indicates (“Charity”), “charity” allows interpretations at abstract level (moral, religious and mental aspect) and concrete level (social, practical aspect), and following this, the chapter analyzes both.

First of all, at an abstract level, I will examine how Ruskin participated in the tradition that comprehends charity as love, shedding a light on its Christian interpretation. Next, as another abstract interpretation of charity, I will investigate the nineteenth-century patriarchal approach to charity, grounded on the concept of justice. Then, informed by these conceptual analyses, I will examine Ruskin’s interpretation of

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<sup>4</sup> Elliott notes that such distinction was more notable in the eighteenth century than the nineteenth century when “‘charity’ and ‘philanthropy’ are most often used synonymously” (12).

charity at a practical level, setting this in a larger context of nineteenth-century attitudes towards charity, influenced by debates on intervention and non-intervention. Behind these lie the rise of evangelicalism and the ideology of laissez-faire. Lastly, the concluding section will present Ruskin's ideal of charitable schemes as an introduction to his own practices, which will be addressed in later chapters. I argue that throughout these analyses, we need to bear in mind Ruskin's family background, and particularly the history of his religious convictions, as an essential element in forming his views on and approach to charity.

### **Charity as Christian love**

Broadly speaking, the history of charity can be traced back to the Middle Ages, when the idea of charity as Christian love was already recorded and widely known. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, charity was accepted as Christian love for neighbors as described in the discourses by Thomas Aquinas and St. Bernard of Clairvaux (Brodman 25-26). In the sixteenth century, *Certain Sermons* published in 1563 recorded that "charity is represented as inseparable from the love of God" (Jordan 165), although charitable practices had been handed over from churches to the secular, according to the transition of roles of parishes, influenced by the Act of Supremacy (Jordan 98). Such biblical perspectives and religious awareness were not completely erased even after the seventeenth century, despite less emphasis on religious duty as charity gradually became a national custom (Jordan 168). The term "charity" in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was not entirely separable from the meaning of Christian love (Checkland 2; Williams 40). Therefore, the interpretation of charity intimately connected to Christian love had a long history stretching from the Middle Ages through to the nineteenth century.

This traditional understanding of charity must have been foregrounded for Ruskin during the daily Bible lessons from his mother Margaret who held an “unquestioning evangelical faith in the literal truth of the Bible” (35: 128). This religious education might have started when he was around six or seven, and was long lasting, as he writes, “As soon as I was able to read with fluency, she began a course of Bible work with me, which never ceased till I went to Oxford” in 1837 (35: 40). The Bible lessons included the thirteenth chapter of the first book of Corinthians, which, in the King James Version, is titled “Charity Never Fails” (28: 101; 35: 42). The last verse of the chapter says: “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three: but the greatest of these *is* charity” (*KJV*, 1 Cor. 13.13). The abiding legacy of this Christian interpretation may be directly seen in Ruskin’s commentaries on charity in the 1840s, as in *Modern Painters* II:

Its [Theoria’s] first perfection, therefore, relating to Vital Beauty, is the kindness and unselfish fulness of heart, which receives the utmost amount of pleasure from the happiness of all things. Of which in high degree the heart of man is incapable; . . . only in proportion as we draw near to God, and are made in measure like unto Him, can we increase this our possession of Charity, of which the entire essence is in God only. But even the ordinary exercise of this faculty implies a condition of the whole moral being in some measure right and healthy, and to the entire exercise of it there is necessary the entire perfection of the Christian character; for he who loves not God, nor his brother, cannot love the grass beneath his feet, and the creatures which live not for his uses, filling those spaces in the universe which he needs not. (4: 147-48)

Here Ruskin appreciates charity as love: the essential and divine power for a Christian being. To be more precise, he comprehends charity as an essential expression of God’s

love; human beings possess an inferior form of it, in their love for God and for other creatures, human and animal. In this respect, it is clear that the core idea of his understanding of charity had much in common with the Christian values of Victorian England.

Yet, this passage also suggests a hint of Ruskin's particularity. If Ruskin inherited a general religious understanding of charity, shared by so many other Victorians, what makes him idiosyncratic in the passage above is his discussion of the concept in the context of aestheticism. In *Modern Painters* II, Ruskin introduced the idea of charity as "the first perfection" of "Theoria," a moral perception essential for the aesthetic experience, in other words, the apprehension of beauty (4: 35). Throughout the volume, although the explanation jumps from one section to another, Ruskin presents how charity as love works within an aesthetic framework. When the Ruskinian observer apprehends beauty in living creatures, this is described as "a perception . . . of the immediate operation of the Intelligence which so formed us, and so feeds us. Out of which perception arise Joy, Admiration, and Gratitude" (4: 47). Behind these objects of beauty lies "the sense of the Divine presence," and "the trees and flowers seem all, in a sort, children of God" (5: 386). Therefore, an observer might be moved by the vital beauty of flowers on the wayside, and

a call for sympathy, . . . however unconscious or senseless the creature may indeed be that so seems to call, cannot be heard without affection, nor contemplated without worship, by any of us whose heart is rightly tuned, or whose mind is clearly and surely sighted. (4: 147)

To Ruskin, the state where a beholder can apprehend beauty is the state in which he/she embraces charity, by "the kindness and unselfish fulness of heart, which receives the utmost amount of pleasure from the happiness of all things." Therefore, in Ruskin's aesthetic approach, charity manifests the beauty of the human heart and the gracefully

established connections among creatures grounded in love. This understanding of charity as part of an aesthetic framework would flourish later as part of Ruskin's attempts to create beautifully harmonized relationships in society.

Ruskin's interpretation of charity during the 1840s, then, owed much to his Christian viewpoint mingled with his aesthetic understanding, and this formed the concrete basis for his comprehension of charity in the 1850s and 60s. Despite his changing religious convictions, Ruskin retained this Christian, moral understanding of charity, grounded in the Bible to which he gave authority as a moral guide that "enforces certain simple laws of human conduct" (17: 350) and "enjoins truth, temperance, charity, and equity" (17: 351). Nevertheless, this co-existed with his increasing familiarity with Greek myths during the period. According to Birch, contrary to his earlier antagonism against Greek myths, "An emancipation is demonstrated in the scheme of the third volume of *Modern Painters* . . . in 1856" (*Ruskin's* 27). His letters to the students at Winington Hall, where he taught religion and geology in the 1860s, record his frequent references to Greek words; he even purchased a new Greek dictionary in order to answer a student's question (*WL* 220-21). Above all, Ruskin started to use Greek etymology in order to understand the Bible and concepts important for religious learning.

His explanation of charity in the 1860s indicates this growing influence. In *Munera Pulveris*, Ruskin introduces Greek goddesses to explain "Charis" (also the Greek word for the English "grace"), which is the Greek origin of "charity." Drawing on his expanding knowledge of Greek myth and etymology, Ruskin explains that the goddess Charis who embodies "feminine household strength" (17: 224n5) can be transformed into three kinds of goddess, Charitas, Chara, and Eleutheria (17: 225-28). He explains, "we have conceived these goddesses as if they only gave loveliness to gesture; whereas their true function is to give graciousness to deed, the other loveliness

arising naturally out of that. In which function Charis becomes Charitas” (17: 225). Using etymological and mythical grounds, Ruskin presents a moral and aesthetic interpretation of charity which resonates with that in *Modern Painters*, but adopts a different angle. What is also striking in the passage is that, holding the abstract notion of charity inseparable from beauty and blessings from God, he provides a new approach to charity as a beautiful “deed.” This marks the development of his interpretation and interest from “moral *perception*” to “moral *practice*” as he mentioned in the third volume of *Modern Painters* (5: 376), coincidentally around the same time when he was being unfettered from his earlier antagonism against Greek myths.

The two other figures of Charis also suggest this slight shift in Ruskin’s thought as well as his ongoing religious and aesthetic approach. For the second goddess Chara, Ruskin introduces her as she who embodies “Joy,” which recalls moral feelings encompassed in aesthetic experiences of charity as expressed in *Modern Painters II*. However, in his explanation of the third goddess Eleutheria, Ruskin’s own particular view intersects with the wider nineteenth-century perspective. In the nineteenth century, its potentially self-indulgent modes became problematic. For example, charity bazaars, which were generally encouraged as a benign female occupation, became the target of such criticism. A reviewer in the *Westmorland Gazette* dated 25 July 1863, for example, condemns them, arguing that “A dole of money fosters idleness and drunkenness among the labouring population of a neighbourhood” (“Philandering”). When Ruskin wrote that the goddess represents “Liberty,” or “such generosity that any man becomes capable of so governing others as to take true part in any system of national economy” (17: 228), he might have shared this Victorian anxiety about undisciplined modes of modern charity. Here we notice Ruskin’s participation in the discussion of charity as a practical activity. This marks again Ruskin’s gradual embarkment on a more practical understanding of charity. In the 1860s, Ruskin still attempted to understand charity at a



conceptual level, but at the same time, seemed to extend his scope to more practical and social charity, which leads to his increasing endeavors in charitable activities.

Even in the 1870s, Ruskin did not forsake this moral, aesthetic understanding of charity as grace and loveliness either in Greek or Christian religion. In his additional notes to the aforementioned section of *Munera Pulveris*, Ruskin laments that “Charis” became mingled with the Latin “Carus,” then “throughout the Middle Ages, the two ideas ran on together, and both got confused with St. Paul’s agaph [agape]” (17: 292). Its result was that “our ‘charity’ having not only brought in the entirely foreign sense of almsgiving, but lost the essential sense of contentment, and lost much more in getting too far away from the ‘charis’ of the final Gospel benedictions” (17: 292). This statement marks not only Ruskin’s strong emphasis on the moral aspect of charity including such feelings as love and joy, but also his thought that the common understanding of charity as material (and largely financial) relief should be subordinate to the primal, moral aspect. Accordingly, he summarizes in *Fors Clavigera* in 1871 that “Charitas” is “the desire to do your neighbour grace, the one source of all human glory, power, and material Blessing” (27: 126), which unsurprisingly echoes the general Christian commandment in the Bible, which says, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matt. 22.39).

At the same time, Ruskin, by using the word “do,” implies the importance of “moral *practice*.” However, this resists the common notion of charity as mere pecuniary relief, as his additional notes to *Munera* suggest. In the same *Fors* letter, with reference to Giotto’s fresco “Karitas,” he emphasizes that Giotto’s work is distinguished in that the figure of Charity is depicted as trampling on the bags of money; instead she is giving corn and flowers. He writes, “Giotto is quite literal in his meaning, as well as figurative. Your love is to give food and flowers, and to labour for them only” (27: 130). As we will see later in Chapter 4, this mode of charity symbolizes Ruskin’s practices for

the Guild of St. George in the 1870s. Though Ruskin had already vigorously participated in charitable practices around this period, he might have glimpsed in Giotto's work an answer to how charity as "moral *perception*" could take a form of "moral *practice*." The linkage between charity and Christian love thus remained in Ruskin's thought from an early stage, forming the core of his principle of charity. From the 1850s onwards, this principle continued to develop, absorbing Ruskin's shifting interests and his perception of society, and gradually shifting into a broader understanding of charity in his later life.

### **Charity as justice and patriarchal duty**

In the middle of the 1850s, there was an event that greatly developed Ruskin's understanding of charity: alongside his emphasis on the softer principle of love, he began to develop a growing awareness of justice as an important element of charity. One clear manifestation of this change happened at Sion on the way back from the continental tour from May to October of 1854. A diary entry of 5 September shows Ruskin's close examination of the houses which were ruined and wretched (*Diaries* 2: 502-07). The sufferings of the peasant life were clearly unfolded in front of Ruskin's eyes. For Ruskin, these miserable realities seemed an apocalyptic revelation, as in Leviticus 26.14-39: "And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it" (Lev. 26.32) for example. He felt God's sternness as Judge, and became obedient to "the law, not now of the kind Father, but of the angry Judge" (Hanson 57). Realizing the contemporary population were hardly just in their daily life, he might have identified them with the Israelites who did not observe God's law exemplified in Amos 5.12 ("For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the

gate *from their right*”). From this point onwards, Ruskin began to direct his attention to the aspect of God as Judge, and justice became an informing principle in his interpretation of charity. He began to criticize modern injustice more vigorously, and to call for righteous charity, casting himself in the role of those earlier prophets who had given warning to the unjust Israelites.

Ruskin’s newly gained motivation for social writings and his reshaped understanding of charity are particularly clearly marked in a lecture given in 1865:

The one Divine work—the one ordered sacrifice—is to do justice; and it is the last we are ever inclined to do. Anything rather than that! As much charity as you choose, but no justice. “Nay,” you will say, “charity is greater than justice.” Yes, it is greater; it is the summit of justice—it is the temple of which justice is the foundation. But you can’t have the top without the bottom; you cannot build upon charity. You must build upon justice, for this main reason, that you have not, at first, charity to build with. (18: 420)

Ruskin unrelentingly attacks what he sees as the wrong-headed belief that virtue consists in charitable activities: “the mistake of the best men through generation after generation, has been that great one of thinking to help the poor by almsgiving, and by preaching of patience or of hope, and by every other means, emollient or consolatory” (17: 60). To Ruskin, this was no more than superficial. He believed that contemporary social misery, including poverty, stemmed from injustice, more precisely, from capitalistic competitiveness and selfish individualism. Therefore, it could not be remedied by temporary relief or empty words. Instead, Ruskin calls for justice, seeing it as the divinely ordained “foundation” for charity. This justice “include[s] . . . such affection as one man *owes* to another” (17: 28), and is therefore a moral principle that can embrace love, in the same manner that God’s Justice is inseparable from His Love

(e.g. Lev. 26.44). In *Unto This Last*, Ruskin presents the practical performance of these moral principles of justice as going hand in hand with behavior at a given place of work: “. . . the only means which the master has of doing justice to the men employed by him is to ask himself sternly whether he is dealing with such subordinate as he would with his own son, if compelled by circumstances to take such a position” (17: 41-42). For a merchant, according to Ruskin, to be just and to perform righteous charity is an extension of paternal responsibility: to love, to discipline, and to lead children, not forsaking them for his own interest. This ideal figure of a merchant resonates with the God who beholds and cares for human beings as His children with love, but also watches over them with discipline.

Interestingly, when Ruskin wrote the quotation about justice and the merchant, he might have had the figure of his father John James in his mind, given that Ruskin’s later epitaph commemorates him as “an entirely honest merchant” (35: 15). This suggests that his mother Margaret was not the only source of Ruskin’s religious and moral impulse towards charity. From his father John James, too, he inherited a conception of a moral principle of justice as the foundation of charity. His paternal genealogy can be traced back to Scottish Presbyterianism, which may have affected Ruskin’s mindset directly and indirectly. Ruskin’s paternal grandmother, Catherine Tweddale (1763-1817), inherited Calvinistic modes of belief from her father (Burd, Introduction 56-57). These were firstly instrumental in forming John James’s mind. Catherine wrote to her son in 1805:

Neither our mind nor our bodys can be in proper tone without one  
[being] first blessed with habits of Industry, even a Man of Fortune if he  
wishes for happiness ought to be as strictly industrious as a Man who has  
his daily bread to work for . . . in short my love there is no situation in  
life from the king to beggar that we can be placed in but what requires

employment God has so formed man that he cannot live in Indolence without sinking into a very insipid or then a very vicious being. (*FL* 1: 6)

Catherine teaches her son here the significance of working industriously and patiently, acknowledging this as God's intention. We might presume that John James followed this lesson: certainly, he carried out his work as a sherry merchant very diligently and successfully. His understanding of work as his appointed duty from God and the lessons he learned from his mother made him earnestly serve his own business: his commitment to these lessons was so faithful that he became ill, due to overworking himself in the service of paying off his father's debt (Collingwood 11).

He might have felt that he was encumbered with another duty to teach this important moral principle to his young son whom he and his wife attempted to make a Bishop. In a letter dated 26 October 1826, John James enthusiastically shared with his seven-year-old son the importance of duty and the child's appointed work:

You are blessed with a fine Capacity & even Genius & you owe it as a Duty to the author of your Being & the giver of your Talents to cultivate your powers & to use them in his Service & for the benefit of your fellow Creatures. You may be doomed to enlighten a People by your Wisdom & to adorn an age by your Learning. It would be sinful in you to let the powers of your mind lie dormant through idleness or want of perseverance when they may at their maturity aid the cause of Truth & of Religion & enable you to become in many ways a Benefactor to the Human Race. (*FL* 1: 209-10)

John James's own interpretation of work in this passage as a duty to God who endowed him with superior faculties to perform may be set alongside Catherine's letter concerning the divinely ordained importance of strict industriousness. The passage echoes exactly what John James wrote to Margaret in 1829, "God give[s] me wisdom to

use it not abuse it” (*FL* 1: 155). Closer attention to his usage of words reveals a possible reference to the Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25.14-30), to which his son John would also later allude in *The Political Economy of Art* (1857). Ruskin’s idea of distributing the wisdom of the wise in that lecture (16: 98-99) might have had its root in the aforementioned letter from his father. Contrary to his parents’ conviction that he would become a clergyman (35: 24-25), Ruskin instead fixed on a career as critic. We might, however, glimpse something of his parents’ desire for him to become a preacher in Ruskin’s search for religious truth and his attempt to present it in his early art criticism (Birch, *Ruskin’s* 7).

The sense of duty – religious, educational and social – which he inherited from his parents long survived in Ruskin’s mind. It fed into his own particular concept of patriarchal charity, informed by religion but also by his complicated attitude towards paternal authority, literal and metaphorical. Literally Ruskin experienced and enjoyed paternal relationships with those whom he supported in practice; metaphorically he allows us an insight into Victorian attitudes towards paternalism, and the important role of paternalism in Victorian charity. We have already noted the importance of the filio-parental relation in Ruskin’s description of the ideal moral relationship between a merchant and his workers; he also apprehended the relation between a guide and those guided in the same manner. As his words “paternal authority and responsibility” (17: 41) clearly demonstrate, for Ruskin, to treat the guided as his children is a duty of a guiding person: the only way to combine love with justice.

In the context of the nineteenth century, Ruskin’s patriarchal approach to charity might seem anachronistic; much of the discourse around charity in the period centers on females. Charity then was widely accepted as being a woman’s mission, the Victorian, but also traditional perception that “a woman’s special traits” were characterized by the terms such as “modest,” “compassionate,” “self-sacrificing,” or “benevolent”

(Prochaska, *Women* 3), meant that it was seen as peculiarly suited to females. Although, as the cliché of the “angel in the house” suggests, women were often confined to the private sphere, their participation in charitable works was socially acceptable because of the reciprocal relation between domestic life and charity. It was believed that women might contribute to the moral improvement of society by spreading their domestic morality to the social sphere (Elliott 1; Prochaska, *Women* 7); such benevolent conduct might, in turn, help to “train[ . . . ] women to be better wives and mothers” (Prochaska, *Women* 6), to cultivate their own moral temper, and thus to benefit their domestic life.

Yet there is a danger in over-emphasizing the identification between women and charity in the period: we need also to understand the complexity of women’s charity as a “manifestation of patriarchal ideology” (Kanazawa, *Modern* 210-11). As Kanazawa argues, “After Prochaska, the combination between philanthropy and women has been accepted as a given premise. In fact, . . . most of the cases, those who dominated management and organization of charity were males” (*Modern* 217). Ruskin was engaging in charity at a moment when gender discourse on the subject was becoming especially complex, and his own attitudes towards the gendering of charity are also complicated. His concept of charity was, on the one hand, shaped by examples of female attributes – love, grace and loveliness – but, on the other, was also informed by a patriarchal sense of duty. For now, we will not explore this gendered approach of Ruskin’s charity further, but we will return later in Chapter 2 for a more detailed account.

### **Ruskin’s ambivalent and reforming approach to existing charity**

We have examined how Ruskin apprehended charity, at a conceptual level, as encompassing moral principles of love and justice. At the same time, it has been

revealed that he also paid a closer attention not only to the aspect of feelings in relation to charity, but also to its practical aspect, given such words as “deed” and “do” with reference to the social context. The section that follows will examine how Ruskin’s understanding of charity at a level of principles manifests itself at a level of social activities, tracing the discourse of charitable practice in his contemporary age. The contemporary interpretation of charity was underpinned by politico-economic and religious ideologies. In the following section, I will pay close attention to the concepts of intervention and non-intervention that played a crucial role in the social dynamics of the period, but I will also focus on the subtle ambivalence of Ruskin’s own views on the practical expression of charity.

In December 1868, Ruskin wrote a short letter to the *Daily Telegraph* and a treatise called “Notes on the General Principles of Employment for the Destitute and Criminal Classes.” Both reveal a great deal about Ruskin’s theory of charity, but his relentless criticism of modern charitable practice is most notable in the letter:

No almsgiving of money is so helpful as almsgiving of care and thought; the giving of money without thought is indeed continually mischievous; but the invective of the economist against *indiscriminate* charity is idle, if it be not coupled with pleading for discriminate charity, and, above all, for that charity which discerns the uses that people may be put to, and helps them by setting them to work in those services. (17: 540)

Here we particularly need to pay attention to two points that show Ruskin’s attitudes towards practical charity and his participation in contemporary debates on it. First, he shows his awareness of the argument over the treatment of “idle” vagabonds and beggars, and indiscriminate/discriminate charity, the distinction that Kanazawa used to explain Ruskin’s attitude towards charity (“Charity” 4). As Kanazawa’s argument does not seek to contextualize Ruskin’s attitude in terms of his background, in the following



section I will advance the discussion by integrating his religious and family background into analysis. The other point suggested in the passage above is that Ruskin follows up this criticism of contemporary modes of charity by calling for reformatory ways that are grounded in the moral principles of “care and thought.”

Firstly, regarding the treatment of idle beggars, as Kanazawa pointed out (“Charity” 4), Ruskin criticizes indiscriminate charity which he believed could be harmful (17: 540). His criticism seems to be grounded in the idea of duty and work that he inherited from his father. Ruskin claims in the December treatise that workers are forced to work double to feed themselves and vagabonds, the indigent who receive their food without working (17: 545). This seems to resonate with the non-interventionist approach of political economy of the day which was largely influenced by laissez-faire and individualism. As has been seen, charity including female participation was accepted in the nineteenth century from a moral point of view. Yet, there also existed negative voices towards charity, in line with Samuel Smiles’s *Self-Help* (1859). They believed that too much involvement might contribute to stimulating the indulgence of those who tended to rely on relief. Such negative voices, as expressed in the aforementioned review in the *Westmorland Gazette*, seem to have been reflected in the New Poor Law (1834), which became stricter in terms of its non-interventionist approach (Taylor 44-45). Bentham was also opposed to outdoor relief on the same grounds, proposing his own scheme of “Panopticon poorhouse” (Bahmueller 2-5). It therefore seems understandable that Ruskin, who also exhibits a concern over the license of modern charity, was listed among the members of the Charity Organisation Society in London that took a similar non-interventionist approach, even if he did not vigorously participate in its activities.

These individualistic and non-interventionist mindsets were notable in religious discourse, but they appeared in a more complex manner than those held by political

economists. As Boyd Hilton has pointed out, evangelicals and philanthropists who were opposed to laissez-faire have often been considered identical; in fact evangelicals were “helping to create and to buttress the very capitalist philosophy that was under attack” (15). The evangelical doctrines which value individual relationship with God and pursuit of salvation in afterlife rather supported the capitalistic idea of individualism. Although it was true that evangelicals played a crucial role in philanthropic works such as the anti-slavery campaigns and Sunday schools as represented by the Clapham Sect, nevertheless, their missionary charity seems to be doubly colored with individualism. First of all, it benefited a benefactor, and its outcome ultimately relied on a recipient. As providers, evangelicals were more seriously motivated to carry out their philanthropic works, seeking for the reward or assurance of afterlife – their personal salvation (Checkland 6). Although this is not the place to discuss evangelical doctrines in detail, in terms of duty and afterlife, the scheme of salvation is as follows:

A sharp discontinuity exists between this world and the next. God transcends this world, and his providence is responsible for everything that happens in it. His creatures are all in a state of natural depravity, weighed down by original sin, and life is effectively an “arena of moral trial,” an ethical obstacle course on which men are tempted, tested, and ultimately sorted into saints and sinners in readiness for the Day of Judgment. Then, souls will be dispatched either to Heaven or to Hell, literally conceived as states of eternal felicity and everlasting torment. (B. Hilton 8)

Briefly, the evangelicals as benefactors thought that without virtuous acts in this earthly life, their afterlife in heaven would be no longer guaranteed.

Ruskin may possibly have been motivated by such an impulse in his earlier life when considerably affected by evangelicalism. In the letter to his father on 11 April

1852 from Venice, Ruskin wrote about the scientific men of the present day:

The higher class of thinkers, therefore, for the most part have given up the peculiarly Christian doctrines, and indeed nearly all thought of a future life. They philosophize upon this life, reason about death till they look upon it as no evil: and set themselves actively to improve this world and do as much good in it as they can. (36: 137)

Ruskin already noticed that striving for good conduct without any expectation is more virtuous than with a hope for reward: he thought the latter “selfish.” Yet, the higher way of living, not grounded in a set of religious doctrines, he believed was, to Ruskin, “the other road,” which he could hardly tread. Differentiating himself from this class of men, he continues, “But I have found that the other road will not do for me, that there is no happiness and no strength in it. I cannot understand the make of the minds that can do without a hope of the future” (36: 138). To the earlier evangelical Ruskin, individual salvation, or “a hope of future” was what may have enabled him to constantly commit to good conduct. Likewise, this sort of individual salvation might have been one of the impulses that drove the benefactors into active charity.

Another individualistic aspect of the evangelicals’ charity is that a recipient was considered responsible for its final outcome. Their philanthropic practice was grounded on the principle that the present misery of those outcast people derived from their own misbehavior (B. Hilton 14; Jay 179). On this ground, they were prone to take a non-interventionist approach in relation to morality and industry, as Max Weber points out in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930), and believed the poor themselves to be answerable for the ultimate betterment of their condition.<sup>5</sup> For example, Ruskin’s mother Margaret adopted this viewpoint towards the poor. Her “hard hearted” attitude to a beggar manufacturess that she expressed in a letter to John James

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<sup>5</sup> The original German text of *The Protestant Ethic* was first published in 1905.

in 1826 remarkably demonstrates non-interventionist ideas. Sharing her husband's Calvinist strict view on duty and work during a stay with Catherine, she says, "I feel somewhat provoked at English men having their health and the use of head & hands becoming beggars [...] surely this is not the case with the *frugal* the honest the industrious –" (*FL* 1: 140). Margaret shows her belief that poverty is the natural consequence of the moral degradation of the poor. Instead of improving the external environment for the poor, the missionaries believed that their works would enable the indigent to have a chance to apprehend a private relation with God and to acquire moral improvement which would alleviate their present misery; yet they also believed that "such intermediaries as priests and sacraments are of relatively little significance" (B. Hilton 8). Their principle that a giver helps a recipient to have an opportunity for salvation, but that the success of this ultimately rests with the recipient shows a non-interventionist, individualistic approach similar to that of *laissez-faire* discourse (Thompson 12). Therefore, although there were many strands of thoughts on charity complicatedly intertwined, it is not too much to say that "*laissez-faire* individualism" was largely infused into the religious approach to charity in the period.

It was because of this "*laissez-faire* individualism" that Ruskin proposed reformatory ways grounded in "care and thought," as opposed to the nineteenth-century mode of charity, in the "Notes on the General Principles." Ruskin seems to take a similar position to contemporary evangelicalism on his argument on vagabonds and beggars, but he should be distinguished from them in the following points. First, Ruskin reproaches their modes of charity that rests on individual interest of salvation as contemporary capitalists. In *The Queen of the Air* (1869), he implies such Christian belief which "always consisted in sacrificing less things to win greater" is inferior to "the poor Greeks of the great ages" who "expected no reward from heaven but honour, and no reward from earth but rest" (19: 350). The other point is that he did not

completely ascribe the cause of poverty to the moral degradation of the poor, but rather poses a question over the morality of the governing classes and of society including external conditions. On this point Ruskin does not share so much ground with his mother Margaret as with “extreme evangelicals” (13) in B. Hilton’s words, who were attentive to circumstances (B. Hilton 15). Whether addressing the moral degradation of beggars, like “moderate evangelicals,” or paying attention to the external conditions, like “extreme evangelicals,” Ruskin believed that such contemporary distortions could be solved only through the moral intervention of “care and thought.” For him, it was a “help” that both sufferers and society needed. Ruskin claims respectively in *The Political Economy of Art* and *Modern Painters* V (1860): “help, of course—in nine cases out of ten—meaning guidance, much more than gift, and, therefore, interference with liberty” (16: 110); “The highest and first law of the universe—and the other name of life is, therefore, ‘help’” (7: 207). Accordingly, Ruskin relentlessly criticizes behaviors that ascribe the cause of poverty to the poor themselves, “*Did* Providence put them in that position, or did *you*? You knock a man into a ditch, and then tell him to remain content in the ‘position in which Providence has placed him.’ That’s modern Christianity” (18: 422). Although Ruskin seems to concur with evangelicals and capitalists in opposing charity for the idle, he was a strong advocate of interventionism for their moral improvement, and for a change in their wider social conditions. Ruskin’s apparently ambivalent approach in fact rests on moral principles of love and justice as such words as “help” and “guidance” suggest.

Ruskin identified the problem of social misery with the problem of morality – regardless of whom that moral problem might belong to: idle beggars, evangelical benefactors or utilitarian capitalists. Yet, Ruskin was convinced of the possibility for moral enhancement through charity, for he believed that human nature is inherently good. In *The Ethics of the Dust*, Ruskin makes the Old Lecturer question the pupils’

taught belief that they are “all evil”: “You would be afraid to answer that your heart *was* pure and true, would not you?” (18: 267). His Socratic dialogues with pupils imply that the Old Lecturer – reflecting Ruskin’s thoughts – believes that human nature is not totally wicked. Ruskin recapitulates this conversation between the Lecturer and pupils in “The Relation of Art to Morals” in *Lecture on Art* (1870):

It is constantly said that human nature is heartless. Do not believe it.  
Human nature is kind and generous; but it is narrow and blind; and can only with difficulty conceive anything but what it immediately sees and feels. People would instantly care for others as well as themselves if only they could *imagine* others as well as themselves. (20: 92)

Here Ruskin emphasizes the inherent moral good of “human nature,” suggesting that everyone possesses a faculty that enables them to care for others. This fails, however, due to immature development – the faculty has not been enhanced to the extent that people feel others as themselves. This understanding of the development of the human heart, as we have seen, resonates with Ruskin’s Christian and aesthetic understanding of charity (see pp. 21-23). Ruskin believed that humans have the capacity to be morally improved and that such development of morality itself contributes to one’s own charity both as spirit and act. Therefore, he put his greatest charitable efforts into guiding people to recognize moral principles of love and justice.

### **Practical proposals of charity as a “guidance”**

Ruskin’s commitment to guiding the moral improvement of his contemporaries was therefore itself an expression of charity, as I will examine in detail in the following chapters by looking at case studies from Ruskin’s activities. As a short bridge to pass from the conceptual understanding to the detailed analysis of each case of his practice,

here I would like to lay out his practical proposals for guiding in relation to contemporary charitable practices. Looking across the whole span of his writings, it is possible to delineate two broad ways in which Ruskin proposed to embody his principles. First, he proposed that the needy should be provided with work rather than with pecuniary support, which is different from the common understanding of charity as almsgiving. Interestingly, a comparison between Dickens and Ruskin, and the different ways in which they supported fellow writers and artists, nicely highlights this contrast. Dickens, finding writers such as Leigh Hunt and James Sheridan Knowles faced serious financial difficulties, raised funds through his own theatrical performances (MacKenzie 200-03), whereas Ruskin, finding George Cruickshank facing poverty, asked him through Howell to “execute some designs from fairy tales” for him (36: 502n3, 503). We can see Ruskin putting this into practice in the 1850s, when he “had his own private work-force” (T. Hilton, *Early* 243), hiring artisans and providing them with work; Chapter 2 will explore this approach in more detail, through the case of Octavia Hill. As these episodes show, Ruskin encouraged workers, including artisans, to obtain happiness and self-help at the same time: his charity enabled them to work with joy.

It is here that we can find Ruskin’s second proposal that charity should be something more than providing financial support, and accordingly that the relation between the provider and the beneficiaries should be more than a mere connection of financial exchange based on wages and labor. On these grounds, his master-worker relation never became utilitarian. As Abse puts it, “The value of a thing did not lie in exchangeability . . . but in its intrinsic, life-availing properties” in Ruskin’s principle (180). In “Notes on the General Principles,” he insists on the opportunity of work as having educational and moral value:

In employing all the muscular power at our disposal, we are to make the employments we choose as educational as possible. For a whole-some

human employment is the first and best method of education, mental as well as bodily. A man taught to plough, row or steer well, and a woman taught to cook properly and make dress neatly, are already educated in many essential moral habits. Labour considered as a discipline has hitherto been thought of only for criminals; but the real and noblest function of labour is to prevent crime, and not to be *Reformatory* but *Formatory*. (17: 544)

What he means by employment here is engagement in the production of goods which “will support its existence” (17: 544) – road-making, reclamation of waste land, harbor-making, portering, repair of buildings, dress-making and works of art (17: 545-46). Unsurprisingly, most of them are, regardless of the class of participants, what Ruskin actually did as his charitable activities, for example, tutoring artisans such as William Ward and George Allen from the Working Men’s College, Hinksey roadmaking in Oxford in the mid-1870s and the promotion of agriculture and local industry in the Guild of St. George. We will examine such practical activities of Ruskin in the following chapters, but the important characteristic found here is that the relationship between Ruskin and his charity circle went far beyond the merely economic. Ruskin’s way of assisting artisans by paying their income could be regarded as patronage, not charity. I would argue, however, that it was something more than patronage, given his commitment to economic and educational guidance as a form of charity. As the son of William Ward, a copyist under Ruskin, looking back on his father’s relationship with Ruskin, put it: “The fact is that Ruskin was, before all else, the teacher” (*Ward* 11). In Ruskin’s concept of charity, the charitable relation between the giver and the receiver was to take place between teacher and pupils as well as between master and workers.

Ruskin’s second proposal to add educational and moral value to charity took a different form of education, not only through his publications, but also through the



building of libraries and museums. In Chapter 4, we will closely discuss this approach to charity, which we might define as cultural philanthropy. It is worth noting here that Ruskin believed reading books and viewing art to be morally educational acts. “[T]he habit of looking intensely at words, and assuring yourself of their meaning, syllable by syllable – nay, letter by letter” (18: 64) requires imagination which he explained in *Modern Painters II* functioned as a faculty to grasp “a more essential truth than is seen at the surface of things” (4: 284). Ruskin was convinced that this careful way of reading books as well as looking at pictures would enhance readers’ or viewers’ moral imagination, seeking for the truth contained in the objects and “annihilating our own personality” (18: 75). Ruskin’s belief in the contribution of books and arts to the moral cultivation of individuals led him to produce some guiding publications. To encourage art education, Ruskin wrote minutely explained drawing manuals such as *The Elements of Drawing* (1857). Ruskin also published “his history-as-guidebook, *The Stones of Venice*, and his later, more formal guidebooks, like *Mornings in Florence*” and even “[f]rom 1855 to 1859 he produced yearly ‘Academy Notes,’ unofficial commentaries” (Helsinger, “Ruskin” 129) to enable readers to fully appreciate the architecture and fine arts of particular cities and museums. Although Helsinger states that what Ruskin expected the public to experience through these publications was evangelical-Protestant-like “self-improvement” (“Ruskin” 129), they suggest his attempt to give a hand to guide them in a right way, even if indirectly through his writings.

Ruskin’s belief that good books and art would serve moral cultivation also led to him appealing repeatedly for their widespread distribution. At the end of “Of Kings’ Treasures,” Ruskin calls for the necessity of national libraries and galleries (18: 104), which suggests his conviction that there was an urgent need for national education, and that the spiritual cultivation of the population might come through books and paintings.

In the lecture “Modern Art” delivered at the Royal Institution in 1867, he strengthened his appeal for the significance of education to be recognized with further and more elaborate explanations. He proposed “three kinds of national collections which it is desirable should be arranged especially for educational purposes: – 1. Libraries. 2. Educational Museums of Natural History. 3. Educational Museums of Art” (19: 220). These proposals were later put into practice by his own hands in the form of St. George’s Museum; they must also have been factors in his support for societies of arts, literature and geology by subscription (MS 114-15, 134) and the support he showed university museums by sending drawings and minerals (Birch, “What” 124, 130-31). In addition to his first appeal to encourage work rather than mere almsgiving and financial support, Ruskin’s second proposal that charity should embrace educational and moral value accounted for a crucial part of his plea throughout his lifetime.

## **Conclusion**

Beyond the lexical meaning of the word “charity,” Ruskin produced multi-faceted interpretations of the concept both from mental and social aspects. He extended the understanding of charity from traditional and contemporary “Christian love” and social acts of “almsgiving” in various ways: through his explorations of Greek and his increasingly keen perceptions of misery and moral degradation in society, he moved to a broader concept of charity as embracing moral principles and practices of love and justice. This idiosyncratic interpretation of charity was shaped, and reshaped, by Ruskin’s own family background, particularly his religious upbringing and his relationship with his father; it was also informed by wider nineteenth-century debates over poverty and charity, which he did not submissively digest, but questioned and challenged.

As we have briefly seen above, Ruskin's charitable practices took place in many ways, grounded in his own theories. In the following chapters on Ruskin's practical activities, we will look closely at the way in which he attempted to put his concepts of love and justice into practice in his approaches to charitable activities. We will ask in what way, and why, Ruskin would attempt to be a representative force for good, seeking to develop different kinds of charity in his circle and in wider society. Each principle – his commitment to “care and thought,” his attempts to balance financial support and industry, and his views on art and moral education through cultural philanthropy – will be carefully examined against actual case studies, seeking to unravel the relationship between his theory and practice of charity across his lifetime. As the first case study of Ruskin's charitable practice, I will begin with an example from the 1850s, which manifests his assiduous but complex approach to supporting Octavia Hill, a pupil and copyist under Ruskin in her earlier years.

## Chapter 2: Charity and Work – the Case of Octavia Hill

“[H]e was the only critic who had the will . . . to translate his principles into practice, and teach with the pencil and the brush the system which he advocated with the pen” (Cook 1: 388). This comment from his contemporary biographer Edward Tyas Cook reveals a good deal about Ruskin’s approach to criticism – and to other areas of his life such as his charitable practice. In the course of his life, he was never satisfied with his art theory remaining dormant in written works or at the speculative level, not least because it was, for Ruskin, related to moral issues. As we have seen in Chapter 1, Ruskin called for “moral *practice*” as well as the enhancement of “moral *perception*.” It seems a necessary consequence that Ruskin, having identified charity as a moral quality linked to the larger concepts of love and justice, should aim not only to present this principle in his writing, but also to put it into practice. To deepen our understanding of Ruskin’s approach to charity, this chapter and the following two will explore some practical instances of his charity, which function as his demonstrations of, and experiments with, the theories and concepts we analyzed in the first chapter. In so doing, it will also attempt to unravel the intertwined complexity of moral sentiments woven into his concept of charity, which converge with his core arguments on art education and social reform.

In the early 1850s, Ruskin began to employ illustrators, copyists, engravers and drawing masters as “his personal labour force” (T. Hilton, *Early* 240) – part of a program of moral and social reform in the shape of charitable practice. By that time he was already renowned as an art critic; nevertheless, he was also the son of “an entirely honest merchant.” From early life Ruskin felt the strains of modern society, which he read as stemming from the moral degradation of human beings; he particularly read such corrupted spirits and distorted human relations in art, crafts, and architectures. In

“The Nature of Gothic” in the second volume of *The Stones of Venice* (1853), Ruskin laments that the ethos of modern capitalism had made workers, through mass production, into machines instead of humans, depriving them of happiness in their work (10: 194). He believed that a humane relationship between master and worker would, through mutual moral enhancement, rectify modern material and spiritual poverty. He was ready, therefore, to undertake the role of guiding workers and encouraging handcrafts instead of mechanical productions. In response to Ruskin’s attempt at this form of charitable practice, many craft workers determined to be trained under Ruskin around this time of the 1850s. Some of them, such as William Ward, were from the Working Men’s College where Ruskin was invited to teach drawing classes; others like J. J. Laing came to know Ruskin through individual contact (Cook 1: 383-87).

It is among them that we can find Octavia Hill, whom this chapter will showcase in order to grasp the way in which Ruskin’s charitable practice manifested itself through an attempt to pursue true master-worker relations. Hill is now best known as a social reformer, praised for her indefatigable work in housing reform and the National Trust movement. However, one of her principal careers in her earlier years was as an illuminator and a copyist under Ruskin. They met in person on 5 December 1853 at the Ladies’ Guild, “an enterprise of the Christian Socialists for designing and painting on glass,” where Hill was already on the staff, with her mother working as a manager (W. Hill 29). Her career as an artisan under Ruskin started in 1855 and continued until she embarked on her program of housing reform in the mid-1860s. From the beginning of their relationship, even before they first met in person, Hill had a favorable impression on Ruskin. Hill was one of the readers of *Modern Painters* and an admirer of his art principles (*LOH* 29-30). Furthermore, Hill, through the educational environment of her family, shared with Ruskin a certain set of moral principles and attitudes towards contemporary social problems. Her father James Hill was radical in the matter of

reform; he was a righteous man, who fought against abuses of administration and law (W. Hill 25). Her maternal line may have had a still more direct influence on her. Her maternal grandfather Dr. Thomas Southwood Smith (1788-1861) possessed “a most earnest nature,” “unfailing gentleness” and “deep sympathy” (Lewes 4-5); he was the harbinger of Sanitary Reform, campaigned for the improvement of the condition of mines, and helped establish housing schemes.<sup>6</sup> Her mother Caroline, being an educationalist, probably gave her an instinct and passion for education. In *Notes on Education for Mother and Teachers* (1906), she refers to the Pauline interpretation of charity described in the thirteenth chapter of the first book of Corinthians (C. Hill 12-13), which was on the list of Margaret Ruskin’s Bible lessons (see p.20). The fact that it was Hill herself that undertook the role of editor for the later publication of her mother’s work speaks to Hill’s considerable indebtedness to Caroline for shaping her moral traits and helping her develop her charitable potential. This must have played a crucial part in helping forge a strong connection with Ruskin, grounded in shared moral sentiments. We will explore in more detail the ways in which these sentiments were strengthened through Ruskin’s charity and spread beyond their relationship in the later part of this case study.

Recent scholarship has re-examined the earlier relationship between Hill and Ruskin, calling for its positive aspects to be highlighted. Some previous literature has argued for the importance of the interaction during that period, suggesting that Ruskin’s principles of art and morality are detectable in Hill’s social schemes including cultural philanthropy (Whyte) and the National Trust (Hewison, “You”). In previous criticism, generally, the relation with Ruskin during her years of employment has often been viewed in limited terms, compared with their later interactions. Ruskin’s support for

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<sup>6</sup> For a more detailed biographical account, see *Dr Southwood Smith: A Retrospect* (1898), especially after chapter 5 for his practical reforms. Also see, W. Hill 27-28.

Hill's housing scheme as a patron from the mid-1860s has been favorably mentioned in many places (Anderson and Darling 40; Darley, *Octavia* 91-99; Hewison, "You" 57; Prochaska, *Women* 130; W. Hill 56-67). On the contrary, their earlier relationship has been seen as problematic from a gender perspective by reducing her to one of those who were commissioned as copiers "for Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, and for sundry lectures," without giving her the chance to cultivate her own capacity (Nunn 10). Likewise, other negative assessments of the relationship claimed that Hill's engagement in copying was irrelevant to her later success in social reform (Darley, *Octavia* 71; Eagles 118).

Nevertheless, despite these unfavorable evaluations, it is not going too far to say that the relationship which developed during this earlier period led Ruskin to provide aid to her afterwards. Regarding her copying work under Ruskin as useless, Bell maintains that "after all, it was Ruskin who later opened the gate for her into her kingdom" (40).

Among recent scholars Whyte more firmly asserts, "Hill's move from apprentice illustrator to energetic social reformer represented not so much the rejection of her artistic education as the fulfillment of it" (56). One of the targets of this case study is therefore to trace how Hill's relationship with Ruskin may have influenced, developed and directed her powers.

The focus on Hill also helps us to understand the gendered aspect of Ruskin's involvement with charity and his female workers' reception of his practice, and reactions to it. Whyte's positive claim about the copying commissions Ruskin gave Hill contributes to advancing the discussion on Ruskin and gender. The debate has developed over half a century since Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1971) through several articles and books such as David Sonstroem's "Millett versus Ruskin" (1977) and *Ruskin and Gender* (2002) edited by Dinah Birch and Francis O'Gorman. Following this critical heritage, this case study, too, will deal with the gendered aspect of Ruskin's approach to charity by posing the following questions: To what extent did

his charitable practice with Hill reflect the masculinity and femininity he identified in his own works? What elements of gender did he see in himself and his worker, and how were they connected to moral characteristics he expected for charity? Thus Ruskin's view on gendered traits, morality and duty will be discussed in parallel, turning back to primary texts mainly drawn from *Sesame and Lilies* (1865).

In terms of its availability and richness of sources, the relation between Ruskin and Hill is also ripe for examination. For the purpose of looking at human interactions in detail, we need to turn not simply to biographical fact but also to consider the role of correspondence, in which we can apprehend inherent emotions and thoughts, and analyze elements which may have been suppressed. The correspondence exchanged between Ruskin and Hill has been edited and compiled into two books by C. Edmund Maurice, *Life: Octavia Hill* (1913) and *Octavia Hill: Early Ideals* (1928). These two books also contain letters exchanged among Hill and a wider circle of sisters and friends, many of which refer to her meetings and conversations with Ruskin, as well as her impressions and thoughts on him. Although we need to be cautious in our treatment of the letters, recognizing that they may give a partial account, the correspondence provides us with a glimpse of various aspects of their dynamic interactions. This abundance and variety of materials has been another factor in determining Hill as a focus for my case study.

This chapter, therefore, will mainly discuss the following points: how Ruskin put his theoretical understanding of charity into practice in an individual master-worker relationship; how he attempted to disseminate moral goodness through his charitable practice as part of moral and social reform; how his approach to charity reflected his perspective on gender in relation to morality. The chapter begins by delineating the background of the start of the relation with Hill in the context of Ruskin's illumination revival in the mid-1850s. This foregrounds Ruskin's attempt of moral education through



art. Then it will probe into the financial and aesthetic aspects of practice in the form of commissions and art education, which vividly demonstrates his practice of moral principles of love and justice. Overlapping with Victorian perspectives on charity more broadly, this also reflects Ruskin's view on almsgiving, work, and moral cultivation through art which is linked to the idea of cultural philanthropy and what Ian Fletcher calls "missionary aestheticism" (25) passed down through Octavia Hill and other female social workers in the late Victorian era (Maltz 5-6). Following this, the chapter moves to depict Ruskin's ambivalence and the fluidity of his charitable practice in relation to Hill due to his unstable physical and mental health. Interestingly, however, my case study also highlights a bond between Ruskin and Hill which was so strong as to continue over a decade despite its apparent failure. This invites the question of why and how they were so strongly connected. In response to this question, the rest of the chapter reconsiders their relationship based on the Ruskinian model of aesthetic experience and foregrounds moral sentiments exchanged between them. By closely looking at the words and tone of the correspondence, I also hope to reveal the complexity of their master-worker relationship, spotlighting Ruskin's gendered approach to charity. In so doing, the chapter broadly aims to demonstrate one of Ruskin's charitable practices in all its fluidity and elusiveness, even though his belief in justice and love itself remained unshakable.

### **Background: Ruskin and art of illumination in the 1850s**

On 24 September 1854, Ruskin wrote a letter from Paris to his friend Lady Pauline Trevelyan about his future educational plans. One of these, he informs us, was "to teach Illumination to the sign painters and the young ladies" (36: 175). In 1850 or 51, as he retrospectively writes in *Praeterita* (1885-89), Ruskin encountered "a little

fourteenth-century Hours of the Virgin, not of refined work, but extremely rich, grotesque, and full of pure colour” (35: 490). Though interrupted by his work on Venetian architecture during 1851-52, his interest in illuminations did not wane, as attested by his frequent visits to the British Museum during the following two years for studying manuscripts (12: lxvii-lxviii).

This particular interest in illuminations during this period may reflect Ruskin’s concern with the moral aspect of art, more precisely, the morality of the people and society who produced the artwork, and with the role of art in moral cultivation. In his earlier art criticism, Ruskin explains that the outline and color of artwork may embody a certain kind of morality. The first volume of *Modern Painters* (1843), where Ruskin explicates the art principles and system of his great master J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851), refers to outline and color as elements of painting. The title of the chapter “Truths of Colour The Least Important” would seem to suggest that Ruskin underestimates the importance of color as it is “uncertain,” “accidental” and changeable according to seasons and to the beholder’s perception (3: 162). Despite the primacy and importance of “form,” defined as the “perfect and harmonious unity of outline with light and shade” (3: 161), Ruskin asks the reader to look at the outstanding particularity of color in Turner’s works – and to admire the purity and moderation of his use of color. In the chapter “Of Purity” in the second volume, which discusses art principles related to beauty and informed by religious belief, the critic explains why beauty is apprehended in “purity.” He explains that purity is “the type of Energy” (4: 129) which assures the divine presence, and as Landow summarizes it, such “beauty of purity is embodied in bright, clear, intense hues” (144). Upholding the purity of color, Ruskin also warns that it should not become extreme. Pure color “is used by Turner only where nature uses it, and in less degree” (3: 291) in accordance with the “principle of delicate and subdued colour” (3: 293). Such an arrangement of color shows a moral quality of “moderation

and restraint” (4: 139). This principle of color is what Ruskin recognized in the art of illumination from the Medieval Ages.

In Ruskin’s art criticism, not only color but also outline might have a moral aspect. For example, he suggests in his explanations about the frescoes in the Arena Chapel in *Giotto and His Works in Padua* (1853-60) that “the ornamentation . . . sternly enclosed within limiting border-lines” functions as a representation of self-restraint (24: 32). Moreover, the act of outlining for illumination may advance the illuminator’s ability of observation since it requires “correctness” (20: 134). This ability, repeatedly emphasized throughout his life, is the faculty of seeing the truth, or what he calls the “imagination penetrative” (4: 250-51, 284). This makes it possible to sympathize with others; “there is reciprocal action between the intensity of moral feeling and the power of imagination” (4: 257) – when the one gets stronger, the other also will be reinforced. Therefore, to Ruskin, the process of producing illuminations – rendering outlines and gradation of pure color – was fully educational in terms of its moral aspect.

These moral qualities of illumination must have prompted Ruskin to begin working towards its revival, with the belief that this art might contribute to enhancing workers’ morality. He believed that it might not only help to moderate and discipline workers (not without vitalizing them), but that it would also provide them with happiness through their work which he felt was lacking in modern mechanical productions. His passion was quick to kindle the opportunity to address his plans and explain his tenets to the wider public, on 11 November at the Architectural museum.<sup>7</sup> Half a year later, Ruskin seemed to set out his plan, writing a letter to Elizabeth Barrett Browning on 6 April 1855: “Among various works I have in hand at present, one is the endeavour to revive the art of Illumination” (36: 197).

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<sup>7</sup> For more detailed information on the backdrop for these lectures, see 12: lxvi-lxxi.

### **Ruskin's charity for Hill: love, justice, and ambivalence**

It was around this time that Ruskin and Hill met each other. On 5 December 1853, after Ruskin visited the Ladies' Guild, Hill excitedly wrote to her sister Gertrude, "[H]e was most delighted with the things [possibly glass-paintings], as showing the wonderful power we possess of introducing and preserving colour" (*LOH* 30). This power of coloring might have been one of the factors that attracted Ruskin and made him decide to employ her as an illuminator. Color was, as has been seen, a significant element in Ruskin's art principles. Whether Ruskin decided to employ Hill because she had been already a drawing master or because he sensed she would become a teaching disciple like William Ward, Hill's coloring skills gave Ruskin the sense that she could undertake an important role to disseminate moral teachings through illuminations among families and workers as expressed in "Addresses on Decorative Colour" (1854) (12: 484). The fact that he gave some instructions and hints on the spot for the further cultivation of her skills (*LOH* 30) tells us that he might have had such expectation for Hill.

Although Hill already started to undertake some work for Ruskin in 1855, it was a financial crisis faced by her family – her mother's losing her job at the Ladies' Guild and its apparent failure (*LOH* 20-21; W. Hill 37-38) – which transformed their relationship into a continuous and stable one. Due to their debts and family loans, the Hills had faced pecuniary issues since their childhood (Darley, "Hill"). This time the need was more urgent.<sup>8</sup> However, even in that hard time, all of the traits, knowledge and familial atmosphere we have seen above may have helped her to steer away from occupations "which would deprive [her] of the power of working for others" (*LOH* 74) and forged her mind to make a decision to be trained under Ruskin with the aim of

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<sup>8</sup> See W. Hill 25-26 for the account of the bankruptcy of Hill's father, James Hill.

becoming an artist (*LOH* 73-74) serving society by means of the “brush” (*OH* 128). Asking her future master for advice, Hill received a request to design a table for him. The result was a success. About a week after, on 27 February 1856, her sister Miranda wrote to Mrs. Durrant:

Ruskin is delighted with Ockey’s table, and means to give her employment in illumination, if she will learn it, and if she has the powers he believes she has; and she means to give an hour or two to the Toy superintendence, and the rest to illumination. Is not this *very very* good news? Ruskin has been so exceedingly kind to Ockey about it. She received to-day a present of a beautiful paint-box and all other materials she can want. (*LOH* 75)

The renewed relationship described here is tainted with a sense of “charity” in a narrow sense, since Ruskin provided sustenance alongside the gifts for drawing. Yet, Ruskin did not aim to do so in an alms-giving-like form. As has been seen in Chapter 1, he encouraged able-bodied workers to work and gain their way of living by themselves, whereby he believed they would be able to enjoy happiness and contribute to society (17: 545; see also p. 39). Hill’s case was no exception. Ruskin was always ready to ask her to work for him if she should need some financial aid (*OH* 133-34).

Ruskin’s involvement in Hill’s work was not only confined to providing financial aid. It was extensive, ranging from Ruskin’s devotion of time and effort, to his provision of material resources and his sharing of knowledge: this shows Ruskin’s justice as a master in the form of earnestness and honesty to the point of sacrifice. As Hill observes, Ruskin tended to put his whole energy into what he was doing (*OH* 125-26). Her recounting of the visit to Ruskin dated 29 January 1860 documents such an experience: “I saw he was ill, and found he had been suffering from toothache, and awake all night. I begged him, therefore, not to attend to my work. However he would

do it” (*LOH* 175). With a strong sense of vocation largely due to his religious background, Ruskin often sought to exert himself without reflecting on the limitations of his own physical condition.

We might see this as a reflection of his own belief in the concept of justice as explored in Chapter 1. This concept was likewise applied to art education and supervision of works for his younger follower. Such practice often took a form of cultural philanthropy – creating the environments and spaces available for everyone to appreciate art or go through the aesthetic experiences – as Hill later did in her housing scheme (Anderson and Darling 40-44; Whyte 56-59). Ruskin invited her to see a considerable amount of materials at his home, grounded in his idea that face-to-face contemplation of the object would cultivate the faculty of seeing.<sup>9</sup> The correspondence of Hill, her sisters and friends record that she visited Ruskin’s house at least four times during the year of 1855 (*LOH* 36-39, 46-47, 56-57, 66-67). Even at the third visit, the first-hand experiences of precious drawings made her delighted:

. . . still it is a very wonderful event for me; and, I think, always will be; for not only is everything which he says precious – all opening new fields of thought and lighting them, – but also his house is full of the most wonderful pictures that I ever dreamed of. (*LOH* 56-57)

Some of those were manuscripts, sketches and pictures from Tintoretto, Hunt, Prout, and Turner including *Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying, Typhoon Coming On* (1840) (“the Slave Ship”) (*LOH* 37, 66-67). Her lively expressions and ceaseless conversational letters show how appreciative she was of such opportunities to enjoy the fine arts regardless of the short time she spent there. Through these experiences, she must have developed her faculty of “seeing.”

Ruskin’s program of art education for the worker also included direct

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<sup>9</sup> For further detail, see pp. 95-96.

instructions: his comments to Hill allow us to trace his candid comments on her works.

Hill wrote to her sister Emily on 16 March 1855:

He evidently thought my design well done, admired the fir and bramble, blamed my not knowing exactly what colours I should put everywhere, and illustrated these things – that in a fine design each thing is of importance, that the effect of the whole would be spoilt by the alteration of any part; that simplicity of form is needful to show colour; that no colour is precious till it is graduated; that grass is more yellow than we think; that holly is not green (made only with blue and yellow) (*sic*) but with crimson and white in it; that it is impossible to have colour on paper so light and so living as in nature; that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, work becomes coarser, more floral, less grotesque than in the thirteenth. (*LOH* 37)

Even a slight glance at this passage teaches us what detailed instructions Ruskin gave Hill in his comments. Unsurprisingly, as has been examined, most of them echo what he expounded in the first two volumes of *Modern Painters* as well as “Addresses on Decorative Colour” delivered a year before and recapitulated in *The Elements of Drawing*. Ruskin was quite consistent in his theory that outline and color are the required “elements” for illumination and basic drawings. Particularly for illuminators like Hill, Ruskin believed that those skills were crucial. Other than these, Turner’s adoption of yellow (3: 296), the reference to the color of grass (15: 27n\*-28n\*), and moral degradation shown in artworks after the Middle Ages (12: 480-81; 24: 32) are all identical to what he retained in his art criticism in the 1850s. Despite the generality of his comments on Hill, it is understandable that Ruskin, planning to make her into an illuminator, repeatedly underlined the elemental but principal ingredients in the comments. Not only the advice for art skills but also his modes of suggestion represent

Ruskin's commitment to being just. As Hill summarizes his overall comments using evaluative terms, his specific remarks must have been a mixture of encouragement and correction of her mistakes – praise and blame, but possibly not “indiscreet,” as his principles laid out in *The Political Economy of Art* (16: 32). Only in this way, Ruskin believed, would young artists advance properly in their skills.

Ruskin's ways of engaging with Hill, as an individual worker, have so far clearly demonstrated his moral principles of charity. However, he was never a stable person in his mind, interests, and activities. As a result, his earnest attention and support could sometimes be distracted and wandering. A letter from Emily to Miranda Hill on 16 April 1859 regarding the guidance of their sister records a conspicuous example of the ambivalence between Ruskin's earnest engagement in principle and apparent misdirection in practice:

. . . She saw Ruskin yesterday. She went to Dulwich and took her work from there to Denmark Hill. Ruskin had said in his letter that he had only a quarter of an hour to spare; so of course she was careful to go away after a quarter of an hour; but altho' her visit was so very short, it seems to have been very nice. Ruskin was very pleased with all her work. The cloud is to be left till his return in the autumn. . . . In speaking of the cloud, O. said that it was all wrong; why did Ruskin praise it? And he said he knew it was wrong, but that it was very difficult indeed. . . .

(*LOH* 136)

There is a remarkable contrast between the very brief period of time and the pitch of Hill's excitement when she received the comments. The supervision for fifteen minutes seems a short period of time as the terms such as “only” and “so very” are self-explanatory. Such a short meeting may not have been enough for providing sufficient explanations and instructions for work. Nor can it be said that Ruskin's



instructive comments were fully understandable to his commissioned worker. About her work on the cloud, Hill shared her puzzlement with Emily over Ruskin's praise for an element she was convinced of being wrong. Ruskin's reason for the praise may have also caused her confusion; the praise was not grounded on Hill's high capacity for dealing with the drawing – rather on the relative value of her skills to copy the drawing. This praise seems to contain an implicit excuse that the outcome is, despite its mistake, acceptable in proportion to the difficulty of drawing. This seems double-edged: it attempted to encourage Hill, but also it could have discouraged her through the unconscious implication that she lacked the ability to tackle the Turner.

Two months later in 1859, Ruskin's apparent misdirection, even if unconscious, also cast a shadow on Hill's view of her career. Anxiety over her future, and the puzzlement she noted as early as 1857, again became marked. Two years earlier, her unease had derived from the disparity between what she wanted to become, an illuminator, and what Ruskin wanted her to be, a copyist (*LOH* 105-06). However, this time, Hill demonstrates her anxiety even about the occupation which her master meant for her. The letter dated 26 June 1859 reads: "I quite trust Ruskin about his plans for me; only I wonder why he should speak *so* despisingly of all copies, and yet set me to do them; but some day I shall understand it" (*LOH* 146). As W. Hill explains (53), the comments from Ruskin must have been discouraging, even if Ruskin believed that what Cook calls "the frankness of his criticisms" (1: 406) would lead her to the right direction for her career. But for the present, his intention was a total enigma to Hill. What she could do was to "trust" and probably hope to understand the reason in the future – even if her "self-sacrificing" period for copying only truly bore fruit in her social work as "ideal" (*LOH* 485). Obviously Hill took no part in the decision regarding her own future; it was Ruskin who decided a plan, but sometimes in a "capricious" way. Hill's mother noticed it though Hill herself tried not to believe: "sometimes Mama seems to

think Ruskin capricious; and I am certain he is not” (*LOH* 160). Hill once wrote that Ruskin’s image of an unreachable hermit had gradually faded away (*OH* 126), but perhaps around this time she may have felt that Ruskin became more incomprehensible than ever.

The complexity and ambivalence of Ruskin’s charity towards Hill as set against his own moral principles became deeper in 1860. During 1859, Hill continued to undertake Ruskin’s commission of copying for *Modern Painters*, even if it was erratic due to his want of time (*LOH* 173-74) and his own struggle to write as expressed in his letter to James Russell Lowell (36: 327). Nevertheless, her efforts to serve him ended up with disappointment and doubt – both in her ability and in the result of the engaging and demanding work. Two weeks after the publication of the final volume, she wrote on 1 July 1860: “It [*Modern Painters*] implies no praise whatever of power or skill, but just says that my help has been, . . . ‘disinterested.’ . . . I know no more of what he thinks about my work than I did before” (*OH* 147). Hill was right to say this, given that Ruskin, without reference to Hill’s “power or skill,” simply wrote, “Aid, just as disinterested, and deserving of as earnest acknowledgment, has been given me . . . by Miss O. Hill, who prepared the copies which I required from portions of the pictures of the old masters” (7: 8n\*). Now the master became more incomprehensible and perhaps more unreliable. What seems to have made her perpetually uneasy was her uncertainty about her own skills, and about the value of works with which she wanted to become a serviceable artist to society.

### **Moral sentiments exchanged in charity**

Hill’s desire to become an illuminator eventually came to nothing though at least she became “a putative artist” (Whyte 47) in that her name was inscribed in the closing

volume of *Modern Painters*. Of course one cannot entirely blame this result on the master. Hill always had a dilemma between social work and her desire to become an artist, and tended to prioritize the former (*OH* 127-28). Similar to Ruskin, Hill tended to devote herself uncompromisingly to an intensive schedule of extensive work, which frequently resulted in mental and physical illness.<sup>10</sup> One may feel it strange, nevertheless, that the relation between Ruskin and Hill during the period we have examined so far was favorable on the whole and strongly bounded contrary to its overall outcome. We might tentatively see a comparison with some Pre-Raphaelites, with whom such similar guidance ended up with a note of discord (Pascu-Tulbure 35-36) – a parallel which makes Ruskin's relation with Hill more enigmatic.

The model of aesthetic experience Ruskin presents in the second volume of *Modern Painters* might help to explore the labyrinth of the Ruskin-Hill relationship, and the ways in which it was constructed with reference to various moral values. As we have seen in Chapter 1, the aesthetic appreciation of Nature as God's work, apprehended by what Ruskin calls Theoretic faculty, raises moral feelings such as gratitude and reverence in the spectator's mind in response to God's grace (4: 47; see also p. 22). Therefore, the relation between God and the spectator is, in this model of aesthetic experience, grounded in a bilateral approach and response, premising the participation from both is connected with moral feelings. Among human beings, this model still works. As Kanazawa points out ("Charity" 6), the relation between the giver and the receiver in the act of charity explained in Appendix to *Munera Pulveris* is also aesthetic: ". . . the political economy of a great state makes both giving and receiving graceful" (17: 293). In such relation, grace, given by the provider accompanied with love, would be responded to by gratitude from the recipient. Such an aesthetic practice

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<sup>10</sup> With regard to her illness, see *LOH* 39, 130-31, 155-56; *OH* 146, 148, 149-52. I will come back to this matter in more detail later in the chapter.

of charity is fully appreciated when both the giver and the recipient partake in the practice with moral sentiments grounded in keen perception. Ruskin's own practice of charity was also made possible through this kind of mutual exchange of moral feelings and affections between the giver and the receiver in real life. If so, this perspective on the bilateral moral relation or participation could be, as in the case of aesthetic experience, what connected Ruskin and Hill over a decade. It was not only Ruskin's efforts but also Hill's responses and participation that made this practice achievable and broadly continuous. Therefore, the rest of this chapter will explore the moral aspect of their mutual relation with reference to religious connotations, class consciousness and gender, where we expect to see a glimpse of charity in light of mental engagement.

Ruskin's charity in the form of art education, albeit not always successful, was full of love and justice: he provided invaluable first-hand drawings and his own instructions and comments. Such earnestness was repaid with Hill's trust in her master. This "trust" might also have been what makes Hill different from the Pre-Raphaelites who tended to detach themselves from Ruskin's involvement in their work and life (Pascu-Tulbure 35-36). Ruskin himself perceived his worker's faith in him and showed gratitude in a letter dated 12 September 1862: "Thanks for your trust in me" (*OH* 156). Three months later, his third serial paper on political economy (later the third chapter of *Munera Pulveris*) was published in the *Frazer's Magazine*. Ruskin wrote a comment echoing his relation with Hill: "Duty properly signifies whatever in substance or act one person owes to another, and faith the other's trust in his rendering it" (17: 204n1). In this respect, Ruskin's master-worker relation with Hill was based on the master's duty and the worker's trust – both of which act as a representation of justice, and may be measured against what Ruskin believed to be ideal.

Ruskin's approach to the master-worker relation was often colored with religious connotations, as the terms "duty" and "faith" represent. To him, this "faith"

shown in the moral quality of “obedience” is the basis of any religion regardless of denominations and even in its secularized forms. Ruskin writes in the 1874 *Fors*: “Religion, primarily, means ‘Obedience’—binding to something, or some one. To be bound, or in bonds, as apprentice; . . . to be bound, or in bonds, under the yoke of God” (28: 156). With a preacher-like tone and repetitions, Ruskin claims that bonds are the basis for human relationship, but that such connection is hardly achievable without “Obedience,” or faith from the follower. In this sense, Hill was a religious devout: she was almost always faithful, obedient and loyal to her master. The following episode Hill shared with her sister Florence in a letter dated 22 November 1857, starkly marks how Hill saw her relation with Ruskin. During the summer and autumn of the year, Hill missed an opportunity to see him and the meeting had been delayed because Ruskin “has been very busy” (*LOH* 103). Besides being “in town everyday” (*LOH* 103), he was occupied with lectures in Manchester and cataloguing the Turner drawings (T. Hilton, *Early* 242-51). Commissioned to produce copies from Albert Dürer, Hill continued working even after the supposed due date. Finally she wrote a “grievance” letter to Ruskin, where she humorously described their relation as master and dog – a dog which kept faith with its promises and which waits for its master’s order and supervision (*LOH* 103-04). This story demonstrates Hill’s obedience to Ruskin and her view on their relation with a tone of reproach not without intimacy.<sup>11</sup>

The relation between Ruskin and Hill was not only characterized by this religious backdrop, but also became entangled within the framework of paternalism where the core duties should consist of “ruling, guiding, and helping” (Roberts 4-5). This model could be also considered as representing the negotiations of care and guidance on one hand, and interference and dominance on the other. An insight into the

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<sup>11</sup> Hill might have learned the importance of “obedience” from her mother Caroline Hill who referred to it in one essay from her *Notes on Education* (15).

complexity of the relationship between them discloses itself in Hill's letter to Ruskin written in April in the same year. At the beginning of the letter, Hill passionately discusses moral and religious subjects which were not only their common topic but also attracted her constant interest. This exchange of thoughts despite their difference in age was possible, for "[s]he was yet immature . . . but mature relatively to him in knowledge of the world" (W. Hill 44). Then, her passionate argument accelerates to the extent that her strong refutation and unfaltering claim over "evil spirits" and the importance of work may arrest the reader's attention. In stark contrast, in the latter half of the letter, Hill, who might become afraid of their relationship breaking up, suddenly veers into self-abasement:

I am sure you know much better than I do about work, rest, quiet, indeed all things. It sometimes seems to me as if I had appeared to forget this too much, when I have written or talked to you. I am sure that a consciousness of it has always existed in me. I have never forgotten the presence of the author of *Modern Painters*, and all I have said has been really as a question to you, from whom I feel it so great a blessing to learn. Will this at all explain the mystery of why I like to come "to be scolded"? If you could realize what your books have been to me, with what childlike reverent spirit I have always listened to your words, you would perhaps let me also sign myself

Yours affectionately,

OCTAVIA HILL. (*OH* 125)

Hill's humility here is outstanding, explicitly showing her obedience as the younger pupil, a worker and an imaginary adoptive daughter like the Winnington girls.<sup>12</sup> Her sudden change in tone and language is marked, with an intention to convince Ruskin

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<sup>12</sup> I will return to this aspect of relationship between Ruskin and the Winnington pupils in Chapter 3.

that her previous argumentative attitude did not stem from a lack of respect or affection. The superlative (“much better than”) and epithet (“the author of *Modern Painters*”) may show Hill’s recognition of Ruskin’s superiority and herself as his follower. The assertive and emphatic tones and words also demonstrate the intensity of her feeling towards Ruskin. Furthermore, what is clearly depicted here is the image of child and pupil scolded by parent or school master: her writing almost has a hint of petition and eagerness to be modified if she should make mistakes. Even without direct references to the terms “father” or “master,” Hill’s words implicitly describe that Ruskin occupied such a role.

What Hill saw as her relationship with Ruskin unsurprisingly corresponds to what he expressed as “fatherly authority” (16: 25) in *The Political Economy of Art* which was delivered during the summer of the same year, or later in *Unto This Last* as “paternal authority,” reemphasizing a father-son-like business relation (17: 41; see also p. 30). This paternalistic engagement in the works and lives of his artisans was to some degree controversial. It sometimes went too far, to the extent that Hill confusedly expressed about her own career, “I feel . . . it is altogether his doing, and I have no responsibility” (*LOH* 106). This may also have been comparable to the experience of the major figures of the Pre-Raphaelites, enduring what Pascu-Tulbure calls a “dictatorial style of intervention” (82) and thus attempting to escape.<sup>13</sup> Yet, this way of governing and leading workers was what Ruskin considered to be “just,” if not constantly, due to interruptions through his overexpansion of works and interests as well as his lingering illness.

This hierarchical model of master-worker relations, bound by obedience and

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<sup>13</sup> Most of the relationships with the Pre-Raphaelites ended up with their departing from Ruskin due to his excessive interference though it came from his “conviction in his duty to show the right way” (Pascu-Tulbure 35). Wildman and Christian also point out Ruskin’s intervention in the circle (79).

loyalty, was also important to Ruskin in terms of moral dissemination. This may have been based on Ruskin's emphasis on the importance of hierarchical guidance of knowledge and morality. In *Time and Tide* (1867) Ruskin wrote that the upper classes should be a role model for the lower ones: ". . . as in all other points of mental discipline, it is the duty of the upper classes to set an example to the lower; and to recommend and justify the restraint of the ambition of their inferiors, chiefly by severe and timely limitation of their own" (17: 322). Here, as the term "class" is mentioned, it is obvious that he hints at the idea of hierarchical order. This ideal model of "limitation of their own [ambition]" by the upper classes expects to be responded to in the same way by the lower ones, who are also expected to show "restraint." This hierarchical and bilaterally demonstrative-responsive relation, presented between the two classes, simultaneously becomes a model to the far lower ones. It is partly in this way that Ruskin believed the moral goodness of obedience would spread among the population he was assigned to "enlighten" by his "Wisdom" as "a Benefactor." He was conservative in that he tried to preserve an orderly society led by the wise, but he was nonetheless liberal in that he believed that moral cultivation and guidance at any level should be open to a wider population including labor classes.<sup>14</sup> Earnestness and self-restraining devotion to others is shown by a master to a worker: thus Ruskin expected to spur a form of self-discipline, through obedience, in a worker's mind.

### **Gendered approach to charity**

As has been seen, Ruskin and Hill constructed a relationship which consists of many different layers, underpinned by their position, age and religious background.

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<sup>14</sup> This kind of "elitism" has been often manifested in his writings (16: 101-03; 17: 74). As for Ruskin's meaning of "conservative," see Letter 1 of *Fors Clavigera* (27: 14-15). Nicholas Shrimpton provides further explanation on his conservatism in *The Cambridge Companion* (116).



However, the relation between them gains another layer of complexity when the perspective of gender is taken into account. As written in Appendix to *The Political Economy of Art* (16: 105), Ruskin's notion of paternal authority always carried a religious connotation, suggesting the relation between father and child (see p. 30). Interestingly, however, this religiously determined relation could also be read in the context of gender. In "Ruskin's 'Womanly Mind,'" Birch interprets the God-human relation as matrimonial: God as husband and Ruskin himself as the obedient wife (315), in the same way as the relation between God and the Israeli people whose unfaithful attitude towards God was metaphorically expressed as adultery in the Bible (Ezek. 16.15-34). The attempt of seeing this fatherly authority and maternal obedience in a gendered context may remind us of Millett's attack on Ruskin's upholding women's obedience which she calls "loving submission" (100). In order to explore Ruskin's complex and differently layered approach to charity, it is now worth examining the extended relation between Ruskin and Hill beyond a business framework and locating it in the sphere of gender, starting with their "matrimonial" relation.

"Of Queens' Gardens" in *Sesame and Lilies* might be the most conspicuous work which deals with gender in Ruskin's writings. It was a lecture delivered at Manchester in 1864 mainly about girls' education. In the 1860s, as he was negotiating his relationship with Rose La Touche twenty-nine years his junior, together with his involvement in Winnington Hall School (see Chapter 3), Ruskin embarked on the discussion on ideal women and proper education for girls.<sup>15</sup> In line with the image of king in the previous lecture "Of Kings' Treasuries," Ruskin uses a symbolic image of a queen as an ideal woman. The importance he attached to this queenly figure may be attested by the frequent appearance of the symbol in the following works such as *The*

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<sup>15</sup> As for the discussion over the background of writing this topic in *Sesame and Lilies*, see Birch, "What" 122-23; O'Gorman, ch.2.

*Ethics of the Dust* and *The Queen of the Air*. Although Ruskin's relation with Hill precedes these writings, and there is no previous literature which relates Hill to Ruskin's development of image of queen, she seems to anticipate this ideal image.

Hill's queenly value was first admitted in her caring attitude to her master as the image itself may recall the goddess of Charity (see p. 23). The year of 1858 afterwards saw the stagnancy in his work due to the melancholic state of mind, deriving from the troubles with faith in Evangelicalism and with awareness of the hard aspects of the world (see p. 74, 83). He constantly struggled with his mixed feelings concerning his declining sense of vocation, his anxieties that might be working in vain, and the uncertainty which stemmed from the disparity between his will, duty and actual capacity. It was during this period that Hill's role in helping him was conspicuous. Ruskin's unreliability and anxiety prompted Hill to undertake a role of providing advice and serving him by using her artistic and sympathetic power. Hill wrote to Ruskin on 29 January 1858:

But believe me, all those to whom you give it weigh the value of the joy you give up in devoting your thoughts and time, and feel your gifts greater, and trust that you will receive a fuller joy for all you lose. . . . I shall be very grateful when any drawing of mine will help your purpose in some other way besides teaching me; not because I don't enter sufficiently into your spirit to be happy in owing so much to you, but because I would have its purpose fully carried out. (*OH* 131-32)

This passage contains both practical and mental aspects of her helpfulness towards Ruskin. The first sentence depicts her consolatory words and encouragement for mentally depressed Ruskin. Hill, as one of those who had received assiduous support from him, shows her sympathetic understanding of Ruskin's dedication. Hill expresses that she is the one who acknowledges such devotion and who is reciprocally eager to be

helpful to him by exerting her power in order for Ruskin to realize his “purpose.” She emphasizes that her practical help is not self-indulgent: she seems to say that the reason for help lies in her commitment to Ruskin, as he attempted to take social action in the hope of curing the modern ills and promoting sympathetic feelings through art.

Therefore, the passage above clearly illustrates her role as a mentor, seeking to serve him in the same manner as Jean Ingelow did, when she acted as “a lenient and forgiving mother-confessor” (Knoepfmacher 33). This sort of self-sacrificial, healing role was all the more notable when Hill was asked by Ruskin on 29 May 1859 whether she would be happy to undertake the commissions for the final volume of *Modern Painters*. As we have seen, its result turned out to be disappointing. Yet, at that time, she decided to be actively useful to Ruskin by “copy[ing] the pictures that he feels to be so precious, and that are being so destroyed,” at the expense of engaging in works which might cultivate more of her power. The key factor which determined her mind was her wish that “it will be a real comfort to Ruskin” (LOH 145).

Interestingly, this curative mode of support foresees what Ruskin explained several years later in the controversial “Of Queens’ Gardens.” In the service of her master, Hill would seem to choose “self-renunciation” rather than “self-development” (18: 123).<sup>16</sup> This therapeutic image of Hill anticipates what Ruskin discusses as the ideal role model for women in the lecture. Undertaking a healing role for Ruskin, Hill is almost identical to what he calls “princesses of Peace” (18: 140), or the repeated figure “queen.” Ruskin claims that wherever women are becomes home which “is the place of Peace,” while men are battling outside of home, being “hardened” (18: 122). He ascribes women’s responsibility as being to understand and sympathize with them: “Men may tread it down without sympathy in their own struggle; but men are feeble in

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<sup>16</sup> By “self-renunciation” here Ruskin does not entirely mean what he calls “suicide” (18: 283) in *The Ethics of the Dust*, the repression of right sorts of pleasures include seeing (18: 284).

sympathy, and contracted in hope; it is you only who can feel the depths of pain, and conceive the way of its healing” (18: 140). If not completely, Hill’s way of supporting Ruskin is quite similar to a matrimonial relationship. Hill heals with sympathy in order to “have its purpose fully carried out” by undertaking copying commissions; whilst Ruskin was taking on a crusading role in wider society by publishing and lecturing against social injustice, and, as expressed to the Brownings, against public attacks levelled against Turner and Paul Veronese (36: 303). However, Ruskin did not intend to confine Hill’s sympathetic queenly role to the private and amateur sphere of copyist unlike other female protégées whose feelings he found “troublesome” (*OH* 142) and whom he therefore found necessary to chastise. As we will see later, Ruskin encouraged her to enter public society on behalf of him to disseminate sympathetic influence as a social reformer.

The other queenly value should also not be dismissed: “the woman’s power is for rule, not for battle” (18: 121-22). This ruling and guiding role is what Ruskin might have conceived, or more precisely, adapted from his learning of Greek mythology. In *The Queen of the Air*, Ruskin states that Athena was in charge of justice (19: 306-07) and was the judge of war (19: 399) like a Christian God. It is here that Ruskin’s gendered approach was revealed to be by no means monolithic. The image of queen becomes more contradictory but also blurred by treating female Athena as interchangeable with the male Christian God (Weltman 357). As Birch puts it, “Ruskin’s religions of Athena cannot . . . be described as wholly matriarchal” (“Ruskin’s” 317). Ruskin, here, suggests the possibility that women also have an authoritative, or so-called, paternalistic power. As he defines his charity as consisting of justice and affection, he was eager for women to do the charity not only with affection but also with justice. Charity turns out to be, in other words, mixed quality of gender roles conventionally ascribed to men and women – justice and affection respectively. He

claims that both of these qualities should be embodied in women as he allows the term “queenly” to be identical to “kingly” in the beginning of “Of Queens’ Gardens” (18: 110). In *The Crown of Wild Olive* (1866), restoring the Greek Goddess of justice, not the Christian God, over the capitalist “Goddess of Getting-on” (18: 448), Ruskin seems to call for the expansion of women’s ruling and sympathetic power over the public sphere as written in “Of Queens’ Gardens.”

Returning to the case of Hill, she was clearly undertaking the role of healing, guiding, if not always ruling, in the relation with Ruskin. Together with sympathetic feeling and guiding power, she must have been the ideal queen for Ruskin. She was, in fact, no less an authoritative figure than a sympathetic one when it came to her housing scheme. As Hewison puts it, “Octavia Hill’s system depended on the close relationship between their tenants and the middle-class female rent collectors on the properties they managed; it was care, but it was also control” (“You” 59). Hill’s supervision of tenants in an authoritative way was also notably recognized in Hill’s circle to the extent that the observer could sense it (Whyte 59). Hill could have been an exemplary of a queenly figure to Ruskin’s eyes even before she embarked on her own housing project.

Ruskin would seem to follow a conventionally accepted paternalistic role whether he plays the role of father, master, or husband. However, as he himself was characterized by fluidity, the role he played in the relation with Hill was also unstable. Hill, too, seems to break binary oppositions of male-female and parent-child hierarchies by undertaking guiding, righteous power and maternal care. Such oppositions of roles were likely to be interchangeable, or blurred, in his writings and in reality as we have seen in the case of Hill. Likewise, Ruskin would become such an ambiguous or “hermaphrodite” figure similar to Athena (Weltman 370). As Birch, grounded in his autobiographical background, sees Ruskin as a person containing femininity (“Ruskin’s” 311-17), Ruskin became comparable with women in the relation with Hill, in terms of

sympathetic power, or affection, another aspect of charity other than justice.

Ruskin's sympathetic approach to Hill was demonstrated in many ways. For example, Ruskin often celebrated Hill's birthday together with her family (*LOH* 104-05, 116-17), and even if not, he surprised her with a gift of books accompanied by a letter, which triggered a rapture in her (*LOH* 170-71). Furthermore, his affection and care were given to her mental and physical health, demonstrating the same care he gave to other workers and painters. For example, to his copyist William Ward, who had got an eye problem, Ruskin admonishingly but caringly wrote, "Whatever you do, *don't strain your eyes*" (*Ward* 57). In Elizabeth Siddal's case, Ruskin asked his doctor friend Henry Acland to give her medical treatment at Oxford (36: 207).<sup>17</sup>

Likewise, around the year of 1861, when Hill started to face a serious break-down because of overwork, Ruskin advised her to undertake easy but remunerative and pleasant jobs in order to "leave [her] energy unbroken" (*OH* 148). Ruskin gave her considerate words when Hill's illness and distraction of work became more obvious and grave. Hill shared them with her friend Mary Harris in a letter written on 15 June next year. This letter is worth quoting at length:

. . . Then he took me into another room to talk business. He said, "I've been thinking about that Angelico. It shows great power; devote yourself to that sort of work. Leave the Turners. They are inimitable. I've given it up myself; everyone has given them up. Besides, Octavia, I have wanted so often to say to you, never let drawing interfere with any other thing you may feel to be wanted. You have infinite sympathy and power of teaching and helping people, use it; feel it to be as much work for me as

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<sup>17</sup> It should be carefully noted that Ruskin might have thought that Siddal's health problem affected Rossetti's work (36: 205) as Berg interprets his support for Siddal (103).

any other.[”] “You see,” he said, smiling, “I feel you to be a very serviceable person, and I cannot have it on my conscience to monopolize you or to injure you. Above all things take care of your health; don’t let it hurt your vanity to do nothing, but just rest as much as ever you want. Whenever you are well, and see anything good to be done, consider that you are my agent to do it. Mind there is one thing you can do to grieve me, and that is to hurt your health. . . . (*OH* 155-56)

Ruskin, who knew well through conversations and correspondences about Hill’s desire to be useful to society, demonstrates his utmost careful attitude and understanding for his young worker. His attempt to soothe and urge Hill to cease working is recognizable in his telling that the Turners are “inimitable.” But at the same time, he tries his best to explain that the suggestion for giving up the Turners does not come from her lack of skills but lies in the difficulty of the Turners themselves. Compared with the passage we examined from the letter dated 16 April 1859 (*LOH* 136), Ruskin seems to show more cautiousness and thoughtfulness by including himself and others in order not to hurt nor discourage his worker. Ruskin also expresses his understanding that Hill’s social works are as important as, or more important than drawings. He rather seems to encourage her to prioritize social works which Hill might be most willing to engage in. To Hill, “not work for drawings” might have been identical to “not work for Ruskin,” and Ruskin himself might have perceived Hill’s agony. In response to this follower’s obedience, he made his effort to alleviate such dilemma and guilty feelings by saying that the social work is equally conducive to him, as “[his] agent.”

Ruskin’s sympathetic attitude towards Hill as well as concession and withdrawal from monopolizing her would seem less masculine. Unsurprisingly, this was what Ruskin understood as the ideal nature of men. He thought that gentlemen were to have both powers – not only authoritative but also sympathetic – as women were to do.

If “Ruskin’s argument in ‘Of Queens’ Gardens’” was seen “as a matter of strange cross-gender movements of thought” (Birch, “Ruskin’s” 315), “Of Kings’ Treasuries,” the other half of *Sesame and Lilies*, would also blur the borders between manliness and femininity. In “Of Kings’ Treasuries,” Ruskin contrasts a gentleman with a vulgar person as he did in the final volume of *Modern Painters*.<sup>18</sup> The distinction between them lies in their capacity for sympathy, or what he calls “quick understanding . . . which pure woman has above all creatures” (18: 80). Such “gentility” was what makes a man “gentleman.” Ruskin’s care for Hill and submission to her passion for social work must have derived from this gentle-manliness or chivalric courtesy explained in “Of Queens’ Gardens” (18: 119). Ruskin wrote once to Hill in 1858 that he was motivated by “chivalresque delight” to help women (*OH* 142). Despite his perception of Hill’s difference from other protégées, he must have seen Hill as part of those he would like to help from which he enjoyed such delight. Here again, Ruskin’s relation with Hill can be gauged within the context of “Of Queens’ Gardens.” The relation between them was not entirely paternal, nor was it completely feminized. No less intricate was it than fluid, crossing the gender spheres and interchangeably taking different roles.

## Conclusion

Ruskin’s practice of charity with Hill in a master-worker relation was not always stable. The relationship between Ruskin and Hill did not remain within the politico-economic framework that could only define them as a relationship based on work: it often went beyond, as debating companions, as well as a teacher and a pupil. Yet, the relation was also diverted by varied interests, activities and changing religious convictions. The relation between them was obviously kaleidoscopic: in either

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<sup>18</sup> Regarding the argument on gentility and vulgarity in men treated in the final volume of *Modern Painters*, see Sonstroem 287-88.



instructions or discussions, it oscillated between proximity and distance, deepening their understanding on one hand, while triggering elusive uneasiness in the other. What enabled their apparently unstable and unbalanced relation to last was not only the hierarchical and bilateral master-worker/teacher-pupil relation buttressed by religious background and difference in age and position. It also drew on the fluidity deriving from his gendered approach to charity. Hill's image as an obedient wife became queenly when she attempted to heal and guide Ruskin as a mentor; Ruskin suddenly shifted from a paternalistic master to a mentee cared for by the maternal figure of Hill. His gendered approach blurred and even integrated the conventional male and female roles by asking both sexes to embody "kingly" ruling power and "queenly" sympathetic power, whereby Ruskin was able to become both paternal and maternal. Through this, Ruskin himself presented a figure embodying justice and affection which he believed to be as the basic moral principles of charity. Even if the nature of their relation as "hierarchical" and "fluid" would seem contradictory, what can be fairly stated is that this relation was anchored by moral sentiments – a sense of obedience, trust, duty, justice and affection. As Hill's own words attest, all of these moral ingredients were invisible but strong enough to remain in her mind: "the thought of our outward link being gone, but I dare trust our friendship to take care of itself, that the spiritual bond cannot be broken" (*OH* 163). The relation between them was by no means an empty shell.

### Chapter 3: Charity and Education – the Case of Winnington Hall School

Indeed, I rather want good wishes just now, for I am tormented by what I cannot get said, nor done. . . . I want to get everybody a dinner who hasn't got one. . . . I want Turner's pictures not to fade. . . . and I can't do anything and don't understand what I was born for. I get melancholy—overeate myself, oversleep myself—get pains in the back—don't know what to do in any wise. (36: 296; Letter to Charles Eliot Norton, 28 December 1858)

Ruskin's mind was overshadowed in the dawn of the 1860s by the aftermath of his personal religious crisis at Turin (29: 89-90; 35: 495-96) and broader social and cultural concerns such as successive wars of the 1850s. The more the world seemed directed towards misery, the more deeply Ruskin came to suffer from a feeling of helplessness, fearing he could do nothing for the betterment of society. The first half of the 1860s continuously saw the same tone and mental status in Ruskin's mind, which yielded few productions except the completion of the last volume of *Modern Painters* and writings on political economy – which may be seen as representative of his mental turmoil in fighting against social misery. In stark contrast, Ruskin seemed more active during the latter half of the decade. In 1866 and 1867, Ruskin's charitable activities were remarkably noticeable in spontaneously and capriciously helping out his friends, including Mrs. Huret (the widow of Ruskin's pilot friend at Boulogne), the painter Cruickshank and even a stranger boy, to the extent that his assistant Howell often managed Ruskin's charitable works "as an almoner" (T. Hilton, *Later* 109).<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the letters of 1868 record Ruskin's frequent references to his attendance at the meetings of the Social Science Association (36: 551n1) and the Employment

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<sup>19</sup> Regarding Ruskin's help for Mrs. Huret, see 36: 506, 515; for Cruickshank, see 36: 502-06, 510, 512, 514; for a stranger boy, see 36: 502.

Committee (36: 557-59).

These two contrasting periods can be divided by his father John James Ruskin's death on 3 March 1864. After this incident, Ruskin received a considerable amount of inheritance worth more than £120,000 (T. Hilton, *Later* 66), which became a rich fund for him to resume vigorous charitable activities. However, his strong sense of guilt and duty as well as his poorly developed sense of economy – in contrast to his father – ultimately led him to exhaust it. As he once wrote to Howell: “I hope . . . to state that for the present I must retire from the position necessarily now occupied by a publicly recognised benevolent—or simple—person. . . . I simply have at present no more money, and therefore am unable to help . . .” (36: 519).

Therefore, Ruskin's charitable activities were in a more static and stagnant mode in the first half of the decade, whereas the latter half marked comparatively active engagements. Apart from these activities in the 1860s, what connected these two periods was his involvement in Winnington Hall School. Winnington Hall was opened in 1851 as a girls' private school in Cheshire, offering a liberal education led by a Maurician headmistress, Margaret Bell. While Burd suggests that they likely met each other before in 1858 (Introduction 22), their first recorded meeting took place on 22 February 1859 when Ruskin gave the lecture “The Unity of Art” at Manchester which Bell attended with her pupils (18: lxiii). From that point onwards, Ruskin supported the school financially, materially and educationally for a decade from 1859 to 1868. At this point, Ruskin withdrew from the school; nonetheless his interactions with his pupils lasted afterwards through correspondence, and his relationship with Bell might have continued until 1878, when Ruskin wrote that their relationship was “entirely closed” (*WL* 695).

Ruskin's engagement with Winnington Hall is highly important in our attempt to trace his charitable practices overall. Perhaps its greatest significance is the role it

occupies in linking the previous and the coming decades of Ruskin's life. The new school allowed Ruskin to reflect on and put into practice the educational principles, art and moral teaching to which he had dedicated his time in the previous decades in different modes – individual lessons, lectures and classes at the Working Men's College as well as a number of publications. However, the experiments at the school, and the new insights offered by Bell, would also have helped him advance his schemes for education, building on and developing the practices he had explored during his years at the Working Men's College. At Winnington Hall, his moral teaching was no longer confined to art but, as we will see, was extended to geology, following intensive study during his stay in Switzerland and Italy in the mid-1860s (Collingwood 246-54). The research advanced his understanding of the moral "law of help" among human beings, in line with the law of crystallization of minerals which he had discussed as an aspect of mountain beauty back in the third volume of *Modern Painters* in 1856 (5: 135-55). As previous researchers have agreed, the Winnington days played a pivotal role in his plan for the Guild of St. George (Atwood 111; Frost *Lost* 49; T. Hilton, *Later* 152) through the development in his ideas of moral education as part of his charitable scheme. I will explore the ways in which this period was instrumental in helping shape this final project, including educational plans for its School and Museum.

Moreover, another reason Winnington Hall accounts for a crucial part of this thesis is that it represents one of the institutions that received a considerable amount of support from Ruskin. Ruskin belonged to various institutions in his lifetime: in the 1850s, the Working Men's College; in the latter half of the 1860s, social committees including the Social Science Association and the Employment Committee; in the 1870s, the University of Oxford. Of course, the way he took part in Winnington Hall would not have been homogeneous with nor completely identical to his involvement in these other institutions. Yet, Ruskin's practices at Winnington Hall may be seen as a good example

of his ways of engaging in a larger concept of charity, which might have been shared by his involvement in the organizations above. By digging into Ruskin's charitable practice at Winnington Hall, I am aiming at disentangling his more complex approaches to charity for a larger body of people than the one-to-one practice of charity I explored in the second chapter. When he encountered a conflict between his own charitable principles and the interests of the institution he was supporting, how did he react to it? It may be possible to gain a deeper understanding of his core principles by examining what Ruskin persisted in when he was put in such a dilemma.

There has not been a stable consensus on the nature of the relationship between Ruskin, Winnington Hall and its school mistresses. According to Dinah Birch ("What" 125), before the publication of *The Winnington Letters* edited by Burd in 1969, the relationship was depicted as "generally disapproving, amused, ruefully pained, or all three together": an implicit endorsement of John James Ruskin's view of Margaret Bell "as an exploitative hanger-on." As Burd has discussed (Introduction 32), biographers have often characterized the relationship negatively, using, for example, the metaphor of a lion and a trapper (Collingwood 217; Evans 257). There are, it should be pointed out, some pre-1969 biographies which do give a more favorable account, praising Bell's ability as an educator and the school's positive influence on Ruskin (Cook 2: 100; Leon 306). Overall, however, the critical approach to Ruskin's engagement with the school seems to enter a new phase after 1969 in terms of not only a more holistic and neutral outlook but also the language used to describe their relationship. Abse and Birch, while not denying Bell's ambition, follow Burd's impartial account of her relationship with Ruskin and interpret his involvement with Winnington more positively. Yet, interestingly, in order to describe the relationship, they use terms reminiscent of political economy: Abse explains that "[t]he benefits . . . were reciprocal" (163); Birch uses words such as "equal terms" and "benefit" and comment that Ruskin "gained as much

as he gave” (“What” 125). It doesn’t necessarily mean that Ruskin adroitly calculated such “gains” or “interests” from Bell and the school; but the politico-economic notion of “exchange” in relation to charity here gives us a new perspective from which to examine the relationship between Ruskin and Bell. My reading of the relationship reflects this shift of critical emphasis post-1969. I would like to build on this critical heritage to shed light on how the “exchange” between Ruskin and Bell took place and how it fits into the Ruskinian “exchange” of educational and moral value as we saw in the previous chapters (see pp. 38-39, 58-59). I would also like to foreground the politico-economic aspect of the relationship between them in the 1860s when Ruskin was coincidentally occupied with his writings about political economy including *The Political Economy of Art*, *Unto This Last* and *Munera Pulveris*.

The overlap of his interest in political economy and his approach to charity in Winnington Hall may also be seen in Ruskin’s own approach to expenditure in this period. This was his “art of spending,” or, to borrow from David M. Craig’s book title, his “ethics of consumption.” Ruskin’s writings on political economy from the late 1850s to the early 1860s, as Craig outlines, deal with the relationship between consumption and morality, shifting the focus from master to consumer who, as the final determinant of purchase, should bear responsibility for the natural world which provides the material for the goods and of the workers who engage in production (250-51). Even if he did not completely discard his awareness of being a “master,” Ruskin, as one of the consumers, called for the exertion of moral imagination, or of moral practice, in order to “extend concern to other people that they [should] be able to develop a full complement of capabilities” (Craig 284). Ruskin was from the upper middle-class, who were more likely to be the consumers than producers/workers; he must have been aware of the responsibility this entailed, particularly after his succession to his father’s inheritance. By paying close attention to Ruskin’s “art of spending,” its direction and purpose, this

chapter illustrates his approach to charity as a consumer with moral obligations and a sense of responsibility.

Therefore, by situating his activities for Winnington Hall in the overall chronology of Ruskin's charity and his role as a representative of various institutions, this chapter aims to provide a macroscopic view on how his charity evolved in mode, approach and principle in the 1860s towards his final projects in the 1870s. Taking a case study of Winnington Hall as its focus, this chapter will consist of three sections. The first section deals with the motives and principles of Ruskin's support for Winnington Hall along with his personal background in the 1860s. By analyzing the letters exchanged between Ruskin, his father John James, and the school mistresses, which are compiled in *The Winnington Letters*, the value of love and justice as Ruskin's impulses for charity as well as its core principles will be reinvestigated.

Then, in the second section, I introduce the concept of the "art of spending," which developed in connection with his study of political economy in the late 1850s to the 1860s. I then seek to analyze how Ruskin applied this concept in his charitable practice concerning Bell and the school. Through a close reading of *The Winnington Letters*, this section attempts to address how Ruskin compromises or changes his approach in supporting the school in relation to his principles of consumption. It reveals the conflicts between Ruskin and the school, paying particular attention to the business relationship between Ruskin and Bell.

The final section addresses how Ruskin's principles of moral education, coupled with his wider attention to the "art of spending," developed as part of his charitable practice towards the school. Ruskin practiced cultural philanthropy towards the Winnington pupils, another form of his "art of spending," which bears certain similarities to his attitude towards Octavia Hill, as examined in Chapter 2. One of the materials he frequently donated to the school was minerals, a keen interest of Ruskin's

in the period (see p. 76). His fascination with minerals as diagrams and teaching tools culminated in his dialogue, *The Ethics of the Dust*. As I address, this particular interest, and its charitable expression in the donations to Winnington, was hardly a coincidence at this period of his life. The world of minerals represented, to Ruskin, a small-scale version of human life in terms of moral temper and relations among its members, and Winnington might have been the place where Ruskin's ideal of an education for girls and his deep interest in mineralogy intersected. To Ruskin, the purchase of minerals was a morally correct form of expenditure in that those materials contribute to the cultivation of morality and observation among school girls. A close-reading of the letters he exchanged with Winnington Hall pupils as well as *The Ethics of the Dust* reveals Ruskin's charitable desire to cultivate morality through material observations, direct interactions, and his teaching. In doing so, I am also hoping to demonstrate his path towards his final destination in terms of educational schemes and of organizational bodies.

### **Ruskin's motives for charity and emotional background**

On 27 May 1864, Margaret Bell, the headmistress of Winnington Hall, wrote to Ruskin the following letter:

May I introduce to you my friend Mr Gretton? A musical genius who is anxious to make his compositions known in England, and for this purpose is about to spend a month in town. He and his wife are excellent amateur pianists, if you could find time to hear them play some day you would judge if his music would be likely to be admired at Winnington. They are Catholics and most devout ones. I have never met with any family who do so much good among the poor on such slender means as



they do. So that if you can kindly give him any patronage that will help to make his music more known you will render a service to one of the most simple hearted and charitable of men. (*WL* 502)

Bell's desire to bring out Ruskin's support is obvious. She places emphasis on what would stimulate his charitable mind: Mr Gretton's potential to contribute to the school and philanthropic character, coupled with his honest poverty – something which later Ruskin also pursued like St. Francis of Assisi (see pp. 120-21), charged with a substantial inheritance from his father. The letter demonstrates Bell's shrewdness and her ability to gauge Ruskin's response. She was able not only to engage his charitable impulses on behalf of others, but also to use them to her own advantage. Through Ruskin, Bell was given a chance to make herself acquainted with other popular contemporaries such as Carlyle (*WL* 392-93) and Edward Burne-Jones (*WL* 410-11).<sup>20</sup> She also received a great deal of benefits through references and introductions Ruskin made for her, which afforded her privileged access to "wherever [she] choose[s]" (*WL* 359), possibly including the British Museum (*WL* 392) and a stay in Boulogne (*WL* 410n1). The connections Ruskin established for Bell herself and for the school as an institution were enormous.

Ruskin's celebrity contributed a great deal to raising the reputation of the school, but his care also extended to financial support – albeit with some limitations, as we will see later in this chapter. Financial aid from Ruskin was particularly important for the school, which was beginning to experience some difficulties. From the very beginning, the financial management of Winnington Hall was uncertain, given Bell's lack of economic sense. Regarding this, one of the previous pupils reflected in the letter to Ruskin in 1874: "I think Miss Bell's inclination to extravagance led her to do many dishonourable things, of which she would feel the shame . . ." (*WL* 683). Although she

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<sup>20</sup> For Edward Burne-Jones's relationship with Winnington Hall, see Burne-Jones 263-70.

does not reveal exactly what “dishonourable things” Bell’s extravagance resulted in, she may have been referring to a series of lawsuits concerning the “lien” of the school’s grand piano the previous December (*WL* 679-83). This already reveals a great deal concerning Bell’s miscalculation, but long before, in December 1860, Ruskin already sensed it and hinted at “the real probability of [Bell’s] having to give up the school” (*WL* 277). Although it is uncertain how much *financial* support Bell anticipated from Ruskin, she must have expected him to undertake a role as a patron. The letter from Ruskin to his father written in November 1861 records that he had promised Bell to send £450, asking him to do so. More surprisingly, John James Ruskin’s account book suggests that he sent Bell £400 in total as early as 1859 in the entry under “Charities & Gifts” (MS 29). On another occasion, when the school faced financial problems in 1865, Ruskin as its security incurred its subrogation on behalf of Bell. He seems to have contributed generously to the school to ensure that it did not face bankruptcy and closure (*WL* 550-54, 559-62). Ruskin’s aid to the school was highly important. Winnington Hall suffered financial crises from beginning to end, but could not have survived for more than a decade without Ruskin’s financial help.

The brief account of Ruskin’s financial support for the school above, then, may raise the question of why Ruskin was so passionate and eager in his aid for the school and the headmistress. Here I present two suggestions to get closer to the answer: his humane relationship with Bell grounded in sympathy and understanding, and the commitment to duty he had learned through family. First of all, as was the case with Octavia Hill in Chapter 2, Ruskin tended to direct his charity towards those with whom he shared familiarity in feelings and principles. Ruskin’s personal emotional and religious context during the period of his meeting with Bell was greatly related to the familiarity he established with her and the school. As the excerpt from his letter at the beginning of this chapter showed, Ruskin was suffering from a melancholic state around

this period due to his religious crisis in 1858. This was followed by detachment from his family and friends, whom he perceived as showing a lack of understanding towards him, with the exception of a few friends such as Charles Eliot Norton, James Russell Lowell, and the Brownings (36: 313).

Family and friends were not the only casualties of the emotional detachment of this period; he also lost confidence in performing his duty which was highly significant in his life. To Ruskin, “the constant duty of every man to his fellows is,” as he writes, “to ascertain his own powers and special gifts; and to strengthen them for the help of others” (18: 288); in his case, it was guiding and enlightening others with his given talents. Regarding himself as a master and a father, his maxim “justice is first with him; his own interest, second” (17: 37) was what shaped the core of his duty and charity. However, in August 1859, Ruskin wrote to his close friend, Charles Eliot Norton: “Some day, when I’ve quite made up my mind what to fight for, or whom to fight, I shall do well enough, if I live, but I haven’t made up my mind what to fight for . . .” (36: 313). Together with his lost convictions which underpinned his sense of duty before, Ruskin perceived that his engagement in the school where he had been teaching for last five years seemed different from what he wanted to do, and he began to feel that his efforts for the improvement of society were in vain (Collingwood 191). The loss of duty in his life presented a fatal challenge for Ruskin, and he was facing such a crisis at the end of the 1850s.

But the rescue represented by Bell and Winnington Hall came at exactly the right moment. Ruskin and Bell shared a similar religious conviction and educational principles, based on which Winnington Hall’s educational scheme was implemented. Bell was generous and liberal in religion; her father Alexander Bell, like Ruskin, had discarded some Calvinist doctrines (Burd, Introduction 47). This would have brought them closer particularly on Ruskin’s part, considering his feelings of alienation after his

religious crisis. Another factor that may have contributed to pulling them nearer was their interest in liberal education, particularly for women. Bell was not only the follower of Ruskin but of Frederick Denison Maurice who valued and promoted “experience” in education, being one of the founders of Queen’s College for ladies in 1848 and the Working Men’s College in 1854 (Burd, Introduction 35-36). Ruskin committed himself to the Working Men’s College and shared its principles of liberal education.

As part of such liberal education, Ruskin’s interest was also directed towards girls’ education, stimulated by his meeting with Rose La Touche in 1858 (T. Hilton, *Early* 262-64). The meeting is often recounted through the lens of his obsessive but unrequited love for her which formed the basis of their complex and strange relationship. Ruskin had met Rose through his friend Louisa, Lady Waterford (35: lxvi); he became her personal tutor in art education, and later in Greek as well. As Cook recalls, “He was a born teacher, and the education of girls was with him a favourite hobby” (35: lxvi). Grounded in this aspiration, Ruskin was also concerned with the education Rose had received – the typical education for the girls of the day, against which Ruskin was fighting in “Of Queen’s Gardens.” This pushed him into passionate involvement with liberal methods of education, particularly for girls (Birch, “What” 122-23) to the extent that he “wrote the *Lilies* to please one girl,” Rose (18: 47; see also O’Gorman 36-39; T. Hilton, *Later* 94). Given his circumstances and interests around that time, it must have been easier for Ruskin to accept and embark on Bell’s scheme of liberal education – it was both relevant and inspirational.

These shared religious and educational beliefs were sufficient for Ruskin to steadily develop his personal attachment to Bell and the school. Ruskin must have established his friendship with Bell through sympathetic feelings in the same manner as he did with other close women friends such as Lady Trevelyan, Jean Ingelow and Octavia Hill. Bell became a person who he believed understood him well and to whom

he could frankly express anxiety and vexation. Ruskin wrote to Bell on 22 March 1859, “You can’t conceive how few people I know with whom I can be myself” (*WL* 120), expressing his isolation even from his parents who did not understand his plan. He continues the letter, implying that Bell is a person who greatly helps him, similar to previous friends he had lost:

I’ve no sisters—no relations who have an idea in common with me – I *had* some nice ones, but all whom I used to care for are drowned—or married far away—or otherwise dead—or departed. I mean—old companions—the kind of person who could have helped me as you are doing . . . . (*WL* 121)

Bell might have been doubly important to him – as a “sister” who has the potential to care for him as a mother and mentor like Octavia Hill, and as a supporter of his religious and educational principles. She appears to have been important in shaping his religious approach in the later 1850s, since through Winnington, Ruskin was given opportunities to teach the Bible through exchanging letters called “Sunday letters” and through school visits. This must have been the release for him to express freely his newly gained religious convictions and ways of understanding the Bible he could not have shared with others around him. He depicted Bell and the school positively to his father in the letter of 1859:

Miss Bell is both wise and cheerful—does not bore one with too much wisdom—nor yet is there ever, even among the girls, the bruyante gaiety which is oppressive—just right—and I have learned & heard a great deal that has been useful to me. (*WL* 105)

His illustration of Bell as “wise and cheerful” and the school as a place for learning indicates the importance they occupied in Ruskin’s life after his change in religious convictions.

In a tough period of wandering in a maze of spiritual and intellectual difficulty, which sadly still continued in the early 1860s, Winnington Hall may have been an important symbol – a place where he might perform his duty, and a new expression of his ideals, following teaching at the Working Men’s College and after a period where he seemed to have lost confidence in what to do next. Ruskin wrote to Lowell in 1859 that it was “one of [his] chief pleasures sometimes to go and stay there [the school] a few days” (36: 327). It was important for Ruskin that he could gain the sense of being needed, and Winnington Hall was the very place that realized his wish to be useful, as he expresses to his father in December 1863, “I am of much more use here [Winnington Hall], for the present” (*WL* 452). Therefore, Ruskin’s charity for Winnington Hall, accompanied by his strong sense of duty and his dedicated efforts, not only saved the school itself but also provided him with opportunities to put into practice the moral justice which he valued.

### **“Art of spending” and a *just* way of charity**

As we have seen, then, Ruskin’s support for Winnington Hall was beneficial not only for Bell and the school but also for Ruskin himself in terms of his intellectual and emotional development. This state of mutual benefit or the concept of “exchange,” which Abse and Birch pointed out, now directs us to the politico-economic aspect of the relationship between Ruskin and Bell. As was the case with Octavia Hill, the relation between Ruskin and Bell was by no means simple, but multi-layered. They established a relationship of friendship and mentorship, but their connection also had public aspects – they were colleagues and business partners. Ruskin’s love and care for Bell may be clearly seen in the ways in which he introduced her to other friends and assisted her personally, unrelated to monetary issues. However Ruskin did not always positively

respond to all the expectations Bell might have had. In terms of providing financial aid for the headmistress, Ruskin tended to show a stricter attitude. It is undeniable that Ruskin could at times demonstrate a shaky sense of economic management and his support could be a little capricious, as has been seen above. Despite his contradictory principles according to which his support was determined, Ruskin's decision-making process depended on his politico-economic theory which developed during the late 1850s and the early 1860s. This can be summarized as the idea that business relations should be grounded in justice and that money should be distributed and spent for a noble aim.

To illustrate this particular approach to charitable practice, the following section will first briefly look at his "art of spending," addressed in *The Political Economy of Art, Unto This Last* and *Munera Pulveris*, focusing on the concept of justice in relation to his theory of political economy. Although our ultimate focus will be on the practical side of Ruskin's approach to charity, it is worth spending a short while exploring his theoretical background, because the period when Ruskin argued on this matter overlaps with the time of his engagement with Winnington Hall. I assume that there is a possibility that Ruskin translated such ideas into his real-life practice, and will examine this after my conceptual analysis. By doing so, the following section will cast new light on Ruskin's "cautious" mode of charity, challenging past studies where Ruskin's extravagant manner of support and Bell's exploitation were likely to be magnified. Through delineating Ruskin's decision-making process based on his politico-economic theory and moral concepts, I will also present some ways of understanding his other mode of charity, cultural philanthropy, in order to sketch a broader outline of his charitable concepts in practice.

Ruskin's theory of spending, or consuming, seems to have burgeoned through his witnessing of modern people's monopoly and misuse of their wealth. In the second

lecture of *The Political Economy of Art*, “The Accumulation and Distribution of Art,” Ruskin points out how the so-called “rich” are liable to accumulate material wealth without distribution (16: 99-102). In the next politico-economic series of essays, *Unto This Last*, he alludes to the erroneous but prevailing concept of accumulation:

. . . there are two kinds of true production, always going on in an active State: one of seed, and one of food; or production for the Ground, and for the Mouth; both of which are by covetous persons thought to be production only for the granary; whereas the function of the granary is but intermediate and conservative, fulfilled in distribution; else it ends in nothing but mildew, and nourishment of rats and worms. . . . consumption is the crown of production; and the wealth of a nation is only to be estimated by what it consumes. (17: 101)

Using a metaphor of harvest, Ruskin gives the reader critical eyes to see the unhelpful result of accumulation. Modern people tend to hoard material assets but hardly distribute them, as a result of which the assets become decayed, useless and worthless. It is also worth noting that by criticizing the modern habit of accumulation, he might allude to the possessor’s incapacity of consuming the produce properly. In the same essay, Ruskin introduces three concepts to determine value, “the value of the thing,” “the valour of its possessor” and “wealth” (17: 88), which are later called in *Munera Pulveris*, “intrinsic value,” “acceptant capacity” and “effectual value” respectively. In this theory of value, Ruskin explains that the “effectual value” or value in use for life depends both on “intrinsic value,” inherent in things, and “acceptant capacity,” or capacity of the possessor to use them (17: 154). In the aforementioned case of accumulation, Ruskin implies that the produce has lost “effectual value” due to want of “acceptant capacity” despite its “intrinsic value.” Here, Ruskin attempts to awaken the reader’s consciousness as a person having an “acceptant capacity,” or a consumer.



Ruskin believed that the monopolizing way of accumulating wealth yields no “effectual value,” and he warns that the misuse of wealth is also fatal for the nation. In *Munera Pulveris*, he laments the contemporary situation where monetary wealth is unjustly spent:

Now, these various temptations to accumulation would be politically harmless if what was vainly accumulated had any fair chance of being wisely spent. . . . But it constantly happens . . . that what it may be stated as a political law also unreasonably spent by the persons into whose hands it finally falls. (17: 207)

The contrasting usage of adverbs “vainly” and “unreasonably” with “wisely” highlights Ruskin’s relentless and mocking attitude towards the modern politico-economic view on wealth. The current “unreasonable” way of spending is, according to Ruskin, “war” and “a stupefying luxury” – causes of death, as opposed to life. He clearly writes in the oft-cited passage in *Unto This Last*: “For as consumption is the end and aim of production, so life is the end and aim of consumption. . . . THERE IS NO WEALTH BUT LIFE. Life, including all its power of love, of joy, and of admiration” (17: 104-05). Using the word “serviceably,” Ruskin implies that things should “serve” life. Likewise, the way to spend material wealth ought to be “to use everything, and to use it nobly” (17:102), fulfilling an end which contributes to life and happiness. Kanazawa sees an “‘aesthetic’ character in Ruskin’s way of charity” (“Charity” 6); so too might we see Ruskin’s spending as a form of “art,” as Ruskin himself calls it (17: 98). His use of the adverb “nobly” suggests such spending should be “beautiful.” As has been seen, Ruskin repeatedly asserted the importance of the just use of wealth and additionally clarifies here that the “art of spending” should aim at its usefulness for life, in the process of which consumers are expected to imagine what it will be used for. As Craig points out, “Ruskin’s approach to the moral life is ‘teleological’” (2). Ruskin judged whether

money is being used in a morally good way or not on its purpose, or what it is being used for. Accordingly, to Ruskin, the determination of the possessor on how to use money was also indispensable. This process, in which “Ruskin puts his own moral imagination into practice” (Craig 350), has much to do with love. To Ruskin, it means to care about others using their own moral imagination. Therefore, Ruskin’s concept of the “art of spending” consisted in justice and love, in which his approach to charity also had its root.

In this way, Ruskin’s approach to charity and to consumption are rooted in a common set of principles. Returning to Ruskin’s actual practices in relation to Winnington Hall, it is more obvious that he was likely to follow his theoretical view on the “art of spending.” Ruskin’s charitable activities for Winnington Hall were, because of their public nature, sometimes to be treated as a business relation: one of the foci of his writings on political economy. The letter written by Ruskin to Bell on 10 January 1866, referring to previous financial dealings with Bell including the payment for a pupil’s board and education, clarifies that Ruskin saw their relation in this light. The following passage is worth quoting in full:

I noticed what you said about her instruments, but you have as yet paid no interest, Mr Rutter [Ruskin’s solicitor] says on the loan: nor has the life insurance been affected. I am sorry to hear this, and for many other things besides: and I have not the least doubt but that I shall ultimately have to pay the £200, for which I am your security, so that the entire sum of £1550 is mere money thrown into the canal lock of Winnington *after* I had supposed the whole was going on well, when you began building, & C. Carry shall have her interests—but I should like you to make an effort to pay that interest to Mr Rutter for the sake of such little credit as you have it still in your power to record with him. . . . Send me a formal

receipt for the £100, Carry's education for 1865. I know how much these illnesses must have cost—and I don't mean to be hard, but I wish you to think of me nevertheless, in this matter as you would of a man of business ordinarily. (*WL* 584-85)

Here Ruskin obviously sees the relation between them as a business one, as he uses the words "credit" and "interest," drawing a line between formal and personal. This letter might have been written according to Mr. Rutter's suggestion, but it is possible that Ruskin himself also considered their relation double-layered: Bell was, to Ruskin, both a friend and a colleague. Showing his care and understanding of the situation caused by her illness, Ruskin nevertheless does not conceal his disappointment in Bell's sloppy accounting and unrepaid interest, and implies that the two different levels of relationship between them should not be confused. Consequently, he urges her to "make an effort" to repay. The letter might remind us of his concept of charity as grounded not only in love but also in justice, as is the case in the master-worker relationship outlined in previous chapters.

Already in 1864, a notable conflict emerged concerning Ruskin's moral principle of consumption and Bell's confusion of the private and the public. Ruskin was not as rigid around this time as later but he was asked for financial aid, it is clear that he was acting upon the basis of his beliefs in a just way of spending. In the letter that follows, Ruskin reluctantly responds to Bell who presumably knew of Ruskin's inheritance from his father and had asked him for financial support for her acquaintance:

I can easily set your poor German master to rights—but it is a sadly unsatisfactory way of spending money. For fifty pounds I could make 25 poor families sing for joy—whereas now—I simply fill up the gap made by a knave. . . . I think his letter entirely honest, though confused—and if

you can really ascertain that you will put him to rights for fifty pounds you shall have it for him—your advanced 20 being considered as part of it, but I do this, remember, only because you say he is useful for the school—for of all helpless objects for help, “masters” of any kind are usually the worse. (*WL* 522)

Referring to the right way of spending money in the form of philanthropy, Ruskin reluctantly offers financial support for Bell’s “poor German master.” He suggests this kind of charitable activity is against his moral criteria, for he would have been otherwise able to save a larger number of poor families. There might seem to be some contradictions in his approach: he was not averse in other instances to giving private financial aid, as when he helped Mrs. Huret, a widow of Ruskin’s friend and pilot. However, at least in this letter, the reason for his reluctance to help seems simply because the “master” appeared “a knave” in Ruskin’s eyes, in contrast to the poor who were deprived of their happiness due to the unjust social and politico-economic system. The letter shows Ruskin’s broader approach to charity, as written in a number of his works on political economy: it should primarily be extended to those who are suffering from social evils and a harmful environment.

### **Fatherly charity for pupils and cultural philanthropy**

Despite the disparity between Bell’s appeal and Ruskin’s ideas of charity and the “art of spending,” the latter was determined, albeit reluctantly, to support Bell’s “poor German master.” Sounding a warning note, however, Ruskin declared that the reason for his support was the indirect contribution of being “useful for the school.” Although we cannot wholly deny Ruskin’s keenness to help for Bell’s sake, his judgement owes much to whether it would be beneficial for the school, and thus for its

pupils. Ruskin was always – sometimes obsessively – concerned with the children’s happiness. The following letter dated 7 March 1864 clearly records Ruskin’s judgement on charitable activities based on his care and affection for a pupil who had suffered some misfortune. Ruskin offers a payment for tuition fees:

. . . the main thing is—can you anyhow contrive any underhand way of managing to keep Isabel at school – The money would be nothing to me if it could be managed—not that I ought to say this of money spent in such absolute self-indulgence as that would be—nor that I have any reason to suppose . . . —that I shall ever have any right to <spend> think of 100 a year as to be disposed of without very careful deliberation. But it would go hard with me if I could not spare as much as that to keep such a child as Isabel happy . . . . (WL 481)

One might admit some fluidity in Ruskin’s judgement considering the difference between his reluctance at paying £50 for Bell’s “master” and such a quick decision to offer £100 for the pupil. However, it follows Ruskin’s logic, as he writes in *The Ethics of the Dust*, “The last and worst thing that can be said of a nation is, that it has made its young girls sad, and weary” (18: 296). Ruskin would have wanted to be supportive particularly for the happiness of his beloved pupils.

Moreover, Ruskin’s care and affection for children were, again, often mingled with his sense of duty as a guide – and a father. The relation between Ruskin and the Winnington pupils was deeper than it appeared – possibly deeper than his relationship with their headmistress Bell. It was not confined to the mere relation between a teacher and pupils, or between friends, but seems to have had a paternal aspect. As Ruskin wrote to George MacDonald in 1864: “I’ve plenty of girl-children there [Winnington Hall] by adoption” (WL 487). He also frequently used “Papa” for his closing signature in the letters to children (WL 481, 499, 505, 650). Ruskin, in the same manner as he did

to Octavia Hill and other protégées, cast himself as their adoptive father, offering them care, affection and guidance. Likewise, Winnington pupils treated Ruskin as another father during their stay at the school away from their own family. One of the pupils Constance Oldham later revealed how children saw this prominent Victorian figure, “. . . in those days, we all looked up to you as our real guide and teacher” (*WL* 684). Ruskin was thus revered and beloved by his pupils, to whom he was always eager to perform his duty as their “father” in the same way as he did to his workers as a master – although Ruskin’s approach and the girls’ reactions were not completely the same as the case of Hill. As their interactions in *The Ethics of the Dust* illustrate, the relationship between Ruskin and the pupils was more playful and childlike, compared to his relationship with Hill who appeared more mature in knowledge and experience than the school girls. Ruskin used a more indulgent and taming tone for the Winnington girls than for Hill, for example, calling them “My dear Birds” in his Sunday letters (e.g. *WL* 130). However, we might also bear in mind his obsessive and somewhat distorted love for Rose La Touche, and regard these relationships, too, as sharing something of that awkwardness. Ruskin’s ardor to care for and love the school girls was underpinned by complex and unspoken dynamics, and may be differentiated from the relationships he had with his other daughter-like protégées.

Nevertheless, we may also see him as enjoying a far-reaching charitable role of “foster father,” not confined to individual pupils. He once expressed to his own father regret at having missed a chance to invite some children who did not have a home to his own house in London: “if Mama and you had been at Denmark Hill I think I should have asked you to take one or two of them for a week of their holidays” (*WL* 447). Clearly, Ruskin tried his best to fulfill his duty as father figure not only for the children who had parents but also particularly for those who did not. He showed his pity and care for some children in his letter to Ellen Heaton in 1863, a month before the proposal

above: “the Miss Leadbeaters are orphans—the Miss Pinatels have no father—and they are just at the age and in circumstances when girls have often bitter trials to bear” (*WL* 437). Furthermore, in addition to Isabel, Ruskin paid board and education from 1865 to 1868 for at least two more pupils who had lost their parent (*WL* 568-69, 603, 608, 612). Again, the reason for this support was in the service of what he thought of as a “noble” aim, to lead them to happiness, or indeed, to life. He wrote a letter to Bell on 9 April 1866 where he expressed gladness to hear that one of the pupils was pleasant: “I am very glad to hear Carrie is so well and happy, she is a dear good girl and I’m very thankful to have been able to make her happier than she would have been” (*WL* 589). All of these practices were, to Ruskin, expressions of justice and love for children whom he looked after, and this care and support embodied moral qualities which constituted the core elements of his approach to charity.

Ruskin dedicated himself to the children’s happiness not only financially but also through his cultural resources. Just as he evoked pleasure in Octavia Hill’s mind by inviting her to his house full of attractive drawings, likewise, Ruskin lent drawings and minerals to the children at Winnington. He went as far as selling his pictures by Turner in order to purchase minerals for the students, saying, “I’ll part with more, —rather than let the children suffer . . .” (*WL* 547). This gives some impression of Ruskin’s extreme affection and care for the children. Nevertheless, we should not overlook Ruskin’s carefulness about what and how he would provide for them as consumers of cultural resources. Ruskin’s choice of this mode of charity – in other words, cultural philanthropy – was also grounded in his desire to spend his money in a noble way. If Ruskin’s ultimate purpose of cultural philanthropy was happiness in life, he also believed that such a mode of charity would also serve the process to reach that final state – by cultivating the moral eyes of the pupils.

Ruskin’s charitable duty was from the beginning “to cultivate [his] powers & to

use them in his Service & for the benefit of [his] fellow Creatures” as well as “to enlighten a People by [his] Wisdom” (*FL* 1: 209-10). This duty continued to have important meaning for Ruskin when playing the role of foster father for the Winnington pupils. As we have seen in Chapter 2, Ruskin’s cultural philanthropy was part of his larger scheme of moral education with a noble aim of cultivating a Ruskinian way of seeing, or moral perception. This way of viewing the world is what he praises in the third volume of *Modern Painters*: “the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to *see* something, and tell what it *saw* in a plain way. . . . To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion,—all in one” (5: 333). During the 1850s, he chose drawings and sketches as a mode through which the workers cultivated their power of observations. This time, for his beloved pupils, Ruskin determined to introduce minerals as their textbook – a textbook which would teach them morality and cultivate their power of “*see*”ing by reading and analyzing its forms and ingredients. As we will see, geology and mineralogy helped Ruskin to cultivate his analytic vision since his childhood by close examination of compositions of rocks and mountains. Such observation enabled Ruskin to apprehend a concept of the law of nature which helps humans enhance their moral qualities – particularly the Law of Help. As one of those who was able to “see clearly,” Ruskin took the lead in cultivating the pupils’ eyes through cultural philanthropy and pursued in spreading the understanding of moral laws.

The young Ruskin’s “analytic power” (35: 51) was cultivated through his “materialistic” looking at nature. Although his mother Margaret Ruskin’s religious, literary, and language teaching was strict and he was “[p]rotected by these monastic severities and aristocratic dignities from the snares and disturbances of the outer world” (35: 131), within that space he was left to do anything he wanted to do without any interference. While his mother was occupied with horticulture, Ruskin had his “own



little affairs to see after” (35: 36), and in his autobiographical book *Praeterita*, he recounts, “Under these circumstances, what powers of imagination I possessed, fastened themselves on inanimate things —the sky, the leaves, and pebbles . . .” (35: 37). Such solitary self-cultivation of the eyes enabled Ruskin to have enough confidence to say, “I have never known one whose thirst for visible fact was at once so eager and so methodic” (35: 51).

Ruskin’s diaries also record his ability in close observation. The entry of 3 June 1835 written by the fifteen-year-old Ruskin reads: “Beneath the chalk range of Shakespeare’s cliff, there is a bed of stiff white clay containing nodules of radiating pyrites, . . . I have found large masses of lustrous yellow pyrites (in one specimen formed upon a nodule of blue iron-stone)” (*Diaries* 1: 2). Even this short excerpt demonstrates the scientific basis for his geological analysis; as Burd comments in relation to his entries for 1840, “[h]is letters and diary for these months are not those of a prospective clergyman but a geologist” (“Ruskin” 309). His adolescent observations clearly show him developing his “analytic power.” In other entries of 1835 too, amongst descriptions of weather, were thorough and minute depictions of geological features belonging to the sites he visited, with many references to the names of minerals such as “pyrites,” “hematite,” “silex,” “chalcedony” and “cornelian” (*Diaries* 1: 2-3).

Through his own examination of nature, Ruskin laid the foundation for enjoying modern natural science. However, as Mark Frost notes, “For Ruskin, materialism was true within its remit, but could never represent the whole truth” (“Circles” 377). He was against “defining science as ‘scientific method’” (Levine 251). Ruskin writes in *Modern Painters* III:

It is in raising us from the first state of inactive reverie to the second of useful thought, that scientific pursuits are to be chiefly praised. But in restraining us at this second stage, and checking the impulses towards

higher contemplation, they are to be feared or blamed. (5: 386)

As Levine notes, mere scientific methods such as microscopic analysis remained “at the stage of ‘useful thought’” (251). In comparison, in the case of Ruskin, at least early in his life, his intense evangelical upbringing enabled him to have an exegetic reading of nature – reading nature as the Words of God (Helsinger, *Ruskin* 215, 219). Such reading led him to “higher contemplation,” or realization, with a sense of “admiring wonder” (35: 59), that nature might embody both beauty and truth, as the first two volumes of his masterpiece *Modern Painters* attempted to explain. The religious hermeneutics paved an easier path for Ruskin to become interested in natural theology and geology when he entered Christ Church, University of Oxford. Through the Rev. William Buckland who greatly promoted the area of research at the university as a lecturer, Ruskin learned a great deal of science of the time and cultivated his understanding of geology in relation to natural theology (Burd, “Ruskin” 301-04).

His idiosyncratic background – an evangelical upbringing combined with the cultivation of analytic observation, both from self-education, and from his university classes – spurred in his mind his own way of “seeing” or “reading” nature, and this, in turn, had a direct impact on his concept of charity. For Ruskin, as Frost suggests (“Circles” 377), religious, scientific, moral and aesthetic readings were all integrated if not always harmoniously. Despite his implication in the discussion on painters that only a privileged few have a true ability “to see clearly,” Ruskin had a strong conviction that this way of “seeing” was significant for everyone. The dissemination, or “distribution” of such clear-sighted vision was an ideal towards which he strove in the course of his life, not only through his writings but also through direct and tactile experiences. To him, the cultivation of the ability “to see clearly” was inseparable from seeing the real object; Ruskin must have known the importance of such experience from his own background. Through intense and earnest observation of objects including stones, plants, mountains

and even drawings, the young Ruskin developed and cultivated his scientific, aesthetic and moralistic eyes, or what he called, “the intellectual lens and moral retina” (4: 36). The beginning of Ruskin’s teaching career signaled the start, too, of a long-running educational experiment in presenting real objects to people’s eyes, not only at universities and schools but also at art galleries and museums.

Ruskin took initiative in selecting the best educational materials himself so that only objects of high quality would be in front of the beholder’s eyes for contemplation. He committed himself to sorting through Turner’s drawings at the National Gallery and was engaged in “some useful and not laborious occupation in arranging the minerals at the British Museum” (*WL* 357). At the Working Men’s College, materials from nature were regular teaching companions for Ruskin (Yokoyama 63). The importance of diagrams was also learned from his teacher William Buckland. Buckland recognized Ruskin’s ability in drawing, and asked him to make diagrams for his geology classes; this may well have been a positive influence on Ruskin’s deployment of diagrams in his own teachings (Burd, “Ruskin” 304). These real “object lessons” were opposite to the Dickensian depiction of Victorian education in *Hard Times* where children were crammed only with facts and definitions through rote-learning (Manning 140). Ruskin’s way of education, by contrast, sought to cultivate people’s “eyes,” engaging them through the contemplation of real objects.

Such engaging activities must have been what girls at Winnington Hall enjoyed during Ruskin’s stay. He was not only a teacher of Bible lessons but also of geology: he wrote to his father on 4 December 1863, “I take one geology class here, and it is very interesting and pleasant” (*WL* 450). Why he decided to teach geology at Winnington is uncertain, but it seems natural for Ruskin to undertake it, considering that his chief occupation during this period was to examine minerals, particularly while he was secluded in Switzerland, a place replete with minerals and geological samples. “If I can

get interested enough in geology to relieve me from the pressure and gloom of all thoughts relating either to human society or human religion—it will be a great deliverance to me. I am working at crystallography and other such matters accordingly” (WL 435-36), wrote Ruskin to his father from Chamouni one autumn day in 1863. This passage tells us a good deal about the importance of Ruskin’s recourse to geology and mineralogy in the face of great suffering; or the other way around, geology was what attracted and gave pleasure to Ruskin. In terms of the aid of the school, too, geology was proper to be introduced: the purpose was “to promote the moral and intellectual improvement of their pupils” (qtd. in Burd, Introduction 25).<sup>21</sup> Considering that the teaching of natural history was likely to overlap with moral education in the form of natural theology through the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century (Boswell 86-87), it was natural that geology was also promoted for educational purposes at Winnington Hall.

Not unlike other precursors and contemporaries of natural science, this understanding of natural history in relation to morality was what Ruskin valued in the teaching of geology. He translated his integration of such topics into a unique conversational work between the Old Lecturer (supposedly Ruskin) and the girls: *The Ethics of the Dust*.<sup>22</sup> Whereas *The Winnington Letters* which record and reveal a great deal of Ruskin’s stay and activities at the school tell us little about the nature of his geology classes, *The Ethics of the Dust* – the model or perhaps even the description of the real classes – describes in great detail how Ruskin taught geology and moral education to the girls at Winnington Hall. As the title of the book suggests, it is not only

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<sup>21</sup> The quote was originally “on the front page of the *Manchester Guardian* (21 June 1851)” as an advertisement by the Bell sisters (Burd, Introduction 25).

<sup>22</sup> As for the genre and mode of instruction in women’s writings on natural science, see Boswell 86-90. In this respect, Ruskin seems to follow the mainstream of women’s writings on natural science, and he would have chosen this format for the universalization of the topic.

about “Dust” or geological details but also the “Ethics” that can be apprehended through the observation of such details, including minerals. Ruskin’s purpose was first to present the way to look at objects using Ruskinian eyes and then to read a larger moral truth or law by such close attention.

The second lecture, called “The Pyramid Builder,” presents the ways in which these Ruskinian eyes might observe and analyze structures. The Old Lecturer sets out to explain “crystallisation,” as introduced in the previous lecture. Through the metaphorical usage of bricks for atoms, the Old Lecturer explicates the crystal structures in the tone and manner of a fairy tale: “Suppose you have to build a castle, with towers and roofs and buttresses, out of bricks of a given shape . . .” (18: 222-23). As Ruskin cultivated his eyes by learning about structures with toy-bricks (35: 58), the Lecturer treats the atoms and structures of the crystal as if they were parts of architecture and asks children to “see” or “read” them, which reminds us of his former masterpiece on architecture *The Stones of Venice*.

Then, the Old Lecturer’s focus on structure leads the children to closer observation of the real objects in front of them. In the conversation with the pupils, the Lecturer often calls out to them as follows:

ISABEL. Please, please, let me see. And what does the rock crystal do?

L. The rock crystal seems able to do nothing. The calcite cuts it through at every charge. *Look here,—and here!* The loveliest crystal in the whole group is hewn fairly into two pieces. (18: 281; my emphasis)

Here, he requires children to “see” and directs their attention to the real objects he has presented. By doing so, the pupils, following the Lecturer’s guidance, are tempted into the experience of close observation. Once these exclamations – “Look” and “here!” – have drawn the children’s eyes to the minerals, the Lecturer next embarks on an explanation of the structures, or “some practical examinations of minerals” (18: 311).

He urges children to observe some pieces of tourmaline one by one: “it is broken, like a pillar built of very flat broad stones, into about thirty joints, and all these are heaved and warped away from each other sideways, almost into a line of steps ...” (18: 326). Even this short excerpt invokes the analytical description seen in the diary of Ruskin’s youth. The Old Lecturer, as Ruskin himself did, attempts to give an opportunity for the children to “see”: the same experience he himself had gone through examining real objects closely.

Nevertheless, the experience of seeing, for the Old Lecturer, does not merely remain at a material level of “observation.” After the observation of tourmaline, he next draws pupils’ attention to the different crystal “brecciated agate” (18: 326). After providing them with a general explanation of the facts, the Lecturer shares his own experience with the children. At Baden, he tells them, “I began to examine them [brecciated limestones] thoughtfully; and perceived, in the end, that they were, one and all, knots of as rich mystery as any poor little human brain was ever lost in” (18: 327). Here, what the Old Lecturer does is not only to clarify his earnest way of seeing “thoughtfully” but also to imply, by using the phrase “rich mystery,” a Wordsworthian sense of wonder. This sense of wonder and curiosity evoked by observation is the experience of a Romantic child full of feelings, different from a stereotypically fact-filled Victorian education. The pupils of the school have their Romantic sensibilities encouraged: their expressions are full of interjections and interrogatives, showing the curiosity and feelings which spring up from such experience. This may find a parallel with the experience Ruskin mentions in the third volume of *Modern Painters* where he shares with the reader enhanced feelings of affection and sympathy with nature (5: 386; see also p. 22). The experience urges and enables human beings to admit their similarity with nature – “the same dust” – and to harmonize with each other. Frost terms this harmony “biblically-tinted ecological binding” (“Circles” 380). In other

words, Ruskin's seeing seems to be a form of interconnection with the object – what he terms “moral *perception*” (5: 376) or “clear and calm beholding” (5: 386). The experience of seeing we have examined so far is, therefore, Ruskin's moral education itself. By this act of seeing both physically and morally, children are invited to appreciate the dynamism of crystallization, the main topic of *The Ethics of the Dust*. By extension, we can also see this as the core teaching of Ruskin's moral education through cultural philanthropy.

On top of the experience of seeing, Ruskin also effectively uses analogy as another device to invoke in children the said interconnectedness as well as to attract them. First of all, at the beginning of the second lecture, the Old Lecturer, pointing out the similarity between the girls and the dust, asks the pupils to imagine they are dust. Likewise, he leads the pupils to consider minerals as human beings. He even explains that there are both well-brought up minerals and ill-brought up ones affected by environment, just as human beings are, and that there exist hierarchies within their world just as within human society (18: 314-15). Ultimately, he seems to regard crystals as people living in Victorian society, exemplifying various types of minerals as “fat,” “politico-economic,” “foolish,” “impatient” and “hypocritical crystals” (18: 335). As Wilmer notes, “by implication, he also saw nature as a kind of society” (“No”). Ruskin perceives a miniature British society in the geological world, arguing that there must be something in common in the roots of human beings and minerals.

One might think that humans and minerals should be distinguished from one another and that the Lecturer's analogy seems hard to defend. Humans are living, whereas minerals are not. However, given that the border “between animate life and inanimate matter” became blurred in the modern scientific approaches of the Victorian Britain, the Old Lecturer's unclear response to a student's question about mineral's nature as alive or dead seems tenable (Mershon 472-76). In this respect, Ruskin's claim

that there is a common feature between humans and minerals cannot be entirely denied. Ruskin in his guise as the Lecturer expresses that “there are conditions entirely resembling those of human virtue” (18: 259). After all, Ruskin’s claim should have been tenable against scientific argument since his approach was not only scientific but also moralistic, the combination of both.

The Lecturer’s observations about the dynamism of crystallization suggest interesting parallels about the organization of humans and minerals; the Lecturer, and Ruskin himself, seek to look more deeply, too, to identify what commonly flows beneath the world of both humans and minerals. According to the Lecturer, the following state is what humans and minerals should be: “So it is in all other right relations. Men help each other by their joy, not by their sorrow. They are not intended to slay themselves for each other, but to strengthen themselves for each other” (18: 286). This is the universal law of nature, or what Ruskin calls, “The Law of Help,” a title for one chapter in *Modern Painters* V. As several researchers have pointed out, that is Ruskin’s central principle which runs through “the realms of aesthetics, architecture, nature, and society” (Frost, “*Law*” 1; see also Atwood 12), and also through charity.

Ruskin already perceived this law in the early 1840s. For instance, one passage from “Of Truth of Earth” in *Modern Painters* I reads: “. . . each individual part and promontory . . . becomes a part of a great and harmonious whole, instead of an unconnected and discordant individual” (3: 460). In the second volume, Ruskin also explains beauty and the significance of that law: “. . . the unity of Membership, which we may call Essential Unity, which is the unity of things separately imperfect into a perfect whole” (4: 95). To Ruskin, such law embodies both truth and beauty as “nature was the source not only of beauty, but of truths informing every aspect of existence” (Frost, “*Law*” 8). In *The Ethics of the Dust*, Ruskin, who admitted truth and beauty of Life against Death in crystallization, shows the connection of minerals as an example of



where the Law of Help works. He believed that such an ideal, helpful state is achievable in comparable human society when “the crystalline power” (18: 329) latent in each person is unveiled. For Ruskin, one of the means to help them do this was, as we have seen, the moral education through observation of minerals, to which his charity was directed.

In addition to observation, Ruskin used games as a way to explain crystallization, and its deeper connection with the Law of Help. In *The Ethics of the Dust*, the pupils are shown playing “a game at crystallisation” in the morning (18: 277). Although there is no evidence that Ruskin actually did this with Winnington Hall girls, it cannot be wholly denied, considering that Ruskin liked playing games with them (*WL* 500). If so, children must have been excited to play “a game at crystallisation” in real life. Two pupils, Lily Armstrong and Isabel Marshall, whose names also appear in *The Ethics*, wrote a letter to their teacher on 26 November 1865: “We were thinking in bed how delightful it would be if Miss Mary would invent us some crystal dances . . . We shall have to turn into particles but you know we shall always be” (*WL* 571-72). Even if Ruskin did not introduce the game of crystallization before the book was published, it is certain that children’s curiosity in playing was whetted, as they proposed “crystal dances” in the letter above. Ruskin cultivated and developed the bond with them not only through letters but also direct, interactive communications including singing, dancing, games, sports and animated conversations with questions and answers. It was through these interactions that Ruskin might have taught them the Law of Help, as well as through his practical demonstrations of love, care, and affection in his role as foster father.

Before concluding this latter part, I will reconsider the reason why Ruskin chose cultural philanthropy as a mode of charity. Through the examinations above, it has become clearer that what he wanted to share was not merely real objects as material

assets. Instead, he wished them to develop their faculties of observation, and to develop moral experience through real activities. He wished this experience to be widespread in society. Although Ruskin was not an advocate of the abolishment of class hierarchy (17: 74), he might be characterized as adhering to an “elitist line of liberal thinking” (Goodlad 30): He believed that, by following the lead of wise men like himself, everyone should be allowed to enjoy the chances to develop their moral faculties. He asserts in *Munera Pulveris* that “the largest possible number of every healthy subordinate class must necessarily be produced also,” and by this Ruskin refers to the aim of their “perfections . . . of his body, affections, and intelligence” (17: 150). Therefore, Ruskin affirmed the importance of cultivating moral “eyes” and experiences across class boundaries.<sup>23</sup>

Ruskin had a strong sense of duty here. What made it possible to acquire such eyes and experiences owed much not only to his idiosyncratic upbringing but also to his father John James Ruskin’s financial security (Atwood 7-8). Thanks to John James’s fortune and travels, Ruskin enjoyed many opportunities to see objects including drawings, minerals, geological attractions and mountains like the Alps with his own eyes. He must have understood how fortunate his position was. As summarized in *The Political Economy of Art*, Ruskin’s idea of cultural philanthropy was that the possessors of assets and the wise have a duty to distribute such materialistic wealth to enable accessibility and to make the most of their capacity to guide and lead others (16: 102). For Ruskin, sharing and being “frank and open in their relations” denoted “helping each other” (16: 94). He attempted to use this mode of charity as one form of practice at Winnington Hall as a “crystallization” of his concepts of love and justice. This could

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<sup>23</sup> In terms of access, process and purpose for appreciating picture, Helsinger’s “Ruskin and the Politics of Viewing” argues that Ruskin distinguishes them between the noble class, working class, women, and non-Britons in the context of imperialism.

have been done only by Ruskin's own attendance at the school, for it was interactions between Ruskin and the girls that enabled their vicarious experience. For Ruskin who considered it his duty to lead people, moral education in the form of culture was a core activity that continued over his lifetime.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up this chapter, we have examined so far, in the first section, Ruskin's practice of charity in the shape of financial help for Bell and Winnington Hall based on the concept of the "art of spending." In the latter section, we have considered in what manner Ruskin as a geological teacher implemented cultural philanthropy and what moral meanings it embraced. The "art of spending" in the modes of financial support and cultural philanthropy were inseparable from the idea of the distribution of wealth that he laid down in his writings of political economy. Yet, the core of his idea, argument, and practice was obviously morality, and his concern was to cultivate such moral value including justice and love in people's mind across the society, as represented in his idea and practice of charity. To the headmistress Bell, he offered affectionate support as a friend, but also sought to behave justly as a trusted colleague; to the Winnington children his justice and sense of duty was always accompanied by love. Ruskin's involvement in the Winnington Hall evidently embodied his idea of charity in practice.

However, at the same time, looking at the relation between love and justice in his practices from a different angle, one might think that Ruskin was sometimes inclined to justice in his politico-economic thinking on one hand, while tilting towards love, prioritizing human relations and happiness, on the other. Even if he tried to balance these seemingly contradictory attitudes, it would have been viewed as inconsistency. In

a larger framework of the educational institution, the disparity between justice and love as well as public and private became larger. The two important moral qualities of his charity, which he managed to combine in his practice relating to individuals, started to demonstrate some conflict at the institutional level. To others around him, Ruskin might seem to swing like a pendulum between justice and love.

This pendulum would still continue to swing in his involvement in the Guild of St. George, which we will examine in the next and last chapter. His principle of the “art of spending” wavered between public responsibility as the Master of the Guild and private passion for his beloved objects. In his relationship with the Companions, too, his moral principles of love and justice appeared to be unstable. There were, however, also plenty of positive continuities. As Frost suggests, Ruskin’s experiences at Winnington Hall fed into his foundation of this newly created society (*Lost* 49), and thus certainly shaped the approach and practices of charity as well. The foundation of St. George’s Museum represented the culmination of his practice of cultural philanthropy. Ruskin put his utmost efforts into the Museum as a mode of moral education and a realization of the noble “art of spending.” Yet, the very next objective he might have wanted to pursue was, to realize the world of the minerals in crystallization in a fragmented Victorian society: Ruskin finally embarked on creating a community in which members might live in a vital, helpful state in the shape of St. George’s Guild.

## Chapter 4: The Integrity of Charity in the Guild of St. George

I have been hindered hitherto from action in the things most at my heart: Simply from a sense of weakness & unworthiness, which made me think—partly also in consequence of much past misfortune, that I ought not to put myself forward in any great matter. But now I cannot delay longer. This Italy is fast becoming whatever in the thoughts of good men most nearly realize hell—that is to say—gratuitously malicious & loathsome. . . . On the other hand in England & America, the good is more superficial, the (present) inner character more faultful. (*WL* 659)

On 31 May 1868, John Ruskin sent a letter from Verona to his former Winnington pupil Dora Livesay to share his strong determination on his last – but by no means least – experiment for social betterment. This was what would become the St. George’s Fund in 1871, followed by the foundation of St. George’s Museum in 1875, and finally St. George’s Guild in 1877.<sup>24</sup> Ruskin envisaged the Guild as a helpful community of Companions, the members in different ranks according to the way they served within it. Ruskin believed that each Companion should be expected to serve the Guild under the leadership of the Master (initially Ruskin himself) offering a tithe of their income (27: 95), and sustaining and promoting the aims of the Guild, through its agricultural, educational and handcraft manufacturing experiments (27: 142-43). This chapter explores how Ruskin’s theories of charity took shape in this final, more complex practice, and in his relationship with the Companions. By doing so, it attempts to locate Ruskin’s specific practices in a larger, integrated context of his lifelong engagement in charity. I argue that the different strands of ideas, principles and motives all contributed

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<sup>24</sup> In order to avoid confusion, the name “the Guild” will be used when I refer to Ruskin’s St. George’s community hereafter.

to a broader current of Ruskin's charity, dynamically, not without ambivalences and contradictions.

In our critical approach to the Guild, it is significant not only to highlight its theoretical underpinning, but to investigate its actual practices and see how these two realms work together. Ruskin's vision of the Guild brought concepts and ideas from his past experiences – including the charitable activities that we traced in the previous chapters – into the creation of one large body of helpful human life. Likewise, his relationship with individual Companions and the practical ways he sought to engage in charity reflect not only the principles worked out in his earlier period, but also some of the complexities and difficulties we have seen in earlier case studies. Mark Frost's *The Lost Companions* (2014) is a landmark study in relation to these two points, shedding light on the practical aspects of Ruskin's approach. Frost dug into actual practices to depict a detailed account of each project, and his methodology has informed my own critical perspective in this chapter. His approach to the projects, from the perspectives of different periods and people, helped to map out the tangled relationships and projects of the Guild clearly. Frost attempted to bring together the schemes, Companions and narratives, and “interconnect” them.

Previous criticism, by contrast, tended to put more emphasis on the abstract aspects of the Guild than on its practical side. While acknowledging it as an integrated demonstration of Ruskin's concepts and ideas, they have also tended towards a dismissive view of its utopianism, suggesting that its reliance on those concepts meant it lacked actual practicability. Cook warns that it would be a mistake if we took all Ruskin's schemes and potential plans seriously, for “the distinction between his visionary Utopia, and his schemes for an actual Guild of St. George was not always clear” (30: xxiv). In the introduction to *The Guild and Museum of St. George* (1907), he repeatedly reminds the reader of Ruskin's role “to point the way” (30: xxiv). This

anxiety that the Guild might be a mixture of Ruskin's abstract visions with possibly little practicability was shared by later scholars. Evans writes, for example, “. . . he never made a clear distinction, even to himself, between his dreams of a visionary Utopia and his schemes for an experiment in real life here and now” (419). These critical views may have guided the reader to see the Guild as a utopian vision rather than actual practice, making it remain at an abstract level.

However, this approach overlooks the scale of Ruskin's efforts in the Guild and how closely his practices reflected his visions and thoughts, the importance of which are hinted at in his own statement. In the January 1875 *Fors*, Ruskin explained about the Guild, “. . . I am wrong, even in speaking of it as a plan or scheme at all. It is only a method of uniting the force of all good plans and wise schemes: it is a principle and tendency, like the law of form in a crystal; not a plan” (28: 235). This statement might mislead the reader into thinking that Ruskin did not pay attention to the practical side of the Guild activities. Yet, it rather shows his intention of showing *how* each envisioned experiment worked in crystallized harmony in real life. In *The Ethics of the Dust* Ruskin in the guise of the Old Lecturer was trying to show this to the pupils through the games of crystallization. This time, he was determined to carry it out in a larger social context through the Guild. Just as Frost challenged the previously accepted theory-oriented view, I will shed light on the dynamic practices of the Guild to examine how his thoughts and principles took shape in them.

I will also explore the challenges and difficulties of Ruskin's approach to charity in response to Frost's focus on Ruskin's complex relationship with the Companions. Ruskin may have applied the law of crystallization to the Guild society, yet it did not always go smoothly. Frost narrates in detail how human relations in the Guild were built – and how they collapsed. He casts a new light on the “more or less nameless people” who had undertaken pivotal work in establishing the practices of the Guild but who had

been erased, for fear that their unfavorable results would undermine the Master's fame (*Lost* 1-2). It was a common view in the twentieth century that some of the Guild experiments during Ruskin's lifetime were a "failure" (Evans 419; Hewison, "Afterword" 225). Nevertheless, Ruskin's mismanagement in relation to the difficulties and failures faced by the disciples had never been mentioned. In the twenty-first century, these came to the surface by Deardren's slight reference in 2010 to James Burden [Burdon].<sup>25</sup> He had originally been an engineer but became an agricultural laborer: he ended up being accused of usury due to his decreased income and sent to jail (Deardren 14). Nevertheless, the critic also seems to defend the Master by noting his support afterwards for Burdon as a printer despite this mishaps (Deardren 14).

Using newly discovered resources related to such "lost companions," Frost laboriously but beautifully integrated their "lost" narratives, voices and works which had underpinned the Guild into the existing picture, presenting at times a revisionary picture, which my work seeks to extend. In 2019, at the Annual General Meeting of the Guild of St. George, the Master Clive Wilmer suggested that this view is now becoming more universally adopted, mentioning that a companion William Buchan Graham (1846-1909) at St. George's Farm was "badly treated" ("Clive"; see also p.134). In this respect, Frost's more impartial and balanced approach has largely contributed to the ongoing critique on the Guild, which this chapter intends to develop. We need to provide a larger but more concrete picture of a complex, intangible enterprise where "obscurity" prevailed.

Therefore, the twenty-first century sees the dawning of a revised critique. Nevertheless, there still remains scope for further exploration. Ruskin's engagement in the Guild needs to be explored through the dynamism of his theory and practice, which

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<sup>25</sup> The 1876 Roll of Companions records his name as "James Burdon" (34: 703). According to Frost, the 1876 Diary List of Companions also records the name of "James Burdon" (*Lost* 225).



this chapter will address in detail. The first section deals with how Ruskin's moral principles of charity and his art of spending are presented and implemented in his support for the Guild. I will look closely at the example of St. George's Museum and detail how financial aid and cultural philanthropy were carried out by looking mainly at Ruskin's confessional *For's* reports and the letters he exchanged with dealers. Ruskin's approach to support for the Guild will reveal not only his sense of duty in battling against social misery, but also his hidden self-consciousness as a well-to-do middle class gentleman which might have been a suppressed impulse beneath his charity. The second half of the chapter will explore the dynamism of Ruskin's relationship with the Companions in light of his moral principles and his emotional climate. It will focus on the case study of Egbert Rydings, who managed the woollen industry at Laxey, the Isle of Man, in the 1870s and 80s. The small section on Rydings and his works will examine Ruskin's involvement and analyze how his charity was managed or *mismanaged*. Written with the awareness of being read by the other, the letters between Ruskin and Rydings demonstrate some tensions as well as reserve between them. Certainly, the extant letters are not sufficient to understand the complete picture of their relationship and can only provide fragmentary pieces; however, brought together, they demonstrate the main features of Ruskin's practices of the time.

### **Ruskin and St. George's Museum**

I am going, under His orders, therefore, to give you some topazes of Ethiopia, . . . and all manner of coral, that you may know what co-operative societies are working, to make your babies their rattles and necklaces, without any steam to help them, under the deep sea, and in its foam; also out of the Tay, the fairest river of the British Isles, we will

fetch some pearls that nobody shall have drawn short breath for: and, indeed, all the things that Solomon in his wisdom sent his ships to Tarshish for, —gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks,—you shall see in their perfection and have as much of as St. George thinks good for you . . . . (28: 465-66)

Ruskin issued this letter in December 1875, and it is usually known as “Christmas *Fors*.” The main purpose of this letter was to delineate a vision of St. George’s Museum and to share his solid determination to achieve it with his readers. Beautifully and metaphorically decorated with fairy-tale-like descriptions and Biblical allusions, this passage reveals a great deal of his mindset as well as characteristics of his charity during the 1870s through 1880s: a religious sense of duty (“under His orders”), “the Law of Help” apprehended in minerals (“co-operative societies”), art of spending and cultural philanthropy (sending treasures including “gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks”), awareness of being rich and wise (“Solomon in his wisdom”) and paternalistic sense of justice (“St. George,” a patron saint of England who slayed the dragon).

We can trace the origins of all these factors that shaped Ruskin as a benefactor back to his earlier life, as discussed in previous chapters. A closer analysis of Ruskin’s engagement in the establishment of the Museum and his motives, ideas and mindset behind it will now enable us to fully understand the main strands of Ruskin’s charity and how all of these strands integrated into one huge ideal enterprise. This section, spotlighting St. George’s Museum and Ruskin’s personal involvement in it, will firstly outline Ruskin’s redefinition of “the museum” from politico-economic and educational perspectives in relation to the idea of cultural philanthropy. Then, shifting from a conceptual approach, it will draw attention to Ruskin’s practical support for the Museum and his impulse behind it, together with his internal conflict between his desire

(selfish, but passionate and innocent) and his principle of righteous, wise judgement over spending. This reveals Ruskin's hidden self-consciousness about his wealth, as well as his sense of guilt, reinforced by his deepening acquaintance with St. Francis of Assisi and Solomon: a consciousness which might have been also shared by many Victorians.

### **Reinterpreting the Museum as an educational “national store”**

The St. George's Museum was established as a symbol and embodiment of the ideas that Ruskin had been mulling over in the 1860s through his writings and lectures. In “Modern Art,” Ruskin clearly asserts that the national collections should be accumulated and stored, supported by the universities and the government, at the national museums for treasury and smaller local museums for educational purpose with full accessibility for the public (19: 220-23). In 1875, Ruskin started to embark on the first example of the latter kind in the Guild whose principal purpose was “to show, by schools and Museums, what should be done for the education of the labourer, whether in town or country” (27: lviii). Setting out on the foundation of the museum, Ruskin reintroduced and reemphasized such main objectives by stating that the Guild aims at a “national store” opposing to a “national debt” which is “a foul disgrace” and “a foul crime.” In the *Fors* letter dated October 1875, Ruskin as its Master states:

The financial operations of the St. George's Company . . . will consist in the accumulation of national wealth and store, and therefore in distribution to the poor, instead of taxation of them; and the fathers will provide for, and nobly endow, not steal from, their children, and children's children. . . . The store of the St. George's Company, then, is to be primarily of food; next of materials for clothing and covert; next of

books and works of art,—food, clothes, books, and works of art being all good, and every poisonous condition of any of them destroyed. (28: 428-29)

This concept of a “national store” as an accumulation and abundance of wealth for the distribution for all can be first traced back to *The Political Economy of Art* where he displayed the ideal mode of accumulation and distribution of art as a cultural asset (16: 57-103). To metaphorically describe this concept, in Chapter 2 of *Munera Pulveris*, Ruskin started to use the term “national store” to express the mode of accumulating things contributing to life, expressing reprobation of new means of production, which add “means of destruction” and “unnecessary luxury” to the store (17: 176). Here Ruskin exemplifies food and clothing as things for life, given that the main focus of the essay lies in sustenance rather than art or other educational objects. Yet, on proposing that local libraries as well as national museums should contain national collections as a whole, Ruskin must have had other things “availing towards life” in his mind – art, books and minerals. When re-delineating the scheme of a “national store” for the Guild, he expanded the range of the term “national store” to include cultural assets. As the fruit of the previous idea of a “national store,” it centered the role of the Guild. The “national store” of food and clothing was realized in the Guild in agricultural and industrial experiments, while the “national store” of books, drawings and minerals found expression in the form of a museum.

Ruskin’s taste for the objects of the museum and his abhorrence about the current selection of objects were unfortunately little understood by his contemporaries. Initially, there was an offer from Sheffield council to incorporate St. George’s Museum into the existing Sheffield museum (28: 448-49). Nonetheless, Ruskin responded,

MY DEAR SIR,—I am obliged by your note, but the work of the St. George’s Company is necessarily distinct from all other. My “museum”

may be perhaps nothing but a two-windowed garret. But it will have in it nothing but what deserves respect in art or admiration in nature. A great museum in the present state of the public mind is simply an exhibition of the possible modes of doing wrong in art, and an accumulation of uselessly multiplied ugliness in misunderstood nature. Our own museum at Oxford is full of distorted skulls, and your Sheffield ironwork department will necessarily contain the most barbarous abortions that human rudeness has ever produced with human fingers. (“Opening” 3)

This letter, where Ruskin criticized the current public taste for art and the ugliness of objects accommodated in the Museum at Oxford, was cited in Mr. Roebuck’s speech at the banquet for the opening of Weston Park. It was publicized in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* next day on 7 September 1875, alongside the audience responses: “Oh, oh” and “Ruskin all over” (“Opening” 3). On the following day, another article in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* ironically declared this a sign of Ruskin’s waywardness: “Fortunately, he cannot prevail on anybody to see matters in the same light. His opinions are in the truest sense his own – and his only” (“News” 3). This episode reveals Ruskin’s uncompromising obsession with his own visions and consistent dislike of the contemporary taste. However wayward and incomprehensible his own idea of a museum was in the eyes of the Victorian public, it is, nevertheless, a solid Ruskinian principle.

Ruskin reinterprets, possibly with the unfavorable South Kensington System and other similar museums in mind, the role of museums as “places of noble instruction” (28: 450), which Whitworth Wallis, the first director of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, also inherited as a definition of a museum (Wallis 491). Although the nineteenth century saw the rapid development of the idea of public museums for all,

particularly targeting the working class, it was mostly designed “to improve standards of design and taste in British workers and consumers, and thereby to stimulate the economy, and fend off foreign competition” (K. Hill 42). In contrast to this industry-centered notion of museums, Ruskin might have designed the Museum for the Guild based on his “objective analysis on the circumstances and problems of the museums of Victorian Britain including National Gallery and South Kensington Museum rather than emerging from his personal utopian visions” (Arakawa, “Three” 313). Such critical observation of and response to the contemporary principles of museums developed Ruskin’s own idea that “noble instruction” of the museums should be

the contemplation and study of the works of God, and the learning that complete code of natural history which, beginning with the life and death of the Hyssop on the wall, rises to the knowledge of the life and death of the recorded generations of mankind, and of the visible starry Dynasties of Heaven. (28: 451)

Therefore, in Ruskin’s mind, the museum was envisaged as the place to “observe” such objects, following his practice as an instructor at Winnington Hall. Such careful observation would enable the visitor to apprehend the law of nature and the universe as well as its truth and beauty. This, he believed, would ultimately invoke in the visitor’s mind the harmonized and unified moral imagination that would constitute the temple of Life.

The St. George’s Museum was established as a “national store” of beautiful and educational objects that were selected and displayed in order to meet this “noble” aim. As the previous chapters examined, Ruskin encouraged his workers, commissioners and pupils to “observe” drawings, illustrated manuscripts, and minerals either at his home or at schools. For instance, the art of illumination was, to Ruskin,

educational because it contributes to enhancing one's morality, enabling him/her to become moderate and disciplined (see ch. 2). Minerals could also become a teaching tool for the beholder to apprehend "the Law of Help" (see ch. 3). These items as well as books and coins were collected and brought into the locus of such noble education. As the online digitalized museum, "Ruskin at Walkley" (<https://www.ruskinatwalkley.org/>) allows us to glimpse, the materials from different categories are beautifully displayed in each room. Viewed in this context, each object is supposed to be observed and read as a morally educational text, in the same manner as architecture read "as a kind of book" (23: 87). Not only the object but also the space in which it was displayed could embody a larger meaning, demonstrating "an underlying structure of thought and categories governing their relationship to each other" (K. Hill 7). As exactly as the Gothic cathedral shows the unity of the various pieces of work (10: 190), this specific layout of the room enabled the visitor to apprehend all of these different works from nature and artifacts in a harmonious state. Ruskin turned the Museum itself into the symbol of interconnectedness, in the same manner as he turned the way up to St. George's Museum on the hill into the symbol of educational process: "the climb to knowledge and truth is ever steep, and the gems found at the top are small, but precious and beautiful" (qtd. in 30: xlii).<sup>26</sup>

For this educational purpose which he laid down according to moral principles, Ruskin chose cultural philanthropy as his means of charitable support for the Guild. Ruskin invested a considerable amount of effort and money in the process of collecting materials for exhibition. Although the display of the Museum included a tiny amount of objects from each category, these items needed to be of exceptionally high quality to meet Ruskin's educational aims. For their selection and purchase, Ruskin established

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<sup>26</sup> The quote was originally from "Reminiscences of Ruskin" by Howard Swan in the *Westminster Gazette* on 24 January 1900.

intimate relations with dealers through exchanging letters, visiting shops and welcoming them to his hermitage at Brantwood. Among such frequent correspondents and/or visitors were the booksellers Frederick Startridge Ellis and Bernard Quaritch as well as the mineralogist Bryce Wright (T. Hilton, *Later* 524-25).<sup>27</sup> From these well-known dealers Ruskin enthusiastically collected minerals, books and illustrated manuscripts. The indirect role they played in Ruskin's cultural philanthropy was huge to the extent that, for example, Ellis, being registered as having a position within the Guild, was commissioned to collect best materials for the Guild (T. Hilton, *Later* 313). Ruskin's passion for the selection and purchase of these items was so intense that his cousin Joan Severn (née Agnew) expressed her concerns about Ruskin's extravagance (T. Hilton, *Later* 428). The records of Ruskin's enthusiastic and constant involvement with these dealers demonstrate how much energy – and how much money – Ruskin invested in the Museum.

Behind this enthusiastic attitude towards cultural philanthropy possibly was Ruskin's renewed awareness of his duty, accelerated by his increasing consciousness of social misery and by his recognition that an urgent response to it was required. The *Fors* letter issued in January 1876 shows Ruskin's moral imagination for the poor and his criticism of the modern wrong way of charity, coupled with his anxiety over his lack of leadership as a Master (28: 484-9). This sense of duty and his care for the poor must have been deeply embedded in his mind since 1874 when Ruskin travelled around Italy including the cities such as Rome and Assisi. Ruskin entered Assisi on 9 June and stayed there for about a month (*Diaries* 3: 794, 800). During the sojourn, Ruskin was allowed to see and draw Giotto's fresco *St. Francis and Poverty* (or "The Marriage of Poverty

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<sup>27</sup> Ruskin's letters and references to these notable dealers are recorded mainly in the thirty-seventh and -eighth volumes of the Library Edition ("Letters" and "Bibliography, Catalogue of Ruskin's Drawings and Addenda et Compendia") and the second and third volumes of *Diaries*.



and Francis”). He had been working on the drawing for weeks at Fra Antonio’s sacristan cell (*Diaries* 3: 794). Long before, in the second volume of *Modern Painters*, Ruskin wrote on this saint: “It is good to read of that kindness and humbleness of St. Francis of Assisi, who spoke never to bird nor to cicala, nor even to wolf and beast of prey, but as his brother . . .” (4: 149). To him, St. Francis was a representative figure of Love (or Charity), finding parallels with Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and Wordsworth’s “Hart-Leap Well” (4: 149). It is reasonable to assume, given Ruskin’s level of interest in the saint, that he may have been a model for Ruskin’s own charitable practice.

There may have been additional reasons for his self-identification with St. Francis, deriving from their similar background. St. Francis was originally “the son of a wealthy cloth merchant of Assisi” (Little 146), but through religious conversion, he lowered himself, casting off his material wealth, and literally and voluntarily became poor (Little 146-49). During the 1874 tour in Italy, Ruskin “deepened his understanding of and respect for the mendicant tradition of St Francis in particular, and for Catholicism in general,” while he advanced his idea of the Guild (Wheeler 209). It is understandable, then, that Ruskin started to get more vigorously involved in the Guild enterprises around this time not only by strengthening his moral imagination and love for the poor inspired by the saint, but also by committing himself to this “mendicant tradition” through a considerable amount of expenditure.

Solomon was another important model for Ruskin. Since his childhood, Ruskin was a devout reader of wisdom literature such as the first book of Kings and Proverbs, as listed in his Bible lessons at home (28: 101). Ruskin must have learned that Solomon was the figure of justice and wisdom exemplified by his wise judgement over the dispute between a dead and living child, where the Israelites “saw that the wisdom of God *was* in him, to do judgment” (1 Kings 3.28). Accordingly, it was by no means

difficult for Ruskin to see himself as a modern Solomon whose duty was to use his “wisdom” as his father had taught him (see p. 29) and to wage a war of justice against the misery of the modern world. Moreover, during the 1870s, as with St. Francis, Ruskin’s inclination to identify himself with Solomon became more profound due to “the disposition of his own inherited wealth” (Wheeler 214). Solomon was a rich possessor of treasures, and he also had symbolic wealth, in the shape of his wisdom. Therefore, just as Solomon – the figure of justice, wisdom and material wealth – enriched Jerusalem as well as his own house (1 Kings 10.27), “Now Ruskin himself could enrich Oxford, through his endowment of a Drawing School, and Sheffield, through St George’s Museum at Walkley. Solomon and the temple were in his mind in the autumn of 1875” (Wheeler 214).

Ruskin’s charitable practice was thus accelerated during the midst of the 1870s, supported, reinforced and inspired by his identification with these two figures, the saint and the Biblical figure, who symbolized love and justice respectively. However, Ruskin’s mindset was not as simple as one might have imagined. On the one hand, the January 1876 *Fors* clearly demonstrates his sense of duty and care for the poor. Yet “Affairs of the Master” appended to the next *Fors* issued in February 1876 goes some way towards showing how complicated his scruples were concerning his own aspirations towards poverty, and his increasing awareness of his material wealth:

When I instituted the Company by giving the tenth of my available property to it, I had, roughly, seventy thousand pounds in money or land, and thirty thousand in pictures and books. The pictures and books I do not consider mine, but merely in my present keeping, for the country, or the persons I may leave them to. Of the seventy thousand in substance, I gave away fourteen thousand in that year of the Company’s establishment . . . , and have since lost fifteen thousand by a relation whom I tried to support in business. . . . and it is very

clear that I am too enthusiastically carrying out my own principles, and making more haste to be poor than is prudent, at my present date of possible life, for, at my current rate of expenditure, the cell at Assisi, above contemplated as advisably a pious mortification of my luxury, would soon become a necessary refuge for my “holy poverty.” (28: 530-31)

Despite his affinity with St. Francis and Solomon as well as his dedicatory donation to the Guild, Ruskin could hardly get rid of the sense of his own privilege and associated guilt. In the letter, Ruskin discloses and publicizes his own fortune and property in addition to his expenditure during the last decade. As he states that “I am . . . making more haste to be poor than is prudent,” Ruskin confesses the expenditure has derived not from rational judgement but from emotion, or more precisely, a twinge of conscience. In light of his art of spending, it would not have been “wise.” However, Ruskin’s attempt of resolving this sense of guilt is obvious in the passage when he deploys the rhetoric of a “national store” and emphasizes that his expenditure is for the public use (for the Guild) and that this act should be religiously allowable. His description of himself as working “too enthusiastically” for charity is an interesting one, suggesting the mixed motives of conscience, justice, self-justification and his own aspirations towards moral goodness which were driving him through the 1870s.

Ruskin’s scruples concerning his own charitable impulses were further deepened and tangled when his philanthropic purchases of objects for St George’s Museum were also accompanied by Ruskin’s purchases for himself. In the autumn of 1876, as he tells us in the “Affairs of the Master” of *Fors*, Ruskin calls his expenditure “extravagance” after the purchase of a manuscript for £140 and possible treaty with Quaritch for £320, despite his promise that one of the manuscripts would go to the Guild (28: 703, 729). This is particularly evident when he confesses that he has “bought a missal worth £320 for [him]self, and only given one worth £50 to Sheffield,” using the

terms “shame” and “selfishness” (28: 727). Yet, again, the rhetoric of a “national store” was valid to alleviate his guilt by emphasizing that his cultural assets are “partly as a national property, in my charge, and partly as my tools of work” (28: 728). He also attempts to persuade himself and his readers that the art of spending should not be judged by superficial financial value of “the cost” or “what they can get for them” but by intrinsic value (28: 727). Eventually, possibly feeling pressured, he ends up claiming that “it is one of my present principles of action not at all to set myself up for a reformer, and it must be always one not to set up for a saint” (28: 727). This seems a part of his repeated attempts to express his tentativeness and his unsuitability for leadership throughout the 1870s (30: xxiv).

This wavering sense of Ruskin’s mind continued in the 1880s. Ruskin wrote to Wright in May 1884, expressing contrasting emotions: “I can’t resist this tourmaline, and have carried it off with me. For you and Regent Street it’s not monstrous in price neither; but I must send you back your (pink!) apatite” (38: 347). Here it is obvious that the Master of the Guild avoided spending money on the object that does not whet his appetite despite its decent price. On making a decision over purchase, he also took into consideration public opinions about price. Having entertained the idea of buying silver from Wright on another occasion, Ruskin then hesitates to purchase it because of its dear price (38: 346). This may be seen as an example of Ruskin’s “art of spending”: a consideration based on wise and rational judgement. Yet, in his words, “I can’t resist this tourmaline,” we can still perceive his barely controllable desire to obtain the object. As Hewison pointed out, in Ruskin, “Two themes are in perpetual counterpoint: his view of himself as a man of action, and his desire to be free of responsibilities” (*John* 168). The identification of himself with St. Francis and Solomon, the symbolic figures of love and justice, definitely accelerated Ruskin’s practice of charity for the Museum. Nevertheless, it was also accompanied with a sense of guilt and hidden impulses of

escape to “the cell of Assisi” – or Brantwood and the pursuit of his own pleasure.

### **Ruskin as a collector/curator and a Master**

Ruskin’s contrasting figures – on the one hand, the thoughtful Master whose spending is rational and regulated; on the other, the individual, pursuing his own emotionally driven desires – also posed an issue in his role for the Museum as a curator and a collector.<sup>28</sup> The way he engaged in the museum project – as well as his mindset overall in this period – wavered between public and private. Although F. Herrmann notes the opposing position between “the professional art historian or museum curator” and “the private collector” (20), such roles could hardly be distinguished for Ruskin. When he was in charge of examining and cataloguing Turner’s drawings at the National Gallery during 1857-1858, his zeal for the role surely derived from his love for Turner as a “private collector.” For many years previously, Ruskin had been collecting Turner’s works, to the extent that it triggered “the reluctance of Ruskin’s father to invest too much money” in them (L. Herrmann 22). Likewise, Ruskin’s desire for acquiring minerals and manuscripts manifested a typical collector’s spirit. His enthusiasm could make him what Pearce calls “fetishistic” (196), and his art of spending for a noble purpose was sometimes clouded with this desire.

Nevertheless, Ruskin’s private, “fetishistic” desire for his beautiful objects was not entirely selfish. His love for truth, beauty and the natural object as well as his pursuit of objects for a noble aim surely helped St. George’s Museum grow as a place of moral education. His collecting zeal allowed it to accumulate high quality items. F. Herrmann distinguishes a collector from a historian by “a better eye” or

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<sup>28</sup> Although Henry Swan was appointed as the first curator of Walkley Museum, Ruskin was, to some extent, the original curator and director to whom the ultimate authority was given in the same manner as he directed the museum as his own private museum.

“Connoisseurship” (21); Ruskin also had this “eye,” or more precisely, a moral, analytic and observational eye, which was capable of critically judging and rejecting materials selected by dealer-collectors (37: 358; 38: 345-46). His collectorship and curatorship made, in Pearce’s words, both “fetishistic” and “systematic” collection (196, 201) possible, creating a unique but wholly educational locus in Sheffield. Therefore, to Ruskin, the seemingly opposed binaries of professional/personal, public/private, systematic/fetishistic, and restraining sense of duty vs. passion for the beautiful were interrelatedly significant. The way in which these binaries were held in tension, and played out against one another, created a place which might be seen as “nobler,” both at an educational and at a moral level, than other contemporary museums.

In this way, Ruskin distinguished both his principles and his museum from others; he was, however, also aware of a larger contextual debate. As Atwood maintains, “While the Sheffield Museum exemplified Ruskin’s educational ideals and artistic principles, it also partook of a wider Victorian debate about the role of the museum in educating artisans and forming public taste” (160). In the same manner, while practicing his own, distinctive mode of cultural philanthropy, Ruskin participated in the broader discourse of the period concerning the practice. In the Victorian era, it was common that private collectors of art had exhibitions open to the public; therefore the public nature of private collections and museum prevailed during the nineteenth century, the collections being regarded as “a part of national wealth” and a representation of high taste in art (Arakawa, “Two” 160). Moreover, in the process of universalizing this experience, municipal museums as they began to be established often borrowed the resources of the “wealthy elites” including private collectors by donations of money or of their own collections (K. Hill 45).

Nevertheless, locating his mode of cultural philanthropy in the context of typical Victorian practice may require some caution. Despite the similarity, Ruskin’s

approach was more public, ideal and disinterested. The political and ideological discourse behind the universalization of museums often showed a concern for higher classes of the society, particularly for the middle classes, rather than for the original target – the working classes (K. Hill 48). In contrast, Ruskin's more grass-roots practice aimed at the real "public," mainly workers. Furthermore, as his rejection of the municipal offer indicates (see pp. 116-17), his museum was initially out of the administrative realm which might have been tainted with the national South Kensington system (Arakawa, "Three" 309-10; K. Hill 46). In this respect, the museum was Ruskinian: it could be regarded as Ruskin's independent, private museum, open to the public for both for their sake and for his own. As Arakawa notes, "it was grounded only in Ruskin's vision but created as a cultural institution open to the public from scratch" ("Two" 167). By extending his personal habit of collecting to the public realm, the museum became a more open space; moreover, by publically donating his private collection, the objects undertook the process of conversion from private to public. Ruskin intended this to strengthen the public character of St. George's Museum, in keeping with his definition of "Local Museums" in "Modern Art."

Through his involvement in the Museum, Ruskin demonstrated a different type of figure from that he had shown to Hill, Bell and the Winnington girls. Here he appeared as a director and inventor of the Museum, expected to manage the expenditure rationally; as a passionate collector of objects of truth and beauty; and as a humble and generous benefactor of those objects, similar to St. Francis and Solomon. Yet those roles were wavering, and so were his emotions and impulses. However, above all, despite some hesitation, Ruskin identified himself as a Master of the Guild, who ultimately held control, and who pursued his duty. The St. George's Museum was a commonwealth, open to civic visitors, but under the control of Ruskin. In this respect, Ruskin may have seen it as a place where he could reign both as a public director and a private collector,

like Solomon the King over his kingdom. His was the commanding authority, and he gathered and distributed wisdom – treasures which had both an intrinsic and an educational value. Just as the king he so admired had done in the Biblical episode, Ruskin attempted cultural philanthropy as a “wise” art of spending – even though it did not always have successful results. Ruskin wrote to his father in a letter from the Alps in 1863:

*I have quite given up all thoughts of that house in Switzerland, now, though my doing so indicates a certain hopelessness and abandonment of all old thoughts & ways which would be little likely to serve me for church-building. I could build a beautiful little museum—or gallery. I could not build a church—most deeply do I wish I could. (WL 457)*

To Ruskin, the Museum was the Temple of Solomon that should be differentiated from other museums, temples only of degraded taste. As he played the role of master and king of the Museum, he was also expected to commit to such roles for the Companions and other Guild experiments. In the next section, we will examine how his mastership among them did embody his principles of charity – yet also experienced great difficulty in practice.

### **Ruskin and the Woollen industry: his Mastership and Companion**

“My own gifts lie more in the way of cataloguing minerals than of managing men” (29: 216), commented Ruskin in 1877. This is a striking, and convincing, confession. It sheds some light on why we might remember Ruskin through his hermitage at Brantwood, or his vigorous arrangements for the Museum, rather than his passionate interactions with the Guild Companions. It is notable that it is the establishment of the Museum which seems to stand out as a success, and which is often



favorably recounted, whereas the other agricultural and industrial experiments related to the Guild have been the subject of less positive critique and attention. For example, in Atwood's *Ruskin's Educational Ideals*, agricultural and industrial experiments receive only one paragraph in a brief note, whereas the Museum is the subject of far more pages, receiving deeper analysis as a model of Ruskin's ideals (154, 160-64). The biographer T. Hilton also offers more frequent references to the Museum than to any other activities of the Guild, concluding that "[a]s would soon become clear, the Guild of St George was well suited to making collections of precious objects. However, the Guild was a failure in its principal purpose of land-holding" (*Later* 353). Ruskin's charity during the 1870s and 80s also seems to be discussed mainly from the perspective of cultural philanthropy, highlighting his extensive engagement in the Guild Museum, and in other colleges and schools such as Oxford, Cambridge and Whitelands (Atwood 154-57; Birch, "What" 129-31).

Yet, this narrow focus on successful charitable practice makes us overlook the more complicated and different aspects of Ruskin's approach to charity during his last few decades. If the Museum reflected a brighter dimension of his charity, the other agricultural and industrial enterprises could have presented a darker side. As we traced in the introduction of this chapter, Frost demonstrated that it is in these experiments that we might see the misery of the nameless and neglected Companions. This suggests that this particular aspect of Ruskin's charity requires more analysis, and in this section I will explore it through a case study: Egbert Rydings and his work for St. George's Woollen Mill at Laxey, the Isle of Man. Then, I will enlarge my focus to the Guild Companionship as a whole in order to see Ruskin's role and influence as a Master in his last years through his relationship with the Companions.

### **Ruskin's relationship with Egbert Rydings**

Egbert Rydings, who was born into a silk weaver family from Failsworth in Lancaster, was a talented figure from an early age. Through his work at “a large silk factory” he obtained expertise about silk manufacture and also contributed as “a designer and assistant to the Master” and an accountant (King 15-16). After the marriage to a daughter of flax farmers in the Isle of Man in 1860, the Rydings with their baby boy decided to move to the wife's home due to the declining silk industry and failure in investment. Seeing the declining industry of flax in the area of Kionedroghad, the Rydings started a drapery at Laxey, where mining industry was thriving and the population was growing, and Egbert at the same time engaged in a new Co-operative society (King 18).

The first contact by Rydings might have taken place around the spring of 1875 through a letter, to which Ruskin responded on 18 June. In the autumn of that year Rydings gave up his current occupation due to his wife's illness, but his aspiration to be part of the Guild of St. George seemed to have been swelling. In his letter to Ruskin on 10 March 1876, disclosing his “past history” and showing his passion, understanding and loyalty to the Ruskinian way of living, Rydings claimed his eligibility to become a Companion, namely “Comites Consilii” (King 20-25), a type of Companion that allows their present work as before but enjoins them to follow the Guild's principles with “giving it the tenth of their income” (28: 539). To this, Ruskin wrote on 14 March 1876, “I most thankfully accept you as a Companion” (*ERL*). Rydings thus eventually became a Companion.

Rydings' letter to Ruskin shows his loyalty both to his Master and to his principles laid down in the writings of political economy and of working men's life including *Fors* and *Munera Pulveris*. Rydings was no less a devout reader of these

works. On 20 April 1876, Rydings wrote to Ruskin after his wife's death:

. . . Five years since I began to read *Fors*, and believed that was stated in them to be the truth; I began to shape my life according to their teachings. Three years later I read this passage in *Munera Pulveris*' p.168, ["]The law of life is, that a man should fix the sum he desires to make annually, as the food he desires to eat daily, and stay when he has reached the limit, refusing increase of business, and leaving it to others, so obtaining due freedom of time for better thoughts[.]” And fully believing in my Master and his teachings, this very passage was the cause of my taking the step I then did; so that whatever strength has been put forth during the past year of my life, your guiding influence has been to it both sun and showers. . . . I am out of employment at present, but could soon find employment if I wished. (*ERL*)

Ruskin must have been pleased to hear that he was helpful even to a worker who was living far away in the Isle of Man. From the beginning, he realized that this newly enrolled Companion would be a true follower of the Master. In an additional letter to the one dated 18 June 1875, Ruskin showed his personal interest in Rydings, “how it has come to pass that you are interested in my books, and collate them so carefully. I hardly ever find people really notice what I say anywhere – much less put two places together” (*ERL*). He was possibly the reader who read in such a way that Ruskin suggested in “The Kings’ Treasuries” of *Sesame and Lilies* (18: 63-65). Ruskin must have established a relation with Rydings similar to the one with Octavia Hill, grounded in trust, justice and obedience which he believed the basis of the relation between a master and a worker (cf. p. 60). In May 1876, though they had not yet met each other, Ruskin’s moral perception of Rydings’ honesty and trust in him was enough for him to accept the new Companion’s offer of checking the Guild accounts before its publication in *Fors*, since

this previous accountant noticed some errors in them (28: 585, 611). Rydings would have been a model Companion to Ruskin in that he once declined his salary of £70 as “Secretary of the Guild of St. George and Manager” of the Woollen Mill, considering that the salary exceeded his actual amount of work (*ERL*; *RL*). To Rydings, it was a just decision to him concerning his work, and he must have thought that it should be done rather in a voluntary spirit of charity. Nevertheless, the Master possibly had a different idea on the Companion’s work. In the same manner as he did to Hill, Ruskin might have thought that giving him a salary would be a just way to help Rydings, who had, after all, given up his previous occupation: this could be characterized as Ruskin’s way of showing his care for his disciple. The misunderstanding for each other ironically remained, but this episode also recorded a mutual exchange of moral feelings and affection between the Master and the Companion.

Ruskin’s care for this potential ideal Companion was notably best recorded in Rydings’ reminiscence of his visit at Brantwood. Ruskin’s letter written on 12 May 1876 implies Rydings’ consultation over his direct meeting with Ruskin at his house near Coniston Water. To this, Ruskin replies, “It is a great pleasure to me to hear that you can come and see me. I trust the delay in my reply, caused by various accidents, may not cause you inconvenience” (*ERL*). Ruskin’s lack of responsibility in the future is already foreseen here, but his welcome of this new Companion must have been the delightful event and assurance of the Companion’s contribution to society. Ruskin’s diary only briefly recorded Rydings’ visit at Brantwood a week later on 20 May: “Yesterday hazy—but beautiful in evening walking to Major Harrison’s with Mr Rydings” (*BD* 11). Yet, this direct interaction between the often inaccessible Master and the Companion witnessed Ruskin’s charity. After showing his study room facing the Coniston Water, Ruskin told Rydings:

“I must show you some minerals and precious stones, and whether you

understand them or not, you will see they are beautiful.” Then he opened a number of small drawers in a cabinet, lined with coloured silks, in which lay the stones, and though I had to confess that I did not understand them or their value, I could see they were very lovely.

(Rydings, “Some” 219)

This account of Rydings recalls Hill’s first visit at Ruskin’s Denmark Hill home full of pictures and sketches (cf. p. 54). Rydings’ tone and vocabulary are much calmer and more idyllic than that of a young, passionate girl, yet his reaction to the aesthetic experience seems not so different. Ruskin would have wanted the Companion to have a direct experience with the beautiful objects as he was intending to do through St. George’s Museum. Here again, Ruskin’s love and care for his Companion took the form of cultural philanthropy, just as it had done for his workers and pupils over the past two decades.

The purpose of Rydings’ visit at Brantwood was to discuss his proposal to revive the woollen industry, which was in decline due to the growing mine industry. Although the local textile industry of flax and wool was the major sector at Laxey during the nineteenth century, by 1870 it was replaced by mine industry which was more attractive to the younger generation (King 11-14). As Rydings’ wife and her mother had learnt homespun before, he had aspirations to revive such local handcraft industries, following the economic and communal principles that Ruskin had presented. Rydings soon embarked on the establishment of St. George’s Woollen Mill in June (*ERL*). Once the woollen industry at Laxey had started, the business was mostly undertaken by Rydings’ hands, with little support from the Master. On 12 December 1877, Rydings reported to his Master that he had started to rent a room as the place for the enterprise, together with current concerns about the prevailing smallpox nearby (*RL*). The next recorded, but undated letter was from Ruskin to Rydings, where Ruskin

expresses the possibility of looking after no other Guild enterprises but St. George's Museum: "The business is not less important to me than to you, but I cannot at this moment attend to anything but what I have in hand or I should break down. I am sorry – but you must sometimes think that I'm dead or I shall soon be so" (*RL*). Ruskin's tone here is almost desperate and sulky by a hint of his death. Ruskin's retreat from the engagement is notable here as was the case with Hill.

Such retirement cannot be always ascribed to his physical obstacles. Through examining the case of another Companion William Buchan Graham and his maltreatment by Baker at the Guild's agricultural enterprise at Bewdley, Frost claims that "Ruskin's neglectfulness, it must be noted, did not merely follow periods of mental collapse, but was a permanent feature, and he never considered inspecting operations at Bewdley himself" (*Lost* 177). Likewise, Ruskin seemingly never appeared in the Laxey Woollen Mill. Back in 1876, Ruskin already stated the excuse, "I have been so pushed lately – the beginning of Sheffield Museum and of St. George's Library, being extra work" (*ERL*). This already shows a glimpse of separate roles between Ruskin as a chief master of curating the museum and Companions as chief masters of industrial and agricultural enterprises.

Even so, Rydings had faith in the final authority of his Master, thus he made several attempts at contact either through letters or through a direct meeting, to which, unfortunately, Ruskin hardly gave prompt responses. According to Frost, this sort of puzzlement, which Rydings and Hill experienced, was also shared by Graham:

It is little wonder that he never knew how to react to Ruskin, and was always unsure of his position . . . he was also instructed to be patiently obedient, and that his own suffering was a form of ascetic service: at once special and subordinate, Graham never experienced the security he felt he had earned. (*Lost* 127)

Frost calls this Ruskin's mode of approaching Companions, "the offhand manner in which Ruskin assumed authority over his sensitive Companion" (*Lost* 127). As with the case with Hill, the relation could have been broken without Rydings' trust, reverence and obedience to his Master as well as their shared principles and interests – Rydings had a writing talent as seen in *Manx Tales* (1895). In comparison, Frost explains the case of another Companion James Burdon, "Nothing could have more damaged his relations with the Master than challenging Ruskin's authority and querying his intentions," as the result of which he received "a coldly dismissive response" from Ruskin (*Lost* 127, 128). It probably was how the relationships between Ruskin and some of the Pre-Raphaelites collapsed. These episodes above have disclosed another doubleness, or "counterpoint": Ruskin's self-awareness as being a paternal master shown in his care, sense of duty and authority, coupled, paradoxically, with his lack of responsibility and his mismanagement.

### **The web of relations in the Guild society**

The vertical relation between the Master and the Companions were thus maintained. Meanwhile, Ruskin's envisaged harmonious human society among its members faced difficulty. Rydings wrote a letter to Ruskin on 9 December 1882:

I fully expected, and I believe that was your hope, that the business would be supported by the members of the guild, — and the friends generally of St. George. However, that has not been the case. I have as yet done very little business with our friends, — but this may have arisen from their not knowing that we are in a position to do a good honest trade with them; but after Christmas, when the parcel post is in working order, I intend to let our friends know that we are still alive here and can serve them with good

honest wearing material, if they need some. (*RL*)

This precisely records his anxiety over unshared visions and little connection with other members. Rydings even hints that the other Companions afforded little recognition of the industry at Laxey and Rydings himself as a Companion. It is obvious that the “horizontal” relationships among Companions were not as strong as Ruskin and Rydings envisaged.

This dispersed web of the Companions’ connections itself embodies the ambivalence between Ruskin’s mastership and his belief in the instinctive crystallization of the members. He certainly held the authority as he did for the Museum, but he might have expected the Companions to assume authority of their own, or to establish the interconnectedness themselves. For example, Ruskin seems to have asked Rydings to arrange the work placement for Graham at the farm of the Isle of Man. In a letter dated 12 May 1876, he thanked to Rydings, “How kind you are about G –,” which might have referred to Graham (*ERL*). It is assumed, however, that Ruskin withdrew from the matter afterwards, leaving little interaction between Rydings and Graham. After a long period neglecting Graham’s appalling condition at the farm, Ruskin finally intervened by asking Rydings to send “useful dress” over to Graham (Frost, *Lost* 126). On another occasion, in September 1879, Graham, who was insufficiently paid by another Companion, Baker, at the farm in Bewdley and “was treated as a labourer who might expedite future communities but not be a member of them” (Frost, *Lost* 176), asked Ruskin for help for sustenance. Ruskin promised to provide some necessities, but Graham was left to ask Baker about his wages first, which was by no means an easy task for him. Graham ended up being saved by his landlady (Frost, *Lost* 176). These episodes illustrate Ruskin’s attempt to trigger some interactions among the Companions, demonstrating his non-interventionist, or “self-help” approach. After all, as Hewison claims, Ruskin might have wanted “that people should be, not his devoted disciples, but



responsible for themselves” (“Afterword” 227). Here we see another form of Ruskin’s contradictory and mingled approach to charity both as an interventionist and a non-interventionist.

In the January 1874 *Fors* letter, Ruskin expressed:

If I could find any one able to carry on the plan instead of me, I never should trouble myself about it more; and even now, it is only with extreme effort and chastisement of my indolence that I go on: but, unless I am struck with palsy, I do not seriously doubt my perseverance, until I find somebody able to take up the matter in the same mind, and with a better heart. (28: 22-23)

As the letter shows, whether it was for or against Companions’ wishes, it would have been a great relief for Ruskin to finally find those who would undertake the mastership. Yet, it took more time for such disciples to realize Ruskin’s ideal society across the barriers both of physical distance and emotional aloofness. It was much harder for them to strengthen their bonds than today, given that they were working at different places across the country, the Isle of Man, the Lake District, Wales and Yorkshire with few means for interaction. Although Ruskin reported the current affairs of each business through *Fors*, as T. Hilton pointed out (*Later* 307), this might have been the only means for the Companions to comprehend what had been promoted in different parts of the Guild society. The Guild society, established on their consciousness of belonging through the print circulation of *Fors*, was initially more or less similar to what Benedict Anderson called an “imagined” community (6).<sup>29</sup> In fact they had some opportunities for face-to-face meetings, including Annual General Meetings which started in 1879. Yet, most of the time, their only recourse must have been to his Master and to

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<sup>29</sup> Anderson sees “print capitalism” which enabled the administrative vernacular language to prevail as a key for the creation of the new imagined communities (37-46).

commitment to his principles. When the Master began to relinquish his authority over the Companions and loosened the reins around 1885, it was their loyalty and admiration to Ruskin as well as their inheritance of his spirit that appeared to bind Companions and maintain the web of the society in the Guild. In the words of T. Hilton's concise summary: "With his illness of 1885 the Guild of St George did not come to a complete halt. We may trust that it was maintained by *individual* members in their *separate* ways" (*Later* 519; my emphasis).<sup>30</sup> We would need to wait for direct and strong interconnectedness among the Companions until Ruskin's death in 1900, when they would have more keenly realized the importance of cooperation and helpfulness in order to cherish and pass down Ruskin's legacy.

## Conclusion

The St. George's Museum at Walkley was a concrete example of Ruskin's charitable mind, approach and moral principles that he developed through his earlier years. His engagement in the enterprise also demonstrated his responsibility and duty as a master and a possessor of a material asset. His sense of official duty being mingled with his private enthusiasm in objects and collecting, the locus of the Museum became not only ideal but also practical. On the contrary, his way of involving himself in other industrial and agricultural enterprises was much less authoritative. He mostly relied on the Companions who undertook the mastership in each business, which clearly marks, together with his seclusion and retirement into Brantwood, his gradual handing over of the mastership and duty to others, in the same way as he expected moral education to prevail by being passed down through demonstrations (see p. 64). For example, St. George's Woollen Mill led by Rydings became one of the leading industries in the Isle

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<sup>30</sup> For different schemes of each Companion, see Dearden 21-22; T. Hilton, *Later* 519-20. Works and legacy from Ruskin for his assistants, see T. Hilton, *Later* 520-25.

of Man. He advertised the enterprise and its products “at the prestigious 1892 Isle of Man International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art” (King 43). The Mill, established by Rydings, has been passed over through the hands of several generations, and still continues to produce handcrafts at Laxey (“History”). In this way, Ruskin’s as well as Rydings’ principles and spirits have been rooted in the island to the present day. As for the Museum, too, Henry Swan was in charge of “a Curator to the Sheffield Museum” from 1876 (28: 529), and then, on the transfer from Walkley to Meersbrook Park in 1890, William White succeeded him (30: xlix). Now the Ruskin collection, the donated objects by Ruskin, are preserved, curated and beautifully displayed in the Millennium Gallery of Museums Sheffield. The 1870s and the early 1880s signaled Ruskin’s final performance of charitable activities but paradoxically in both vigorous and retiring ways. From the 1890s onwards, through the death of its Master in 1900, the main activities of the Guild have been in the hands of his disciples. In the next concluding chapter, I will reconsider Ruskin’s practical activities we have seen so far by locating them in the context both of his whole life and of the broader nineteenth century. I will also expand our view of his ideas and practices of charity to encompass his posthumous influence.

## Conclusion

This thesis attempts to determine the concepts and motives underlying Ruskin's charity, and the backgrounds that shaped them. It then seeks to bridge Ruskin's theory and practice of charity by analyzing how the central concepts and theories were embodied and presented in practical acts. In order to address the first issue, the first chapter delves into his biographical and historical background including the influence of his family, his religious education, and the cultural and social climate of the nineteenth century. My close reading and examination of Ruskin's primary materials including letters exchanged among his family explores the impulses behind his charity alongside his principal theories. The analysis reveals that historical and family surroundings, dating back to the earliest part of his life, shaped his core principles of love and justice, and informed his approach to charity.

Subsequent chapters then analyze his practice of charity chronologically, and in closer detail. Each case study deals with a certain period of the 1850s, 60s and 70s-80s according to Ruskin's different life stages, tracing his shifting religious convictions and the focus of his interests. My studies examine not only the principles of love and justice he was keen to carry out but also his diverse modes of support. This approach of using individual case studies allows us to go deeper into the web of Ruskin's extensive activities and intricate relations with his beneficiaries, and discloses many and various strands and aspects of Ruskin's charity. By carefully looking at his theories and practice together for each case study, this thesis also spotlights his complex emotional climate and its conflicts, long obscured behind his many different practical activities. Through these investigations, by interconnecting the theoretical and practical aspects of charity, the thesis has demonstrated that Ruskin's modes of charity took various forms both metaphorical and literal: metaphorical in a sense that his practice embodied

principles of charity, and literal in a sense that he actually provided material and monetary support. First, his commitment to the principles of love and justice examined in the first chapter was clear in his caring and vigorous engagement in his beneficiaries to the extent that he overworked himself. His tendency to assign work rather than providing direct financial aid suggests his attitude towards the nineteenth-century debate on relief and poverty. His art of spending and cultural philanthropy challenged the justification of luxurious consumption and contributed to the universalization of education through appreciation of objects such as art, minerals and books. All of these may be seen as contributing to the larger “noble” aim that Ruskin wanted to achieve for social betterment and advancement of happiness in life for all.

My attempt to reconsider Ruskin’s practice of charity in the interlinking context of religious and family background and his discourse of gender has offered a broader picture of the nature of Ruskin’s charity, and his charitable behavior, invoking further argument on medievalism and paternalism of the day. His close attachment to the Bible through his mother’s lessons is significant; he regarded love and affection no less as Christian values than feminine attributes that the Victorians were likely to identify with. In this respect, Ruskin claimed these core values of charity should be embraced by both men and women even if they are considered feminine. As he was “often seen by his contemporaries as in some way feminine, or unmanly” (Birch, “Ruskin’s” 311), his approach to charity may be seen as having some feminine connotations, but to him it also embodied an ideal gentlemanly form of moral temper. Informed by the model of a Christian God who cares for His Children, love and affection often took a paternalistic form in Ruskin’s charity. This approach also suggests Ruskin’s indebtedness to the chivalric and medieval legacy of “patriarchal hospitality”

(28: 131); what Marcus Waithe sees as “the paternalism of antique hospitality” (xiii).<sup>31</sup> Because of this paternalistic aspect, Ruskin’s charity also required obedience and love from his beneficiaries, without which his interfering relationship with them would not have been otherwise understood, accepted and cultivated. Nevertheless, as we have seen, Ruskin’s desire to intervene and direct was often undercut by his self-doubt and hesitation, illustrated by his erratic withdrawal from his practice.

Thus, through charity, Ruskin participated in the nineteenth-century discourses of political economy, gender, religion, the surging revival of medievalism, and the influence of the reform movement on public education. Ruskin was also deeply involved in a broader culture of charity, sharing in the cultural consciousness and feelings attached to its practice in Victorian England. Since his childhood, Ruskin’s father had sought to imbue him with a strong sense of duty to use his gifts of intellect and wealth for social betterment, as expressed in a letter to him. The culture of charity at home promoted by both of his parents must have also nurtured Ruskin’s social obligation and his sense of his charitable duty, as a gentleman from a well-to-do family. The increase of this sense of duty accompanied by guilt paralleled his clear recognition of the need for immediate relief of social misery that capitalism and wars had generated, which was later accelerated by his inheritance from his father in 1864. This personal agony and sense of pressing motivation was a shared emotion and impulse particularly among contemporary upper- and middle-class Victorians.

The renewal of the concept of condescension as part of the culture of philanthropy through the Victorian age, however, is fraught with contradictions, similar to those which cluster around the act of benevolence. Daniel Siegel argues that in the world of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, “condescending gestures and tones of voice solved problems rather than causing them” (3) between the classes,

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<sup>31</sup> For the discussion on Ruskin’s hospitality, see Waithe 22-31.

whereas in the Victorian age, through the social shift to liberalism, condescension “represented the grasping determination of a ruling elite to maintain status distinctions and stifle reform” (4). Through this conceptual and cultural shift, he suggests that the Victorian philanthropists had to face “the contest between these two forces – the confidence but also the anxiety that charity’s effects could no longer be reliably squared with its intentions” (9). This Victorian reaction to the culture of condescension suggests how the act of charity was entangled with self-complacency over good deeds, or self-consciousness concerning class differences. Likewise, Ruskin’s explanation of his purchase and accumulation of drawings and minerals for the Guild of St. George as a “national store” discloses his self-consciousness of his benevolent act on one hand and his class consciousness as being rich on the other, with a sense of compunction which led him to develop a more vigorous mode of charitable practice in the 1870s.

This contest between goodness and selfishness – a common pattern in Victorian England – also took the shape of voracious engagement in charitable practice for Ruskin, alternated with sudden withdrawal. This great Victorian’s mind was kaleidoscopic, frequently affected by his own thoughts and surroundings. On the one hand, he confesses his own pleasure in escaping from the outer world and its concerns, while on the other hand also desiring to war against social misery. In other words, Ruskin tended to internalize the act of charity, linking the practice to his own emotional climate, mental state and events happening around him, but also externalizing it by presenting himself as an active, paternalistic figure that reaches out to society for change. In this respect, just as charity itself in the period might be seen to move back and forth between public (social) and private (domestic) spheres, Ruskin’s own practice might also be seen to oscillate between internal, personal desire – his pursuit of his own hermit-like pleasure – and his social, public desire to be useful to others by exerting his intellectual capacity and utilizing the material assets of his privilege. These conflicting directions

were exactly the force that created the dynamism of Ruskin's charity.

His conflicting and evasive behavior was unsurprisingly echoed by his critical reception, as Ruskin might also have foreseen. Ruskin was convinced that his work would never be perfect, unlike the Almighty's. In the second volume of *The Stones of Venice*, he wrote:

Do what you can, and confess frankly what you are unable to do; neither let your effort be shortened for fear of failure, nor your confession silenced for fear of shame. And it is, perhaps, the principal admirableness of the Gothic schools of architecture, that they thus receive the results of the labour of inferior minds; and out of fragments full of imperfection, and betraying that imperfection in every touch, indulgently raise up a stately and unaccusable whole. (10: 190)

Although he sought to get rid of social misery by practices and warnings and possibly to slay it as St. George did the dragon, he must have realized that, like the Gothic masons he describes, he was an imperfect figure. At the same time, he also believed that his effort should be worth continuing. With the Christian virtue of modesty, Ruskin pursued "The Task of the Least" (7: 217-29) – individual, best effort, "however small" (7: 227), to contribute to a whole – and must have had expectations that future generations might complete the integral whole that he originally began drawing.

However motley, unstable and imperfect his charitable practices were, Ruskin's legacy was firmly established through the beneficiaries and participants of his charity. After all, the moral principles that underpinned Ruskin's charity were formidable and passed down to the generation that followed their master. For example, Octavia Hill, whom we closely looked at in the second chapter, undertook cultural philanthropy, including her housing scheme, and the establishment of the National Trust.



Unsurprisingly, another key figure for this foundation was Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley, a participant in Ruskin's drawing classes and Hinksey roadmaking as an Oxford undergraduate and one of the Companions of the Guild later (30: 86).<sup>32</sup> In most cases, those who inherited and implemented Ruskin's principles were his enlightened pupils. The Companions of the Guild notably included a Winnington Hall pupil, Dora Livesey, and a pupil from the Working Men's College, Henry Swan, who would play an important role as a curator at St. George's Museum. Although they did not become Companions, many figures, exemplified by Octavia Hill and Arnold Toynbee, involved in the Oxford roadmaking (Waterson 24), were nonetheless inspired by Ruskin and carried out their own integral approach to charity and social reform. As Ruskin wished during his lifetime, seeds he sowed through his acts of charity went on to flourish, ready to blow the next seeds to spread love and justice.

The 1904 annual meeting of the Guild at the Ruskin Museum (Meersbrook, Sheffield) marks the establishment of horizontal Companionship that Ruskin and Rydings were longing for. An article from the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* issued in 1904 records the Companions' direct interaction – they came from different regions and communities – London, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Bewdley, Ambleside and Keswick (“Ruskin's” 7). Despite their individual work at different places, they also started to cooperate with one another in an attempt to resolve Sheffield's contemporary environmental and industrial problems. Even in the twenty-first century world, the legacy of Ruskin's Companionship and principles exist in the Guild. The present Companions of the Guild work to implement and proliferate Ruskin's principles collaboratively, albeit independently, both within and outside the UK. This was notably marked in Ruskin's bicentenary year, 2019, which also celebrated his legacy in our

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<sup>32</sup> The history of foundation and how the Octavia Hill and Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley as well as another founder Robert Hunter engaged in it are counted with reference to Ruskin in Waterson 14-38.

contemporary world.

For example, the previous farming experiment at Bewdley is integrated into the present “Ruskin in Wyre” project in Ruskin Land, “an area of the Wyre Forest near Bewdley,” with the support of the Wyre Community Land Trust. In order “to ensure that it will remain *‘beautiful, peaceful and fruitful’* for centuries to come,” this undertakes the advancement of ecological, communal and aesthetic principles of Ruskin, and one of the projects “deepened the links between the community and the forest” (“Ruskin in Wyre”). As part of this larger program, “Ruskin in Wyre,” receiving benefit “from the resources of this area of outstanding natural beauty, and from the skills and expertise of the people who live and work on the land” (“Ruskin in Wyre”), aims to promote useful production including wood handcrafts, “pasture fed beef,” and agricultural products (*Wyre*).

The Big Draw, previously the Campaign for Drawing, founded in 2000 by the Guild of St. George, has “promote[d] the universal language of drawing as a tool for learning, expression and invention” as a charitable institution (“About Us”). It has also supported artists by establishing The John Ruskin Prize with the Guild (“The Ruskin Prize”), inheriting Ruskin’s spirit as the prize honors his name. Now the Big Draw encourages flourishing events worldwide, both within and outside Britain, advancing the significant role of art education in society.

Ruskin Mill Trust, which also has strong affiliations to the Guild, adopts a unique pedagogic approach called “Practical Skills Therapeutic Education (PSTE)” method that draws its inspiration from the insights of Rudolf Steiner, John Ruskin and William Morris (“Practical”). This promotes “holistic learning by role modelling positive relationships in the fields of arts, crafts, commerce, agriculture, nutrition, living skills and the environment” (“Our”). Such a purpose clearly reflects Ruskin’s educational principles of liberal arts, and interdisciplinary ways of learning; it

emphasizes the importance of self-sufficient work. Particularly, Ruskin's admiration for craftsmanship unified by "the hand, the head, and the *heart*" (16: 294) may be seen to be continued by one of its colleges called Freeman College in Sheffield. This offers education through "[w]orkshop sessions such as metallurgy, forging, jewellery, textiles, and the arts" ("Freeman"), encouraging direct engagement with materials, and the production of handcrafts.

Within and outside the Guild, this variety of projects and places can be seen to make up a helpful and sustainable society through the work of Companions, artists or academics, as Ruskin once envisaged:

A pure or holy state of anything, therefore, is that in which all its parts are helpful or consistent. They may or may not be homogeneous. The highest or organic purities are composed of many elements in an entirely helpful state. The highest and first law of the universe—and the other name of life is, therefore, "help." (7: 207)

Although the history of Ruskin's charity was marked both by internal conflict, and by conflict with the contemporary tide of fashion, these projects and institutions inspired by Ruskin have established a larger and more interdisciplinary helpfulness across the country and overseas. It was what Ruskin ambitiously anticipated, when explaining his experiment with land in *Fors*, "I am yet thinking out my system on a scale which shall be fit for wide European work" (28: 424). Under Ruskinian but globally adopted principles, people involved in the projects can be considered practitioners of Ruskin's charity, responding to Ruskin's call: "'To do good work, whether you live or die,' it is the entrance to all Princedoms; and if not done, the day will come, and that infallibly, when you must labour for evil instead of good" (27: 347-48). Through individual but also cooperative work, Ruskin's legacy of charity continues to create "the entrance to all Princedoms."

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