

*The Rescue of Romanticism: Walter Pater and John Ruskin* by Kenneth Daley. Athens: Ohio UP, 2001. xii, 176 pp. ISBN: 0-8214-1382-1. \$39.95.

Kenneth Daley has given us the first detailed study of John Ruskin's influence on Walter Pater. The topic is sufficiently ambitious that Daley would have been justified in taxing the reader with a much longer book. As it is, in four chapters and a brief introduction and conclusion, he admirably accomplishes what is needed by focusing on Pater and Ruskin as theorists of romanticism, which enables him to itemize crucial differences between the two critics while exploring the ambiguities of Pater's debt to Ruskin.

The rescue of romanticism in Daley's title refers to Pater's having to save romanticism from Ruskin's negative critique, "which associates modern romantic art with antinomianism, faithlessness, and social anarchy." The title is borrowed from a 1940 essay by Jacques Barzun, who defended romanticism against humanist and New Critical scapegoating. Barzun and others in this century stand in a tradition that, in Daley's view, descends from Pater as "the first literary theorist in England to attempt an explicit defence against the accusations that romanticism promotes egotism and a disregard of social life." Although Daley categorizes his book with those exploring Pater's orientation to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century rather than modernist aesthetics, in this ethical defence of romanticism he concludes that Pater's relation to Ruskin is "paradigmatic of subsequent theories of romanticism."

The relation between the two critics is complex since – despite Ruskin's hostile critique of romanticism, a critique that was taken up by succeeding conservative critics to be hurled against Pater himself – Pater inherited much of his thinking about romanticism by way of Ruskin. This paradox arose from Ruskin's ambivalent approval of "noble" characteristics of Gothic romance mixed with profound disgust over what he viewed as the degradation of romance in modernism. Pater rejects Ruskin's criticism while recognizing an ambivalence in the elder critic that could be "transform[ed] ... into the essence of [Pater's] own theory of the romantic." The process of this rhetorical transformation is examined, first, by comparing the critics' conceptualizations of Wordsworth and of the Renaissance and, then, by examining Pater's direct experience of and response to Ruskin at Oxford. Daley vividly shows how doctrines so overwhelmingly thundered by the Slade Professor of Art underwent a somewhat muted but decisive transformation in Pater's essays.

Daley appears to arrange his chapters so as to trace a growing ambivalence in Ruskin toward romanticism, whereby it is especially the Oxford Ruskin who sponsors Pater's "critique of Ruskin's historical narrative" mixed with "an endorsement of Ruskin's own revision of that narrative, a revision that becomes even more explicit in [Ruskin's] Oxford lectures of the 1870s" (65). Because