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Rethinking John Ruskin's "Imagination Contemplative"

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In *Modern Painters II* (1846), John Ruskin illustrates the imaginative faculty in three forms. The first "Imagination Penetrative" penetrates, analyzes, and reaches truths; the second "Imagination Associative" creates new forms by combination; and the third "Imagination Contemplative" treats, or regards, both the simple images and its own combinations in peculiar ways. In this paper, I would like to reconsider especially the function of "Imagination Contemplative". This imagination is based on the indistinctness of "conception" existing in the brain in a visible form, but can rise towards more vivid experience by giving to its abstract being self-consistency and reality.

The characteristic of "Imagination Contemplative" is closely examined in the 1850s. Ruskin thinks that Turner, by relating facts imaginatively, not only seizes transient effects, but also reproduces general impressions of all the surrounding landscape on the mind of the spectator of his "poetical" pictures; and such vigorous "Imagination Contemplative" as Turner possesses is characterized by a sort of childish perception meeting all the visible and governable things around him.