



***The Eighth Lamp: Ruskin Studies Today***

**No 9 2014**

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Edited by

Anuradha Chatterjee and Laurence Roussillon-Constanty

ISSN 2049-3215

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Surface and depth, persistent Ruskin!

It's been yet another exciting year for Ruskin scholars worldwide as a fair number of events either celebrated Ruskin or revealed yet unknown facets of his life and works. Among them the splendid exhibition *John Ruskin: Artist and Observer* (jointly organized by the Scottish National Portrait Gallery and the National Gallery of Canada)—the most extensive to date devoted to Ruskin's achievements as an artist in his own right—provided a unique and memorable almost first-hand experience with the critic's acute sense of detail and astonishing drawing skills. First housed as it was in the *Scottish National Portrait Gallery*, a Gothic style building so resonant with Ruskin's writings on Gothic architecture, the exhibition just seemed at home.

Indeed perhaps this is the first time the name Ruskin—as uttered by the local Scottish museum custodian rolling the “r”—was heard to echo through the centuries and sound like the familiar name of a friend or relative. No doubt the sensation of familiarity wasn't shared in the same way abroad (see below for a review of the exhibition as seen at the National Gallery of Canada) or else in Mike Leigh's recent film, *Mr Turner* (2014), in which, as Philip Hoar rightly summed up, the artist, “played by Joshua McGuire, is a simpering Blackadderish caricature of an art intellectual: a lisping, red-headed, salon fop.” (For full review, see: <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/oct/07/john-ruskin-emma-thompson-mike-leigh-film-art>).

In these conflicting views of Ruskin what prevails is the public interest in his personality as well as his remarkable and extensive oeuvre, and that from being an observer, Ruskin has now become observed by a new generation of scholars addressing lesser-known aspects of his commitments or questioning what has so far been taken for granted.

The Eighth Lamp No. 9 features two referred articles. Patrick McDonald brings focus back to the somewhat under researched aspect of “Albert Fleming's attempt to revive hand spinning and weaving in Westmoreland (the Langdale Linen industry) and publication of the handmade, illustrated anthology of spinning and weaving literature from Homer to Wordsworth, *Songs of the Spindle and Legends of the Loom*.” Marjorie Cheung expands Ruskin's theory of word painting by arguing that “the representation of colour in language is one of the defining linguistic characteristics of Victorian word-painting, as can be clearly seen in the British Periodical Database and in Ruskin's own theory.”

The issue also features four reviews—three book reviews and one exhibition review. Cynthia Gamble says that the *Marriage of Inconvenience* “is a piece of clever, compelling detective work based on years of research in archives and libraries in Britain and America. Steady application, stamina, and determination have produced a *magnum opus* with arguments difficult to refute. The author has the gift of storytelling, combined with academic rigour. I loved the endnotes too!” As did we. Anita Grants astutely notes that in *Building Ruskin's Italy* Stephen Kite is able to show “Ruskin's process rather than on simply including the better known and more finished products with which we are familiar,” and in “going beyond the boundaries of

Venice”, he reminds us “how Ruskin stretched his understanding of Italian Gothic architecture, and of his joy of discovery.”

Rachel Dickinson’s review of Talia Schaffer’s *Novel Craft: Victorian Domestic Handicraft & Nineteenth-Century Fiction* is a reading relation to Ruskin.” Dickinson argues that while “Ruskin is not her main focus, Talia Schaffer’s *Novel Craft: Victorian Domestic Handicraft & Nineteenth-Century Fiction* sheds light on Ruskin’s use of craft and textiles within his broader project to improve society, placing his writings within wider contexts and noting ways in which he mirrored and inspired craft-related ideals and activities in the Victorian period.” Anita Grants also reviews the exhibition, *John Ruskin: Artist and Observer*, at National Gallery of Canada. She notes that the exhibition features “hundred and forty sketches, watercolours, and daguerreotypes featured in this exhibition span five decades and reflect Ruskin’s powers of observation as well as his gifts as an artist.” Indeed the act of seeing and the depth and breadth of the visual world captured by Ruskin will continue to be relevant to questions of perception.

Furthermore, this has been a productive year for scholars working on Ruskin monographs. We are looking forward to reading as well as reading reviews of Caroline Ings-Chambers’s *Louisa Waterford and John Ruskin: “for you have not falsely praised”* (Oxford: Legenda, February 2015); Jeffrey Richards’ *The Golden Age of Pantomime: Slapstick, Spectacle and Subversion in Victorian England* (London: IB Taurius, 2014); Mark Frost’s *Lost Companions and John Ruskin’s Guild of St George: A Revisionary History* (London; New York: Anthem Press, 2014) and Octavia Randolph’s novel, *Light, Descending* (Exemplar Editions, December 2014). A big thanks to Rachel Dickinson, Mark Frost, Professor Liliane Louvel, and Laurence Roussillon-Constanty, in reviewing the articles. Our continued gratitude to the Editorial Board for the unrelenting support and guidance.

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## EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS



### **Cynthia Gamble**

Dr Cynthia Gamble is a visiting Fellow of The Ruskin Library and Research Centre, Lancaster University, and Vice-Chairman of the Ruskin Society. She is the author of *Proust as Interpreter of Ruskin: The Seven Lamps of Translation* (Summa Publications, 2002) and *John Ruskin, Henry James and the Shropshire Lads* (New European Publications, 2008), a work that was inspired by her Shropshire heritage. She has co-authored many works on Anglo-French cross currents such as *'A Perpetual Paradise': Ruskin's Northern France* (Lancaster University, 2002) and *Ruskin-Turner. Dessins et voyages en Picardie romantique* (Musée de Picardie, Amiens, 2003), and finds particular inspiration in working with two languages and cultures. She contributed 14 entries to the *Dictionnaire Marcel Proust* (Honoré Champion, Paris, 2004), a work that was awarded the prestigious Prix Émile Faguet de l'Académie Française. Although currently based in London, she has lived and worked in Belgium and France for considerable periods of time and has taught at lycées in Quimperlé and Grenoble and in schools, colleges and universities throughout England. She is a graduate of the Université de Grenoble and London University.



**Iolanda Ramos**

Iolanda Ramos is Assistant Professor of English Studies at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal. Her Ph.D. thesis on Ruskin's social and political thought, entitled *O Poder do Pó: O Pensamento Social e Político de John Ruskin 1819-1900*, was published by the Gulbenkian Foundation in 2002. She has contributed to the volume *Ruskin in Perspective: Contemporary Essays* with the essay "Museums for the People: A Signifying Practice of Order within a Community" (ed. Carmen Casaliggi and Paul March-Russell, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007). She has published widely in the field of Victorian Studies, mainly on political, economic and gender aspects in reference to cultural and utopian studies. She has been carrying out research as part of the project "Mapping Dreams: British and North-American Utopianism" within the Centre for English, Translation and Anglo-Portuguese Studies (CETAPS), and she is a member of the Advisory Board of *Spaces of Utopia: An Electronic Journal* (<<http://ler.letras.up.pt>> ISSN 1646-4729). Her research interests include visual studies, intercultural communication, and translation studies (19th-21st century).



**Emma Sdegno**

Emma Sdegno teaches nineteenth-century English literature and literary translation at Ca' Foscari University, Venice. She graduated in English Language and Literature at Ca' Foscari, and in the A.Y. 1991-1992 attended the MA in "Literature and the Visual Arts, 1840-1940" at the University of Reading (UK), where she

started a research work on Ruskin, which would be developed and expanded in her PhD dissertation on the rhetorical strategies in *Modern Painters*, submitted at Venice University. She has written mainly on Victorian literature and culture and extensively on Ruskin. Some of her contributions on his art critical prose and twentieth-century reception were presented at the international conferences on Ruskin's European legacy, i.e.: *Ruskin and Tuscany*, Sheffield-Lucca 1993 (J. Clegg and P. Tucker, org.); *Ruskin and Modernism*, Milano-Vercelli, September 1997 (G. Cianci and T. Cerutti org.); *L'eredità italiana di Ruskin*, Firenze, 2000 (P. Tucker and D. Lamberini, org.); "Posterité de Ruskin", Lille, Fr. June 2009 ( J. Prugnaud, I. Lenaud-Lechien). With K. Hanley and R. Dickinson (Lancaster University) she organized the international conference "Ruskin, Venice, and 19th-century Cultural Travel," hosted in Venice, VIU and Scuola Grande di San Rocco, on September 26–28, 2008. Her current interests concern Ruskin in the broader context of modern theory on landscape and nineteenth-century travel writing, and is engaged in a project with Lausanne University on Ruskin's Franco-Swiss tours.



**Helena Gurfinkel**

Helena Gurfinkel received her PhD in English from Tufts University. She is an Assistant Professor of English at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in Victorian literature, critical and cultural theory, and gender and sexuality studies. She is the author of articles on Oscar Wilde, J.R. Ackerley, Anthony Trollope, and Alan Hollinghurst, among others. Her book manuscript considers non-traditional fatherhood in Victorian and twentieth-century British literature. Her other interests include psychoanalytic theory, Diaspora studies, and masculinity studies. She is a co-editor of *UpStage: A Journal of Turn-of-the-Century Theatre*.





**Anita Grants**

Anita Grants teaches in the Department of Art History at Concordia University in Montreal (Canada). Her PhD (Concordia, 2006) examined the nature of the influence of John Ruskin on art, architecture and art education in Canada during the second half of the nineteenth century. Her MA (Concordia 1995) considered how some of the more radical theories of the mid-nineteenth century, including Ruskin's, had a direct impact on the life and work of Canadian painter/educator Arthur Lismer. Dr. Grants has taught courses at Concordia on nineteenth and twentieth century art and architecture, as well as on art and propaganda, Leonardo da Vinci and pop culture, and on Pop Art. She is a regular invited lecturer at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; her topics have included decorative arts, the painting of Edouard Vuillard, artistic life in early twentieth-century Paris, and the role of English art in the films of Alfred Hitchcock.



**Carmen Casaliggi**

Dr Carmen Casaliggi is a Lecturer in English at the University of Wales in Cardiff, UK. Her research interests include the relationship between literature and the visual arts, Romanticism, Ruskin and nineteenth-century European literature and culture. She has published several articles on Ruskin and Turner and her collection of essays (co-edited with Paul March-Russell) - *Ruskin in Perspective: Contemporary Essays* was published by Cambridge Scholars in 2007 (pbk 2010). For the Routledge Studies in Romanticism Series she is now editing an anthology entitled *Romantic Legacies: Literature, Aesthetics, Landscape* (forthcoming, 2012).



### **Bénédicte Coste**

Bénédicte Coste is Professeur des Universités, Université de Bourgogne, Dijont. She has taught English at the University of Montpellier and translation at City University (London). She has translated some 20 essays by Walter Pater (including essays on Greek art and mythology, Houdiard, 2010), and Ruskin's *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* ( Michel Houdiard, 2010) as well as essays by A. Symons et B. Berenson (Houdiard 2009 & 2010). She has published *Pater Critique littéraire* (Ellug, 2010). Her book-length study of Pater's aesthetics will be published by PULM in Spring 2011.



### **Rachel Dickinson**

Rachel Dickinson is a Principal Lecturer (Research & Knowledge Exchange) and Programme Leader (English Literature) in the Interdisciplinary Studies Department at Manchester Metropolitan University's Cheshire campus. Prior to that, she was an AHRC Post-Doctoral Research Associate on the three-year 'John Ruskin, Cultural Travel and Popular Access' project based at Lancaster University's Ruskin Centre. Her PhD (Lancaster, 2005) was published as *John Ruskin's Correspondence with Joan Severn: Sense and Nonsense Letters* (Legenda, 2009). Her current research focuses on textiles as part of a wider interest in Ruskin-inspired sustainability; she curated an exhibition at Lancaster University's Ruskin Library "Teaching Silkworms to

Spin”: Ruskin and Textiles’ (May–September 2013). She is a Companion of the Guild of St George, the charity for arts, craft and the rural economy founded by Ruskin, and became a Director in 2014.



**Sara Atwood**

Sara Atwood took her doctorate at The Graduate Center/City University of New York with a dissertation on Ruskin and education. She is a frequent contributor to the *Ruskin Review and Bulletin* and has recently contributed essays—on *Fors Clavigera*, Ruskin and Darwinism, and the Platonic aspects of Ruskin’s educational philosophy—to *Nineteenth-Century Prose* and *Carlyle Studies Annual*. She has acted as guest editor for a special issue on Ruskin of *Nineteenth-Century Prose*, forthcoming Autumn 2011 and has contributed an essay to an edition of Carlyle’s *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* to be published as part of Yale University Press’s *Rethinking the Western Tradition* series in 2012. Her book, *Ruskin’s Educational Ideals*, was published by Ashgate in February 2011. She is currently pursuing further research on Ruskin and Plato. Sara Atwood is a member of the Advisory Board of the *Ruskin Review and Bulletin*



**Mark Frost**

Mark Frost's research interests arise out of the works of John Ruskin, and have a particular emphasis on nineteenth-century scientific contexts and the interplay in Ruskin's work of materiality, creativity, and culture. He is current researching the contextualisation of Ruskin's natural histories in relation to eighteenth century scientific models, nineteenth-century materialism (and especially the twin sciences of ecology and evolutionary theory), Evangelicalism, and Romanticism. This will take the form of a monograph proposal, but has also yielded articles in *Journal of Victorian Culture*, *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism* (both forthcoming) and *Eighth Lamp: Ruskin Studies*. Recent archival research has led to a contracted monograph on Ruskin's Guild of St. George, due in December 2012, the first standard work on this subject for thirty years. He is an annotations contributor to the Routledge ABES project and was also involved in the Leverhulme-funded Electronic Edition of John Ruskin's *Modern Painters I* at the Ruskin Programme, Lancaster University.

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

**Content:** *The Eighth Lamp: Ruskin Studies Today* (ISSN 2049–3215) invites contributors to submit scholarly papers (8,000–10,000 or 3500–4000 words), ideas for book reviews, exhibition reviews, news and events, titles of publications and projects in progress, and creative work and abstracts related to John Ruskin and related nineteenth century scholarship. The journal is circulated to over 100 scholars and academics internationally. The journal is listed in key Victorian studies and nineteenth century literature, culture, and visual studies forums.

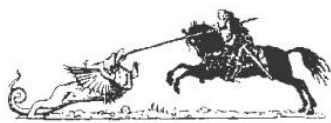
**Scope:** *The Eighth Lamp* has two key aspects. Firstly, its coverage is intended to be multidisciplinary. This is crucial especially since Ruskin was a polymath, well versed in a number of subjects. Hence, we welcome submissions related to art, religion, historiography, social criticism, tourism, economics, philosophy, science, architecture, photography, preservation, cinema, and theatre. Secondly, this section does not aim to have an exclusive focus on Ruskin. It hopes to generate a greater understanding of Ruskin's relation to his fellow Victorians as well as his influence on fin-de-siècle arts and literature.

**Approach:** *The Eighth Lamp* is particularly interested in new perspectives on Ruskin. In other words, it places emphasis on showcasing new historical evidence as well as critical interpretations that challenge the narrow label of the 'Victorian'. Therefore, it seeks to foster postmodern readings of Ruskin's thought in terms of subjectivity, identity, subversion, and feminism. Furthermore, this section seeks to investigate the specific nature of modernity in the nineteenth century by studying Ruskin. Hence, the focus is on newness and innovation in visuality; critical frameworks for interpreting art; dress reform; architectural documentation; literary genres as evidenced in Ruskin's work.

**Editorial Management and Leadership:** *The Eighth Lamp* is an online and double blind refereed journal. It is led and managed by Dr Anuradha Chatterjee and Dr Laurence Roussillon-Constanty. The journal is also complemented by the Editorial Board that provides intellectual and pedagogical support and leadership to the journal.

**Contributing:** Please email submissions (full manuscripts with copyright cleared images or abstracts as expressions of interest) directly to the editors at [theeighthlamp@gmail.com](mailto:theeighthlamp@gmail.com). Scholarly papers should be submitted at least six to eight months in advance to allow for the refereeing and revisions process.

## ASSOCIATIONS



### GUILD of St GEORGE

Ruskin announced the formation of St George's Company, as it was first called, in 1871, but it was not till 1878 that it was properly constituted and given its present name. In its origins, it was a frankly utopian body. It represented Ruskin's practical response to a society in which profit and mass-production seemed to be everything, beauty, goodness and ordinary happiness nothing (Source: <http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/background-guild-today/>). Today the Guild is a charitable Education Trust, which tries to put Ruskin's ideas into practice. Its purpose has never been to pursue specifically Ruskinian or antiquarian projects. It aims to work in the spirit of Ruskin's Company, but to pursue those values in contemporary ways (Source: <http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-guild-today/>).

See: <http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/>

### The Ruskin Foundation



The Ruskin Foundation: The Ruskin Foundation is a charitable trust, founded in 1995, for the care, conservation, and promotion of the legacy of John Ruskin. The Ruskin Foundation oversees the world's largest collection of the works of the writer, artist, and social visionary John Ruskin. These assets are housed at the Ruskin Library at Lancaster University, and Ruskin's former home and estate, Brantwood, where the Foundation is based. The Foundation explores the relevance of Ruskin's ideas today, undertaking intellectual enquiry and educational activity through a wide range of projects. It is based at Bowland College, Lancaster University, Lancaster, England LA1 4YT. The Foundation has recently created a new website (Source: <http://www.ruskin.org.uk/>).



The Ruskin Society, originally established by John Howard Whitehouse at a meeting held at the Royal Society of Arts in 1932, was re-founded in London in 1997 by a group of Ruskin scholars and devotees. It aims to encourage a wider understanding of John Ruskin (1819-1900) and his contemporaries. It organises at least four events a year which seek to explain to the public the nature of Ruskin's theories and to place these in a modern context (Source: <http://www.theruskinsociety.com/>).

Ruskin Museum, Coniston, Cumbria: There has been a Ruskin Museum in Coniston since 1901, when W.G. Collingwood, a local artist and antiquarian who had been Ruskin's secretary, set it up both as a memorial to Ruskin and a celebration of the area's heritage. Therefore, although the museum has a Ruskin collection,

there are also exhibits relating to the coppermines, slate, geology, lace, farming, and Donald Campbell. The museum was extended in 1999 with the help of a Heritage Lottery grant; additional building with modern design-work, computer displays, and hands-on exhibits has transformed the look of the two galleries (Source: <http://www.ruskinmuseum.com/>).



Friends of Ruskin's Brantwood: This is owned and managed by an independent charity, the Brantwood Trust. It receives no public subsidy and relies upon visitor income and the generosity of individual donors and volunteers. The Chairman of the Management Committee is Tony Cann CBE; the Director is Mr Howard Hull; and the General Manager Ms Rachel Litten (Source: <http://www.brantwood.org.uk/>).

#### **OTHER RELATED ASSOCIATIONS**



#### **British Association of Victorian Studies (BAVS)**

The British Association for Victorian Studies (founded in 2000) is a multi-disciplinary organisation, dedicated to the advancement and dissemination of knowledge about the Victorian period. It has over 600 members, drawn from the academic community and the general public, in both the UK and abroad. Members have a wide range of interests in the nineteenth century, including art history, cultural studies, history, literary studies, performance studies and the history of science. <http://www.bavsuk.org/index.htm>

#### **North American Victorian Studies Association (NAVSA)**

The North American Victorian Studies Association (NAVSA) was established in 2002 to provide a continental forum for the discussion of the Victorian period, to encourage a wide variety of theoretical and disciplinary approaches to the field, and to further the interests of scholars of the period within such larger bodies as the MLA, the AHA, and ACCUTE. Our goal will be to provide a more visible forum for Victorianists in the profession: encouraging press and journal editors to participate in our annual conferences; facilitating the networking of Victorianists across regional and national boundaries; forging contacts with other national Victorian groups, such as the British Association of Victorian Studies; and initiating web-based archival projects that make Victorian texts more easily accessible to members. We enthusiastically invite our fellow Victorianists in all fields to join us (Source: <http://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/navsa/about.cfm>).

### **Nineteenth Century Studies Association**

The Nineteenth Century Studies Association (NCSA), formerly known as the Southeastern Nineteenth Century Studies Association, is an interdisciplinary association for the study of nineteenth-century world cultures. Founded in 1979 as a forum to encourage interdisciplinary exchange, the membership has grown to include scholars whose disciplinary focus ranges from art, architecture, and literature to religious, scientific, and legal writing, to social, political, and economic debate (Source: <http://www.nineteenthcenturystudiesassociation.org/>).



### **Australasian Victorian Studies Association**

The Australasian Victorian Studies Association aims to promote the activities and research of scholars in Victorian literary, historical, and cultural studies, including art history, architecture, politics, popular and print culture, and, increasingly, considerations of 'the Victorian' beyond the chronological period, and beyond the geographical centre of British Victorian Studies.

Since its first conference in 1973, AVSA has provided a meeting place for scholars in Victorian Studies in the southern hemisphere. AVSA's membership is international, with a particular focus on Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Japan, and Singapore. We also have strong links with Associations in Britain and the United States.

AVSA conferences are held regularly, hosted by members around the region. Most recently, the 2011 annual conference was held in Adelaide. The 2012 conference will be held in Brisbane, Australia at Griffith University. The call for papers has now closed. The latest details are available from the [AVSA 2012 conference](#) webpage.

The other major initiative for AVSA is the transformation of our well-established refereed journal, AVSJ, to a new web-based electronic journal: *Australasian Journal of Victorian Studies* (AJVS). The first issue went online in December 2007. For more information about the Journal, please go to its home on the [National Library of Australia's Online Journal System](#) webpage (Source: <http://www.avsa.unimelb.edu.au/>).





### **Pugin Foundation**

The Pugin Foundation (ACN: 115 269 371) is a not-for-profit public company, limited by guarantee, registered under the Corporations Act 2001 in the State of Victoria.

The Foundation's key objectives include:

- Assistance in the provision of funds for the conservation of Pugin's Australian buildings and objects
- Provision of expert advice and assistance to the custodians of Pugin's buildings and objects in the conservation of that heritage
- Promoting a wider understanding and better appreciation of Pugin's Australian works
- Being a catalyst for public involvement in the physical and financial upkeep of Pugin's Australian buildings and their environment
- Actively promoting ongoing research into Pugin's Australian works
- Being a clearing-house for information on those works

(Source: <http://www.puginfoundation.org/about/>).

### **Pugin Society**

To be a member of the Pugin Society is to be someone who, as Pugin said of his wife Jane, 'perfectly understands and delights in spires, chancels, screens, stained windows, brasses, vestments, etc.' The Society is a Registered Charity (No. 1074766) and was founded in 1995. From small beginnings in Ramsgate, where Augustus Pugin (1812-1852) built his own house and church, it has grown to be a flourishing national and international organisation. Its interests include the study of nineteenth-century Gothic Revival architecture, associated decorative arts, and social and church history of the period. It is a Society where not only experts and scholars, but everybody with an interest in Pugin and the Gothic Revival, participate together in enjoyable events and other worthwhile activities (Source: <http://www.pugin-society.1to1.org/home-intro.html>).

### **The William Morris Society in the United States**

Founded in New York in 1971 as an affiliate of the UK William Morris Society, the William Morris Society in the United States strives to publicize the life and work of William Morris and his associates. We coordinate our activities with our fellow Morris Societies in the UK and Canada, and distribute UK and US Newsletters and a biannual *Journal of William Morris Studies*.

(Source: <http://www.morrisociety.org/>)

### **The William Morris Society UK**

The William Morris Society aims to perpetuate the memory of one of the greatest men of the Victorian or any age. The life, work, and ideas of William Morris (1834–1896) are as important today as they were in his lifetime. The Society exists to make them as widely known as possible.

The variety of Morris's ideas and activities bring together those who are interested in him as a designer, craftsman, poet, and socialist, who admire his robust and generous personality, his creative energy and his courage. His ideas on how we live and how we might live, on creative work, leisure, and machinery, on ecology and conservation, on the place of arts in our lives and in relation to politics remain as challenging now as they were over a century ago.

The Society, established in 1955, publishes a Journal, Newsletter, and commentaries on all aspects of his work and runs a varied and interesting series of talks and visits throughout the year. It encourages the re-publication of Morris's works and the continued manufacture of his textile and wallpaper designs. (Source: <http://www.williammorrissociety.org/>).

## CONFERENCES

### **French Society for Victorian and Edwardian studies (SFEVE)**

The South: Visions, encounters, representations

**23–24 Janvier 2015**

Université de Perpignan

The next conference of the French Society for Victorian and Edwardian studies (SFEVE) will take place on January 23rd and 24th 2015 in Perpignan Via Domitia university and will explore the way in which the Victorians and the Edwardians thought of, lived in or represented the South in various literary, artistic, cultural and historic contexts. The subject can be approached in various ways, considering not only the south of England, but also the Mediterranean countries and the Southern hemisphere at large.

To quote a famous example Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* raised the question of social and cultural tensions between the North and the South of the country. The opposition between cities and the countryside, industry and agriculture, modernity and traditions is obvious in many other works and debates, and it is interesting to consider both the vision inhabitants of the North had of the South and the way in which those who lived in the South asserted, defined, or represented themselves as such. For Thomas Hardy, the rural south, rechristened using the old name of Wessex (the appellation which I had thought to reserve to the horizons and landscapes of a merely realistic dream-country), was the foundation of a whole poetic and novelistic work. Later, and in a different field, it was suggested that cinema adaptations of Victorian and Edwardian fiction, or more generally a certain heritage cinema, developed a vision of the period that was too systematically associated with a postcard image of rural England.

On the other hand, numerous British poets and novelists, Robert Browning and George Gissing among others, found sources of inspiration in Mediterranean countries, which their contemporaries appreciated more and more as holiday destinations. In the same way, besides the shock that Venice represented for John Ruskin or the fascination of pre-Raphaelite painters with Italy, George Edmund Street wrote on the Gothic style in Spain, while the painter John Frederick Lewis settled in Cairo where he stayed for ten years and received the visit of William Makepeace Thackeray.

Finally, the Southern hemisphere at large allowed rewarding researches as *The Voyage of the Beagle* published by Charles Darwin in 1839 testifies. Perspectives for more colonial conquests and wealth continued to develop, though worries and prejudice sometimes remained, in spite of new approaches like Mary Kingsley's. As for Robert Falcon Scott's death in 1912 in his quest for the South Pole, it is often presented as the symbol of the end of an era.

However varied approaches of the subject may be, one will try to determine in what way the reference to a particular South allowed the Victorians and the Edwardians both to respond to their own demographic, economic, social and cultural evolutions and to define their relationship to the old and the new world. The

South successively appeared as the place of roots and traditions or an exotic or wild territory, as a relaxed way of life or a hostile climate. A geographical position and a representation of the mind, a physical and a mental landscape, it could in turn be a reassuring reference, evoke the threat of a decline, or provide unexplored territories offering possibilities for new beginnings but also the temptation to reproduce existing norms.

See

<http://victorianpersistence.wordpress.com/2014/08/30/cfp-the-south-visions-encounters-representations-23-24-janvier-2015-universite-de-perpignan/>

## **Material Cultures/Material Worlds**

**March 25–28, 2015**

Material Cultures / Material Worlds takes into account the strong scholarly interest (the “material turn”) in this topic in the last few years. The long nineteenth century is filled with material things that continue to fascinate us, from the taxonomies of the Enlightenment and the invention of the public museum to Marx's commodity fetishism to Victorian collections of bric-a-brac and beyond.

See <http://www.ncsaweb.net/Portals/0/CFP%20NCSA%20Boston%202015.pdf>

See <http://www.ncsaweb.net/Conferences>

## **Northeast Victorian Studies Association NVSA**

**April 10–12, 2015**

Victorian Accidents

University of Rhode Island, Providence

See <http://northeastvictorianstudies.files.wordpress.com/2014/08/2015-cfp-final.pdf>

## **Aestheticism and Decadence in the Age of Modernism: 1895 to 1945**

**17–18 April 2015**

**Institute of English Studies, Senate House, London.**

This conference considers Aestheticism and Decadence from three main angles:

- 1) the continuing evolution, diversification and internationalisation of Aestheticist and Decadent ideas and forms;
- 2) how writers, artists, critics, musicians engaged with the figures and ideas of nineteenth century Aestheticism and Decadence.
- 3) the production of the ‘Yellow Nineties’ and the posthumous representation of Decadent and Aestheticist writers, particularly Wilde and Pater, in memoir, biography and literary criticism

We encourage proposals that address these Aestheticist and Decadent afterlives in the context of their cultural, political, and social moments, and which engage with the problematics of these terms.

Subjects might include but are not limited to:

- Decadents and Aesthetes publishing after 1895 (e.g. Machen, Beerbohm, Lee)
- Decadents and Aesthetes who refashioned themselves and are now considered Modernists (e.g. Yeats)

- The concept of 'art for art's sake' in post-1895 literature and art
- The cultural and artistic legacies of fin de siècle decadence in 'Modernist' works
- Reappraisals of Decadent tensions such as deviant sensuality and 'reserve'
- The Decadent/Aesthetic individual in the modern city
- Decadent tropes and characters in the 'middle-brow' novel
- Reworkings of Decadent literary forms
- Decadence/Aestheticism on film/in photography
- Decadence/Aestheticism in Music
- Critiques and denunciations of nineteenth century Aestheticism/Decadence
- The influence of and engagement with Aestheticism/Decadence in non-Western cultures
- Decadence/Aestheticism in the United States
- The presentation of Decadents/Aesthetes in monuments, biographies, histories, memoirs.
- Writers who could be explored within these contexts are legion, but some notable cases include: Arthur Symons. Max Beerbohm Arthur Machen Victor Plarr Ernest Rhys Ronald Firbank W.B. Yeats Thomas Sturge Moore Vernon Lee T.S. Eliot Ezra Pound H.D. James Joyce Edith Wharton Evelyn Waugh Cyril Connolly Ford Madox Ford Virginia Woolf Christopher Isherwood John Betjeman Carl Van Vechten Ben Hecht James Huneker F. Scott Fitzgerald And the 'afterlives' of: Oscar Wilde The Pre-Raphaelites Algernon Charles Swinburne Walter Pater John Ruskin Lionel Johnson Ernest Dowson Aubrey Beardsley. See <http://www.ies.sas.ac.uk/ies-conferences/ageofmodernism>

## **Industrial History of Cumbria**

**18 April 2015**

Spring Conference and AGM: Industry and the Arts in Cumbria

Shap Wells Hotel, CA10 3QU

Speaker Stephen Wildman

See [http://www.cumbria-industries.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2015-Spring\\_Conf\\_info.pdf](http://www.cumbria-industries.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2015-Spring_Conf_info.pdf)

## **British Association for Victorian Studies**

**Annual Conference 2015, Victorian Age(s)**

**27 August–29 August 2015**

**Leeds Trinity University**

Confirmed Keynote Speakers:

Professor Martin Hewitt (University of Huddersfield)

Professor Helen Small (University of Oxford)

Professor Pat Thane (King's College, London)

The Victorians were highly preoccupied by the passage and experience of time in their own personal lives and their lifetimes. Anxious to explain and express the historical changes around them, to arrange and categorise time(s) according to new disciplines and discourses, to explore and differentiate the experiences of different stages in the life-cycle, they strove to relate their era to preceding ones, to measure modernity,

and to imagine possible futures. Their experience of both of aging and living in an 'age' are among the themes of this conference, as too our own attempts to define the Victorian period.

The conference theme marks the 'coming of age' of the Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies, which will celebrate its twenty-first anniversary in 2015. 2015 is also the fifteenth birthday of BAVS.

We will welcome papers on, but not limited to, the following topics:

The Victorian ages of man (and woman): eg infancy/childhood, puberty/adolescence, maturity/middle age, old age/senescence; relationships between different generations; rites of passage in the Victorian life-course, such as birth, coming of age, marriage, widowhood, death, and alternatives to traditional rites of passage.

The Victorian period and periodization: its viability as a historical period, and where it begins and ends;; its relationship to preceding, succeeding, and overlapping periods/eras such as the Regency, the Romantic era, the Modernist Age, the Edwardian period, the long nineteenth century; sub-periodisation within it, eg the early Victorian period, the high Victorian era, the Naughty Nineties; characterisations of the Victorian period, eg 'age of empire', 'the industrial age', 'age of improvement'.

Issues and experience of time and temporality in Victorian cultures: the passage of time and the Victorian experience of change/continuity; the nature of modernity; parallel times, time compression, timespace, timeslip, time travel, and the science of time; chronological tropes and narratives of time/historical writing, eg 'deep time', diaries; nostalgia for times past; the utopian/dystopian future; differing experiences and organisations of time, eg gendered experience of time, the globalization of time, rural versus urban experience of time, factory or railway time/timetables.

Victorian relations to/appropriations of other periods, such as the prehistoric eras, biblical and classical periods, the Anglo-Saxon age, the medieval period, the Tudor era, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, 'olden time', the recent past. All conference presenters are required to be members of BAVS or an affiliated organisation (eg AVSA, NAVSA). Proposals for panels of two or three papers will be particularly welcome, especially those related to the above strands. Please submit a proposal of 250-300 words to [bavs2015@gmail.com](mailto:bavs2015@gmail.com) by the deadline of 2 March 2015. Papers will be limited to 20 minutes.

Associates of the Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies should note that their normal discount does not apply for this event. Enquiries to Dr Rosemary Mitchell, Director of the Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies, at [lcvs@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:lcvs@leedstrinity.ac.uk). Conference organisers: Michael Allis (Leeds), Susan Anderson (LTU), Jane De Gay (LTU), Di Drummond (LTU), Helen Kingstone (LTU), Rosemary Mitchell (LTU), Simon Morgan (Leeds Metropolitan), Jim Mussell (Leeds), Richard Salmon (Leeds), Nathan Uglow (LTU).

See <http://bavs.ac.uk/events/7/>

## CURRENT RESEARCH

### LIST OF PAPERS FROM FORTHCOMING AND PAST CONFERENCES 2014

Interdisciplinary Nineteenth Century Studies Conference

Nineteenth-Century Energies

“Resuscitating Ruskin: Race Culture as Aesthetic Culture at the fin de siècle” | Eileen Cleere, Southwestern University

Interdisciplinary Nineteenth Century Studies Conference

Nineteenth-Century Energies

“Resistant Ruskin: Energy, Vitality, and the Gothic” Hala Herbly, University of Texas, Austin

### BOOK IN PROGRESS

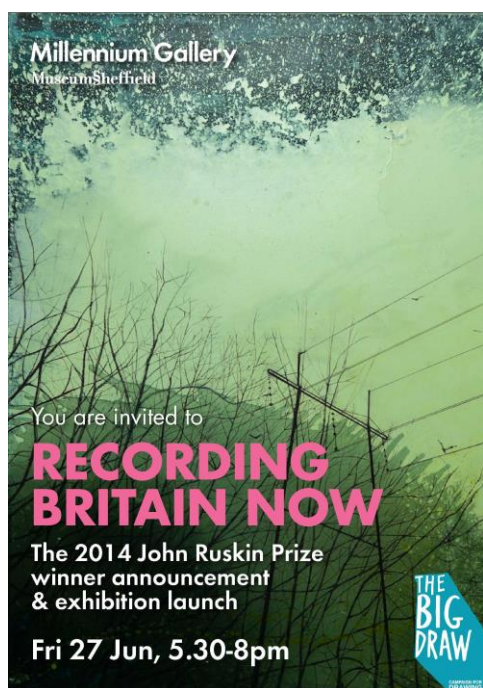
Anuradha Chatterjee

Surfacing the Fabric of Architecture: John Ruskin’s Adorned “Wall Veil”

Contracted by Ashgate Publishing

The book imaginatively assembles Ruskin’s theory of surface architecture, as it were, or the adorned “wall veil,” using the theoretical lenses of dress studies, gender, science, and visual studies. It presents Ruskin’s inventive historiography of medieval and Renaissance buildings, characterized by compelling textile metaphors that transformed the tectonic elements into a language of tailoring, upholstering, cutting, and stitching. The book presents a new perspective not only on Ruskin but it also presents a competing theory of textile analogy in architecture based on morality and gender, countering the dominance of Gottfried Semper’s historicist and ethnologically based theory. The book shows that the theory of the adorned “wall veil” advanced a new disciplinary definition of architecture as surface—an entirely visual phenomenon, highlighting an important moment in the constitution of architectural modernity. The book provides a precursor to the recent re-emergence of surface debates in architecture (marked by publications such as *Surface Architecture* by David Leatherbarrow and Mohsen Mostafavi and *Surface Consciousness* ed Mark Taylor). It gives currency to the emergence of surface studies—an interdisciplinary field in humanities that considers the philosophical, ontological, psychological, performative, spatial, visual, and formal nature of surfaces (natural, artificial, real, and virtual).

## EVENTS



### **John Ruskin Prize 2014**

The Guild of St George, a charity founded by Ruskin in 1871, launched the Campaign for Drawing (now an independent charity) in 2000 to celebrate Ruskin's belief that drawing helps us see the world more clearly. The John Ruskin Prize 2014 invited new visions of our urban, rural, and social environments.

See <http://www.campaignfordrawing.org/competitions/ruskin.aspx>

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/ruskin-prize-2014/>.

The winner of the Ruskin prize is Maggie Hargreaves.

See <http://www.campaignfordrawing.org/competitions/ruskin2014.aspx>

### **Ruskin in Sheffield**

#### **Guild of St George**

Guild has been awarded £67,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund to reveal, reconnect, and re-imagine aspects of Ruskin's heritage in Walkley, Totley, Rivelin Valley, and Stannington in 2015. See <http://www.ruskininsheffield.com/> Ruth Nutter will be leading the Project, working with local residents, amateur and professional historians and artists, and Guild Companions. Together, we will uncover and interpret the impact of St George's Museum on local workers' lives, and of the Totley Colony at St George's Farm on local social reform movements. The launch is to happen 01 February 2015, 4pm–7pm, Ruskin Hall, Walkley Community Centre, 7a Fir St, Sheffield, S6 3TG. See <http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/ruskin-in-sheffield/>

#### **Guild of St George events**

Please see <http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/events-2011/>



## **Anglia Ruskin University**

Ruskin the Educator: A one-day international conference at Anglia Ruskin University

**11 April 2015**

Lord Ashcroft Building, Anglia Ruskin University, East Road, Cambridge, CB1 1PT

Our International Conference celebrates both the 150th anniversary of the publication of Ruskin's key work *Sesame and Lilies* and the 10th anniversary of our existence as Anglia Ruskin University. Our conference will focus on 'Ruskin the Educator', and will feature the top names in Ruskin studies. Our plenary speakers will be Professor Dinah Birch and Jan Marsh and there will be short papers from, among others, Rachel Dickinson, Stuart Eagles, Keith Hanley, Farah Mendlesohn, Francis O'Gorman, Emma Sdegno, Marcus Waithe and Stephen Wildman.

For further details please contact [Professor Valerie Purton](#)

See

[http://www.anglia.ac.uk/ruskin/en/home/faculties/alss/deps/english\\_media/research/research\\_activities/ruskin\\_educator\\_conference.html?utm\\_source=ruskinconference&utm\\_medium=url&utm\\_campaign=redirect](http://www.anglia.ac.uk/ruskin/en/home/faculties/alss/deps/english_media/research/research_activities/ruskin_educator_conference.html?utm_source=ruskinconference&utm_medium=url&utm_campaign=redirect)

## **Scottish National Portrait Gallery**

Behold the Light of Nature': Ruskin on Turner, Edinburgh 1853 (Performed Reading)

**20 January 2015**

12.45–1.30pm

Hawthornden Lecture Theatre - Gardens Entrance (Scottish National Gallery)

Paul O'Keeffe, actor and art historian, recreates John Ruskin's moving account of the life, achievements, and death of JMW Turner, now re-edited and expanded to incorporate more of the original lecture and include visual aids.

See <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/whatson/events-calendar/behold-the-light-of-nature-ruskin-on-turner-edinburgh-1853-performed-reading-24734/date/2015-01-20%2000:00:00/interval/0/>

## **British Glass Biennale**

### **Ruskin Glass Centre**

Call for Entries Deadline 30 January 2015

Awards Ceremony 27 May 2015

Exhibition Opens 28 May 2015

Winners Announced 27 May 2015

Exhibition Ends: 28 June 2015

British Glass Biennale: Stourbridge, West Midlands Open Daily: 10am–5pm

<http://www.biennale.org.uk/2015-biennale/exhibition.php>

## EXHIBITIONS

### **John Ruskin: Artist and Observer**

**14 Feb 2014–11 May 2014**

Prints, Drawings and Photographs Galleries

John Ruskin: Artist and Observer focuses on the creative genius of John Ruskin (1819–1900) as represented in his draughtsmanship. The artist's drawings demonstrate how his work evolved over time and how he used the medium in a distinctive technical manner.

This exhibition showcases around 140 works, including watercolours, drawings, and daguerreotypes. Of great beauty and of a very personal nature, these varied drawings celebrate the extraordinary creative heritage Ruskin left to British art.

Organized by the National Gallery of Canada and the National Galleries of Scotland

<http://www.gallery.ca/en/see/exhibitions/upcoming/details/john-ruskin-artist-and-observer-6859>

### **Ruskin Research Centre**

*Permanence and Fragility: Paintings and Drawings by Victoria Crowe*

**13 October 2014–12 December 2014**

Victoria Crowe is well known for portraits of artists, writers and scientists including the poet Kathleen Raine (National Portrait Gallery), actor Graham Crowden (Scottish NPG) and most recently Prof. Peter Higgs, for the Royal Society of Edinburgh. She is a member of the Royal Scottish Academy, and was appointed OBE in 2004. More widely, her work embraces both figure and landscape, often in striking combination. The series *A Shepherd's Life* (1970–1985) focuses on life in the Scottish Borders, and one subject has been converted into tapestry by Dovecot Studios in Edinburgh. She has a passion for the natural world, and also spends much time in Venice, which has inspired large paintings redolent with images of the city's buildings and history. These interests echo those of John Ruskin, and this exhibition of past and recent work will offer many points of connection.

See <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/users/ruskinlib/Pages/VictoriaCrowe.html>

*Returned triumphant: Loans to the exhibition John Ruskin, Artist and Observer*

**January 2015–March 2015**

The Ruskin Library (Ruskin Foundation) was the largest single lender to the recent exhibition of Ruskin drawings and daguerreotypes, the most comprehensive since the Tate Britain centenary exhibition in 2000. This reflects the standing of the Ruskin Library in holding the most important collection of Ruskin's work in the world. All 49 loans (out of 132 items) are shown in this display, including ten of the twelve daguerreotype photographs used in the exhibition to emphasise Ruskin's concentration on drawing and recording what he saw, as a means of understanding both nature and human endeavour, especially in the finest Gothic architecture of northern Europe. Several of the most celebrated works from the Whitehouse Collection are displayed, including *The Walls of Lucerne* (1866), *Vineyard Walk, Lucca* (1874) and *The North-West Porch of*

St. Mark's, Venice (1877). This is a rare chance to see these together, alongside others covering the whole range of Ruskin's life and interests, over nearly half a century.

See <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/users/ruskinlib/Pages/triumphant.html>

*Coming of Age: Ruskin's Drawings from the 1840–41 Tour*

**April 2015–September 2015**

*Ruskin's helpers: Collingwood, Hilliard, Rooke, Severn*

**October 2015–December 2015**

*Ruskin and Still Life*

**January 2015–April 2016**

### **National Gallery of Canada**

*John Ruskin: Artist and Observer*

**14 Feb 2014–11 May 2014**

Prints, Drawings and Photographs Galleries

<http://www.gallery.ca/en/see/exhibitions/upcoming/details/john-ruskin-artist-and-observer-6859>

### **Scottish National Portrait Gallery**

*John Ruskin | Artist and Observer*

**04 July–28 September 2014**

See <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/whatson/exhibitions/john-ruskin>

### **Vanabbemuseum**

*Confessions of the Imperfect 1848–1989*

**22 November 2014–22 February 2015**

Curators: Steven ten Thije, Alistair Hudson

Confessions of the Imperfect is an exhibition on art, design, life, and work, structured as a practical and experiential survey of the modern world. The exhibition presents a diverse mix of historical material, design, and contemporary art projects to reflect on but also to use. It takes its title from the Romantic art critic and social reformer John Ruskin, who in *Stones of Venice* (1869), presented a holistic and ecological view on the relation between art and life as a perpetual and necessary struggle with human imperfection. "We may expect that the first two elements of good architecture should be expressive of some real truths. The confession of Imperfection and the confession of the Desire of Change." You could not summarise the modern dilemma more succinctly than this. We dream of a perfect world, which is actually within reach with all our technological progress, but every time that we achieve our ideal, the utopia we dream of turns out to be a dystopia.

He developed this vision as a critique of industrialising and capitalist societies that tried to resolve human imperfection through standardised forms of production and government. Instead of worrying about the

outcome, however, Ruskin suggests we should focus on the process. How can we live life artfully and experience work not only as toil for reward, but as an organic part of a total social and ecological system of life and work? This question inspires this exhibition to take an unusual tour through modern times.

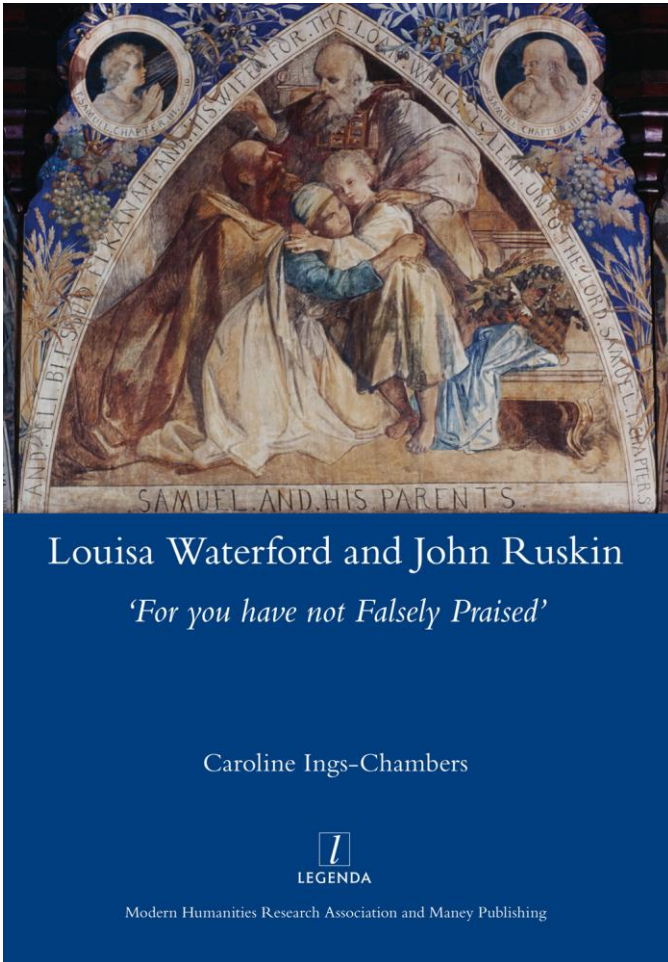
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[http://vanabbemuseum.nl/en/programme/detail/?tx\\_vabdisplay\\_pi1%5Bptype%5D=18&tx\\_vabdisplay\\_pi1%5Bproject%5D=1464](http://vanabbemuseum.nl/en/programme/detail/?tx_vabdisplay_pi1%5Bptype%5D=18&tx_vabdisplay_pi1%5Bproject%5D=1464)

## PUBLISHED AND FORTHCOMING WORKS

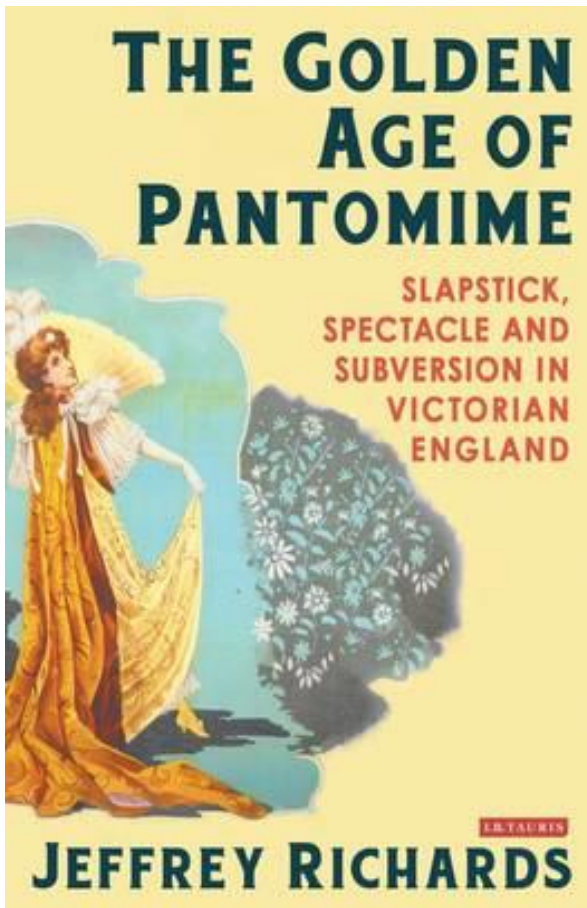
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**Caroline Ings-Chambers, Louisa Waterford and John Ruskin: "for you have not falsely praised,"**  
**Legenda: Oxford, February 2015 ISBN: 978-1-909662-47-6**  
<http://www.legendabooks.com/titles/isbn/9781909662476.html>

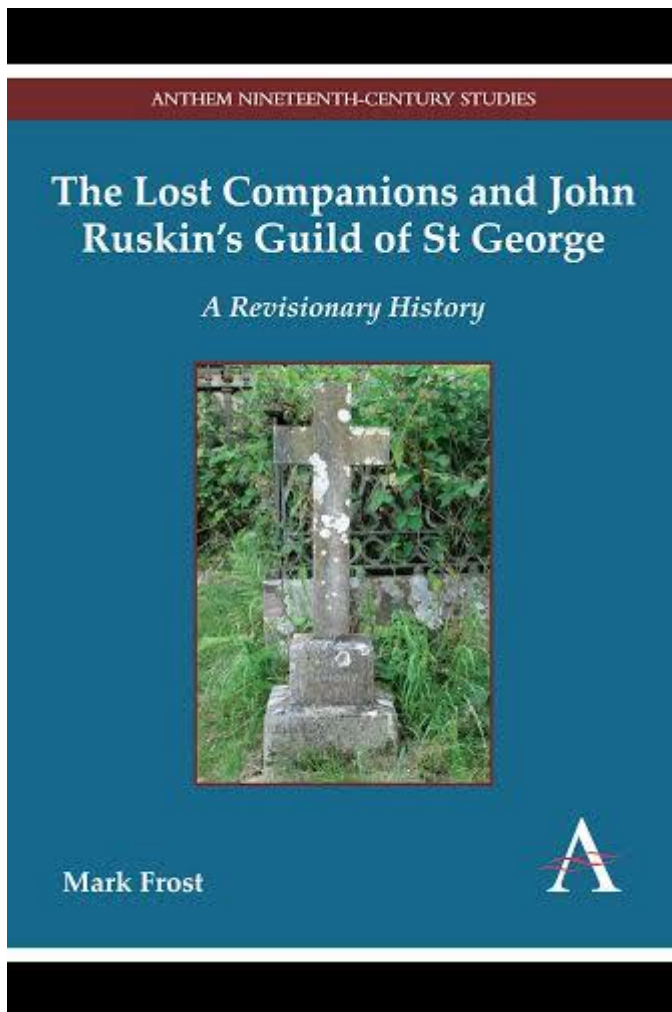
Louisa Waterford (1818–91), modest, retiring, of good family, renowned for her beauty, and with extraordinary grace, was the embodiment of a Victorian ideal of womanhood. Like the age itself, her life was filled with contrasts and paradoxes. She had been born with artistic gifts, and became a satellite of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, though she had no formal training. Then, at the height of John Ruskin's intellectual power and success as a critic, she asked him to accept her as an art student, and he accepted. His correspondence with her—often harshly critical, never, as Waterford put it, falsely praising—lies at the heart of this book. These are letters, which open a spectrum of discussion on the cultural, gender and social issues of the period. Both Waterford and Ruskin engaged in tireless philanthropic work for diverse causes, crossing social boundaries with subtle determination, and both responded to a sense of duty as well as an artistic vocation. More than a mere reflection of contemporary society, as Ings-Chambers shows, their dialogue helped to make Waterford the artist she became. Caroline Ings-Chambers runs courses in nineteenth century literature and culture at Morley College, London.



**Jeffrey Richards, *The Golden Age of Pantomime: Slapstick, Spectacle and Subversion in Victorian England*, IB Taurius, ISBN: 9781780762937 Publication Date: 30 Oct 2014**

Of all the theatrical genres most prized by the Victorians, pantomime is the only one to have survived continuously into the twenty-first century. It remains as true today as it was in the 1830s, that a visit to the pantomime constitutes the first theatrical experience of most children and now, as then, a successful pantomime season is the key to the financial health of most theatres. Everyone went to the pantomime, from Queen Victoria and the royal family to the humblest of her subjects. It appealed equally to West End and East End, to London and the provinces, to both sexes and all ages. Many Victorian luminaries were devotees of the pantomime, notably among them John Ruskin, Charles Dickens, Lewis Carroll and W.E. Gladstone. In this vivid and evocative account of the Victorian pantomime, Jeffrey Richards examines the potent combination of slapstick, spectacle, and subversion that ensured the enduring popularity of the form. The secret of its success, he argues, was its continual evolution. It acted as an accurate cultural barometer of its times, directly reflecting current attitudes, beliefs and preoccupations, and it kept up a flow of instantly recognisable topical allusions to political rows, fashion fads, technological triumphs, wars and revolutions, and society scandals. Richards assesses throughout the contribution of writers, producers, designers, and stars to the success of the pantomime in its golden age. This book is a treat as rich and appetizing as turkey, mince pies, and plum pudding.

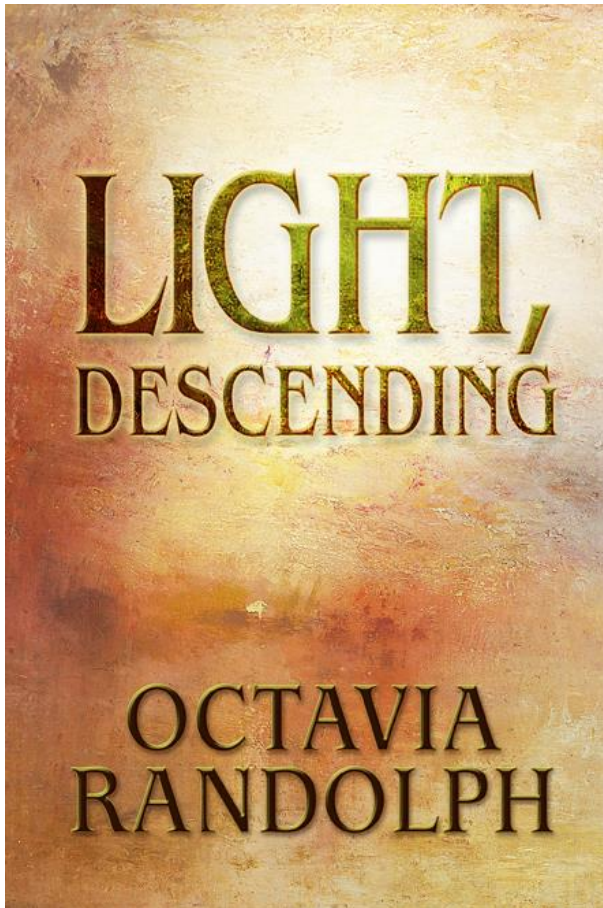




**Mark Frost, *The Lost Companions and John Ruskin's Guild of St George: A Revisionary History*, Anthem Press**

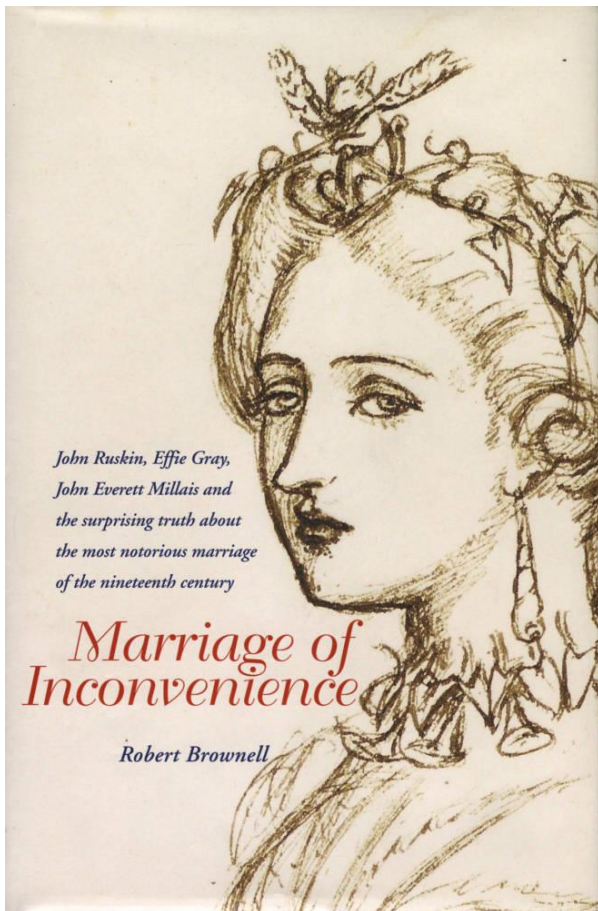
<http://www.anthempress.com/the-lost-companions-and-john-ruskin-s-guild-of-st-george>

This major work in Ruskin studies offers a timely re-evaluation of the origins, formation, and workings of John Ruskin's Guild of St George. Drawing on both significant and recently discovered archive material and existing research, this work looks afresh at the genesis of Ruskin's ideas and their translation into practice. Since Ruskin criticism began, attention has been drawn to the Guild of St George, Ruskin's attempt in the 1870s and 1880s to foster a series of self-sufficient, co-operative agrarian communities founded on principles of artisanal (non-mechanised) labour, and creativity and environmental sustainability. While endorsing previous accounts, which point to the positive impact of Ruskin's Guild, this book tempers such readings by considering the often destructive effect of Guild life on the Companions who worked in the communities. An astonishing wealth of previously unpublished correspondence reveals the extent to which Ruskin's ideological position caused a failure to translate well-meaning idealism into effective social action, and often devastating consequences for those who worked St George's land. By drawing on entirely new material, it is possible to reveal in detail for the first time the realities of Guild life over an extended period of time. This monograph provides an authoritative work on Ruskin's utopian experiment, enriching ongoing discussions on sustainable community and bringing Ruskin's work to a wider audience.



Octavia Randolph, *Light, Descending*, Exemplar Editions December 2014. Print: ISBN-13: 978-1-942044-01-7; Ebook: ISBN-13: 978-1-942044-00-0. <http://www.octavia.net>

Brilliant illuminator of artistic truths. Failed lover. Provocative critic of social injustice. Raving lunatic. John Ruskin was all these things. *Light, Descending* brings to life Victorian art and social critic John Ruskin (1819-1900), a passionate and tormented genius whose career as art critic, social reformer, and benefactor and nemesis to some of the greatest names of 19th century art ended in near-universal public acclaim – and madness. Octavia Randolph, author of the best-selling *The Circle of Ceridwen* Saga, portrays Ruskin's artistic genius, political struggles, and frustrated private passions in a vivid and haunting recounting of the great man's life. From his life-long defence of the painter JMW Turner, to Ruskin's unconsummated marriage to Effie Gray, to his patronage of artists Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his fiancée, Lizzie Siddal, and Lizzie's death by self-administered drug overdose; to Ruskin's love affair with the teenaged Rose LaTouche, and her early death, which broke Ruskin's mind; and the infamous libel trial brought against Ruskin by James McNeill Whistler, *Light, Descending* sweeps the reader from bustling London to a decaying Venice to wild Alpine heights as it chronicles Ruskin's ecstatic triumphs and blighted happiness. Based on letters, diary entries, and Ruskin's own voluminous published writings, and peopled with some of the most compelling personalities of the 19th century, *Light, Descending* is a tour-de-force novel about the man Mohandas Gandhi said "made me transform my life."



**Cynthia Gamble, Review of *Marriage of Inconvenience* by Robert Brownell. London: Pallas Athene, 2013.**

Image source: <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/ruskin/gallery/brownell.jpg>

The marriage is that of Euphemia (Effie) Chalmers Gray and John Ruskin that took place according to Scottish law in the drawing room of the Gray family home, Bowerswell, in Perth, on 10 April 1848. It is well known that the marriage was short lived, but the reasons for this have been a source of sometimes lurid speculation.

I am often asked: “Why did John and Effie marry?” or “Why did they divorce?” Robert Brownell provides a convincing answer and explanation, as well as a most engaging story. I found it impossible to put this book down and was compelled to continue reading to the end, and even then—like an aftershock—this was followed by a re-reading with greater scrutiny. It is a story not only of a couple, but of a relationship between two families. To parody Princess Diana, “there were six people in this marriage.”

The thrust of Brownell’s argument is that John Ruskin initiated proceedings for a separation and cunningly manoeuvred Effie into a vulnerable, compromising position and then sprang a trap. In other words, a sub-title to this book might well be: *How to Get Rid of Your Wife*.

Central to this story are health and money. John Ruskin was the irreplaceable apple of his parents' eye. But he was sickly and fragile, and his doting parents were terrified of losing their 'treasure.' Brownell's medical research has revealed that John (and the extended Ruskin family) was suffering from tuberculosis, the dreaded, dangerous, infectious disease of the age.

John's stoop was caused by Pott's disease, a secondary tubercular infection (61). This information helps us to understand the parents' constant anxieties about his health, for a sneeze or a cough could herald disaster and even death. It is against this background, unknown to Effie, that Mrs Ruskin's 'interference' or overbearing concern must be understood.

John James Ruskin had acquired great wealth through sheer hard work and careful husbandry. George Gray, Effie's father, was a lawyer and an "inveterate speculator" (144) who had over-invested in shares in the new railways, one of which, ironically, was the Boulogne-Amiens railroad (150). When the Railway Bubble burst, their value collapsed, and in the ensuing financial chaos four banks also failed (148).

In spite of their dire financial situation, Mr and Mrs Gray continued recklessly to produce fifteen children, excluding miscarriages, on a regular basis until 1855. Bowerswell House was on the point of being seized by creditors (158–59). Effie's marriage into the Ruskin family would solve Mr Gray's problems. She was the sacrificial lamb. Mr Gray's reasoning proved to be correct for Effie indeed sent regular sums of money and presents to the Grays, not forgetting assistance given by John James Ruskin.

It would seem that John fell deeply in love with Effie, a sentiment that was not reciprocated. Although John's parents disapproved of his choice, they were terrified of thwarting him for fear of provoking an attack of tuberculosis to which John was prone in moments of stress.

When John discovered the truth, it was too late to abort the marriage plans. Brownell argues that the knowledge that John had been used as a tool or pawn in a marriage of convenience was the reason why he did not wish to have any sexual relations with Effie (a strong secondary reason being his dislike of children).

Differences between the young couple emerge soon after the wedding—Effie's compulsive socialising (182) and John's need for a reclusive life (196). The situation is made worse by parental interference at Salisbury in 1848 when the reality of Effie's new life becomes apparent (197–98; 202). Fissures grew quickly into chasms. Rumours about a separation had already started during Effie's unexplained return to Perth for some eight months between early February and late September 1849: these reached John James Ruskin (260).

While John and his parents were on their 1849 continental tour, long elaborate letters crisscrossed and were exchanged at the pace of today's emails—between John James Ruskin and Mr Gray; Effie and John James Ruskin; Effie and John; John and Mr Gray. Little remained private and endless discussions took place about this correspondence. Little wonder there was room for misunderstandings to arise. The two sets of parents

started bickering (238). It was nothing short of a “labyrinth of misunderstanding” (238) as this tragedy of King Lear unfolded (239) in which Effie was portrayed as Goneril (483).

The two Venetian sojourns (November 1849 to late February 1850; and 1 September 1851 to 29 June 1852) brought out the extreme opposites in Effie and John. While John studied stones, Effie’s reckless social life gathered momentum as she flirted and accumulated admirers who were even prepared to risk their lives in duels for her.

Effie’s lifestyle became more and more lavish. While at the Casa Wezlar they engaged “a ‘donna,’ two gondoliers and a cook” (301), in addition to their servants Mary and Hobbs. Brownell portrays a dizzy portrait of Effie’s *insouciance* and risk taking, her endless parties and balls and flirtations with Austrian officers.

One can well understand and sympathise with John James Ruskin’s concern expressed in a letter to Mr Gray on 10 December 1851, urging more control over finances, pointing out that they “spent £1,670 out of £1074’ and have ‘overdrawn above £1000” (304). What would he have said had he known that Effie was regularly sunbathing alone in the Ducal Palace (322)?

The Venetian story is full of suspense and dramatic twists and turns, sometimes to the point of incredulity such as the sudden disappearance of Effie’s jewels as they are about to leave the city (331). The suspect, Mr Foster, was, according to Brownell, emotionally involved with Effie (342). By now, Effie had acquired unpalatable notoriety.

We learn how John studied matrimonial law and works by Charles Dickens to engineer his release from Effie. He deliberately organised the stay at Brig O’Turk and encouraged the relationship between Effie and Everett Millais in order to have evidence of her adultery. Brownell has explored the Glenfinlas area – he may even have walked across the famous bog—and goes as far as to hypothesise that Effie and Everett were living together in a cottage on their own (404).

It is surprising that Mr and Mrs Ruskin senior apparently knew nothing about John’s plans for the annulments (440). I cannot find a reference to the exact moment when they did find out.

The Ruskin family were abroad when the marriage was annulled and the final decree declared in the Lady Chapel of St Saviour’s Church in Southwark on 15 July 1854.

Effie is depicted as a selfish, spoilt child, wilful and extremely ungrateful to John James Ruskin for all the money he showered on her, all the houses and servants he provided and all the continental travel. She lacks concentration, and Brownell suggests that she may have been suffering from St Vitus’ Dance or a hyperactive disorder (583, note 41). She basked in the fame of John Ruskin, the great writer, but failed totally to comprehend that fame was not acquired at the touch of a magic wand but by sustained, dogged labour in solitude.

*Marriage of Inconvenience* is a piece of clever, compelling detective work based on years of research in archives and libraries in Britain and America. Steady application, stamina, and determination have produced a *magnum opus* with arguments difficult to refute. The author has the gift of storytelling, combined with academic rigour. I loved the endnotes too!

The publisher is to be congratulated on a book of such high quality as regards print, layout, and paper. In flaw I could only find one—a missing comma, but I leave that to the reader to have the fun of discovering where it isn't!

*Reviewer: Cynthia Gamble, Chairman of the Ruskin Society London*

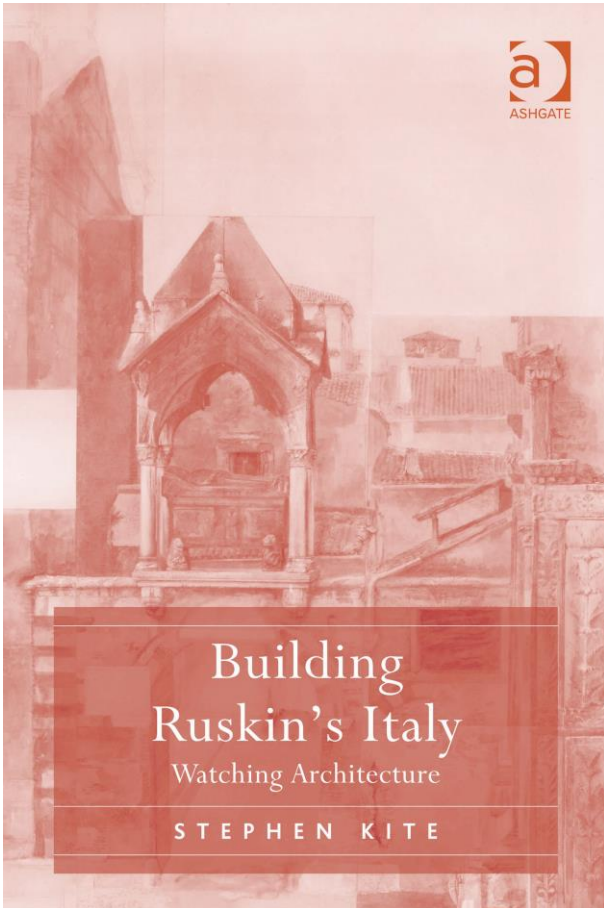


Image Credit Ashgate

**Anita Grants, Review of *Building Ruskin's Italy: Watching Architecture* by Stephen Kite. London: Ashgate, 2012.**

This is not the first book written about John Ruskin and his relationship with Italy, but it is the first to critically examine the evolution in his ideas about architecture in a wider Italian context. Using Ruskin's notebooks, sketchbooks, worksheets, tracings and referring to diaries and letters, Stephen Kite examines how Ruskin's theories developed and changed over the course of his numerous extended visits to Italy through his engagement with and minute study of its architecture. Where previous publications have focused on Venice, the best known of these by Robert Hewison (*Ruskin and Venice*), Sarah Quill (*Ruskin's Venice: The Stones Revisited*), and John Unrau (*Ruskin and St. Marks*), Kite expands his work on the critic's "careful watchfulness" beyond the city's boundaries into Italy, particularly Verona. This has allowed him to integrate his research on Adrian Stokes, and the writer's comments on Ruskin.

Early chapters trace how Ruskin's ideas were shaped both by his artistic training under Charles Runciman, Copley Fielding and James Duffield Harding, as well as by Samuel Prout's engravings in *The Forget-me-not Literary Annual for 1827*, *Continental Annual and Romantic Cabinet for 1832*, and *Sketches in Flanders and Germany*, Samuel Rogers' *Italy* (and its Turner illustrations), Robert Willis' *Remarks on the Architecture of the Middle Ages, especially of Italy*, and Turner's *Liber Studiorum*. Kite shows how Ruskin moved beyond these

early influences and came to trust his own experience of Italy's architecture. This experience, it is argued, was one of intense observation and physicality.

Ruskin wrote of two pivotal events in the development of his powers of observation: the drawing of 'a little aspen tree' near Fontainebleau in 1842, and of seeing the twelfth-century buildings of Lucca on his first walk there in 1845. These events are used as a starting-point in Kite's discussion of how details came to be increasingly important to the young critic. Daguerreotypes were purchased and valued for their flat depiction of architectural features. Meticulous sketches of these features also filled notebooks, pocketbooks, housebooks and worksheets. Ruskin wandered and watched and sketched and thought. To use Kite's description, the critic became a *flaneur*, that is to say a dawdler, and he points out that Ruskin himself referred to what he was doing as "watchful wandering." By his own admission, these walks became increasingly unplanned. This ambulatory contemplation, Kite reminds us, has a long history, and for the critic evolved into an inherent understanding of architecture which made Ruskin alert to the inauthentic, and more appreciative of its detail.

The physicality of Ruskin's experience of architecture is emphasised by Kite in a way not previously done. In using Ruskin's own words to describe the physical aspects of his discovery of Italy's churches and palazzos, we are reminded that Ruskin was still a young man when he was making his first forays into architectural writing. Extracts from the letters selected by Kite tell us of a Ruskin who climbs onto the roof of San Michele in Verona after which he walks the ramparts (for a little exercise), whose fingers are frostbitten from making a full size tracing at the base of a column shaft in Venice, where he is also described as climbing about the capitals which cover him in dust and cobwebs. His work ethic in Italy, even twenty years later, involved intense sketching sessions during the damp of the early morning and heat of the later afternoon. Accordingly, to quote Kite, "the embodied knowledge of architecture Ruskin had gained [was] from a fusion of unrelenting perception and the physical experience of touching, climbing over and inside these structures."

Kite concludes his book with a comparison of the architectural theories of Ruskin on Verona and the writing of Adrian Stokes (1902–1972) on the subject. Although Stokes applies a Kleinian analysis to Ruskin's comment to his father that he wanted to "eat [Verona] all up into my mind, touch by touch," Kite mostly resists the urge to digress. The different approaches of these men to and understanding of architecture and its ornament are touched upon; however the critics are shown to be in agreement on at least two points. Both deal with describing Verona in much the same way, and encourage the reader to look down at the marble and to appreciate its colours. They also agree on the superiority of the Italian Gothic funerary monument to Cortesia Serego (1424–29) and appreciate its detail.

*Building Ruskin's Italy* is a well illustrated book, primarily using examples from the various Ruskin notebooks and worksheets which form part of the Ruskin Foundation collection at Lancaster University. The emphasis is on showing Ruskin's process rather than on simply including the better known and more finished products with which we are familiar, such as the watercolours of the Doge's Palace in Venice. In providing the reader with the image of a worksheet of Notes on the Ca' d'Oro replete with detailed measurements and a "Bit Book"



page with incomplete details of the Palazzo Badoer in Venice and its stylized peacock design, for example, Kite tries to provide an insight into how Ruskin's practice changes and of how this change affects his architectural vision. While the black and white images are suited to the discussion of architectural detail, they are less effective when writing about colour, such as that of Verona's marble.

Although this book covers some of the same material as others have previously, Stephen Kite's investigation of how Ruskin went from youthful traveller to knowledgeable architectural pundit fills a niche. By going beyond the boundaries of Venice, we are reminded of how Ruskin stretched his understanding of Italian Gothic architecture, and of his joy of discovery.

*Reviewer: Anita Grants, Concordia University*

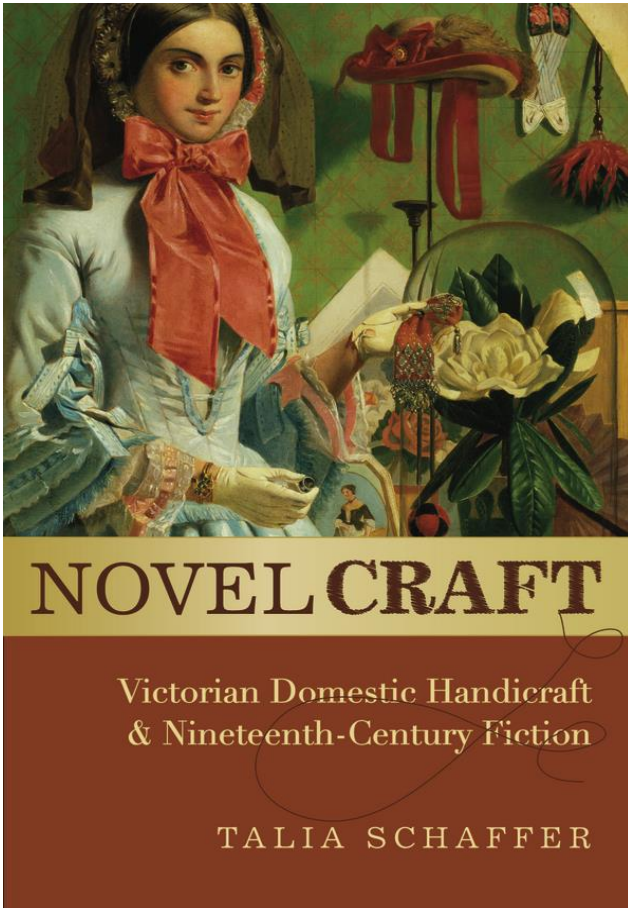


Image Credit: Oxford University Press

**Rachel Dickinson, Review of *Novel Craft: Victorian Domestic Handicraft & Nineteenth-Century Fiction* by Talia Schaffer. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.**

In the 1871 preface to *Sesame and Lilies*, Ruskin urges his readers to ‘every day, make some little piece of useful clothing, sewn with your own fingers as strongly as it can be stitched; and embroider it or otherwise beautify it moderately with fine needlework, such as a girl may be proud of having done’ and have it ready to give to those in need (18.40). He stresses active making and beautifying, not just the skill of plain sewing but also of decorative embroidery—and of beautifying and edifying the wider society through these acts. He constructs such domestic production as a laudable daily activity. While Ruskin is not her main focus, Talia Schaffer’s *Novel Craft: Victorian Domestic Handicraft & Nineteenth-Century Fiction* sheds light on Ruskin’s use of craft and textiles within his broader project to improve society, placing his writings within wider contexts and noting ways in which he mirrored and inspired craft-related ideals and activities in the Victorian period.

Schaffer sets out to “change our understanding of the history of craft ideas (5).” She traces ‘the craft paradigm’ of the nineteenth century, that is, “a set of beliefs about representation, production, consumption, value, and beauty,” which colored much of that culture. Her focus for exploring this is domestic handicraft, chosen because it “is alien enough [to twenty-first century scholars] to force us to spell out its basic principles (4).” Along the way, she debunks some common assumptions about craft in the Victorian period and outlines a clear distinction between handicraft and Arts & Crafts.

The volume opens with “Introduction: How to Read Wax Coral, and Why.” Written in the first person, it starts with a puzzle: a set of instructions from 1875 on how to make ‘coral’ using just a bowl, wire, yarn and wax. Schaffer points out that, from our twenty-first century position, “we have no grammar for decoding this practice (3).” *Novel Craft* endeavors to map this ‘language’ across the nineteenth century, translating its rules for a twenty-first century audience. Her study concludes with, “Postscript: The Novelty of Craft,” which echoes the introduction by opening with a comparable twenty-first century craft: a bracelet constructed from a base cut from a Pringles tube. She then asks: “does modern handicraft derive from the Victorian domestic handicraft, and if so, how might acknowledging that relationship help us read the contemporary craft industry?” (177). These two first-person chapters offer a stimulating set of observations and ideas which will inspire scholars of things made by hand, whether it be democratized handicrafts or professional Arts and Crafts.

These two chapters are joined in their supporting role by chapter 1, “Women’s Work: The History of the Victorian Domestic Handicraft.” Together, they form an important addition to the field. Chapter 1 succinctly outlines shifts in craft from the fifteenth century through the early Victorian period, then more slowly progresses through the nineteenth century. Schaffer notes that the early Victorian focus in domestic handicraft was on “rationalizing and taming nature,” arguing that this was “the opposite of the sublime (28, 31).” She marks the Great Exhibition “as the climax of the domestic handicraft movement (36).” At this mid-century moment, “industry’ meaning both ‘hard work and machinery [...] aligned handicraft [or ‘ornamental industry’] with mechanical manufacture (37).” It was also a point when the “imitative arts” were an ideal, “promising to make heretofore forbiddingly expensive items affordable,” just as industrial mass-production was simultaneously giving rise to a consumer culture (38). Mid-century craft reflected the drive for realism. As the Arts and Crafts movement emerged, it “developed and defined itself against the domestic handicraft industry” (50). Schaffer’s tracing of this battle between handicraft and Arts and Crafts offers an accessible survey of these two approaches to making—two approaches which are often interpreted in our current popular culture as being closely linked and even interchangeable. *Novel Craft* maps their distinct terrains while offering clear explanations of how they relate to each other.

Schaffer identifies Ruskin as the figure “who really popularized the new principles” of design when he published *Seven Lamps of Architecture* in 1849, bridging from the Design Reform movement, led by figures such as Henry Cole, Richard Redgrave and Owen Jones, to Arts and Crafts figures epitomised in William Morris (53). Because of his prominent role as a definer of taste, Ruskin features in all three of the scene-setting chapters (introduction, chapter 1, postscript). He is not mentioned in the ‘meat’ of the book, chapters 2 through 5. Each of those chapters focuses on a specific novel (thus the play on words of the title *Novel Craft*) to trace a theme: “Ephemerality” in Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Cranford* (1851–1853); “Preservation” in Charlotte Mary Yonge’s *The Daisy Chain* (1856); “Salvage” in Charles Dickens’ *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–1865) through to “Connoisseurship” in Margaret Oliphant’s *Phoebe Junior* (1876).

A thread traced throughout the book is how handicraft has been gendered. Practiced by men and women in the eighteenth century, it became “coded as a women’s hobby specifically” in the early nineteenth century,

when the domestic interior and decorative objects became linked to the feminine (33). With the emergence of the Design Reform and Arts and Crafts movements, craft began to be linked to the masculine. The “redefining of the home as male” and the acceptance “that crafts were fit for male professionals” pushed women from the center of the home and of craft production (56, 152). This was, Schaffer notes, a distressing trend for some women, undermining a key source of identity; those “who wanted to affirm their fidelity to the traditional housewifely model might make handicrafts to symbolize this identification. But for women affiliating themselves with more contemporary gender models [...] the domestic handicraft symbolized a retrograde past (50).” These observations are not new, but they are presented in a coherent, multi-layered, well-illustrated way, offering new insight into the complexities of these shifts in gender coding over time. This will be of use to Ruskin scholars wanting to place his writings in a wider context, for example the explicitly gendered “fine needlework” by ‘a girl’ which Ruskin uses to illustrate a point about the importance of active charity and useful making in the preface to *Sesame and Lilies*. Similarly, in discussing Yonge’s *The Daisy Chain*, Schaffer points out that this novel describes how a “community works to write [one girl’s] personal problem on a civic level: how do you facilitate girls’ learning, in spite of retrograde mothers?” Ruskin asks similar questions in his requirement that communities must support those within them, like the women he urges to sew items for charity, so “that when you see a half-naked child, you should have good and fresh clothes to give it, if its parents will let it be taught to wear them (18.40).”

This review has focused on *Novel Craft* in relation to Ruskin. It is, of course, relevant to a broader range of interests. Illuminating an aspect of nineteenth century culture that our own culture assumes it understands—these decorative, household objects made by hand—, it teaches us to read them with an awareness of the rules that governed their production and reception. Armed with these rules, it offers detailed, thoughtful readings of four major novels in chronological order, tracing key shifts in emphasis over the course of three decades. For those concerned with explaining why the Victorians still matter, and those who are interested in achieving impact within twenty-first century culture, the framing chapters offer particularly useful resources.

*Reviewer: Dr Rachel Dickinson, Manchester Metropolitan University*

**Anita Grants, Review of Exhibition, John Ruskin: Artist and Observer. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 14 February–11 May 2014 [Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh 4 July–28 September 2014], curated by Christopher Newall and Conal Shields.**

The first thing that strikes you upon entering the Prints, Drawings and Photographs exhibition space at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa is John Ruskin's *Self-portrait in a Blue Neckcloth* (1873, Morgan Library and Museum). Ruskin is focused, his stare is direct. It is the gaze of a man for whom the visual experience and its rendering on paper was crucial to his understanding of the object depicted, be it a capital from St. Mark's in Venice, the glaciers of Chamonix, or a branch of juniper. The hundred and forty sketches, watercolours, and daguerreotypes featured in this exhibition span five decades and reflect Ruskin's powers of observation as well as his gifts as an artist.

The overall message of the exhibition is that Ruskin drew to make sense of the world. Works are grouped according to seven themes: Architectural Detail and Ornament, Buildings, Towns and Topography, Geology and Foregrounds, Mountains and Skies, Nature Studies, and Figures. By arranging them at just below eye level and side-by-side on a dark background, the viewer is compelled to consider each piece individually, rather than as a group, and to form their own understanding of the objects and places depicted, much as Ruskin did. The five galleries provide ample space, and passing through them the flow from theme to theme feels natural, even though the exhibits are mostly arranged chronologically within each theme.

While visitors are drawn to the coloured images and signature works, such as *Study of a Velvet Crab* (1879?, Ashmolean Museum), *Ferns and Rock in a Wood at Crossmount, Perthshire* (1847, Abbott Hall Art Gallery), and *Vineyard Walk, Lucca* (1874, Ruskin Foundation), the exhibition has other gems which tell us of Ruskin's experience with the world and how he processed it. For example, the early and lasting influence of J.M.W. Turner is evident in Ruskin's watercolour of *The Glacier des Bois* (c.1843–44, Ruskin Foundation); its composition echoes Turner's watercolour *The Alps (At Daybreak)* (c.1830–32) done for Samuel Rogers' *Poems*. Similarly, Ruskin's *Dawn at Neuchatel* (1866, private coll) and *Study of Dawn: The First Scarlet on the Clouds* and *Study of Dawn: Purple Clouds* (both 1868, Ashmolean Museum) could be mistaken for Turner studies done during the last decade of his life.

Ruskin's methodology in studying a place can be observed in *Stilted Archivolts, from a Byzantine Ruin in the Rio di Cà Foscari, Venice* (1849, Ruskin Foundation). To create the watercolour, he sat beneath the building in a gondola trying to catch the details, such as the sky in the window, the shutter latches, and ferns growing out of the base of the arch, through reflections and shadows. It is a partial treatment in which Ruskin only spends time on what is of interest or useful to him, one of the few things he was at odds with his father about. In a later watercolour sketch of *Baden, Switzerland* (1863, private collection) we are again presented with an incomplete image, but here can actually see how Ruskin's ideas of depicting the resort changed through the different levels of completion in the five attached sheets, the upper right pages having far more detail and colour. But in terms of seeing Ruskin's hand, his sketch of *Casa Falier, Venice* (1877, Private coll) is an excellent example. The view looking east along the Rio dei Santi Apostoli, depicts a row of attached palazzos

roughly and rapidly drawn, their windows mere slashes of a pencil, the people, and gondola virtually unrecognizable at the bottom of the notebook page. This is a drawing intended for no one but himself, an aide memoire which is touching.

*John Ruskin: Artist and Observer* brings together both well and lesser-known works in a celebration of Ruskin, and proves that despite his protestations to the contrary, we may objectively add 'artist' to this polymath's portfolio.

Reviewer: Anita Grants, Concordia University

## WORKS IN PROGRESS

These recently completed works have Ruskin related content.

- Beyer, Rachael Anne. 'You Must Make it the fashion:' Selling utopia in Roycroft and Arden, 1895-1915. Iowa State University, ProQuest, UMI Dissertations Publishing, 2013.
- Bninski, Julia. The Many Functions of Taste: Aesthetics, Ethics, and Desire in Nineteenth-century England. Loyola University Chicago, ProQuest, UMI Dissertations Publishing, 2013
- Campbell, Mark. A Beautiful Leisure: The Decadent Architectural Humanism of Geoffrey Scott, Bernard, and Mary Berenson. Princeton University, ProQuest, UMI Dissertations Publishing, 2014.
- Chloe Kim. "Gods in Exile": Late Victorian Painters of the Mythic School Portugeis. Yale University, ProQuest, UMI Dissertations Publishing, 2013.
- Huang, Chun. Beauty for the Present: Mill, Arnold, Ruskin, and Aesthetic Education. University of Durham (United Kingdom), ProQuest, UMI Dissertations Publishing, 2012.
- Samalin, Zachary. The Masses are Revolting: Victorian Culture and the Aesthetics of Disgust. City University of New York, ProQuest, UMI Dissertations Publishing, 2013.
- Witzleben, Megan Burke. Building a Mind: Reading Victorian Character through Architecture. Fordham University, ProQuest, UMI Dissertations Publishing, 2012.
- Zenas, Benjamin. Disappearing Walls: Architecture and Literature in Victorian Britain Cannon, University of California, Berkeley, ProQuest, UMI Dissertations Publishing, 2014.

## ARTICLES

### **“Swift visions of centuries”: Langdale Linen, *Songs of the Spindle*, and the Revolutionary Potential of the Book**

**Patrick McDonald**

“Just here, historical materialism  
has every reason to distinguish itself  
sharply from bourgeois habits of thought.  
Its founding concept is not progress but actualization”  
-Walter Benjamin, *Arcades Project* [N2, 2]

In 1889, a dispute erupted between the two founding members of the Langdale Linen Industry, Albert Fleming and Marian Twelves, both of whom were active members of John Ruskin’s Guild of St. George at the time. Central to this disagreement was a conflict between the two over the Industry’s faithfulness to Ruskin’s ideals. Originally founded in 1883, the Langdale Linen Industry sought to employ old women, produce hand-spun flax and hand-woven linen, and put Ruskin’s ideals of handcraft production into practice. In fact, according to Sara E. Haslam, Langdale Linen represents one of the most successful early ventures of the Guild of St. George , garnering both a wide commercial market and acclaim as a “successful artistic product.”<sup>1</sup> However, by 1889, the contradictions inherent in the undertaking had reached a conjuncture, the two sides of the dialectic represented by the positions of Fleming and Twelves. On the one hand, “Fleming tried to capitalise on the Linen Industry’s success either by taking on more workers or by requesting that more linen be produced or both,” championing the Industry’s capacity to be monetized and brought under the yoke of industrial capitalism.<sup>2</sup> On the other, Twelves argued that the Industry’s importance lay in, “*not* how many yards of linen may be made and sold, but how what *is* done may influence and help the doers within these limits, and be the means of inspiring others to similar effort beyond them,” emphasizing the qualitative nature of the spinning and weaving over and against its quantitative value.<sup>3</sup> This contradiction proved too much to bear. Twelves “immediately resigned from St Martin’s [Langdale Linen] and headed for Keswick.”<sup>4</sup> Fleming’s “involvement with the Langdale Linen Industry was minimal” after 1889, effectively bringing to a close the Langdale Linen Industry’s original form.<sup>5</sup>

It is curious to note that 1889 also marks the publication of *Songs of the Spindle and Legends of the Loom*, a Christmas gift book printed on and bound in Langdale Linen for which Fleming authored a foreword. Previous accounts of the Langdale Linen Industry tend to mention *Songs of the Spindle* in passing, focusing instead on the material realities of the Industry.<sup>6</sup> However, this bibliographical oddity crystalizes in many ways the Fleming-Twelves dialectic that underpinned Langdale Linen between 1883 and 1889. Simultaneously paragon of capitalist commodity culture and product of hand work, result of modern technology and a rejection of it, *Songs of the Spindle* registers—at both the literary and material levels—the major stakes of the dispute between Fleming and Twelves and the problems facing any attempt to return to pre-capitalist relations of



production within a capitalist economy. In order to illuminate the book's status as a monument to Langdale's contradictions, I first tease out several recurrent contradictions inherent from the Industry's inception present in contemporary periodical articles on the Industry. I then turn to Fleming's own published accounts of his and Twelves' venture—from which Twelves is glaringly absent, which serve to intensify the contradictions already latent in the other accounts and establish a firm connection between Langdale and literary history which informs *Song of the Spindle's* literary archive. Finally, I demonstrate how the textual and bibliographical codes of the book itself reflect and materialize the dialectical underpinnings of Fleming's dispute with Twelves. Reading the Industry and the book this way, Fleming becomes a historical materialist and *Songs of the Spindle* a dialectical image (in Walter Benjamin's use of the terms), illustrating the revolutionary potential of both the book itself and the undertaking which produced it despite the overt and profound conservatism of Albert Fleming, Langdale Linen, and The Guild of St. George.

### **“A Handsome Plenishing of Linen”: Langdale Linen and Capitalist Economy**

Albert Fleming and his housekeeper Marian Twelves both joined The Guild of St. George and founded the Langdale Linen Industry in 1883. Despite not being mentioned in nearly any of the contemporary literature (which heavily emphasises Fleming) between the founding and 1889, Marian Twelves' importance to the Industry throughout this period cannot be understated. According to Haslam: “Since neither Ruskin nor Fleming had any experience of what they saw as a traditionally female craft, Fleming arranged for ... Twelves to take the first steps in learning to spin by hand, no teacher being available.”<sup>7</sup> She further underscores Twelves' crucial position within the Industry, arguing that “Fleming's understanding of Ruskin's writings, Miss Twelves's [sic.] application of those writings, and Ruskin's direct contribution were the elements essential to success.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, while she does not appear in any of the writing I analyze, Twelves and her conspicuous absence serve as an essential backdrop to all of these accounts; the Industry would have been impossible without her. Though not registered in these terms, the ideological contradiction between Fleming and Twelves appears again and again in the contemporary coverage of the Langdale Linen Industry along with an almost obsessive desire to connect the Industry to literary history.

In order to more fully understand this dialectic and *Songs of the Spindle* itself, we must turn to contemporary accounts of it.<sup>9</sup> As John Hayman notes, the first piece of the archive, chronologically, is a letter from Albert Fleming to John Ruskin in October of 1883 that is worth quoting here at length:

Many years ago Wordsworth lamented the disuse of the Spinning Wheel in the dales of Westmoreland. The poet says that the wheel was a cure for grief and care, that it composed the throbbing pulse, and had various other healthful influences, all of which you will find melodiously set forth in his XIXth Sonnet...

I am trying in a small way to re-establish the industry in this quiet corner of the world. I shall lend wheels to the cottagers and teach them how to spin, and (at first) give them the wool and flax, and buy it back when spun. I am aware that this manner of business will not commend itself to the

ordinary commercial mind. As a factor in cottage life nothing...has taken the place of the Spinning Wheel, and if we are able to brighten (not unprofitably) some weary hours, and to give work to some old hands, then we shall begin to think the good old influences yet linger round the Spinning Wheel. If any of your readers are old-fashioned enough to care for hand-spun and hand-woven linen, or unpractical enough in this utilitarian age to give us a good world and wish, let them write to me<sup>10</sup>

As his letter shows, for Fleming the project of reviving the spinning industry in his “quiet corner of the world” is inseparable from literary history. He frames his project in connection with Wordsworth’s “XIXth Sonnet,” establishing his project in relation to one of the premier national poets of the nineteenth century even before laying out its material particularities. Furthermore, Fleming presents his idea as existing outside realm of industrial capitalism, and as not agreeable to the “ordinary commercial mind.” However, the proposed system is still implicated in an economy of exchange: he intends to “(at first) give them the wool and flax, and buy it back when spun” (emphasis added). Even in the beginning, he plans to “buy...back” the spun flax, implicating his project in capitalist exchange value by compensating the “cottagers” for their labor of transforming material. Additionally, it is only “at first” that he will “give them the wool and flax” implying that, eventually, they will be responsible for purchasing their raw materials and will enter into the processes of circulation and exchange prior to beginning production. Fleming’s letter to Ruskin shows that, from its very conception, the Langdale Linen project was haunted by a contradiction: on the one hand, Fleming wishes to rectify the “disuse of the spinning wheel,” reviving a pre-capitalist cottage industry; on the other, however, he cannot help mirroring the logic of industrial capitalism in so doing. As we shall see, this contradiction plays itself out materially as well: Langdale Linen relied on both a division of labor and the importation of flax from Ireland from the beginning.<sup>11</sup>

The industry appears again in the September 20, 1884 issue of *The Spectator*, in a piece, which echoes many of the same sentiments Fleming expresses in his letter to Ruskin. As with the letter, the *Spectator* piece, signed only with the initials M.H., begins with an elegiac lament of the cottage spinning industry: “Time was when spinning played such an important part in a woman’s existence that, as [Jacob] Grimm observes, it came to be regarded as her sole occupation,--nay more, as her very life and being.”<sup>12</sup> Here, the text casts the labor of spinning as something more than mere labor, thereby making an ontological claim about women (“her very life and being”). M.H. desires a return to an idealized past when spinning played this “important part in a woman’s existence.” Much like the reference in Fleming’s letter to Wordsworth, this text casts this idyllic past in literary terms through its allusion to Grimm. In addition to this passing allusion, the *Spectator* article uses the “earnest thought” given to table linens in George Eliot’s *Mill on the Floss* to demonstrate the distance between the industrial capitalist present, “this feverishly active century”<sup>13</sup> and a past in which a “matter of innocent pride was to send away each daughter who was married with a ‘handsome plenishing of linen.’”<sup>14</sup> M.H. remarks sadly that this practice, “[has] long been [a thing] of the past.”<sup>15</sup> In addition to supporting its own lament with literary examples, the text explicitly casts Fleming’s project in terms of literature: “[Fleming] had the happy thought that it might be a good thing to try to revive what Wordsworth calls ‘the venerable art torn from the poor.’”<sup>16</sup> Both Fleming’s letter and *The Spectator* piece suggest that inspiration for the project is unthinkable without literary history, a history that will come to be embodied in *Songs of the Spindle*.

These resonances between Langdale Linen and literature extend beyond literary history as well. M.H. recounts the Industry's role in textual production:

Some specimens were recently presented to Mr. Ruskin. They were of a finer quality, and had been expressly woven for him. In the corner was embroidered, in soft silks, the lovely cluster of roses from the garment of Spring in Botticelli's famous picture of Venus. This cluster stands on the title-page of "Fors Clavigera," and on the fly-leaf of all of Mr. Ruskin's books<sup>17</sup>

In addition to supporting Hayman's argument concerning Fleming's reverence for Ruskin, this passage connects the industry to its contemporary literary scene in a very material way. "The lovely cluster of roses" in the linen presented to Ruskin implicates itself in the production of books, both "the title-page of 'Fors Clavigera'" and "the fly-leaf of all of [his] books."<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, it links Langdale Linen to the political scene of its day, the *Fors Clavigera* consisting of Ruskin's letters to working men of England. Years before the production of *Songs of the Spindle* in 1889, Langdale Linen was tangentially involved in textual production, appropriating the material formatting of "all of Mr. Ruskin's books" in the linen presented to him.

In addition to sharing Fleming's letter's proclivity for the literary, "Langdale Linen" repeats many of its contradictions. "As soon as one of [the women] was able to spin a good thread," M.H. writes, "[Fleming] lent her a wheel and gave her some flax, together with an assurance that he would buy it back when spun, at the rate of 2s. a pound."<sup>19</sup> These spinning women, much like the proletarian workers the text implicitly contrasts them to are only "lent...a wheel" and are then not in control of the means of production. Additionally, they are producing the spun flax only to add value to it through their labor, which Fleming immediately converts into a price of "2s. a pound," underscoring the operation's dependence on capitalist exchange value. This exchange between Fleming and the spinners is decidedly unequal; the linen, we are told, "sells readily at 4s. a yard."<sup>20</sup> The radical inequality between "2s. a pound" and "4s. a yard" mirrors the extraction of surplus value from the worker that Marx describes in *Capital*.<sup>21</sup> The process which the letter only describes as "buy[ing] it back"<sup>22</sup> now becomes explicitly quantified, put in the abstract terms to which every commodity is subjected. Emphasizing the commodity character of the linen, the text tells us that "[t]he Langdale loom produces a strong and thoroughly honest sheeting that can be trusted to outwear many a machine made rival."<sup>23</sup>

By describing the relationship between Langdale's hand-made linen and its industrially-produced counterpart as a rivalry, M.H. places its Linen squarely in the realm of capitalist circulation where, due to the formal and abstract equality that exchange value produces, commodities compete with each other, as rivals, in a constant, dynamic state of flux.<sup>24</sup> Thus the material manifestation of the linen production embodies a fundamental contradiction (as Fleming's imagining of the industry had done a year earlier) between a desire to return to a pre-capitalist past—exemplified in literary history and domestic relations of production—and the immediate commodification and circulation of its products in a capitalist economy, between putting women "in the way of earning their food and clothing for themselves,"<sup>25</sup> and extracting, from their labor, a surplus value. In this way, Langdale Linen reproduces Ruskin's aesthetic—which emphasises the dialectic of the public and

private mediated by the window<sup>26</sup>—at the level of the economic by combining the private realm of domestic handcrafts with the public realm of circulation.<sup>27</sup> The proliferation of these contradictions in some of the earliest documents in Langdale Linen’s archive firmly demonstrate that the dialectic which eventually led to the dissolution of Fleming and Twelves’ partnership lurks beneath their undertaking from its inception. Moreover, this dialectic surfaces again in Langdale’s circulation both as a news item and as a commodity.

As *The Spectator* article contends, evidence from the contemporary periodicals shows that the Langdale Linen did indeed have a wide circulation both as a commodity and a noteworthy news item, likely due to Fleming’s “unashamed[] exploit[ation] [of] the novelty of hand-spun, hand-woven cloths created by poor women.”<sup>28</sup> The American Rev. Marcus D. Buell, in the June 11, 1885 issue of the *Christian Advocate*, uses Langdale Linen (as mediated by *The Spectator*, presumably the “recent London paper” to which he alludes) as an example of how the church can help the destitute. Buell reads Fleming’s industry as an attempt to get the old spinners “to climb toward the ideal of one’s own personal development,” realizing the women’s latent potentiality and perfecting what the early Marx would call her species-being in ways that resonate with the ontological claim M.H. makes about women through Grimm. He concludes his article with an imperative: “So sing the spinning-wheels, answering one an other [sic], among the cottages above Elterwater.”<sup>29</sup> This command to “sing the spinning-wheels” prefigures, perhaps, the title of *Songs of the Spindle*, praising the Langdale Linen Industry and urging the reader to do the same through its use of the imperative mood. The *Christian Advocate* article shows that news of Fleming and Twelves’ project received transatlantic circulation even shortly after its founding, and points towards the concerns which will come to be taken up in *Songs of the Spindle*.

Langdale Linen also circulated materially as a commodity in a transatlantic capitalist economy. An anonymously authored article on “The London International Inventories Exhibition” in the August 1, 1885 *Harper’s Bazaar* entitled “New Work for Ladies,” mentions Langdale Linen as “[a]nother exhibit at the ‘Inventories’ of special interest to ladies,” as it has been used as the raw material for the embroidery of “some very dainty and tempting designs.”<sup>30</sup> In both its title and its content, this article repeats the feminine gendering of spinning and its products that both *The Spectator* and *Christian Advocate* present. Furthermore, the article offers the purchase of Landgale Linen as an alternative to “buying whole bales of Russian ‘crash,’ and selecting therefrom the two or three pieces which [are] clean enough or good enough to work upon,” again placing it as a commodity in an international capitalist economy, rivaling both “Russian ‘crash’” and the products of “machine weaving.”<sup>31</sup> Also, the article acknowledges the industry’s contradictions, writing that “the old hand industries, which are always so superior to those who can afford to pay for the difference in the labor.”<sup>32</sup> Langdale Linen, produced by poor old women, becomes an exclusive commodity available only to “those who can afford to pay” for the qualitatively different labor it embodies; it carries a prohibitive price tag and repeats the capitalist exploitation it seeks to do away with through its transatlantic circulation. Nonetheless, it shows that “there was a sufficient, if not abundant, market in a capitalist economy for high-quality, more expensive, handmade goods,”<sup>33</sup> a fact that Fleming will eventually exploit through the publication of *Songs of the Spindle*.<sup>34</sup>

## Reviving the Corpse: Albert Fleming's Gothic Project

The two published accounts Fleming himself wrote about the industry both support many of the more secondary accounts and offer further insight into—and an intensification of—the contradictions that structure it.<sup>35</sup> The first, titled simply “The Langdale Linen Industry,” appeared in the London *Pall Mall Gazette* in February of 1886;<sup>36</sup> the second, “Revival of Hand Spinning and Weaving in Westmoreland,” was published in New York periodical *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* three years later in February of 1889. Already we see that the publication history of Fleming's accounts mirrors the circulation of the linen itself, published transatlantically in both New York and London. However, the ways in which Fleming frames his “own personal experiment”<sup>37</sup> focuses more on quasi-Gothic themes of Frankensteinian revival, as the title of the second piece suggests, than the feminine, domestic work that the other accounts of the linen emphasise.

Fleming's *Pall Mall Gazette* article offers a slightly different account of the material conditions surrounding the origins of Langdale linen than that of the account from *The Spectator*. Rather than a simple lament of the loss of fine linen and the customs revolving around it in the late nineteenth century, Fleming writes:

Amongst the evils resulting from the gradual depopulation of villages is that round us here, in Westmoreland, all the old trades are dying or dead—bobbin-turning, charcoal-burning, wood-carving, basket-making, hand-spinning and weaving—some are clean vanished and others are the mere ghosts of their old selves<sup>38</sup>

What the texts elsewhere describe in terms of a degradation of women's being and a loss of established tradition, Fleming ascribes to the “gradual depopulation of the villages,” that presumably comes about as a result of primitive accumulation and its resultant urbanization<sup>39</sup>, describing the project as a direct reaction to economic conditions rather than a degraded English culture. From the beginning he also casts his project in terms of revival of an old trade “dying or dead,” an attempt to materialize the “mere ghosts” of lost domestic industry. This revival results in a product which, at least at first, “seemed terrible stuff, frightful in colour, and of dreadful roughness, with huge lumps and knots meandering up and down its surface,”<sup>40</sup> something more analogous to Frankenstein's monster than the beautiful family linen of *The Mill on the Floss*. Here, we see Fleming's penchant for describing his project in Gothic terms, the revival of the dead resulting in something monstrous and grotesque.<sup>41</sup>

Continuing the interest in literary history he evinces in his letter to Ruskin, Fleming saturates his first published account of Langdale with allusions to literary history. As in his letter, he emphasises that “Mr. Ruskin has been eloquently beseeching English men and maidens once more to spin and weave. Wordsworth, too, melodiously lamented the disuse of the spinning wheel.”<sup>42</sup> Thus, the two poles of influence, Ruskin and Wordsworth, appear again here to justify his project. The geographic location of the industry repeats this negotiation between these two giants of English literature, as Fleming locates the “here” of his undertaking “in the Langdale Valley, in Westmoreland, half-way between Mr. Ruskin's home at Coniston and Wordsworth's at

Rydal.”<sup>43</sup> The influence of literature does not stop at Ruskin and Wordsworth, however. The location in the Langdale Valley, Fleming writes, “exactly fulfill[s] Horace’s injunction, ‘Near the house let there be a spring of water, and a little wood close by.”<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, “Homer,” Fleming writes, “taught us the true principle of bleaching, and we adopted the simple method described in the *Odyssey*.”<sup>45</sup> According to his own figuration, both the economic conditions at Westmoreland in the late nineteenth century and what seems an enormous constellation of literary history precipitated Fleming’s project.

Beyond merely repeating the themes from the secondary literature, though, Fleming’s early account offers a solid description of the industry as it actually existed in its fledgling state and illustrates his penchant for capitalist rationality:

We have two looms going, and about thirty women at work. The old weaver gets a fixed wage of 16s. a week and a good cottage rent free. The best of our spinners earn about 6s. a week. We make seventeen different kinds of linen, varying in price from 2s. to 6s. a yard. The widest linen is 44 inches, and its price is 3s. 6d. a yard. Stout, durable sheeting (very white and soft) is our staple production, but we aspire to table-cloths and body-linen by-and-by<sup>46</sup>

Running directly counter to the rest of the piece’s engagement with literary history and pre-capitalist forms of cottage labor, this conclusion engages directly with the quantifying impulse of capitalist industry. He provides quantitative data on the number of employees (“thirty women” and “the old weaver”), their wages (“about 6s. a week” and “16s. a week” respectively), the price of the commodity (“from 2s. to 6s. a yard”), and even its measurements (“the widest...is 44 inches”).<sup>47</sup> Fleming also demonstrates the importance of gender to his undertaking: the weaver is male while the spinners are all female. The illustrations that accompany the text—at least in its reprinting in Ruskin’s *Complete Works*—reflect this gendering of employment, depicting “‘Old John,’ the Weaver” across from a “Peasant-Woman Spinning.”<sup>48</sup> The “old weaver” is paid by time, as contemporary wage laborers in more traditional capitalist environments (like factories) were. To the contrary, the spinners receive compensation per unit, “the best...[earning] 6s. a week.” Importantly, the male wage is almost three times that of “the best of [the] spinners,” betraying gender inequality at the heart of the superficially egalitarian project.<sup>49</sup> The concluding “few facts,” thus both provide an account of the industry and expose its contradictory nature: the employees are compensated in money; consumers purchase the linen as a commodity. Fleming himself puts into play the dialectic that will eventually spark his retreat from Langdale Linen entirely.

This dialectic not only manifests itself in the conclusion of the piece, but structures it throughout. Fleming describes his early attempts to procure a spinning wheel: “we ransacked the country side, advertised far and wide, and bought and begged anything that had a leg to stand on or a wheel to turn.”<sup>50</sup> While not explicitly an engagement with industrial capitalism, the passage uses its language of advertisement and exchange to narrate its point. Even the image of “ransack[ing] the countryside” resonates with the “gradual depopulation of the villages”<sup>51</sup> and its deleterious effects. More materially, Fleming’s depiction of their means of production and their acquisition are not exempt from the larger contradiction structuring his project. Though he “wanted to

carry out the whole process, from the flax in the field to the sheet on the bed, but that [he] found impossible, and I have to get my flax from Ireland.”<sup>52</sup> This desire to control the entire process of production from “flax” to “sheet,” raw material to finished product, proves impossible, requiring entrance into an international (and colonial) capitalist market before they can even produce a single yard of linen.

The contradiction at the heart of the reconstruction of the loom for “Old John, the Weaver” only makes the article’s dialectical underpinnings more explicit. In keeping with the Gothic themes of Fleming’s text, the loom “was discovered” “in a cellar in Kendal,”<sup>53</sup> placing it in an unused, perhaps haunted space off the proverbial beaten path. Furthermore, “it was in twenty pieces, and when we got it home not all the collective wisdom of the village knew how to set it up.”<sup>54</sup> Resonating with the Frankensteinian undertones of the piece writ large, Fleming again presents an image of (perhaps grotesque) death “in twenty pieces” that he must resurrect. However, the very people who are to be making use of this loom (“the collective wisdom of the village”) are unable even to imagine how to do so. The solution comes from the very contemporary scene the Langdale industry tries to turn away from: “Luckily,” the text continues, “we had a photograph of Giotto’s Campanile, and by help of that the various parts were rightly put together.”<sup>55</sup> In a very real sense, Langdale Linen could not have ever existed without the technological advancements of the late nineteenth century it sought to escape, despite its explicit attempt to resurrect the pre-capitalist loom of Giotto’s Campanile. Thus, despite its socialist desires (e.g. “the profits will be divided among the workers at the end of the year”<sup>56</sup>) and celebration of the pre-capitalist past, the Langdale linen industry, like all such attempts, continually runs up against numerous fundamental contradictions both in its representations and material existence.

Fleming’s later, American publication describing the Langdale industry (“Revival of Hand Spinning and Weaving in Westmoreland”) repeats many of the same gestures of the earlier text, but importantly serves as an intensification of the Gothic themes “The Langdale Linen Industry” contains in their infancy. Importantly for our purposes, the representation of this dialectical intensification comes directly on the heels of both Fleming’s falling out with Twelves and the publication of *Songs of the Spindle*. Again present are the references to literary history, including “Homer and Catullus,” “Ovid’s Metamorphoses,” “Plato’s vision,” “Shakespeare’s pretty picture,” “Wordsworth,” “Ruskin,” “Horace’s pretty injunction,” and “Carlyle,”<sup>57</sup> though, as the sheer length of the catalog suggests, in a much richer form, justifying the project with references to spinning and weaving from literary history yet again. His distaste for industrial capitalism and its “frightful machines”<sup>58</sup> also saturates this text, writing of spinning and weaving: “One associates them now with newspaper reports of strikes and the prices of calicos; with dreadful cities of death where the sun itself seems to swoon and sicken, and through which one hurries with closed eyes and aching heart.”<sup>59</sup> Here, he lists the ills of capitalism in characteristically hyperbolic fashion (“strikes,” “prices,” “dreadful cities of death,” and later “cheap Manchester goods”), contrasting them with an idyllic past complete with “lovelier memories” of when “through...the lives of all peoples, the shuttles gleam[ed] and fl[ew] and the distaff [bore] gentle sway.”<sup>60</sup> Also present are the contradictions from “The Langdale Linen Industry”: the “precious example” of “a certain photograph of Giotto’s ‘Weaving,’” Fleming’s obligation “to get [his] flax from Ireland,” and the fact that, “even in the hard and fast commercial sense,” “it does pay.”<sup>61</sup> However, in many ways, Fleming’s representation intensifies the

fundamental contradiction of which these form a part—the desire to carve out a pre-capitalist space within an international capitalist economy—through its use of enchantment and Gothic elements.<sup>62</sup>

Fleming's descriptions of the places associated with the undertaking contain strong Gothic undertones. After he "advertised, wrote to all kinds of people, and scoured the countryside," spinning wheels were still few and far between. However, as the story goes, "now and then a daleswoman would drop in to report that she had heard of a wheel in *some remote valley*."<sup>63</sup> The wheels exist only in rumor, at two removes from Fleming; even the "daleswoman" had only "heard of a wheel," lending them a legendary, spectral character. Furthermore, their geographic location ("some remote valley") echoes that of the far-off castles of much Gothic literature. As with the latent animism, this Gothic geography applies also to the loom. The loom originally employed at Langdale came from "an old-established firm in Kendal, which took root back in the last century, but had blossomed out of late into big factories and steam power...buried in one of the cellars."<sup>64</sup> Again, "the cellar" serves the same function as "some remote valley," establishing an at least quasi-Gothic space from which Fleming takes his means of production. Buttressing this point, Fleming found a weaver to use this loom "in a dim back yard in Kendal."<sup>65</sup> It seems as though every material thing associated with the genesis of Langdale linen came from a dark, remote,—perhaps even haunted—place.

Additionally, "Revival" depends on an animate—or at least potentially animate—material world to construct its argument. The "old spinning wheel" standing "in the corner of [Fleming's] dining-room," in the text, becomes a kind of synecdoche for the Linen Industry: "for many years forgotten and useless, its bands broken, its wheel silent. On its distaff still hangs a hank of flax, dusty and discolored."<sup>66</sup> After reading "the nineteenth and twentieth sonnets" in his Wordsworth volume, Fleming continues: "Lifting my eyes from the page my old wheel seemed to say, 'Bring me back to work and usefulness; let my dry bones live.'<sup>67</sup> Not only does this passage echo the larger theme of resurrection in the literature surrounding the Langdale linen industry (making its "dry bones live") it also animates the objects of the past, making them "seem[] to" speak, awakening their latent potentiality for enchantment. Fleming's wheel is not only enchanted, but also enchanting. Reading Wordsworth, he celebrates "the wheel's many kindly and beautiful offices: how it comforts the sorrowful, soothes the throbbing pulse, and aids and deepens love."<sup>68</sup> The object's animism, in other words, is not without effect on the perceiving subject. For Fleming, the wheel possesses "strange qualities and powers"<sup>69</sup> over those who encounter it.

This animism extends beyond the spinning wheel in Fleming's dining-room to the loom he procured for his undertaking, "an old loom long since dead and now buried in one of the cellars; possibly its dead bones might live again; at any rate [he] could try it."<sup>70</sup> Here, again, Fleming heavy-handedly emphasises the lifelessness of his raw materials, the loom "dead and buried," composed of "dead bones." However, he leaves open the possibility that it can be animated, made to "live again." Despite the fact that "dust, rust, and the worm had preyed upon it...it seemed to have what the scientific men call the 'potentiality of life' in it."<sup>71</sup> Just as the spinning wheel's "dry bones" can be resurrected, the loom's "dead bones" contain "the potentiality of life." Fleming's loom, too, possesses the ability to enchant, being welcomed "with much delight and not a little bewilderment,"<sup>72</sup> evincing its ability, to affect perceiving subjects with its "strange qualities and powers,"<sup>73</sup> not



unlike its spinning wheel counterpart. Thus, we find throughout this account a world of historical objects that, contrary to being inert, lifeless things, contain “what the scientific men call the ‘potentiality of life’,” a tendency that resonates with Fleming’s Frankensteinian Gothic project. Furthermore, this animism allows Fleming to circumvent the contradictions inherent in his Linen project, casting it in terms of a mystical resurrection of the past through its surviving objects rather than a return to pre-capitalist forms of social relations. Enchantment represents Fleming’s most elaborate attempt to elide the dialectic that structures his piece, his dispute with Twelves, and the Industry itself.

Fleming’s account of the material act of producing “the first hand-spun and hand-woven linen produced in England in this generation”<sup>74</sup> brings all of the threads running through the text to a head. Of “the actual weaving,” appropriately taking place “on Easter Monday, 1884,”<sup>75</sup> he writes:

The dull thud of the loom was music to my ears, and standing by the weaver’s side, watching his shuttle fly, I seemed to join hands once more with the memorable past. They say that a drowning man sees in one flash all the past events of his life; so in the dusty weaving-room I saw strange, swift visions of centuries long since gathered and gone by. It was a happy day when the first thirty yards were completed<sup>76</sup>

Again, we see the capacity of something very material and objective, the process of weaving represented as “the dull thud of the loom,” to deeply and strangely affect Fleming and other spectators. He characterizes his bizarre reaction to the scene of weaving in terms of both shock and a relationship to history. In very corporeal terms, Fleming “seemed to join hands once more with the memorable past,” showing that the act of weaving and the linen itself engender a very particular relationship to history, one that can apprehend “centuries long since gathered and gone by.” Thus, it seems, the whole of History becomes available to him, bringing him to a relationship to History that would not be possible without the weaver’s labor in “the dusty weaving-room” (an appropriately Gothic space). Furthermore, this historical awareness comes to Fleming not gradually through the study of literature or “a vast quantity of exceedingly tiresome reading—through treatises, handbooks, and innumerable articles in the dictionaries,”<sup>77</sup> but rather “in one flash,” a moment of intense shock that the linen and its production bring about independent of the linen’s quality (“wretched—as coarse as canvas, dreadful to touch, and horrible to smell”<sup>78</sup>). As with his use of enchantment, Fleming’s reliance on this mystical conception of history allows him to resolve the contradictions that structure the piece, joining past and present, capital and pre-capital, together in a single moment.

Fleming’s shock moment brings him, in one fell swoop, to an acute awareness of a constellation of history in ways that resonate with Walter Benjamin’s historical materialist of “Theses on the Philosophy of History.” For Benjamin, in contrast to historicism’s “‘eternal’ image of the past”:

historical materialism supplies a unique experience with the past. The historical materialist leaves it to others to be drained by the whore called “Once upon a time” in historicism’s bordello. He remains in control of his powers, man enough to blast open the continuum of history (262).<sup>79</sup>

Fleming's experience of "seem[ing] to join hands...with the memorable past,"<sup>80</sup> certainly constitutes a "unique experience with the past."<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, he is not content for historicism's "once upon a time," (ibid.) instead opting for an active, material engagement with history through weaving and the loom. In this way, he is able to "blast open the continuum of history," (ibid.) able to see "in one flash... swift visions of centuries long since gathered and gone by" (Fleming 527). Also resonating with the account Fleming offers, Benjamin's historical materialist experiences an ephemeral yet shocking relationship to history. Just as Fleming sees "swift visions" "in one flash," for the historical materialist "the past flits by," "flashes up at a moment of danger," (255) and is "shot through with chips of Messianic time" (263). Read this way, we find that Fleming's project (at least how he represented it around the time of *Songs of the Spindle's* publication and his dispute with Twelves) goes beyond a Gothically-inflected return to a pre-capitalist cottage industry. Instead, it becomes an attempt to revive the ghosts of a dead industry, shocking those involved into an awakening that brings them in touch with History and "messianic time" through the mediation of spinning, weaving, and their products. This relationship between Fleming the historical materialist and the products of Langdale Linen repeats itself in the presumed relationship between the reader/consumer and *Songs of the Spindle*. Instead of being mediated by the linen alone, the book's textual and bibliographical codes combine to form a dialectical image, placing the reader in a similar position to Fleming's at the scene of weaving, complete with all its implications.

### **Material Contradictions: The Textual and Bibliographical Codes of *Songs of the Spindle***

At first glance, *Songs of the Spindle and Legends of the Loom* seems a rather unremarkable book. Its dull, brown, fabric cover, with title and spinning wheel stamped in black on the front does not present a particularly aesthetically pleasing object, evoking instead cloth-bound eighteenth-century schoolbooks. The modest octavo format does not command the viewer's attention in the way that the grandeur of Morris' Kelmscott folios do. Casually flipping through the book offers little more in terms of aesthetic pleasure. Though pleasing to the touch, the plain brown paper does not connote luxury. Peppered throughout with illustrations and fleurons, set against a modest archive of literary representations of spinning and weaving, it appears merely another product of the largely regressive tendencies of 1890s fine press work. An anonymous review from the December 7, 1889 issue of *The Spectator*—the only contemporary review extant—echoes these sentiments: "This volume comes in plain and homely guise among the gorgeously coloured and ornamented throng that competes for popular favor."<sup>82</sup> However, when one looks further into this "plain and homely guise" and delves into the particularities of both its content and bibliographical form, its radical, perhaps even revolutionary, potential becomes apparent.

The text's short "Prefatory Note," authored by H. H. Warner—about whom very little is known—reveals a keen concern with many of the issues that the Langdale Linen accounts address, along with their attendant contradictions.<sup>83</sup> Warner's text opens with a keen concern for the materiality of the book in which it appears: "This little book is the product of *hand-work alone*, and we have chosen to produce it in this way because we wish to preserve in each copy, as much of that individuality and human interest, as the price at which it is offered will permit."<sup>84</sup> Right from the outset, the text attempts to demystify the source of its own value, "*hand-*

*work alone*” being directly correlated to “the price at which it is offered.” This kind of thinking, while demystifying the commodity, points to a fundamental contradiction between “that individuality and human interest,” embodied in the material particularities (such as the uneven coloration of the linen cover) and the “price,” the manifestation of exchange value which makes every commodity formally and abstractly equal with every other one within a capitalist economy.<sup>85</sup> Making explicit the book’s close connection with Langdale Linen, the preface continues, “the flax—which forms the basis of both Linen and Paper—was first spun by the cottagers at their wheels in the Langdale Valley, and the thread thus formed was afterwards specially woven for the cover of this book on the hand loom at the same place.”<sup>86</sup> *Songs of the Spindle* is Langdale Linen through and through. In keeping with his proclivity for demystification, Warner directs the reader’s attention to the particularities of the labor that produced the book: “as it is only right that honour should be given to whom honour is due, we have, as far as possible *given the names of all craftsmen and workers* concerned in producing this volume, and we hope that the purchasers of it will feel a kindly interest in knowing the names of those whose united handiwork they possess.”<sup>87</sup> For Warner, the book is to bring the consumer and the producer into closer proximity through its materiality, engendering “kindly interest” and concern for the laborer.<sup>88</sup> Unlike Fleming’s more fanciful (and perhaps radical) relationship with the Linen Industry revealed through his periodical publications, Warner’s text represents a more reformist, sentimental account of its function, attempting to flatten out its contradictions through demystification and empathy.

*The Spectator* review mirrors much of the content from Warner’s “Prefatory Note,” but also gives us a better sense of the real context of *Songs of the Spindle*’s circulation. Praising the book’s attempt at demystification, the reviewer notes, “editor, publisher, and illustrator we are accustomed to know by name; but it is good, also, to be aware of our obligations to spinner of thread and weaver of linen, and binder.”<sup>89</sup> For the reviewer this expansion of acknowledgment of labor engenders an awareness of “obligation” not dissimilar from Warner’s “kindly interest,” bringing the consumer and the laborer closer together through the act of acknowledgement. Additionally, this text sheds light on what exactly the book’s conditions of circulation were, writing of its status as hand craft, “no *gift-book* of the year has a better claim.”<sup>90</sup> The Victorian gift book “had no pretences to purity and was unabashedly commercial in conception and methods. As a way of expanding into the popular market, a publisher would package poetic selections or collections with decorative bindings and illustrative wood-engravings for the Christmas sales season.”<sup>91</sup> Here arises yet another instantiation of the Fleming-Twelves dialectic. *Songs of the Spindle* “competes for popular favor”<sup>92</sup> using an “unabashedly commercial” form to “expand[] into the popular market” yet figures itself in direct opposition to the fetishization and rampant consumerism of late-Victorian industrial capitalism.

The seemingly ubiquitous Albert Fleming appears again as the author of the “Forewords,” which reproduce *in nuce* the themes of his other articles. At Warner’s request, Fleming writes “a brief account of [his] effort to give back to a few of our Westmoreland men and women ‘the venerable art torn from the poor,’”<sup>93</sup> framing the text immediately in terms of local literary history through its deployment of a Wordsworth quotation. Fleming also echoes M.H.’s lament for the decline of a “maiden[’s]...’plenishing’ of good linen, spun by her mother’s and her own thrifty fingers,” alluding to Eliot’s *Mill on the Floss*. He also quotes from Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s *Aurora Leigh*, another Wordsworth text (“To S.H.”), and Ruskin’s *Fors Clavigera*.<sup>94</sup> This catalogue steeps his

account in English literary history, a thread which runs all the way from his initial letter to Ruskin to *Songs of the Spindle*. The “Forewards” also emphasise the theme of resurrection: “the good old handicrafts of spinning and weaving seemed finally dead and buried, and no man had ventured to write *Resurgam* [“I shall rise again”] on their tombstones.”<sup>95</sup> Fleming thus frames his project as one of Gothic (and Christian) revival and resurrection, an attempt to make the “dead and buried” industry “rise again.”<sup>96</sup> Concluding that “there seems a special grace and fitness in [Langdale Linen’s] being chosen to hold and bind together this little sheaf of spinning songs, gathered by kindly hands from long centuries of immortal verse,”<sup>97</sup> Fleming contrasts the “dead and buried” spinning and weaving with their representation in “long centuries of immortal verse,” figuring the book’s project as an effort to link his revival to “immortal verse” and produce “swift visions of centuries long since gathered and gone by,”<sup>98</sup> in the reader through the book’s bibliographical composition.<sup>99</sup> Fleming’s “Forewards,” then, fit into a larger constellation of texts about Langdale Linen, condensed and inserted into the body of *Songs of the Spindle* in order to frame its archive and foreground the reader’s response to it.

The bibliographic particularities of the book itself mirror Langdale Linen’s contradictions between returning and reviving by simultaneously looking to the past and towards the future. *Songs of the Spindle* contains no shortage of antique book-making techniques in addition to the handmade, arts and crafts nature of its production. Each section, both in the prefatory materials and the literary selections on spinning and weaving, begins with an illuminated letter, harkening back as far as pre-printing manuscript culture (though, importantly, reproduced in woodblock, not hand illuminated). In keeping with this affinity for manuscript formats, the author’s name appears at the end of each selection in bold, difficult to read, Gothic typeface. This style of presentation persists even if this association is anachronistic, as in the cases of “Longfellow”<sup>100</sup> and “Wordsworth.”<sup>101</sup> At the level of font choice, the book employs a ct ligature, first developed by Aldus Manutius at the turn of the sixteenth century to mimic handwriting in printed texts,<sup>102</sup> throughout, both in its standard size (as in “the stru[ct]ure of the loom in use to-day is pra[ct]ically the same...”<sup>103</sup>) and the smaller size used for quotations (as in “The dust of the a[ct]ual,”<sup>104</sup> quoted from *Aurora Leigh*). In the same way that Langdale Linen looks to the past in both historical, literary accounts of spinning and weaving and its pre-capitalist economic status, *Songs of the Spindle* looks back to pre-capitalist printing techniques: illuminated letters, ligatures, gothic typeface, hand printing.<sup>105</sup>

The opposite tendency—more in keeping with Fleming’s conception of “revival”—also runs throughout the book, appropriating contemporary print practices with an eye toward futurity. A closer look at the superficially unremarkable book reveals it to be a kind of monstrous assemblage (not unlike the first Langdale Linen, “coarse as canvas, dreadful to touch,”<sup>106</sup> of the contemporary and the pre-capital. For example, while the text contains numerous wood-block illustrations, hand printed on the Langdale Linen paper, it also contains “four Auto-Gravure plates,”<sup>107</sup> several of which are quite crudely pasted in to the book.<sup>108</sup> Gravure printing, unlike the hand press of the majority of the pages, depends on a technology developed in the late nineteenth century, resulting “from the invention of photography and the adoption of rotary printing from cylinders.”<sup>109</sup> It eventually became the preferred method for printing photographs in newspapers. This dependence on modern technology in the production of *Songs of the Spindle* harkens back to Langdale Linen’s dependence

on photography to construct its loom. Furthermore, the paper upon which the auto-gravure images appear is not the soft, high-quality linen paper used throughout the book, but a stiff, cardboard-esque paper that has discolored more so than its linen counterpart over time. Thus, the book is not as it so frequently claims the product of “*hand-work alone*,”<sup>110</sup> but a combination of hand- and machine-labor practices: a far cry from any kind of aesthetic unity.<sup>111</sup> This tension between the modern and the antique emerges at the level of content as well. After all, this book that celebrates the cottage-industry, pre-capitalist labor practices of spinning and weaving dedicates itself to “To Rev. S. A. Barnett & Mrs. Barnett...[w]ho have done so much for the workers in East London,”<sup>112</sup> framing itself in opposition to contemporary capitalist exploitation while the majority of its content looks back to pre-capitalist relations of production through literary example.

Even the paper which seems to be identical in color and texture (aside from the violently pasted-in auto-gravure illustrations), upon further inspection reveals two contradictory tendencies through its two different watermarks. The book’s opening and closing pages, half pasted on to the board that supports the cover, contain a textual watermark which reads, upside down, “Ilder.” Only this second half of the watermark is legible because the opposite side backing the cover does not have the necessary transparency. The last page, fortunately, has the opposite construction, the “Ilder” pasted against the back cover, leaving legible “Van G” when held up to a light. From this, we can reconstruct this watermark appearing on the book’s first and last sheets as “Van G-Ilder,” written in well-formed, blockish, architectural letters; however, because the middle of the text appears on the fold in each of its incarnations, what comes between the “G” and the “I” remains inscrutable.

This indeterminacy lends itself to a double reading. On the one hand, the watermark bears an extraordinarily close resemblance to that of “Van Gelder” paper, a high quality “Holland Paper” (see figure 1). If it is in fact “Van Gelder” paper, the watermark would demonstrate the book’s and the linen’s dependence on an international capitalist economy, the flax woven by hand in England and the paper produced on the continent in Holland. However, despite the similarities in lettering, the pages watermarked “Van G-Ilder” in *Songs of the Spindle* contain neither the “Zonen” or “Holland” present in the figure. These inconsistencies open up the possibility of an alternate interpretation. Perhaps, and here we enter the inevitable realm of speculation, the watermark actually reads “Van Guilder,” punning on the Dutch paper company, but meaning “Of the guild.” This marking would align the book with Ruskin and St. George’s Guild, of which both Fleming and Twelves were members.<sup>113</sup> Whether this reading is accurate or not, the illegibility of the watermark—in both instances—engenders the sheer possibility of offering it. Since this watermark only appears on the first and last sheets, this illegibility seems intentional.

On the other hand, in several of the book’s interior pages (Dedication, 7/8, 17/18, 25/26, “Unripe Flax,” 19/20, 27/28) an entirely different, but equally inscrutable, watermark appears, again always split in two. Against the orderly, straight letters of “Van G-Ilder,” the other watermark offers an image composed of organic, crude-looking lines. Appearing both right side up and upside down, it seems to depict an abstract, human-like figure dancing on a small circle. In its right hand, it holds a two-pronged, curved object that sprawls across both halves of the image. As with the other watermark, its exact content is difficult to reconstruct because it always

appears either on a fold or at the edge of a page. However, despite its illegibility, its organic, crudely drawn lines stand in direct contrast to the orderly lettering of the watermark that “bookends” the book’s pages. In this way, the seemingly identical papers, embody the Ruskinian contradiction between the “[g]eometric perfection [that] expresses the rigor of the division of labor”<sup>114</sup> and “the law of free expression”<sup>115</sup> that characterizes his aesthetic.<sup>116</sup>

We find—at every level and stage of *Songs of the Spindle*’s existence—a plethora of contradictions stemming from the same dialectic the two sides of which Fleming and Twelves represent throughout the history of Langdale Linen. All of these contradictions come to be embodied in the book in their most extreme, material manifestation. The Langdale Linen, the very stuff of the book’s material support, is caught between a desire to return to the past and a desire to revive and project it in a socialist future, pre-capitalist modes of production and industrial capitalist circulation and consumerism, regional, local cottage economies, and international capitalist ones. The book’s content makes a similar move, acknowledging both its debt to literary history and its status as a gift-book, the celebration of hand work and the necessity of exchange value. Finally, as we have seen, the book’s material particularities mirror these contradictions, combining auto-gravure with woodblocks, ligatures, and gothic typeface with more contemporary content, perfectly formed block letters with crude sketches. How, then, are we to read this book? Along with Warner, as an attempt to engender sympathy between producers and consumers? As just another symptom of capital’s commodification of everything that it touches? Or, perhaps, something more revolutionary than Warner’s sentimentally reformist vision or the relentless extension of capitalism?

### **Exploding the Contradictions: *Songs of the Spindle* and the Dialectical Image**

The extraordinary contradictions of *Songs of the Spindle* harken back to the most important themes that run throughout Fleming’s descriptions of Langdale Linen and the Industry’s material existence between 1883 and 1889: its intimate relationship with literary history, its Gothic project of revival. *Songs of the Spindle* contains in its archive of twelve authors, five of whom are mentioned in the periodical literature: Homer, Ovid, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and Grimm. The reader approaching the text confronts many of the same texts that serve as Langdale Linen’s conditions of possibility, all arranged into a particular constellation of literary history. Additionally, the reader comes into contact with a rather monstrous aesthetic object, composed of various prostheses and contradictory impulses, not unlike the first linen, “terrible stuff, frightful in colour, and of dreadful roughness, with huge lumps and knots meandering up and down its surface.”<sup>117</sup> The reader/consumer of *Songs of the Spindle* is then in many ways analogous to Fleming the historical materialist observing the scene of weaving in that “dusty weaving room.”<sup>118</sup>

For Fleming, this encounter, so steeped in contradiction, resulted in “swift visions of centuries long since gathered and gone by” (ibid.), mirroring the experience of Benjamin’s historical materialist. A closely related concept in his thought—the dialectical image—allows us to theorize similarly the relation between *Songs of the Spindle* and its implied reader.<sup>119</sup> According to Benjamin:

It's not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent.<sup>120</sup>

As we have seen, *Songs* dramatizes a relationship between the past and the present in several, contradictory ways. It displays not a relationship in which “what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past,” but rather presents “dialectics at a standstill,” reifying a particular relationship between past and present that reflects the ideological conflict between Fleming and Twelves. The dialectical image’s “suddenly emergent” flash resonates with Fleming’s “swift visions,” and the reader’s relationship to the book itself. Just as Fleming, steeped in a particular constellation of literary history, receives a shock from the contradictions of Langdale’s weaving (and monstrous product), *Songs*’ reader confronts both a constellation of literary history, the materialization of Langdale Linen’s contradictions, and an aesthetically “frightful..., dreadful” book.

Thus, the book’s project is far more than an attempt to reduce the distance between producer and consumer or to spread the good news of Fleming and Twelve’s revival of hand spinning and weaving at Langdale. *Songs of the Spindle* represents no less than an attempt to open the reader onto the entire “continuum of history”<sup>121</sup> bringing her into a relationship with history akin to that of Benjamin’s “angel of history...[who], where we perceive a chain of events, ... sees one single catastrophe.”<sup>122</sup> The book embodies a constellation that synthesizes—in a singular shock moment—“centuries long since gathered and gone by.”<sup>123</sup> For Benjamin this synthesis has the potential to produce an awareness of history that engenders a critical, historical consciousness which opens up the possibility of a utopian, socialist future.<sup>124</sup> Read this way, the dialectic so integral to the book simultaneously synthesizes and explodes. It synthesizes the stark contrast between the old spinners at Langdale and the “workers in East London”<sup>125</sup>—between the profit-driven Fleming and the more socially-conscious Twelves—in a moment constituted by an immanent liberatory potential. In seeking the synthesis of past and present in a utopian future, the book becomes revolutionary both in spite and because of its participation in an industrial capitalist system and ostensibly regressive social movements. *Songs of the Spindle and Legends of the Loom* stands today as a monument to this revolutionary impulse.

**John Ruskin and the characterisation of ‘word-painting’ in the nineteenth century**  
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**Introduction**

Ruskin’s modern day reputation depends to a large extent on his visually-oriented prose, or ‘word-painting’, as nineteenth-century critics first called it. Alain de Botton, for example, notes that “however respected [Ruskin] was in his lifetime for his drawings, it was his word-paintings that captured the public imagination and were responsible for his fame in the late Victorian period.”<sup>1</sup> Gary Wilh similarly attributes Ruskin’s success to his word-painting, arguing that “[...] he seems to have succeeded most brilliantly in the writing of magniloquent prose—perhaps, as John Rosenberg has suggested, the finest in the language.”<sup>2</sup> This modern perception of Ruskin continues a trend that started in the nineteenth century, when critics such as Agnes Atkinson treated Ruskin’s word-painting as an ideal. Atkinson elevated it over Walter Scott’s:

We are charmed by Scott, we note with delight the completeness of his detail, the directness of his epithet, but we experience no heart-beats, nor do unbidden tears gather in our eyes as when dwelling on such word-painting as [Ruskin’s...].<sup>3</sup>

Ruskin is also a canonical figure in modern study of the literary label ‘word-painting.’ Rhoda Flaxman, in her pioneering book-length study of the Victorian term ‘word-painting,’ acknowledged Ruskin’s place in the development of the term in the nineteenth century. However, while admitting that “Ruskin may have been the first to use the phrase “word-painting,”” she excluded word-painting in Ruskin’s essays from her study, which focuses on nineteenth-century novels or poetry.

While some modern studies have concentrated on Ruskin’s actual practice of word-painting, little has been said about what Ruskin and his contemporaries’ own definitions of ‘word-painting’ were.<sup>4</sup> This paper explores what the term meant in the nineteenth century, what kind of writing it included, and how Ruskin’s early discussion of the qualities of ‘word-painting’ coincided with the later definitions by nineteenth-century periodical writers. To examine this much used yet understudied Victorian label, this paper examines fresh data from the British Periodical Database in which writers discuss ‘word-painting.’ It also analyses Ruskin’s explicit statements concerning the ways in which he carried out his own word-painting. I will suggest that the representation of colour in language is one of the defining linguistic characteristics of Victorian word-painting, as can be clearly seen in the British Periodical Database and in Ruskin’s own theory. More generally, I argue in this paper that Ruskin’s word-painting cannot be thoroughly understood unless it is placed in the larger Victorian context in which the label ‘word-painting’ was coined and debated in the nineteenth century.

**Modern characterisation of ‘word-painting’**

Modern characterisations of word-painting tend to place it in contrast with some other descriptive label to create a more or less consistent dichotomy of representation (e.g. fluid vs static, romantic vs classical etc.). Thus, though all these modern critics handle the question of word-painting rather differently, they share a



common methodology and conclusion. In *Victorian Word-Painting and Narrative: Toward the Blending of Genres*, Rhoda Flaxman defines 'word-painting' as

extended passages of visually oriented descriptions whose techniques emulate pictorial methods. Word-painters typically employ framing devices, recurrent iconographic motifs, careful compositional structures, and pay close attention to contrasts of light and dark, of color, volume, and mass. But the primary feature that distinguishes a genuine word-painting from a static catalogue of visual data is faithfulness to a precise and consistent perspective focused through the viewpoint of a particular spectator. This point of view often yields an effect we moderns call cinematic, implying progress from one element to the next in a 'narrative of landscape.' This narrative of landscape transforms a static catalogue of visual data into the dramatization of the visual. Word-painting, then, implying a spatial progression through a landscape, offers a correlative to narrative.<sup>5</sup>

Eventually word-painting comes to be the "fusing [of] the narrative, the descriptive, and the dramatic to illustrate the metaphorical journey toward the discovery of self."<sup>6</sup> Flaxman contrasts Victorian 'word-painting' with another technique, 'a static catalogue of visual data', a phrase that appears twice in her definition. How do these two descriptive techniques, 'word-painting' and 'a static catalogue of visual data,' differ from each other?

Generally speaking, 'a static catalogue of visual data' and 'word-painting' refer to descriptive techniques associated with two historical periods, roughly corresponding with the eighteenth century<sup>7</sup> and the nineteenth century respectively. However, as Jean Hagstrum notes, nature description as a genre can be traced as far back as the classical period; he calls the primary technique of this genre 'literary pictorialism.'<sup>8</sup> He divides this into two branches. One branch of 'literary pictorialism' follows a tradition in which the language of description aims to be descriptive and naturalistic; the other tradition involves the use of language that is evocative and psychological. He says that the former,

the roots of which lay in the naturalism of antiquity and the Renaissance, may be exemplified by the rhetorical and critical notion of *enargeia*, or lifelike vividness. The other, primarily characteristic of the medieval centuries and of the baroque seventeenth century, tended to remove the pictorial from the external and natural and associate it with the internal and supernatural.<sup>9</sup>

Here Hagstrum uses two contrastive pairs to describe the characteristics of these two branches of 'literary pictorialism': 'external' and 'natural' on the one hand, and 'internal' and 'supernatural' on the other.

Later critics, including Richard Stein, Elizabeth Helsinger, and John Arthos, extend Hagstrum's discussion of literary pictorialism from the classical period, the medieval centuries, and the seventeenth century to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Specifically, they draw on Hagstrum's distinctions between the 'internal' and the 'external' depiction of natural landscape, and apply them to certain qualities of eighteenth- and nineteenth- century literary pictorialism. Stein points out that, in the eighteenth century, "despite a growing interest in psychology and evocative literary effects, most references to the arts emphasised fidelity to nature."<sup>10</sup> Stein's term 'fidelity to nature' seems to correspond to Hagstrum's expressions, 'lifelike vividness', and 'external' description. By contrast, nineteenth-century pictorialism shifted away from external 'fidelity to nature' to capture the 'internal,' or what Stein calls the 'private consciousness' of the writer. As Stein puts it,

By the Victorian period, it is not simply that the rational eighteenth-century world view has been shaken: there has been a shift, even from the time of the Romantics, in the writer's understanding of his own role. For the neoclassic aesthetic of the eighteenth century, the arts sought general truths and found their 'sisterhood' in holding a mirror up to nature. This view changed in Romantic art, where the mirror also reflected the private consciousness of the artist himself.<sup>11</sup>

Stein considers the two poetic traditions as fairly distinct and detached from one another.<sup>12</sup> This echoes M.H. Abram's two metaphors for poetic creation: the eighteenth-century metaphor of the mirror that considers poetic acts as mimetic ('holding a mirror up to nature'), and the nineteenth-century metaphor of the lamp that suggests an expressive function of poetry, emphasising the depth of the poet's feelings ("the mirror ... reflected the private consciousness of the artist himself").<sup>13</sup>

Helsingier is another critic who uses two contrastive terms, the 'picturesque' and the 'excursive', to characterise eighteenth- and nineteenth-century modes of description.<sup>14</sup> The characteristics Helsingier ascribes to the eighteenth-century 'picturesque' mode correspond to those that Hagstrum ascribed to 'external' description. Helsingier notes that eighteenth-century 'picturesque' description is characterised by a focus on "visual features rather than mental experience."<sup>15</sup> Writers adopted 'a single clear focus established by lighting [and] subject', instead of engaging in an extended process of perception.<sup>16</sup> She notes that Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, for example, "is almost wholly concerned with the aesthetics of the single impression..."<sup>17</sup> Besides commenting on the process of perception associated with the 'picturesque' mode, some critics also remark on the language of eighteenth-century 'picturesque' description. For example, Arthos suggests that the picturesque mode of perception gave rise to a type of picturesque description that was highly scientific in the way it used language.<sup>18</sup> Helsingier notes that the eighteenth-century scientific language of nature description acquired "connotations of the superficial and unfeeling" for Wordsworth among others.<sup>19</sup> Wordsworth adopted what Helsingier calls the "excursive" mode of perception and description, which takes into account the viewer's psychology and aims for "evocative literary effects."<sup>20</sup> Helsingier's emphasis on the psychology of the viewer seems to correspond to the "internal" mode of description as defined by Hagstrum.

This brief sketch of eighteenth and nineteenth-century modes of description helps us better understand Flaxman's definition of 'word-painting,' in contrast with the provision of "a static catalogue of visual data." Flaxman's point is that Victorian 'word-painting' transforms "a static catalogue of visual data" into a dramatized landscape. Her definition of the term 'word-painting' thus incorporates features of both literary traditions. On the one hand, "a static catalogue of visual data" suggests eighteenth-century features of nature description, highly pictorial, and paying close attention to visual details like colour and light. On the other hand, Flaxman sees Victorian word-painting as fusing this static mode with features specific to the nineteenth century, which make it 'evocative' and 'dramatic'. Although she does not make it explicit, by contrasting word-painting with the 'static' mode of description, Flaxman implies that word-painters began to include some aspect of movement into their descriptions. In addition, Flaxman shares Stein's and Helsingier's view that Victorian word-painting placed emphasis on the psychological responses of the viewer towards natural objects (e.g. her reference to the way word-painting involves a "dramatization of visual").

The three characteristics of ‘word-painting’ identified by Flaxman—the fact that it is pictorial, non-static, and dramatic—are taken up and developed further by Landow.

Landow develops Flaxman’s study further by analysing how word-painting is used in Victorian essays, rather than in novels and poems.<sup>21</sup> He introduces the idea of a hybrid mode of description as a distinguishing feature of Victorian word-painting. By “hybrid mode,” he means a blending of the picturesque (external) and psychological (internal) approach to the perception and representation of natural objects, which he says is a feature of Ruskin’s practice of word-painting. Landow says that although Ruskin’s pictorial approach can be seen in his claim that he investigated “actual facts” to show that Turner was “like nature”<sup>22</sup> and advised young artists not to tolerate anything “but simple *bona fide* imitation of nature,”<sup>23</sup> Ruskin was not “advancing a claim for the artistic superiority of extreme photographic naturalism as a painterly style.”<sup>24</sup> Landow’s term “extreme photographic naturalism” is suggestive of some of the terms used by Hagstrum, Stein, and Helsingier to characterise eighteenth-century pictorialism: e.g. ‘external’ description and the aim of achieving ‘fidelity to nature’. Landow, commenting on Ruskin’s ideas about representation in painting, makes a contrast between the two modes quite forcefully.

Ruskin does not ... wish art mechanically to transcribe nature, but he emphasises that [... it] must be instinctive, unconscious, and imaginative.<sup>25</sup>

Landow analyses key passages from *Modern Painters* and *The Stones of Venice* in terms of three distinctive word-painting styles: additive, dramatized and cinematic.<sup>26</sup>

In summary, a number of points can be made about Victorian ‘word-painting’ as interpreted by modern critics:

- Word-painting refers to a style of text that is visually oriented. It demonstrates characteristics of both an eighteenth-century pictorialist mode of description featuring scientific and descriptive language, and a nineteenth-century emphasis on the evocative and affective.
- Victorian word-painting emerged in response to a perception that eighteenth-century pictorialist practice was a ‘superficial’ and ‘unfeeling’ mode that merely enumerated visual details.
- In Victorian word-painting, emphasis is put on a close attention to visual (or pictorial) details including colour and light, but also on the perceiver’s psychological responses to natural landscape.
- Victorian word-painting dramatically integrates spatial with temporal elements in its descriptions.

### **Characterisation of ‘word-painting’ in Victorian periodicals**

Such standard modern accounts are, however, not particularly useful for the purposes of this paper. First, the studies on which they are based are primarily analyses of word-painting practices; second, they handle the term ‘word-painting’ without reference to historical change. This means that they run the risk of over-generalising Ruskin’s theory of word-painting, as well as his practice, both of which spanned several decades of the nineteenth century. To solve the problem of the lack of any *diachronic* investigation of nineteenth-

century views about the term 'word-painting,' this section investigates how early and later nineteenth-century writers used the term in Victorian periodicals. In it, I provide fresh data on how the term 'word-painting' was used, and test the standard accounts of 'word-painting' against this new data.

The tool I have used is the British periodical database.<sup>27</sup> A survey of the term 'word-painting' in the database suggests that while the term appeared in early Victorian periodicals, extensive discussion of it as a critical term did not appear until the late 1860s. Since the term may have been used differently in the early nineteenth century, I have increased the coverage of the term in my investigation. I focus on two major periods in the nineteenth century: the period from the 1820s to the 1840s, and the period from the 1860s to the 1890s. I have chosen the former period because it was the context from which Ruskin's first volume of *Modern Painters* (1843) sprang. Within the entire Ruskin corpus, it is *Modern Painters* that has been most characterised as a "visual" book.<sup>28</sup> I contrast these results with usages in the period from the 1860s to the 1890s.

#### *Early period: 1820s-1840s*

The periodicals in this early period usually applied the term to examples of actual practice rather than speculating theoretically on its meaning. The number of hits from the British periodicals database suggests that the term was not widely used in Victorian periodicals in this early period. There are only 27<sup>29</sup> instances found in the early documents, a significantly smaller number than the 1265<sup>30</sup> instances returned for the 1860s-90s. Usages of the term in the early and late periodicals are also different.

One characteristic feature of the use of the term 'word-painting' in the 1820s-1840s period is that writers apply the term to different kinds of descriptive activities, such as to descriptions of landscapes,<sup>31</sup> portraits,<sup>32</sup> and scenes of people and places.<sup>33</sup> In this last category, *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* (1839) considered the following paragraph, Mrs Postans's discussion of the characteristics of people in a small town of India, to be an example of a "bit of good word-painting:"

The population is principally composed of Banyans, Brahmins, and cultivators, many of whom may be seen on the outside of the town, either engaged in their several callings, loitering lazily along, or grouped together in little knots, gossiping, with vehement gesticulation, on any trifling subject of profit or pleasure. Here and there a retainer of the Rao comes swaggering along, displaying the superior height, aquiline nose, and long moustache of the Rajpoot tribe; his arms are a sword, shield, and matchlock, and his dress and bearing are marked by an air of mingled haughtiness, foppery, and independence. Then are seen swarthy but fine-limbed children, rolling on the soft sand in childish glee, and shouting with joy, as a horseman passes them, circling and passaging with consummate skill his gaily decorated steed. Near these, a water-carrier urges on his bullock, which, laden with the water-bags, slowly saunters forward, whilst his master smokes his hookah, and indulges in a passing chat with the women, who, gracefully bearing their earthen water-vessels on their heads, are returning to the well to which he journeys. Lastly, are groups of women, employed in sifting grain from light baskets, in which they display the most graceful attitudes; the passing breeze winnows the corn, as it falls into large heaps, and numerous asses wait leisurely around, to carry it in sacks to the merchants' granaries.<sup>34</sup>

Three characteristics of this description correspond to the modern characterisation of the term ‘word-painting;’ they are the presence of pictorial and external description, the use of temporal and/or spatial elements, and the emphasis on the viewer’s psychological perspective. First, the narrator gives an external evaluation of the people and scene based on her perception. The use of the expression ‘an air of’ suggests that the narrator evaluates based on the Rao retainer’s external appearance: his physical build (superior height and aquiline nose), the way he dresses (‘foppery’) and the way he walks (‘swaggering along’).

Apart from giving visual details, the narrator also incorporates temporal and spatial elements so that the description reads like a narrative. Temporal and spatial markers like ‘here and there’, ‘then,’ and ‘finally,’ shift the perceptual focus from the general to the specific: first the narrator gives an overview of the make-up of the population, then her eyes rest on a Rao retainer. From this retainer her focus continues to shift to a group of children, who are not far from a water-carrier (‘near these’). The water-carrier is seen having a “passing chat” with a woman, and the description “lastly” finishes with comments about a group of women. The use of these markers makes the description both sequential, following the eye movement of the narrator, and narrative-like.

A third element, an emphasis on the viewer’s psychological perspective, is also present in this description. This can be seen in the way the narrator uses adjectives that signal value (“superior,” “swarthy,” “fine-limbed,” and the superlative “most graceful”).<sup>35</sup>

Word-painting in this early period is always positively evaluated. Some of the positive words used in conjunction with the term ‘word-painting’ are “good,” “beautiful,”<sup>36</sup> “most effective,”<sup>37</sup> “dramatic and picturesque,”<sup>38</sup> visual details in a word-painting are said to be “artistically grouped,”<sup>39</sup> “minute,”<sup>40</sup> and possessing word-painting skills is said to be a “power.”<sup>41</sup> This positive evaluation of the term seems to have continued until the early 1860s.

#### *Later period: 1860s-1890s*

##### a) Definitions of ‘word-painting’

The term ‘word-painting’ was used to refer to a literary *practice* in early Victorian periodicals. However, later in the century, critics began to pay attention to it from a more theoretical perspective. Although the term ‘word-painting’ had been circulating in the English language for almost four decades, the fact that it had not been properly theorised prompted William Francis Ainsworth in the *New Monthly Magazine* (1875) to call word-painting “a new phrase.”<sup>42</sup> He pointed out that it was “used to designate an art that dates from the earliest period of the World’s history, even before the introduction of a *written* literature.”<sup>43</sup> Although he suggested the term was new to his contemporaries, Ainsworth recognised that the concept and practice of using language to represent visual phenomena was not.

Placing ‘word-painting’ in the literary pictorialist tradition, and the *ut pictura poesis* tradition in particular, Ainsworth considered the relative status and ordering of painting and word-painting. He was particularly

interested in assessing whether painting or word-painting was better at imitating a viewer's visual experience of colour. He first laid out what he saw as the similarities between the two arts in colour representation: both painters and word-painters had to overcome technical challenges of colour representation, according to Ainsworth.

An author has as much to learn in his choice of *words* as an artist has in mixing his colours, both have to serve a dreary apprenticeship of failure; it is only patience and perseverance that can ensure success, either with the paint-brush or the pen. Authors differ as much as artists in their sketches. One has a bold style of writing, conveying his ideas in short decisive sentence, and making them stand out in relief like one of Reynolds' portraits. Another veils his thoughts in vague obscurity like one of Turner's skies.<sup>44</sup>

Although painting and word-painting require a similar amount of effort in representing colour accurately, Ainsworth goes on to express his view that painting is superior to word-painting. In his view, word-painting may be applied to a work that 'has not any intrinsic merit of its own to recommend it, but the choice of language of its author has been so good that as a mere collection of pleasing sounds it possesses a value of its own'.<sup>45</sup> Ainsworth's attitude towards 'word-painting' is mixed: when he describes 'word-painting' as "a mere collection of pleasing sounds" that "possesses a value of its own," his use of the word "mere" seems to suggest that he does not consider "pleasing sounds" to be important in works that represent visual phenomena. However, he still sees word-painting as having "value," although he does not specify its nature.

Another Victorian critic, Agnes Atkinson, similarly highlights the pictorial nature of Victorian 'word-painting'.<sup>46</sup> She defines 'word-painting' as "the gift of calling up before the mental vision, by means of words, the image of a scene, whether of landscape or of dramatic actions, with its pictorial and emotional significance."<sup>47</sup> Three characteristics of this definition link closely with both Flaxman and Landow's observation about the term; Atkinson refers to the *pictorial* significance of word-painting, the *dramatic* actions which word-painting can represent, and the *emotional* significance that word-paintings can convey.

Elsewhere, Atkinson points out three features which she sees as distinctive to word-painting. They are its high concentration of colour terms, its use of analogy, and the internal perspective from which natural landscape is described. Atkinson observes that accurate representation of colour had become a prerequisite of good word-painting. Many contemporary translators of classical poetry, in an attempt to produce good word-painting, added colour descriptions into their translation even though colour elements were absent in the original work.<sup>48</sup> Word-painters' use of colour terms was also becoming more sophisticated and elaborate, according to Atkinson. She notes that sophisticated colour depiction 'comes very slowly to play the [*sic.*] part in literary description'.<sup>49</sup> Eighteenth-century pictorialist writers primarily employed basic colour terms such as "blue," "purple," "white," and "gold." By contrast, according to Atkinson, Victorian word-painters used more sophisticated colour expressions, demonstrating the "subtle perfection of relative tones and delicate gradations."<sup>50</sup>

Atkinson contends that Victorian word-painters were also using analogy more profusely than their predecessors. She explains this with an example:

The palette of nature is exhaustless in variety; your painter cannot come near its appositions and gradations, the writer must needs have recourse to analogies in default of fit terms. The woodland scenes in which the shepherds of Virgil's 'Eclogues' discourse their loves and contest for supremacy in song, and the rustic backgrounds of the 'Georgics' abound in perceptive touches specifying or implying colour, while we also find therein among modern sympathies (such as the love of scented flowers -- violets, hyacinths, cassia, lilies, virvien) that fine artistic affinity between dramatis personae and surroundings, which has reached a point of supreme finesse in contemporary writing, especially of the French school.<sup>51</sup>

Here Atkinson suggests that painters have trouble representing natural landscape accurately because 'the palette of nature is exhaustless in variety' but the colour pigments available to them are not. Writers too cannot represent nature's variety of colour, lacking enough 'fit terms'; but they can have recourse to more subtle methods of suggestion or implication in representing colours, through the use of analogies. Unfortunately, Atkinson does not explain what kind of analogies she has in mind when she refers to "perceptive touches... implying colour," but instead changes direction and talks about the "fine artistic affinity between dramatis personae and surroundings."

Another topic Atkinson discusses, which she sees as differentiating Victorian word-painting from more traditional pictorialist descriptions, is the perspective from which natural landscape is described.<sup>52</sup> Atkinson notes that human interest in natural landscape is a common theme of both eighteenth- and nineteenth-century natural landscape descriptions. However, writers in these two centuries handled this theme differently, from two different perspectives. For eighteenth-century pictorialists, "the description is from the outside as distinctly [*sic.*] by an onlooker "who was there".<sup>53</sup> Victorian word-painting, by contrast, places more emphasis on individual experience:

the description of the external *entourage* of the individual or individuals placed before us is, as it were, given not from outside, but from within the consciousness of the actors.<sup>54</sup>

According to Atkinson, this shift in the Victorian preference for natural scenes that reflect 'the consciousness' of the viewer changes the primary function of landscape description in the nineteenth century. Both writers and readers look for descriptions that describe not only the surface details of natural scenes, but also the feelings (or "consciousness") of "the individuals portrayed." Atkinson continues,

The reader find himself drawn by a new transfiguration of soul into the consciousness of the individuals portrayed, and, seeing with their eyes, understands how their character is formed by their habitual environment, or may be swayed by accident of emotion or imagination, stirred at sight of some natural incident—tree branches moving in the wind, the sudden lift of a storm-cloud above the horizon, the visionary glories of autumn sunset, or the upturned gaze of a child.<sup>55</sup>

Words as an intermediary tool also transform external perception into internal disposition; readers are put into the "consciousness" of the characters and they respond to the description of the scene not so much with their perceptual faculty but with "emotion" and "imagination." This internal focus of landscape description echoes

modern ideas about the history of the term 'word-painting,' which suggest that the label was adopted in response to an eighteenth-century mode of description that was perceived to be "superficial and unfeeling."

Note also, in the above quotation, how Atkinson makes indirect reference to Ruskin in discussing successful word-painting: "The sudden lift of a storm-cloud" and "the visionary glories of autumn sunset" are quite likely picking up on phrases widely associated with Ruskin's own style. Further evidence, as mentioned previously, that Ruskin represented an ideal of Victorian word-painting is seen when Atkinson compares Ruskin with Scott, elevating the former over the latter:

We are charmed by Scott, we note with delight the completeness of his detail, the directness of his epithet, but we experience no heart-beats, nor do unbidden tears gather in our eyes as when dwelling on such word-painting as [Ruskin's...].<sup>56</sup>

Here Atkinson's contrast between Scott's descriptive style and Ruskin's is a contrast between "complete detail" and "direct epithet" on the one hand, and a style that is sentimental and passionate (it excites "heart-beats" and induces "tears") on the other. The tendency for nineteenth-century critics to look for a representation of the writer's feelings or the representation of the consciousness of a character in descriptions of natural landscape seems to prompt Atkinson to privilege Ruskin's word-painting over Scott's.<sup>57</sup> To Atkinson, Ruskin was "the greatest modern English master of descriptive prose."<sup>58</sup>

#### b) Perceptions of 'word-painting' from the 1860s-1890s

Apart from looking at the term 'word-painting' from a theoretical perspective, Victorian periodical writers also discussed the term as a literary practice. Their discussions focused on four issues: the adequacy of language for representing visual phenomena; the level of attention paid to visual details; the density of colour term usages; and the dramatization of the viewer's psychology in word-painting. Although word-painting is perceived more negatively as a practice in the post-1860s period, the criteria by which Victorian periodical writers of this period discussed the term 'word-painting' are very similar to those used by the earlier critics.

According to Edmond Hodgson Yates, word-painting as a literary practice was in vogue in the early 1880s.<sup>59</sup> A few years later another critic, Arthur Galton, was predicting that word-painting, in vogue at the time of writing, would cease to be employed so abundantly once there was "the inevitable change in fashions and modes of speech."<sup>60</sup> One of the ways in which late Victorian critics began to criticise the value of word-painting was by discussing the inadequacy of language in representing visual phenomena. Late Victorian critics pointed out that word-painting was able 'merely' to depict visual details but had little potential beyond this.<sup>61</sup> Even simple depiction in word-painting Sidney Colvin found to be "imperfect":

All that the poet can do to make us realise, in any given case [...] is by translating it as vividly as possible into words, so as to bring before the mind's eye, as exactly as they can be brought, the appearances which would be brought before the bodily eye by the original. But this task of minutely translating material appearances into words is one which language can at best but imperfectly perform.<sup>62</sup>



Word-painting was also criticised for its excessive amount of attention to visual details. Austen Henry Layard wrote:

The minute representation of the most insignificant objects in the pictures of the pre-Raphaelite school has its counterpart in what is commonly called the 'word-painting' of many of our, for the day, popular writers. That special and lasting impression which it should be the object of the painter and the poet to produce is lost in a cloud of irrelevant details. That which is itself beautiful or grand is rendered vulgar or poor by the accessories with which it is surrounded and encumbered.<sup>63</sup>

This quotation parallels the hyperrealism of the Pre-Raphaelites with contemporary word-painting style. What kind of formal linkages, however, was the critic thinking of? Pre-Raphaelite art, in its first phase, was characterised by the use of minute detail, and bright colour with a minimum of shadow.<sup>64</sup> Anne Amor points out that the Victorian poet, William Bell Scott, identified photographic elements in the Pre-Raphaelites' painting:

William Bell Scott, whose poetry filled the youthful Gabriel with enthusiasm, called to see him [Rossetti] and found him working in the studio with Hunt. Initially thinking that they were painting in the manner of the Dutch realists, he quickly decided that they were recording nature in a way that was apparently photographic.<sup>65</sup>

According to Christopher Wood, such treatment of photographic details:

often led to a relentless accumulation of compressed detail at the expense of the overall composition; a common fault with Pre-Raphaelite landscapes, but a sacrifice they thought was justified in their crusade for greater truth in art. Many critics argued that to treat every inch of the canvas with equal importance was in itself unnatural, as the human eye could not take in so much detail at once. They also criticized the lack of shadow in many Pre-Raphaelite landscapes, and indeed their brilliant colours do often produce an airless, artificial effect that is certainly not realistic – in twentieth-century terms, we would certainly call them surrealist.<sup>66</sup>

The Pre-Raphaelites' 'extreme fidelity to nature', to use Tim Barringer's expression, can be traced back to Ruskin's influence:<sup>67</sup>

The Pre-Raphaelites practised Ruskinian naturalism before they encountered the critic in person. It was Holman Hunt who read *Modern Painters I* first, and absorbed it most fully. He later recalled: 'Of all its readers none could have felt more strongly than myself that it was written expressly for him. When it had gone, the echo of its words stayed with me, and they gained further value and meaning whenever my more solemn feelings were touched.' A Ruskinian influence can be detected in the extreme fidelity to nature in the foreground of Hunt's *Valentine rescuing Sylvia from Proteus* [...], with every leaf meticulously and individually characterised.<sup>68</sup>

Staley argues that Ruskin was influential on the Pre-Raphaelites in two main ways: the first in his emphasis on detail and finish in *Modern Painters II* (1846); and the second in his exhortation to the young artists of England, in *Pre-Raphaelitism* (1851), to "go to nature."<sup>69</sup> It is perhaps no coincidence that Ruskin acted as a source of influence on both artistic and poetic representations of natural landscape. When the "photographic" style of word-painting was carried to extremes, the device was criticised<sup>70</sup> in the late Victorian period as

“boring”<sup>71</sup> and “weariful.”<sup>72</sup> A critic in the *Calcutta Review* even described the over-attention to detail in one word-painting as a kind of “bombast.”<sup>73</sup>

‘Word-painting’ was also judged negatively in the post-1860s because of its typically heavy use of colour terms. I mentioned previously that early Victorian critics considered colour description and the use of colour terms important in word-painting. Contemporary translators of classical works even added colour terms into works that had no colour presence. This tendency to pay what they considered excessive attention to visual details, including details of colour and light, annoyed some later critics. *Westminster Review* critic Arabella Shore, in explaining her dissatisfaction with certain kinds of writing, comments:

One sense of this, as well as of a sense of confusion and exhaustion left by these works, is the excess of word-painting. Nothing is left to the suggestive simplicity of Nature. Colour, light, or mere epithets significant of light and colour, are lavished everywhere, and minute effects are given which disturb the large perception of the general plan and do not really make the particular clearer.<sup>74</sup>

The critic continues to argue that many colour terms in word-painting are either uncalled for, or are predictably clichéd, as in the following example:

[...] a scene [...] in one of Mr. Besant’s novels, is coloured with a fatiguingly luscious sentimentality. Her “creamy arms” are “wreathed round the old man’s neck,” he “tenderly pinches her ripe cheek”; she laughs, and instead of those two simple and sufficient words, we have her “clear silvery laughter rang thrilling from her rosy lips.”<sup>75</sup>

Colour terms exhausted readers, according to critics, because they were often employed symbolically, and synaesthetically.<sup>76</sup> Commenting on Jonathan Sturjee’s “exaggerated word-painting,” a critic in *The Saturday Review* suggested that Victorian word-painting was characterised by “the use of epithets and similes pertaining to one sense when describing what can only be appreciated by another sense: -- “And the voice gave the colour of violets,” “smoked-streaked, sharp-eyed sun,” “gloom-red sun,” “the electric blue-white icy mist,” &c.”<sup>77</sup> Word-painters exploited colour terms synaesthetically in two ways: they mixed colour terms with other senses such as hearing (a ‘voice of violet’); and they metaphorised colour terms by compounding them with nouns suggesting emotion (e.g. ‘gloom-red’). These two comments show that the representation of colour in language, often using epithets and similes, was a firmly established feature of word-painting.

A final reason why critics evaluated ‘word-painting’ negatively in later Victorian periodicals is that they thought that the use of colour terms, alongside other features, overdramatised descriptions of natural landscape. Word-painting is often branded as “sensational” in the later Victorian periodicals. In the following example, in which a reviewer in *The Examiner* praises Frederick Boyle’s *Chronicles of No Man’s Land* (1880), he notes that one reason for the quality of the *Chronicles* was that it contained no such word-painting style:

There is no ‘word-painting,’ no writing for effect, no sensational padding. Every sentence is necessary, and not a word can be spared from any sentence without injuring the context. [...] We are never wearied by a repetition, and we come to the end of a chapter hungry for more. The language is picturesque no doubt [...] – but it never o’ersteps the modesty of nature. But there is withal a naturalness about the terse descriptions, an ease about the flowing periods [...].<sup>78</sup>

The absence of ‘word-painting’—or the linguistic and stylistic features associated with it—had become meritorious for late Victorian literary critics. ‘Word-painting’ came to be branded as “writing for effect” and “sensational”; the excessive attention paid to visual details was thought to make word-painting repetitive, and a “weariness”.

Where word-painting was evaluated positively, it was often associated with women’s writing, suggesting that the term was feminized in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. For example, G.A. Simcox speaks of Mary Mitford’s word-painting as “true and faultless.”<sup>79</sup> Bash W. Worsfold also praises Charlotte Brontë’s description of a scene at the Cowan Bridge School: “The result is a remarkable, almost photographic, exactness of word-painting, producing the same vivid portrayal of actual life as we find in the almost parallel case of Olive Schreiner, the authoress of *The Story of an African Farm*.”<sup>80</sup> Similarly, Jason Camlot notes how Ruskin’s “ekphrastic style” in *Modern Painters* became increasingly associated with a supposed feminine style, and talks about how contemporary critics tried to “effeminize Ruskin by referring to his “weeping and howling,” his “voice choked with tears,” his “female virulence,” and his “feminine nonsense” [...].”<sup>81</sup>

#### *Ruskin’s ideas about ‘word-painting’*

How much did Ruskin share the ideas of word-painting as defined and discussed by his contemporaries? To answer this question, I examine the evaluative criteria Ruskin applied to examples of word-painting: what he thought word-painting was, and how he thought it should be carried out. I extract these ideas of Ruskin from two sources: his 1839 criticism of the word-painting of other writers, including Scott; and his 1847 commentary on his own word-painting.

##### a) The word-painting of other writers

In 1839, Ruskin commented on Scott and Shelley’s descriptive practices,<sup>82</sup> concluding that while Scott certainly “brings his landscape clearly before the reader’s eyes,” Shelley’s landscape description has a “soul.”<sup>83</sup> These comments are significant statements that pinpoint Ruskin’s critical priorities for what constitutes powerful landscape word-painting.

[Scott’s] descriptive pieces are universally allowed to be lively and characteristic, but not first-rate; they have been far excelled by many writers, for the simple reason, that Scott, while he brings his landscape clearly before the reader’s eyes, puts no soul into it.<sup>84</sup>

“We have not space for quotations,” Ruskin continues,

but any one may understand our meaning, who will compare Scott’s description of the Dell of the Greta, in *Rokeby*, with the speech of Beatrice, beginning, “But I remember, Two miles on this side of the fort,” in Act III. Scene i. of *The Cenci* [...].<sup>85</sup>

This second reference is to Shelley. An analysis of these two verses suggests that Scott creates verisimilitude through the use of similes and the presence of an observer who sees and hears. Shelley is more interested in investing feelings into the natural landscape, through the use of personification. In addition, Shelley's passage lacks motion, and the sense of vision is subordinated to that of hearing. In 1839, then, Ruskin's early view about word-painting seems to have been that effective word-painting should go beyond merely creating a clear image, by animating natural landscape with human feelings.

#### b) Ruskin's own word-painting of Turner's *Slave Ship*

A second source to assess Ruskin's views on 'word-painting' is his 1847 reply letter to his Oxford tutor the Reverend Walter Brown, who was concerned about the language Ruskin had used to describe Turner's *Slave Ship* in *Modern Painters I* (3. 571–572). The letter from Brown to which Ruskin replied cannot be traced, but it is possible to reconstruct Brown's concerns from Ruskin's reply.

My dear Mr. Brown, [...] I admit the charge of enthusiasm at once, but my intended position ... is that there is a certain kind and degree of enthusiasm which alone is cognizant of all truth, and which, though it may sometimes mistake its own creations for reality, yet will miss no reality, while the unenthusiastic regard actually misses, and comes short of, the truth [...]. One may entangle a description with facts, until you come to pigments and measurements. For instance, in describing "The Slaver," if I had been writing to an artist in order to give him a clear conception of the picture, I should have said: "Line of eye, two-fifths up the canvass; centre of light, a little above it...etc. Once leave this and treat the picture as a reality, and you are obliged to use words implying what is indeed only seen in imagination, but yet what without doubt the artist intended to be so seen; just as he intended you to see and feel the heaving of the sea, being yet unable to give motion to his colours. And then, the question is, not whether all that you see is indeed there, but whether your imagination has worked as it was intended to do, and whether you have indeed felt as the artist did himself and wished to make you. (36. 80–81)

This is an important passage for understanding Ruskin's thinking about word-painting, as in it he explains key issues including the different stylistic choices he made for representing different dimensions of 'reality'. His discussion about word-painting in 1847 corresponds to a large extent to the early nineteenth-century definition of word-painting surveyed earlier; namely that word-painting combines both the physical and psychological modes of representation, it combines temporal and spatial descriptive elements and it is generally perceived positively as a literary device.

Ruskin conceives word-painting to involve a stylistic choice between two modes of description: the mode that involves the description of 'facts'—the physical; and the mode that involves the use of words that imply "what is indeed only seen in imagination"—the psychological. Word-painters have the choice of describing the 'scientific' features of a canvas, or they can go on to interpret what the artist "intended to be [...] seen." However, these two modes of description are not incompatible with each other. Ruskin's view was that representation involves two stages: the representation of empirical facts, and then the representation of the viewer's psychological response to the painting or natural object. Like Atkinson in the nineteenth century and Flaxman in the twentieth century, Ruskin thought that word-painting should involve a combination of the two modes of description. In fact, according to Ruskin, only when both the physical and psychological dimensions

of perception are included is word-painting rendered complete, and can come closest to representing the whole of reality, of 'all truth.'

What, though, does 'all truth' mean to Ruskin? Cook suggests that the idea of 'truth' was important to Ruskin; and that when applied to pictures it refers to whether a landscape is true to the "facts of nature."<sup>86</sup> Ruskin championed Turner and his work in *Modern Painters* because in his view, "Turner *is* like nature, and paints more of nature than any man who ever lived (3. 52; original emphasis)." Turner's power to bring his viewers as if to the scene struck Ruskin as an important aspect of Turner's work. In *Modern Painters I*, he suggests that,

the great quality about Turner's drawings which more especially proves their transcendent truth is, the capability they afford us of reasoning on past and future phenomena, *just as if we had the actual rocks before us*; for this indicates not that one truth is given, or another, not that a pretty or interesting morsel has been selected here and there, but that the whole truth has been given, with all the relations of its parts. (3. 487-88; emphasis added)

Similarly,

You cannot find a single edge in Turner's work; you are everywhere kept upon round surfaces, and you go back on these you cannot tell how, never taking a leap, but progressing imperceptibly along the unbroken bank, *till you find yourself a quarter of a mile into the picture, beside the figure at the bottom of the waterfall*. (3. 491; emphasis added)

For Ruskin, Turner's art was able to present the "whole truth" of a scene, making it almost impossible to tell the difference between 'reality' and its representation, a point he highlights in the passages I have italicized above. Tony Tanner, however, complains that Ruskin is claiming an almost impossible transformation of art into reality, saying it is "as if he wants art magically, impossibly, to turn into the real thing."<sup>87</sup> I think that Ruskin indeed wanted this, but that he did not believe all arts had the same potential for achieving this representational goal. He was indeed aware of the limitations of the visual arts in representing "all truth"; for example he believed that Turner had difficulty in representing one important component of reality, movement, in painting. Ruskin points out in the passage cited above that because Turner could not "give motion to his colours," word-painters were 'obliged' to interpret the intention of his artist, and help him to complete the representation. This is what he claims to have done in *The Slave Ship* word-painting in *Modern Painters I*, by combining both spatial (colour) and temporal (motion) elements in his word-painting. Here I want to highlight the fact that Ruskin included colour description as one of the linguistic features of his word-painting in *Modern Painters*, something I have previously pointed out as being a distinctive feature of Victorian word-painting.

Although some modern critics have commented on Ruskin's dislike of being called a 'word-painter' as opposed to a 'thinker',<sup>88</sup> none have commented on Ruskin's first and positive usage of the term 'word-painting' in 1859, in a letter to Tennyson. There he talked about how he enjoyed the poet's use of language in *Idylls*, and how 'In Memoriam', 'Maud', and 'The Miller's Daughter'

will always be my own pet rhymes, [...] I am quite prepared to admit this [*Idylls*] to be as good as any, for its own peculiar audience. Treasures of wisdom there are in it, and word-painting such as never was yet for concentration. (36. 320)

The term 'word-painting' does not seem to be used in a pejorative sense here; Ruskin is 'quite prepared to admit' that Tennyson's word-painting is fine writing. Apart from expressing enthusiasm about Tennyson's concentrated use of word-painting, Ruskin also appreciates the "treasures of wisdom" he finds in Tennyson's work. It seems at this stage that Ruskin considered 'word-painting' to be capable of elaborating complex ideas. This linkage between word-painting as a *form* of writing and its ability to communicate ideas is something Ruskin would return to, and challenge, in his post-1870s usage of the term. His revised attitude towards word-painting, from positive to negative, echoes the nineteenth-century trend I outlined above.

Ruskin's contribution to the label 'word-painting' goes beyond the writing of his "magniloquent prose," and the provision of a benchmark for the practice. Rather, he grappled with the issue of word-painting and discussed its function and linguistic characteristics in the 1830s and 1840s. The parallels between Ruskin's early discussion of the characteristics of word-painting in the 1830s and 1840s on the one hand, and the later Victorian periodical writers and modern critics on the other hand, indicate a profitable avenue for further study of the Victorian label through Ruskin, the critic and the writer.

## NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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*The Chicago Manual of Style* presents two basic documentation systems, the humanities style (notes and bibliography) and the author-date system. Choosing between the two often depends on subject matter and nature of sources cited, as each system is favored by different groups of scholars.

The humanities style is preferred by many in literature, history, and the arts. This style presents bibliographic information in notes and, often, a bibliography. It accommodates a variety of sources, including esoteric ones less appropriate to the author-date system.

The more concise author-date system has long been used by those in the physical, natural, and social sciences. In this system, sources are briefly cited in the text, usually in parentheses, by author's last name and date of publication. The short citations are amplified in a list of references, where full bibliographic information is provided.

Below are some common examples of materials cited in both styles. Each example is given first in humanities style (a note [N], followed by a bibliographic entry [B]) and then in author-date style (an in-text citation [T], followed by a reference-list entry [R]). For numerous specific examples, see chapters 16 and 17 of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition.

Online sources that are analogous to print sources (such as articles published in online journals, magazines, or newspapers) should be cited similarly to their print counterparts but with the addition of a URL. Some publishers or disciplines may also require an access date. For online or other electronic sources that do not have a direct print counterpart (such as an institutional Web site or a Weblog), give as much information as

you can in addition to the URL. The following examples include some of the most common types of electronic sources.

## BOOK

### *One author*

N: 1. Wendy Doniger, *Splitting the Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 65.

B: Doniger, Wendy. *Splitting the Difference*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

T: (Doniger 1999, 65)

R: Doniger, Wendy. 1999. *Splitting the difference*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

### *Two authors*

N: 6. Guy Cowlshaw and Robin Dunbar, *Primate Conservation Biology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 104–7.

B: Cowlshaw, Guy, and Robin Dunbar. *Primate Conservation Biology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

T: (Cowlshaw and Dunbar 2000, 104–7)

R: Cowlshaw, Guy, and Robin Dunbar. 2000. *Primate conservation biology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

### *Four or more authors*

N: 13. Edward O. Laumann et al., *The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 262.

B: Laumann, Edward O., John H. Gagnon, Robert T. Michael, and Stuart Michaels. *The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

T: (Laumann et al. 1994, 262)

R: Laumann, Edward O., John H. Gagnon, Robert T. Michael, and Stuart Michaels. 1994. *The social organization of sexuality: Sexual practices in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

### *Editor, translator, or compiler instead of author*



N: 4. Richmond Lattimore, trans., *The Iliad of Homer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 91–92.

B: Lattimore, Richmond, trans. *The Iliad of Homer*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.

T: (Lattimore 1951, 91–92)

R: Lattimore, Richmond, trans. 1951. *The Iliad of Homer*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

*Editor, translator, or compiler in addition to author*

N: 16. Yves Bonnefoy, *New and Selected Poems*, ed. John Naughton and Anthony Rudolf (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 22.

B: Bonnefoy, Yves. *New and Selected Poems*. Edited by John Naughton and Anthony Rudolf. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

T: (Bonnefoy 1995, 22)

R: Bonnefoy, Yves. 1995. *New and selected poems*. Ed. John Naughton and Anthony Rudolf. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

*Chapter or other part of a book*

N: 5. Andrew Wiese, “The House I Live In’: Race, Class, and African American Suburban Dreams in the Postwar United States,” in *The New Suburban History*, ed. Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 101–2.

B: Wiese, Andrew. “The House I Live In’: Race, Class, and African American Suburban Dreams in the Postwar United States.” In *The New Suburban History*, edited by Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue, 99–119. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

T: (Wiese 2006, 101–2)

R: Wiese, Andrew. 2006. “The house I live in”: Race, class, and African American suburban dreams in the postwar United States. In *The new suburban history*, ed. Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue, 99–119. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

*Chapter of an edited volume originally published elsewhere (as in primary sources)*

N: 8. Quintus Tullius Cicero. “Handbook on Canvassing for the Consulship,” in *Rome: Late Republic and Principate*, ed. Walter Emil Kaegi Jr. and Peter White, vol. 2 of *University of Chicago Readings in*

*Western Civilization*, ed. John Boyer and Julius Kirshner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 35.

B: Cicero, Quintus Tullius. "Handbook on Canvassing for the Consulship." In *Rome: Late Republic and Principate*, edited by Walter Emil Kaegi Jr. and Peter White. Vol. 2 of *University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization*, edited by John Boyer and Julius Kirshner, 33–46. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986. Originally published in Evelyn S. Shuckburgh, trans., *The Letters of Cicero*, vol. 1 (London: George Bell & Sons, 1908).

T: (Cicero 1986, 35)

R: Cicero, Quintus Tullius. 1986. Handbook on canvassing for the consulship. In *Rome: Late republic and principate*, edited by Walter Emil Kaegi Jr. and Peter White. Vol. 2 of *University of Chicago readings in western civilization*, ed. John Boyer and Julius Kirshner, 33–46. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Originally published in Evelyn S. Shuckburgh, trans., *The letters of Cicero*, vol. 1 (London: George Bell & Sons, 1908).

*Preface, foreword, introduction, or similar part of a book*

N: 17. James Rieger, introduction to *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), xx–xxi.

B: Rieger, James. Introduction to *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, xi–xxxvii. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

T: (Rieger 1982, xx–xxi)

R: Rieger, James. 1982. Introduction to *Frankenstein; or, The modern Prometheus*, by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, xi–xxxvii. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

*Book published electronically*

If a book is available in more than one format, you should cite the version you consulted, but you may also list the other formats, as in the second example below. If an access date is required by your publisher or discipline, include it parenthetically at the end of the citation, as in the first example below.

N: 2. Philip B. Kurland and Ralph Lerner, eds., *The Founders' Constitution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/> (accessed June 27, 2006).

B: Kurland, Philip B., and Ralph Lerner, eds. *The Founders' Constitution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/>. Also available in print form and as a CD-ROM.

T: (Kurland and Lerner 1987)

R: Kurland, Philip B., and Ralph Lerner, eds. 1987. *The founders' Constitution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/>.

## JOURNAL ARTICLE

### *Article in a print journal*

N: 8. John Maynard Smith, "The Origin of Altruism," *Nature* 393 (1998): 639.

B: Smith, John Maynard. "The Origin of Altruism." *Nature* 393 (1998): 639–40.

T: (Smith 1998, 639)

R: Smith, John Maynard. 1998. The origin of altruism. *Nature* 393: 639–40.

### *Article in an online journal*

If an access date is required by your publisher or discipline, include it parenthetically at the end of the citation, as in the fourth example below.

N: 33. Mark A. Hlatky et al., "Quality-of-Life and Depressive Symptoms in Postmenopausal Women after Receiving Hormone Therapy: Results from the Heart and Estrogen/Progestin Replacement Study (HERS) Trial," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 287, no. 5 (2002), <http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v287n5/rfull/joc10108.html#aainfo>.

B: Hlatky, Mark A., Derek Boothroyd, Eric Vittinghoff, Penny Sharp, and Mary A. Whooley. "Quality-of-Life and Depressive Symptoms in Postmenopausal Women after Receiving Hormone Therapy: Results from the Heart and Estrogen/Progestin Replacement Study (HERS) Trial." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 287, no. 5 (February 6, 2002), <http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v287n5/rfull/joc10108.html#aainfo>.

T: (Hlatky et al. 2002)

R: Hlatky, Mark A., Derek Boothroyd, Eric Vittinghoff, Penny Sharp, and Mary A. Whooley. 2002. Quality-of-life and depressive symptoms in postmenopausal women after receiving hormone therapy: Results from the Heart and Estrogen/Progestin Replacement Study (HERS)

trial. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 287, no. 5 (February 6), <http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v287n5/rfull/joc10108.html#aainfo> (accessed January 7, 2004).

#### POPULAR MAGAZINE ARTICLE

N: 29. Steve Martin, "Sports-Interview Shocker," *New Yorker*, May 6, 2002, 84.

B: Martin, Steve. "Sports-Interview Shocker." *New Yorker*, May 6, 2002.

T: (Martin 2002, 84)

R: Martin, Steve. 2002. Sports-interview shocker. *New Yorker*, May 6.

#### NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Newspaper articles may be cited in running text ("As William Niederkorn noted in a *New York Times* article on June 20, 2002, . . .") instead of in a note or an in-text citation, and they are commonly omitted from a bibliography or reference list as well. The following examples show the more formal versions of the citations.

N: 10. William S. Niederkorn, "A Scholar Recants on His 'Shakespeare' Discovery," *New York Times*, June 20, 2002, Arts section, Midwest edition.

B: Niederkorn, William S. "A Scholar Recants on His 'Shakespeare' Discovery." *New York Times*, June 20, 2002, Arts section, Midwest edition.

T: (Niederkorn 2002)

R: Niederkorn, William S. 2002. A scholar recants on his "Shakespeare" discovery. *New York Times*, June 20, Arts section, Midwest edition.

#### BOOK REVIEW

N: 1. James Gorman, "Endangered Species," review of *The Last American Man*, by Elizabeth Gilbert, *New York Times Book Review*, June 2, 2002, 16.

B: Gorman, James. "Endangered Species." Review of *The Last American Man*, by Elizabeth Gilbert. *New York Times Book Review*, June 2, 2002.

T: (Gorman 2002, 16)

R: Gorman, James. 2002. Endangered species. Review of *The last American man*, by Elizabeth Gilbert. *New York Times Book Review*, June 2.

#### THESIS OR DISSERTATION

N: 22. M. Amundin, "Click Repetition Rate Patterns in Communicative Sounds from the Harbour Porpoise, *Phocoena phocoena*" (PhD diss., Stockholm University, 1991), 22–29, 35.

B: Amundin, M. "Click Repetition Rate Patterns in Communicative Sounds from the Harbour Porpoise, *Phocoena phocoena*." PhD diss., Stockholm University, 1991.

T: (Amundin 1991, 22–29, 35)

R: Amundin, M. 1991. Click repetition rate patterns in communicative sounds from the harbour porpoise, *Phocoena phocoena*. PhD diss., Stockholm University.

#### PAPER PRESENTED AT A MEETING OR CONFERENCE

N: 13. Brian Doyle, "Howling Like Dogs: Metaphorical Language in Psalm 59" (paper presented at the annual international meeting for the Society of Biblical Literature, Berlin, Germany, June 19–22, 2002).

B: Doyle, Brian. "Howling Like Dogs: Metaphorical Language in Psalm 59." Paper presented at the annual international meeting for the Society of Biblical Literature, Berlin, Germany, June 19–22, 2002.

T: (Doyle 2002)

R: Doyle, Brian. 2002. Howling like dogs: Metaphorical language in Psalm 59. Paper presented at the annual international meeting for the Society of Biblical Literature, June 19–22, in Berlin, Germany.

#### WEB SITE

Web sites may be cited in running text ("On its Web site, the Evanston Public Library Board of Trustees states . . .") instead of in an in-text citation, and they are commonly omitted from a bibliography or reference list as well. The following examples show the more formal versions of the citations. If an access date is required by your publisher or discipline, include it parenthetically at the end of the citation, as in the second example below.

N: 11. Evanston Public Library Board of Trustees, "Evanston Public Library Strategic Plan, 2000–2010: A Decade of Outreach," Evanston Public Library, <http://www.epl.org/library/strategic-plan-00.html>.

B: Evanston Public Library Board of Trustees. "Evanston Public Library Strategic Plan, 2000–2010: A Decade of Outreach." Evanston Public Library. <http://www.epl.org/library/strategic-plan-00.html> (accessed June 1, 2005).

T: (Evanston Public Library Board of Trustees)

R: Evanston Public Library Board of Trustees. Evanston Public Library strategic plan, 2000–2010: A decade of outreach. Evanston Public Library. <http://www.epl.org/library/strategic-plan-00.html>.

#### WEBLOG ENTRY OR COMMENT

Weblog entries or comments may be cited in running text (“In a comment posted to the Becker-Posner Blog on March 6, 2006, Peter Pearson noted . . .”) instead of in a note or an in-text citation, and they are commonly omitted from a bibliography or reference list as well. The following examples show the more formal versions of the citations. If an access date is required by your publisher or discipline, include it parenthetically at the end of the citation, as in the first example below.

N: 8. Peter Pearson, comment on “The New American Dilemma: Illegal Immigration,” The Becker-Posner Blog, comment posted March 6, 2006, [http://www.becker-posner-blog.com/archives/2006/03/the\\_new\\_america.html#c080052](http://www.becker-posner-blog.com/archives/2006/03/the_new_america.html#c080052) (accessed March 28, 2006).

B: Becker-Posner Blog, The. <http://www.becker-posner-blog.com/>.

T: (Peter Pearson, The Becker-Posner Blog, comment posted March 6, 2006)

R: Becker-Posner blog, The. <http://www.becker-posner-blog.com/>.

#### E-MAIL MESSAGE

E-mail messages may be cited in running text (“In an e-mail message to the author on October 31, 2005, John Doe revealed . . .”) instead of in a note or an in-text citation, and they are rarely listed in a bibliography or reference list. The following example shows the more formal version of a note.

N: 2. John Doe, e-mail message to author, October 31, 2005.

#### ITEM IN ONLINE DATABASE

Journal articles published in online databases should be cited as shown above, under “Article in an online journal.” If an access date is required by your publisher or discipline, include it parenthetically at the end of the citation, as in the first example below.

N: 7. Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History*, ed. John Bostock and H. T. Riley, in the Perseus Digital Library, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Plin.+Nat.+1.dedication> (accessed November 17, 2005).

B: Perseus Digital Library. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/>.

T: (Pliny the Elder, Perseus Digital Library)

R: Perseus Digital Library. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/>.

## ENDNOTES

### “Swift visions of centuries”: Langdale Linen, *Songs of the Spindle*, and the Revolutionary Potential of the Book

<sup>1</sup> Sara E. Haslam, *John Ruskin and the Lakeland Arts Revival, 1880-1920* (Cardiff: Merton Priory, 2004), 31. The direct contrast, here, is between the Langdale Linen Industry and Egbert Ryding’s attempt to revive hand spinning at Laxley—which Ruskin financially supported. This attempt failed in part because “the cloth was so durable that it was not a good prospect commercially” (7). Furthermore, “the bulk of the carding and spinning” in Ryding’s operation, “was carried out by water-powered machinery” (26). As we shall see, Langdale Linen circumvents both of these barriers to success, employing entirely hand work with substantial commercial success.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, 51

<sup>3</sup> Marian Twelves. nd. *The Ruskin Linen Industry, Keswick*. Keswick: T. Bakewell in Frederick A. Benjamin, *The Ruskin Linen Industry of Keswick* (Beckermet: Michael Moon, 1974) 28. Mark Frost notes a similar contradiction operative in the material practices of the Guild of St. George itself—also around 1889—concerning its treatment of working-class Companions: “At its inception, the Guild insisted on the right of the rich and powerful to rule and the obligation of the poor and weak to obey. Nothing occurring between 1871 and 1891 seriously threatened the essential power dynamic that the Guild embodied, and leaders of the organisation probably used the traditional tools of their class to manipulate, suppress, and coerce those under their power” (219–20). Frost suggests as well that Fleming himself certainly belonged to this “rich and powerful” ruling class of The Guild and was “one of the Master’s most conservative followers” (205). Mark Frost, *The Lost Companions and John Ruskin’s Guild of St George* (London: Anthem, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> Haslam, 51.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> See Haslam, 36, 153, 166, 192 and Rachel Dickinson, ““The Nobleness of Dress”: Ruskin and Ideal Clothing in the Late Nineteenth Century,” Proc. of “Teaching Silkworms to Spin”: John Ruskin and the Ethics of Textiles, Ruskin Library at Lancaster University, Ruskin Library at Lancaster University, Web, 12 Nov, 2013. <<http://tailoredtrades.exeter.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/dickinson.pdf>>.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 25.

<sup>9</sup> As a useful supplement to my focus on close reading and limited archive, see Haslam, 11–65 for an extensive and definitive history of the Langdale Linen Industry and Rawnsley, Rev. H. D. *Ruskin and the English Lakes* (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1901), 119–148, for a more historically proximate account of Langdale Linen and its eventual metamorphosis into the Keswick School of Industrial Arts.

<sup>10</sup> John Hayman, “John Ruskin’s “Hortus Inclusus”: The Manuscript Sources and Publication History,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 52, 3 (1989): 363–87. JSTOR. Web. 17 Oct. 2013, 371–2.

<sup>12</sup> M.H. “Langdale Linen.” *The Spectator* [London] 20 Sept. 1884: 1232–233. *Periodicals Index Online*. Web. 29 Oct. 2013., 1233

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 1232

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 1233

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Haslam, 35-7. Fleming’s—and his Langdale project’s—connection to *Fors Clavigera* does not end here. In Ruskin’s 95<sup>th</sup> Letter, he happily notes that he “can now say that this vision of thread and needlework, though written when my fancy had too much possession of me, is now being in all its branches realized by two greatly valued friends,—the spinning on the old spinning-wheel, with most happy and increasingly acknowledged results, systematized here among our Westmoreland hills by Mr. Albert Fleming” (John Ruskin, *Fors Clavigera: Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain*. Vol. VIII (Kent: George Allen, 1884). *Open Library*. Web. 7 Nov. 2013.

273-4). The influences between literature and Langdale linen (even before *Songs of the Spindle*) was, then, more bidirectional than *The Spectator* text would lead one to believe.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> As an example, Marx writes (interestingly in terms of spinning): “Expressed in gold, the labour of five days is 30 shillings. This is therefore the price of the 20 lb. of yarn.... But the sum of the values of the commodities thrown into the process amounts to 27 shillings. The value of the yarn is 30 shillings. Therefore the value of the product is one-ninth greater than the value advanced to produce it; 27 shillings have turned into 30 shillings; a surplus-value of 3 shillings has been precipitated. The trick has at last worked: money has been transformed into capital.” Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin, 1990), 301. Though M.H. does not provide the exact price of the commodities used to produce the linen, as Marx does in his illustration, the enormous gap between “2s. a pound” and “4s. a yard” implies that, somewhere along the line, surplus value is, indeed, being extracted.

<sup>22</sup> Hayman, 172

<sup>23</sup> M.H., 1233

<sup>24</sup> In his brilliant reading of the *Grundrisse* from his *Modernity at Sea*, Cesare Casarino argues that circulation “is an entity that cannot just sit still: in order to continue to materialize itself it needs to be reproduced and realized all over again in each singular and successive moment of exchange.” Cesare Casarino, *Modernity at Sea: Melville, Marx, Conrad in Crisis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2002), 85. Thus, circulation—even in its most Marxian sense—always-already implies dynamism. This tendency, to some extent, also manifests itself in Marx’ analysis of the “expanded form of value” in *Capital*, as each commodity not only fluctuates in price, but must be comparable to and able to contend with—at any given time—all other commodities currently on the market (154–7).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Rachel Dickinson, “A Glass Picture’: A Window into Ruskin’s Aesthetic.” *Ruskin in Perspective: Contemporary Essays*. Ed. Carmen Casaliggi and Paul March-Russell (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 210.

<sup>27</sup> According to Rachel Dickinson, Ruskin, “stresses the importance of windows as liminal constructs bringing the external world inside. The window transforms the exterior world into a piece of interior, domestic artwork” (‘A Glass Picture,’ 210).

<sup>28</sup> Haslam, 31.

<sup>29</sup> Rev. Marcus D. Buell, “What Can They Do?” *Christian Advocate* 60, 24 (1885): 375. *American Periodicals Series Online*, Web, 24 Sept, 2014.

<sup>30</sup> “New Work for Ladies,” *Harper’s Bazaar* 1 Aug, 1885, 18th ed.: 490. *American Periodicals Series Online*. Web, 31 Oct, 2013.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., emphasis mine. This stratification of book consumers prefigures William Morris’ Kelmscott Press publications of his own works, marketed for those who could afford handmade books rather than the cheaper, machine-printed editions.

<sup>33</sup> Stuart Eagles, *After Ruskin: The Social and Political Legacies of a Victorian Prophet, 1870-1920* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011), 71.

<sup>34</sup> For additional contemporary accounts that bear witness to Langdale Linen’s transatlantic circulation see Higgin and Ware.

<sup>35</sup> Most likely as a direct result of the events of 1889, Fleming—in both pieces—“state[s] that he himself had learnt the art of spinning and taught the workers, with the name Marian Twelves ominously omitted” (Haslam 53), a fact that seriously calls their accuracy into question. This omission becomes particularly glaring considering that “Marian Twelves was solely responsible for the further development of the linen into a successful artistic product which eventually achieved for the Industry the description of ‘art industry’, [sic] and which reaffirmed the venture’s uniqueness” (ibid. 31). I am interested not so much in their truth as historical documents, but rather the ways in which they frame the endeavor in terms of a link between revival and literary history and register the contradictions inherent in his dispute with Twelves.

<sup>36</sup> Hayman, 372

<sup>37</sup> Albert Fleming, “The Langdale Linen Industry.” In Cook, E.T. and Wedderburn, Alexander (Eds.). 1903–12. *The Library Edition of John Ruskin’s Works* (London: George Allen. 39 vols. Vol. 30.), 326.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Fleming’s “gradual depopulation of the villages” mirrors Marx’ assertion that: “In the history of primitive accumulation, all revolutions are epoch-making that act as levers for the capitalist class in the course of its formation; but this is true above all for those moments when great masses of men are suddenly and forcibly torn from their means of subsistence, and hurled onto the labour-market as free, unprotected and rightless proletarians. The expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant, from the soil is the basis for the whole process” (876). Clearly, here, as in Fleming, the decline of “peasant” productive labor, such as



spinning, tears its practitioners “from their means of subsistence,” (spinning wheels and looms), forcing them to become “unprotected and rightless proletarians,” in an industrial, urbanized market far removed from the dales of Westmoreland.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 329

<sup>41</sup> The Gothic result of the early attempts at weaving in Westmoreland was probably due to Fleming’s unsuccessful attempts to grow flax locally (Haslam 37), linking Fleming’s gothic rhetoric with Langdale’s reliance on Ireland as a source of flax.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 328.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 329.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 329–30.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 330.

<sup>47</sup> Fleming’s emphasis on quantitative figures runs directly counter to Twelves’ assertion in “The Ruskin Linen Industry, Keswick” that what matters about the linen industry is “*not* how many yards of linen may be made and sold, but how what *is* done may influence and help the doers within these limits, and be the means of inspiring others to similar effort beyond them” (28).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 328. Engels, in his “Introduction,” to *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (first published in English in 1886, mere years before Fleming’s “Langdale Linen Industry”) relies upon the same gendering of spinning and weaving, arguing: “Now [i.e. after the invention of the spinning jenny] that the jenny as well as the loom required a strong hand, men began to spin, and whole families lived by spinning.” Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. Ed. Victor Kiernan (London: Penguin, 2005), 53. Previously, then, women were responsible for spinning; men have only just “beg[un] to spin.” Engels’ use of “as well as,” too, implies that men were responsible for weaving prior to the introduction of the spinning jenny.

<sup>49</sup> To an extent, this inequality grounded in gender serves as an illustration of “the extent to which paternalistic moralizing crept into contemporary discussions of working-class craft industries for women.” Anthea Callen, *Women Artists of the Arts and Crafts Movement 1870-1914* (New York: Pantheon Book, 1979), 117. However, it simultaneously points to the Ruskinian principle that “a society which functions as a complete whole must empower the feminine to inhabit both the private and the public spheres” (Dickinson, Rachel. “Of Ruskin, Women and Power.” *Persistent Ruskin: Studies in Influence, Assimilation and Effect*. Ed. Keith Hanley and Brian Maidment (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013) 53–66, 65, by including women in the public sphere of circulation, albeit indirectly.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 329.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 326.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. Langdale’s dependence on photography resonates with another Arts and Crafts project distrustful of the machine made—William Morris’ Kelmscott Press. To create his ideal, Golden type, Morris “having been supplied with *photographic* enlargements of the types [from incunabula]...traced them repeatedly until he felt he understood the essence of the letterforms.” William S. Peterson, *The Kelmscott Press: A History of William Morris’s Typographical Adventure* (Berkeley: University of California, 1991), 84.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 330

<sup>57</sup> Albert Fleming, “Revival of Hand Spinning and Weaving in Westmoreland.” *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* 37 (1889): 521-27. *Periodicals Index Online*. Web. 6 Nov. 2013, 521–5.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 521.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 521–2.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 522.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 525–7.

<sup>62</sup> Of course this interest in the Gothic is part and parcel of Ruskin’s and The Guild’s medievalism and the larger late nineteenth century obsession with the medieval. Nonetheless, Fleming’s rhetorical uses of distant and ancient spaces along with enchanted and seemingly inexplicable occurrences underscore the fundamental contradictions structuring Langdale Linen, contradictions the literary genre of the Gothic traffics in.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 524, emphasis mine.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 525.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 526.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 522.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 525.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 526.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. I use enchantment, here, in a manner consistent with Jane Bennett's work. Enchantment, for her, in contrast to mere amusement, "delights and unsettles" through a "mixed bodily state of joy and disturbance" that depends on a material world in which objects have the capacity to act on subjects and, for Bennett, has the potential to engender more ethical consumption practices. See Jane Bennett, "Commodity Fetishism, and Commodity Enchantment." *Theory & Event* 5.1 (2001): n. pag. *Project MUSE*. Web. 5 Nov. 2013.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 522.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 526–7.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 526.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 527.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 521.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Benjamin, Walter. "Theses on the Philosophy of History." *Illuminations*. By Walter Benjamin, Ed. Hannah Arendt, Trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 2007), 262.

<sup>80</sup> Fleming, « Revival , » 527.

<sup>81</sup> Benjamin, 262.

<sup>82</sup> "Songs of the Spindle and Legends of the Loom," *The Spectator* [London] 7 Dec, 1889: 787. *Periodicals Index Online*, Web, 29 Oct, 2013.

<sup>83</sup> One of the other, scant references to Warner in contemporary periodicals comes in the December 24, 1898 *Friends' Intelligencer*. Reviewing Warner's "The Wooing of Nefert, an Egyptian Story... a pretty volume, printed in old style, on antique paper, with title-page in red and black," (also from N.J. Powell & Co.), the anonymous reviewer remarks that "the author and publishers are Friends" ("Current Literature." *Friends' Intelligencer* [Philadelphia] 24 Dec, 1898: 943. *American Periodicals Series*, Web, 14 Nov, 2013). In addition to giving us a better sense of Warner the man, his religious leanings and associations with N.J. Powell & Co., this short review reveals that *Songs of the Spindle* remained in the popular consciousness for almost a decade after its publication and was known transatlantically (at the very least among Quakers), as the *Intelligencer* is a Philadelphia publication.

<sup>84</sup> H. H. Warner, comp, *Songs of the Spindle & Legends of the Loom* London: N. J. Powell & Co., 1889), 7.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Note 21.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 8

<sup>88</sup> Warner's conclusion repeats this sentiment: "If, then, in purchasing the finished article, the buyer be led to take an interest in the welfare of those concerned in producing it, and thus render the worker's sacrifice light and joyful, the purpose of these few words will have been accomplished" (9).

<sup>89</sup> "Songs." Notably the book's list of "The Names of those who have assisted to produce this book" (10) does not include a name for "Maker of Paper," instead offering merely "-----," a point to which I will return.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., emphasis mine

<sup>91</sup> Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, "Poetry in the Victorian Marketplace: The Illustrated Princess as a Christmas Gift Book," *Victorian Poetry* 45, 1 (2007): 49–76. *Project MUSE*, Web, 14 Nov, 2013: 50-1.

<sup>92</sup> "Songs"

<sup>93</sup> Warner, 13.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>96</sup> He also repeats the gendering of spinning and weaving that he shares with Engels, as an image of a female, ancient Egyptian spinner (14) and one of a male weaver (16) accompany his text. Furthermore the choice of an Egyptian illustration to represent spinning repeats his association of spinning with the ancient, as his use of the "Three Fates" to illustrate the Langdale Spinners in "Revival" does in that text.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 16

<sup>98</sup> Fleming, "Revival," 527.

<sup>99</sup> Fleming's quasi-revolutionary, historical materialist's approach to the book runs directly counter to Warner's more modest, reformist project, creating a tension in the book's paratext before the "text proper."

<sup>100</sup> Warner, 26–7.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 23–4.

<sup>102</sup> Randy McLeod, "The Birth of Italics," University at Buffalo–Poetry Collection, Buffalo, 30 Oct, 2013, Lecture.

<sup>103</sup> Warner, 15.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> This penchant for looking back to pre-capitalist printing anticipates William Morris' Kelmscott publications with their use of Gothic type and various other medieval book production conventions.

<sup>106</sup> Fleming, "Revival," 521.

<sup>107</sup> Larisa Cassell and Christopher Cassell, "Arts & Crafts Books and Book Design," *The Arts and Crafts Home: A Design Source for Home Decoration*, Green Gate Farm Antiquarian Books, n.d. Web, 14 Nov, 2013. <[http://www.achome.co.uk/antiques/current\\_exhibition.htm](http://www.achome.co.uk/antiques/current_exhibition.htm)>.

<sup>108</sup> These pasted-in, Auto-Gravure illustrations are: "Langdale," "The hum of the wheel and the singing suddenly ceased," "An ould Irish wheel and a young Irish girl at it," and "By night wool unwound..." Interestingly, all but one of these illustrations employing contemporary technology in their production depict acts of labor (echoing the theme of revival), while the older, more integrated wood-block prints (such as "When the flocks are all at rest") present idyllic, pastoral scenes, mirroring the impulse of the book to return to an idealized, pre-capitalist past.

<sup>109</sup> Fleming, Paul D., III. "History." *Gravure*. Western Michigan University, n.d. Web. 14 Nov. 2013. <<http://www.wmich.edu/pci/gravure/>>.

<sup>110</sup> Warner, 7.

<sup>111</sup> The variance in methods used in the production and the materiality of the book mirrors, interestingly, Ruskin's "articulation of Gothic art" which emphasises "its 'savagery' and crudeness'...executed by artisans of unequal talent but all equally keen to leave their mark" (Ranciere, 141). Likewise, in this book, it seems to matter little that it forms a unity, but that everybody—every process of production—"leave[s] [its] mark." Also embodying this tendency, none of the illustrations have page numbers, implying that the book was not the result of careful planning and forethought, but the result, rather, of a kind of bricolage, bringing disparate elements together to form the completed object.

<sup>112</sup> Warner, 5.

<sup>113</sup> Recall that, according to Sara Haslam's definitive history of the industry, Twelves "joined Ruskin's Guild of St George with Fleming" (20) in 1883 around the same time that the two founded Langdale Linen.

<sup>114</sup> Jacques Ranciere, *Aisthesis: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art*, Trans. Zakir Paul, London: Verso, 2013, 138.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>116</sup> *Songs of the Spindle's* use of handmade paper and watermarks, like Langdale Linen's dependence on photographic technology, prefigures Morris' Kelmscott Press venture, as the "paper used by the Kelmscott Press was handmade, containing the old-fashioned watermark and chain lines that automation had eliminated from nineteenth-century paper." Nicole Howard, *The Book: The Life Story of a Technology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2009), 136.

<sup>117</sup> Fleming, "Revival," 529.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 527.

<sup>119</sup> Notably, Benjamin's most sustained discussion of historical materialism in *The Arcades Project* comes in Convolute N, "On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress," the same convolute in which the concept of the dialectical image emerges.

<sup>120</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, Trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge: Belknap, 1999), 426.

<sup>121</sup> Benjamin, "Theses," 262.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 257.

<sup>123</sup> Fleming, "Revival," 527.

<sup>124</sup> For more on this strain of Benjamin's thought, as well as an excellent introduction, see Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge: MIT, 1991).

<sup>125</sup> Warner, 5.

## John Ruskin and the characterisation of 'word-painting' in the nineteenth century

<sup>1</sup> Alain de Botton, *The Art of Travel*, (London: Penguin, 2002), 230–231.

<sup>2</sup> Gary Wihl, *Ruskin and the Rhetoric of Infallibility* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Major studies on Ruskin's practices of word-painting include Elizabeth Helsinger, "The poet-painter", in *Ruskin and the Art of the Beholder* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 11–40; George Landow, "Ruskin the word-painter", in *Ruskin; Past Masters Series* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 21–38; George Landow, "Lawrence and Ruskin: the Sage as a Word-Painter", in *Lawrence and Tradition*, ed. by Jeffrey Myers (London: Athlone Press, 1985), 35–50; Jeremy Scott, "The Soul of the Eye and the Words on the Page: Ruskin's Literary Vision and *The King of the Golden River*", in *Ruskin in Perspective: Contemporary Essays*, ed. Carmen Casaliggi and Paul March-Russell (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 68–79; and Stephen Cheeke, "Prose Ekphrasis," in *Writing for Art: The Aesthetics of Ekphrasis* (Manchester University Press, 2008), 163–186.

<sup>5</sup> Flaxman, 9–10.

<sup>6</sup> Flaxman, 10.

<sup>7</sup> See for example Jean Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958). The following critics discuss the eighteenth-century 'picturesque' in relation to Ruskin. Robert G. Stange, "Art Criticism as a Prose Genre", in *The Art of Victorian Prose*, ed. George Levine and William Madden (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 39–52; Richard L. Stein, *The Ritual of Interpretation: The Fine Arts as Literature in Ruskin, Rossetti, and Pater* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1975); Elizabeth Helsinger, "Excursive Sight," in *Ruskin and the Art of the Beholder* (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1982), 67–110; Francesca Orestano, "Picturesque Landscape vs. Modern Space: An Agony, in Three Fits," in *Ruskin and the Twentieth Century: The Modernity of Ruskinism*, ed. by Toni Cerutti (Vercelli: Edizioni Mercurio, 2000), 63–83 and, Francesca Orestano, "Across the Picturesque: Ruskin's Argument with the Strange Sisters," in *Strange Sisters: Literature and Aesthetics in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Francesca Orestano and Francesca Frigerio (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 99–122.

<sup>8</sup> Hagstrum, 129.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Stein, 3.

<sup>11</sup> Stein, 4.

<sup>12</sup> Stein, 3.

<sup>13</sup> M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: Norton, 1958).

<sup>14</sup> Helsinger, "Excursive Sight," 67–110.

<sup>15</sup> Helsinger, "Excursive Sight," 69.

<sup>16</sup> Helsinger, "Excursive Sight," 81.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> See John Arthos, *The Language of Natural Description in Eighteenth-century Poetry* (New York: Octagon Books, 1970).

<sup>19</sup> Helsinger, "Excursive Sight," 69.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* Orestano uses a different set of terms to distinguish the two modes of pictorialism emphasizing static visual details and visual effects; they are 'formalist' and 'associationist' picturesque. See Orestano, "Across the Picturesque: Ruskin's Argument with the Strange Sisters," 102.

<sup>21</sup> Landow, 21–38. Other studies that have commented on Ruskin's word-painting include Townsend 1951 and Austin 1991. Townsend mentions Ruskin's word-painting in passing, when he comments on Ruskin's vision of God in nature. See Francis G. Townsend, *Ruskin and the Landscape Feeling: A Critical Analysis of his Thoughts During the Crucial Years of his Life, 1843-1856* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1951), 13. Austin elaborates on the term 'word-painting' in more detail, explaining what linguistic skills are usually associated with word-painters. She explains, "As a word-painter, Ruskin could render detail and convey movement with active verbs, extensions of spatial images, and rapid visual associations which were simultaneously rendered into aural sensations through alliteration and rhythm." See Linda M. Austin, "Ruskin's Precritical Reading," *Victorians Institute Journal*, 19 (1991), 71–88 (73–74).

<sup>22</sup> Landow, 23. Quoting from 3. 51–2.

<sup>23</sup> Landow, 23–4. Quoting from 3. 623.

<sup>24</sup> Landow, 23.

<sup>25</sup> Landow, 27.

<sup>26</sup> Landow, 33–35. He analyses Ruskin's narration of the approach to Torcello in *The Stones of Venice II* (10. 17). Roy Park echoes Landow's view, observing that Ruskin unified the external and internal modes of perception in his writing. (Roy Park "'Ut Pictura Poesis': The Nineteenth-Century Aftermath", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 28 (1969), 155–164 (156). See a similar view in Alain de Botton, *The Art of*

*Travel* (London: Penguin, 2002), 234.) Ruskin, he says, “hostile to the excesses of pictorialism as well as to the excesses of the reaction which it had provoked,” emphasized that both modes of representation were essentially twin facets of a unified poetic experience. (Park, 156).

<sup>27</sup> The electronic database is British Periodicals via ProQuest, which covers news items from 1680-1940.

<sup>28</sup> Charlotte Brontë commented on *Modern Painters*: “This book seems to give me eyes.” See Clement K. Shorter, *Charlotte Brontë and Her Circle* (London, 1896), 387. Meghan Freeman recently examines Ruskin’s influence on Brontë’s thinking about art and narrative in *Villette* in “Cordons of Protection: The Stage of Spectatorship in Charlotte Brontë’s *Villette*”, *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 41 (2013), 643–675. Lester Dolk, who assesses the reception of the first two volumes of *Modern Painters* in Victorian periodicals, similarly remarks on the visual quality of this work. He writes, “one of the commonest remarks about *MP* was that it opened the eyes of readers to natural phenomena.” See Lester Dolk, “The Reception of *Modern Painters*,” *Modern Language Notes*, 57 (1942), 621–626 (622 footnote 5). As Richard Jenkyns points out, the five volumes of *Modern Painters* are held together by their visual emphasis; “few writers can make us see things more clearly and intensely.” Richard Jenkyns, “The Argument of the Eye,” *Ruskin Gazette*, 1 (1990), 9–17 (13).

<sup>29</sup> There are two records for each of the two decades 1820-29 and 1830-39; for the decade 1840-49 there are 23. A closer look at all these entries suggest that at least two documents do not contain the label ‘word-painting’, but variations like ‘The word Painting’ as in William Hazlitt, “ART. IV.-The History of Painting in Italy, from the Period of the Revival of the Fine Arts, to the end of the 18th Century. Translated from the original Italian of the Abate Luigi Lanzi”, in *The Edinburgh Review, 1802-1929*, 48.95 (1828), 61-88 (74) <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/britishperiodicals/docview/6551512/>> [accessed 28 May 2013]; or having the words ‘word’ and ‘painting’ scattered through the document as in ‘ART. I.-1. Noticia de los Quadros que se hallan colocados en la Galeria del Rey Nuestro Senor’, *The Foreign Quarterly Review, July 1827–July 1846*, 13.26 (May 1834), 237–271.

<<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/britishperiodicals/docview/2636304/>> [accessed 20 February 2012].

<sup>30</sup> The usage of the term ‘word-painting’ is quite evenly distributed in the later three decades: 420 (1870–79), 412 (1880-89), and 433 (1890-99).

<sup>31</sup> A description of St. Bernard in a history book (*History of the Consulate and the Empire* by L.A. Thiers, 1845) is called a word-painting. See “ART. VI.-Histoire du Consulat et de l’Empire, par L. A THIERS,” *The Foreign Quarterly Review, July 1827–July 1846*, 35.69 (Apr 1845), 109-153, <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/2645462/>> [accessed 20 February 2012].

<sup>32</sup> “Faneuil Hall and Edward Everett,” *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*, Nov. 1822 - June 1847, 1.1 (Jan 3, 1846), 10-13 <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/2855752/>> [accessed 20 February 2012].

<sup>33</sup> Christian Isobel Johnstone, “Mrs Postans’ Cutch; or, Random Sketches of Western India,” *Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 6.61 (Jan 1839), pp. 28-35 <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/4441176/>> [accessed 20 February 2012].

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* 28.

<sup>35</sup> Here I am using R.M.W. Dixon’s adjective classes, which will be explained in more detail in Chapter 7.

<sup>36</sup> “Book review,” *The Edinburgh Quarterly Review*, 2.3 (Aug 1845), 159-173 (166) <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/8340591/>> [accessed 20 February 2012].

<sup>37</sup> “ART. VI.-Histoire du Consulat et de l’Empire, par L. A THIERS”, *The Foreign Quarterly Review, July 1827–July 1846*, p. 139 <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/2645462/>> [accessed 20 February 2012].

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> ‘Poetry’, *Critic, 1844-1847*, 3.55 (Jan 17, 1846), 51-54 (52)

<<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/2603695/>> [accessed 20 February 2012].

<sup>41</sup> See for example “The Writings of The Late John Foster”, *Fraser’s Magazine for Town and Country, 1830-1869*, 30.180 (Dec 1844), 684–702 (698)

<<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/2603695/>> [accessed 20 February 2012]; and “The Cricket on the Hearth; a Fairy Tale of Home,” *Critic, 1844-1847*, 2.52 (Dec 27, 1845), 699–700 (699) <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/4848414/>> [accessed 20 February 2012].

<sup>42</sup> William Francis Ainsworth, ed., “Word Painting,” *The New Monthly Magazine, Jan. 1853-Dec. 1881*, 8.42 (Jul 1875), 119-120 (119) <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/4422623/>> [accessed 23 June 2012].

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ainsworth, 119. For a general discussion about the interplay of the pen and pencil in advancing Victorian visuality, see Gerard Curtis's chapter "Shared Lines: Pen and Pencil as Trace," in *Visual Words: Art and Material Book in Victorian England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Agnes Atkinson, "On Word-Painting," *The Portfolio: An Artistic Periodical*, 23 (Jan 1892), 206–211 <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/8019406/>> [accessed 20 February 2012].

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. 206.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. 207.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Atkinson, 208.

<sup>52</sup> Fenn in "Landscape in Fiction" defines word-painting as "landscape-painting in words" (318). Like Atkinson, he considers word-painting a valuable literary device because the writer has to possess 'no inconsiderable degree of power,' and he thinks its popularity in his time 'shows a growing appreciation of the beautiful in nature' (ibid.). See his discussion of the handling of landscape descriptions in writers including Scott, George Eliot and Dickens in W.W. Fenn, "Landscape in Fiction," *The Magazine of Art*, (Jan 1880), 318–320 <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/7273123/>> [accessed 20 February 2012].

<sup>53</sup> Atkinson, 210.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Trickett considers Scott one of the earliest writers to have employed a "visual rhetoric," something Ruskin inherited. Therefore, the continuity from Scott's pictorialism to Ruskin's word-painting that she describes is different from Atkinson's account of the relation between the two writers.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Edmond Hodgson Yates, ed., "Descriptions in Novels," *Time*, 3 (Sep 1880), 606-609 (606) <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/6414797/>> [accessed 20 February 2012].

<sup>60</sup> Arthur Galton, "Mr. Ruskin's Hortus Inclusus," *Century Guild Hobby Horse*, Jan. 1886–1892, 2.9 (Jan 1888), pp. 18-23 (p. 22) <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/3454993/>> [accessed 20 February 2012].

<sup>61</sup> See for example Henry Robert Reynolds, ed., "David Lloyd's Last Will," *The British Quarterly Review*, 51.101 (Jan 1870), 258–258 <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/8202344/>> [accessed 20 February 2012]; and Henry Alford, "The Holy Grail, and other Poems," *The Contemporary Review*, 1866–1900, 13 (Jan 1870), 104–125 (125).

<<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/6964356/>> [accessed 23 June 2012].

<sup>62</sup> Sidney Colvin, "Literature and the Manual Arts," *Fortnightly Review*, May 1865–June 1934, 27.160 (Apr 1880), 580-597 (581). <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/2429435/>> [accessed 20 February 2012]. See a similar view in D.T. Ansted, Professor, "Chapters on River Scenery," *Art Journal*, 1839-1912, 19 (Jan 1880), 13–15 (13).

<<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/7060264/>> [accessed 23 June 2012].

<sup>63</sup> Austen Henry Layard, Sir, "ART. IV. -1. Contributions to the Literature of the Fine Arts,"

*The Edinburgh Review*, 1802–1929, 131, 268 (Apr 1870), 392–417 (p. 407).

<<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/6842111/>> [accessed 20 February 2012].

<sup>64</sup> Allen Staley, *The Pre-Raphaelite Landscape* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 5. See a similar view in George Landow, "Pre-Raphaelites: An Introduction", *Victorian Web*,

< <http://www.victorianweb.org/painting/prb/1.html> > [accessed 10 July 2012]. On the two general phases of the Pre-Raphaelites, see Jan Marsh, *The Pre-Raphaelites* (London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 1998), 9; and Joyce Townsend, Jacqueline Ridge and Stephen Hackney, *Pre-Raphaelite Painting Techniques, 1848-56* (London: Tate Publishing, 2004), 19.

<sup>65</sup> Anne Clark Amor, *William Holman Hunt: The True Pre-Raphaelite* (London: Constable, 1989), 41.

<sup>66</sup> Christopher Wood, *The Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981), 81.

<sup>67</sup> Tim Barringer, *The Pre-Raphaelites: Reading the Image* (London: Everyman Art Library, 1998), 60.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Staley, 8-9. See a similar view in Elizabeth Helsinger's "Pre-Raphaelite Intimacies: Ruskin and Rossetti", in *Ruskin's Artists: Studies in the Victorian Visual Economy*, ed. Robert Hewison (Aldershot: Ashgate Press, 2000), 89–111.

- <sup>70</sup> With regard to excessive “photographic” detail, it was not only word-painting that was criticised but also the work of the Pre-Raphaelite artists. Jan Marsh notes that ‘in spring 1850 the PRB pictures were ferociously attacked by the press as outlandish, ugly, crude, and irreverent.’ See Marsh, 8.
- <sup>71</sup> “Chronicles of No Man’s Land,” *The Examiner*, 3755 (Jan 17, 1880), 86–87 (86) <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/8720581/>> [accessed 20 February 2012].
- <sup>72</sup> “The New Poet,” *The Scots Observer, 1888-1890*, 1, 1 (Nov 24, 1888), 16–17 (17) <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/6029768/>> [accessed 20 February 2012].
- <sup>73</sup> “ART. III.-Bangadhip Parajay,” *Calcutta Review*, 50.99 (Jan 1870), 66–80 (73) <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/5275466/>> [accessed 20 February 2012].
- <sup>74</sup> Arabella Shore, “Modern English Novels,” *Westminster Review, Jan. 1852-Jan. 1914*, 134, 1 (Jul 1890), 143–158 (p. 153) <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/4466852/>> [accessed 21 February 2012].
- <sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>76</sup> Katie Wales defines ‘synaesthesia’ as “the interconnections between the different senses that can be exploited for literary effect.” See Katie Wales, *A Dictionary of Stylistics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Harlow, England; New York: Longman, 2011), 419.
- <sup>77</sup> “Novels,” *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 76.1976 (Sep 9, 1893), 301–302 (302) <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/9073834/>> [accessed 20 February 2012].
- <sup>78</sup> *The Examiner*, p. 86.
- <sup>79</sup> G. A. Simcox, “Life of Mary Russell Mitford, told by herself in Letters to her Friends,” *The Academy, 1869–1902*, 4 (Jan 1870), 91–92 <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/6648800/>> [accessed 21 February 2012].
- <sup>80</sup> Bash W. Worsfold, “Charlotte Brontë,” *Fortnightly Review, May 1865-June 1934*, 65.385 (Jan 1899), 74–84 (79) <<http://search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/docview/2468859/>> [accessed 20 February 2012].
- <sup>81</sup> The sources of these, according to Camlot, are “Review of Ruskin,” *Saturday Review*, 10 (1860), 583; and J.M. Capes, “Political Economy in the Clouds,” *Fraser’s Magazine*, 62 (1860), 656. See Jason Camlot, “The Political Economy of Style,” in *Style and the Nineteenth-Century British Critic* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 91–108 (96).
- <sup>82</sup> 1. 259.
- <sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>84</sup> 1. 259.
- <sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>86</sup> Edward Tyas Cook, *Studies in Ruskin: Some Aspects of the Work and Teaching of John Ruskin* (London: George Allen, 1890), 9.
- <sup>87</sup> Tony Tanner, “Ruskin and the Sea,” in *Ruskin’s Struggle for Coherence: Self-Representation through Art, Place and Society*, ed. Rachel Dickinson and Keith Hanley (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006)1–20 (5).
- <sup>88</sup> Patricia Ball, “Ruskin and “The Pure Fact,”” in *The Science of Aspects: The Changing Role of Fact in the Work of Coleridge, Ruskin and Hopkins* (London: University of London, The Athlone Press, 1971), 48–102 (78); Alexandra Wettlaufer, “Ruskin’s Moving Images: The Politics and the Poetics of the *Paragone*,” in *In the Mind’s Eye: The Visual Impulse in Diderot, Baudelaire and Ruskin* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2003), 241–292 (244); Helsinger, “The poet-painter,” 34–35.