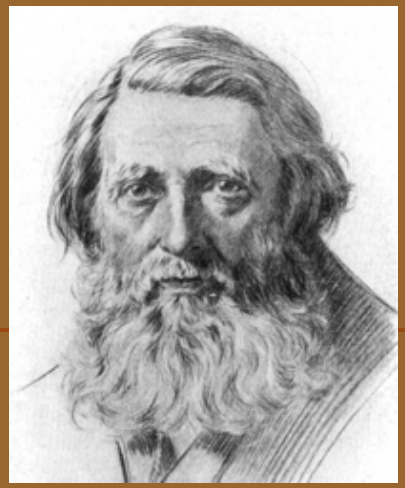
The Eighth Lamp:

Ruskin Studies To-day

Edited by

Anuradha Chatterjee



Enter through the window





The Eighth Lamp

Ruskin Studies Today

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Click the logo

Foreword

Editorial

Statement of Purpose

Abstracts

Associations

Conferences

Current research

Events

Exhibitions

Publications

Reviews

Works in Progress

To return to our home page, click | To return to our hub page, click



The Eighth Lamp

Ruskin Studies Today

FOREWORD

D.C. Rose, General Editor of THE OSCHOLARS group of journals

All scholars of Oscar Wilde know that at Oxford the two principal influences on the young Irishman were Walter Pater and John Ruskin. While Wilde's debt to Pater has been and continues to be well explored, the place of Ruskin in his life and thought has been more or less reduced to anecdotes about Wilde working on the Hinckley road project. It was clear to me that it was the business of THE OSCHOLARS to examine more minutely the teachings of Ruskin, and to draw (or let others draw) the inferences. The idea, first of having a section within THE OSCHOLARS consecrated to Ruskin, and then of creating a new journal, was born.

In Anuradha Chatterjee, we have been fortunate to find as editor of this journal a highly qualified and dedicated Ruskin scholar, able and willing to take this project and expand it into a study of significance to Ruskin studies and indeed intellectual history in general. Her Statement of Purpose is wide-ranging and ambitious. With her Editorial, it sets an agenda for these pages in which other Ruskin and nineteenth-century specialists will join.

Dr Chatterjee grew up in India where she completed her 5 year Diploma in Architecture. She went on to complete her Masters in Architectural History and Theory from the University of New South Wales (UNSW), specialising in nineteenth and twentieth century architectural theory. She has completed a doctoral thesis, titled 'The Troubled Surface of Architecture: John Ruskin, Human Body, and External Walls'. The thesis makes a major contribution to Ruskin studies and architectural theory as it re-frames fragments from Ruskin's writings and unifies them into the theory of the adorned 'wall veil'. This is a theory of architecture, dress, and body, and it puts Ruskin in the same league as Gottfried Semper (who is

well-known for his research on the textile origins of architectural ornamentation). The thesis chapters are being developed for publication in 2008. Dr Chatterjee has taught design and history/theory for several years. She is interested in nineteenth century architectural theory scholarship, specifically the role of scholarship in re-casting design practices. She now has a Lecturer's post at the Louis Laybourne Smith School of Architecture and Design, University of South Australia.

The Eighth Lamp, which we hope to publish twice a year, is a very welcome addition to the oscholars group of publications. It will illuminate much that has been obscure.

For The Table of Contents, click  | To return to our hub page, click 



The Eighth Lamp

Ruskin Studies Today

EDITORIAL

First, a big thanks to David Rose and the scholars in the Rose Garden for their enthusiastic reception of emerging scholars. Just when I was giving up on Ruskin studies, after being type cast and pigeonholed for doing irrelevant research, this really fantastic opportunity came along, which is allowing me to 'indulge' my research interests.

This is the inaugural issue of *The Eighth Lamp: Ruskin Studies Today*. We agreed on the name after a lot of debate. The title was used by Peter Davey in his article on the new building in the Lancaster University ten years ago. However, we felt compelled to use it again. The term 'eighth lamp' was used for the first time in 1851 by a reviewer of *Stones of Venice*, Vol. 1 by in the *Dublin University Magazine*, and we felt that it appropriately but subtly indicated my interest and expertise in the built environment. In addition, the title suggests an addition/revision to the Seven Lamps of Architecture. Therefore, it conveys the 'progressive' approach of this journal.

The Eighth Lamp is interested in re-framings and re-castings of Ruskin's writings and teachings. While the statement of purpose states the aims and scope of this journal, I feel the need to explain the basis of those statements which emerge from my personal research interests. I am a historian, and I believe that history is a useful tool for understanding artifacts (textual or built) and events within the context of available ideas and means. However, I am also a theorist, and therefore, I also deal with atemporal and abstract concepts. I am convinced that some themes re-occur across the historical timeline, and the intellectual history of ideas and objects cannot be anything but fragmented. In any case it cannot be linear. Furthermore, I am an architect, but one who is interested in way architectural thought is generated via intersections between profession, critics, history, art, photography, and travel and tourism.

Hence, the journal looks for multidisciplinary scholarship on Ruskin that is ground breaking. It can be scholarly or it can be creative work. Furthermore, it should have the potential for challenging stereotypes as well as partial and incomplete readings of Ruskin. I feel that this is already happening in current scholarship. A shining example of this is Sharon Aronofsky Weltman's *Performing the Victorian: John Ruskin and Identity in Theater, Science and Education* (2007), which is also reviewed in this issue of *The Eighth Lamp*. I hope to bring similar work to your attention as often as I can. Scholars can aid by sending in abstracts or excerpts from their work.

There are some glaring gaps or slants in the content of *The Eighth Lamp* at the moment, for which we apologize. For instance, the only abstracts that are online are mine, and that of a colleague in Australia! I have requested other authors to send in their abstracts. The work of other Ruskin societies is under-represented and it will seem that the activity of Ruskin Programme at Lancaster University is over exposed! This is because in some cases we have had to depend only on web based information. Also, the Work in Progress, I am sure, is less than substantial. There must be many crazy PhD students slogging away at a really-hard-to-write thesis on Ruskin in some corner of the world.

It is a growing venture, and it will grow in depth and complexity with time. Hence, we invite you to participate and partake in the scholarship generated by the journal.

Dr Anuradha Chatterjee, PhD UNSW
Lecturer, Louis Laybourne Smith School of Architecture and Design
University of South Australia
&
Editor, The Eighth Lamp: Ruskin Studies Today
URL: http://www.oscholars.com/RoseGarden/RoseGarden.htm
e-mail:@

For The Table of Contents, click  | To return to our hub page, click 



The Eighth Lamp

Ruskin Studies Today

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Content: The Oscholars has expanded its coverage to 1) report research, publications, and events related to John Ruskin 2) publish papers, book reviews, creative essays, and art works by scholars interested in the teachings of Ruskin. Please email architecturalhistorytheory@gmail to send in your entries.

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.

Anuradha

Dr Anuradha Chatterjee
Associate Editor

For The Table of Contents, click  | To return to our hub page, click 



The Eighth Lamp

Ruskin Studies Today

ABSTRACTS

Chatterjee, Anuradha. ‘Tectonic into textile: *John Ruskin and the changing meanings of wall and ornament.’ Textile: the journal of cloth and culture* (expected 2008).

> This paper considers the architectural writings of John Ruskin (1891-1900), an important architecture, art, and social critic in Victorian England. It interprets Ruskin’s preoccupation with the surface ornament. The paper demonstrates that Ruskin viewed architecture as a living entity. His idea of life was spiritual, not physical. It was influenced by the writings of Thomas Carlyle. For Carlyle, the soul of the human being was more important than the body, and it could be expressed only through clothing. Ruskin translated these ideas into an architectural theory. He believed that the soul of architecture (its meaning) was contained in the decorative symbols. Therefore, throughout his career as a historian and critic, he focused on the architectural surface. This gave rise to the theory of the adorned ‘wall veil’. Architecture was required to have an adorned wall veil, a planar external masonry wall that was masked and decorated with a dress-like veneer of chromatic and relief ornamentation. Through these findings, the paper argues that Ruskin’s writings were not unarchitectural. They made a profound but subtle contribution to architectural theory in the nineteenth century, specifically the debates on dress and architecture, and by challenging the meaning of representation and its relation to the tectonic aspects of architecture.

Chatterjee, Anuradha, ‘John Ruskin and femininity as the theoretical precondition for architecture.’ *Fabrications: The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand* (expected 2008).

> This paper considers the architectural writings of John Ruskin (1891-1900), an important architecture, art, and

social critic in Victorian England. It focuses on the issue of gender, and it demonstrates that Ruskin went against the grain of the established tradition in architectural theory. Classical and Gothic revival theorists used the metaphor of sexual difference to distinguish between styles of architecture, and to differentiate Gothic from classical architecture. However, Ruskin considered femininity as the fundamental and philosophical condition of architecture. Irrespective of style, typology, or period, architecture was regarded as an analogue of the dressed female body. The paper develops this argument by drawing on Ruskin scholarship, and by examining his theory of creative labour, his definition of architecture, and his interest in the myth of the woman born dressed in classical mythology. The paper considers the implications of the central finding – the feminized status of architecture. First, it argues that the relation between production (labour, craft) and representation (ornamentation, symbol) was informed by the idea of sexually differentiated bodies. Second, it argues that the idea of dressing was used to differentiate architecture from building, thereby giving rise to a new definition of architecture. Architecture was synonymous with the act of creating and adding decorative surfaces. Third, the paper argues that the analogy between the construction of the building and the myth of the first woman born dressed ruled out attached ornamentation, and encouraged the use of ornamental cladding. The paper shows that Ruskin used gender as a tool for ascertaining the disciplinary boundaries and limits of architecture.

Chatterjee, Anuradha. 'The Troubled Surface of Architecture: John Ruskin, Human Body, and External Walls.' PhD diss., University of New South Wales, 2008

The meaning of the architectural surface was thoroughly reconsidered by architects and historians in England and Europe between early and mid-nineteenth century. There were two major trends. The first one was historicist. Ornament and colour was considered important because it represented the origins of architecture. The second approach was rational and tectonic. It suggested that an honest surface had to be created by emphasizing the structure and by truthfully expressing materials. An unusual response to these debates was John Ruskin's history of medieval and Renaissance architecture. This was published as *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), and the three volume study, *The Stones of Venice* (1851-1853). Ruskin's writings were difficult to grasp. On the one hand, they were fragmented, historically inaccurate, and lacking in explanatory power. On the other hand, they emphasized surface ornament, without ever indicating its architectural 'use'. As a result, nineteenth and twentieth century historians and architects declared Ruskin's writings as being irrelevant to architectural theory and practice. By examining Ruskin's writings on architecture through the theoretical lens of dress, body, and gender, the thesis demonstrates that he proposed the theory of the adorned 'wall veil'. This was a two-part theory. Firstly, architecture was defined by the presence of planar walls. The masonry structure of these walls was masked and decorated by a seamless dress-like surface, consisting of relief and polychromatic ornaments. Secondly, Ruskin distinguished between the ideal and the corrupt dress. The ideal dress celebrated the spiritual aspects of the body (surface, skin, and colour). The corrupt dress represented the scientific image of the body (depth, bones and muscles, and form). The ideal dress was reflected by the surfaces of medieval buildings, and the corrupt dress was mirrored by the Renaissance architectural surface. Through these arguments, the thesis makes two major contributions. Firstly, it shows that Ruskin's views were consistent with the architectural modernism of the twentieth century, in which the free façade and the atectonic surface were key concerns. Secondly, it establishes that Gottfried Semper's writings were not the sole origin of the debates on dress and architecture. It shows that Ruskin developed a critical theory of

dress by synthesizing debates on gender, science, and spirituality. He used this theory to suggest a new approach towards architecture.

Stiles, Mark. ‘Reading Ruskin: Architecture, Social Reform and the Order of Things in Colonial Australia 1880-1906.’ PhD diss., University of New South Wales, expected late 2008.

This examines the reception of Ruskin's thought in Australia 1880-1906 by looking at four groups : ordinary readers, architects, the labour movement, and suffragists. The link between them is the search for social justice in an unstable colonial society on the eve of Federation

For The Table of Contents, click  | To return to our hub page, click 



The Eighth Lamp

Ruskin Studies Today

THE RUSKIN ASSOCIATIONS

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. Its aim is to make Ruskin's ideas and achievements as widely influential in the world as possible. Through the Ruskin Library and Brantwood it enables the greatest possible number of scholars and general public alike to access the world's largest and most important collection of Ruskin material. It also promotes the continuing relevance of Ruskin's ideas through its own special projects and a wide range of partnership activities. It is based at Bowland College, Lancaster University, Lancaster, England LA1 4YT.

The Foundation has recently created a new website (click the colophon below).

The Ruskin Foundation

The Ruskin Society of London

The Ruskin Society of London serves to promote interest in the life and works of John Ruskin and his contemporaries:

This maintains no website, but can be contacted, appropriately if paradoxically, at 351 Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 7NX, England. Telephone: 01865 310 987; Fax: 01865 310 987

The New Ruskin Society of Birmingham

This is recorded in the Oxford World Classics Magazine list of literary associations, but at time of publishing this edition we have been unable to discover any details.

For The Table of Contents, click  | To return to our hub page, click 



The Eighth Lamp

Ruskin Studies Today

CONFERENCES

PAST CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

There were three major conferences emerging out of the project Ruskinian Theatre. The most recent one was ‘New Issues in Theatre Historiography’, University of Birmingham, 6-7 July 2007.
See http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/ruskin/documents/TheatreConferenceprogramme.doc.

November 24th, 2007, ‘Memory as historical material’, Liz Leicester (Birkbeck and Ruskin Colleges) explores the relationship of memory to the past through looking at a little-known strike of 30,000 mainly women clothing workers which took place in Leeds in 1970. Ruskin Public History Group, Ruskin College, Oxford.

January 26th, 2008, ‘Living in Victorian London: a material history of everyday life’, Alastair Owens and Karen Wehner (Queen Mary, University of London) and Nigel Jeffries and Rupert Featherby (Museum of London Archaeology Service). This presentation derives from an on-going AHRC-funded research project, which aims to understand the ‘social complexity and geographical diversity of metropolitan lives in the mid-nineteenth century through a study of the material culture of everyday domestic life’. Ruskin Public History Group, Ruskin College, Oxford.

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

The Ruskin Centre holds weekly research seminars during term time. For Lent Term Programme 2007 - 2008 Seminar Series and Autumn Term Programme 2007-2008 Seminar series,

see http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/ruskin/events/seminar.htm

15th March, 2008, 'Remembering the Women's Freedom League: suffragette memories and public history', Mandy Richards. Ruskin Public History Group, Ruskin College, Oxford.
See http://www.ruskin.ac.uk/news/page.php?news_id=58

18th - 19th July 2008, 'Persistent Ruskin–Aesthetics, Education, Social Theory, 1870-1914', University of Lancaster. The conference is being organized by The Ruskin Centre at Lancaster University, in association with Leeds Metropolitan University and the University of Salford as part of the John Ruskin, Cultural Travel and Popular Access project. For the call for papers, see http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/ruskin/event/2116/.

25th - 27th September 2008, 'Ruskin, Venice, and 19th Century Cultural Travel', Venice. The conference is being organized by The Ruskin Centre at Lancaster University; INCS: Interdisciplinary Nineteenth Century Studies The Department of European and Postcolonial Studies of University of Ca' Foscari Venice. For the call for papers, see http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/events/venice/

14th-16th November 2008 North American Victorian Studies Association Annual Meeting, Yale University, New Haven, CT

NAVSA 2008 is an interdisciplinary conference on Victorian culture in Britain and it will foster the examination of 'high and low, domestic and imperial, metropolitan and regional' cultures. It aims to 'encompass comparative perspectives on colonial and continental subjects' (See https://webspace.yale.edu/navsa2008/).

There is going to be an entire panel on entire panel on Ruskin titled 'Rethinking Ruskin', which will be chaired by Deanna Kreisel. The panel aims are as follows: 'This year marks the 150th anniversary of Ruskin's famous 'turn' from art criticism to economic theory and politics; 1858 was also the year Ruskin renounced evangelical Protestantism and met his impossible beloved, Rose LaTouche. It thus seems a fitting time to re-evaluate his extensive, and contradictory, critical legacy. This panel will examine Ruskin's aesthetic theories in light of his later writings on social justice and vice versa, and will particularly welcome papers that invite us to re-think commonplaces about his political predilections, his quixotic economic theories, and his influence on later author'

There might be papers on Ruskin in other panels like the 'The Victorian Critic' and, of course, any other panels on art history. See https://webspace.yale.edu/navsa2008/callPapers.html.

The Eighth Lamp will attempt to notify the readers of the titles and abstracts of the Ruskin papers in the next issue.

For The Table of Contents, click  | To return to our hub page, click 



The Eighth Lamp

Ruskin Studies Today

CURRENT RESEARCH
2007 - Early 2008

RUSKIN LIBRARY AND PROGRAMME, UNIVERSITY OF LANCASTER, ENGLAND

John Ruskin, Cultural Travel and Popular Access
1st October 2005 until 30th September 2008

Participants: This is a research project funded by the AHRC, and it is being undertaken by the Universities of Lancaster, Central Lancashire, and Salford.

Aim: The scope of the project is reconstruction and analysis of Ruskin's principal cultural tours in Britain, France, Italy, and Switzerland. According to the project leaders, it will 'involve the comparative analysis of the It will compare the practices of cultural experience in these and his related guidebooks and drawings with his social and economic teachings, particularly those addressed to children, women and workers. By placing Ruskin's works in the context of contemporaneous developments in popular leisure activities and the rise of mass tourism, important and complex conflicts between elitism and popularisation will also be explored'.
See http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/ruskin/research/ahrc.htm

Ruskinian Theatre: The Aesthetics of the Late Nineteenth Century Popular London Stage, 1870-1901
October 2004- 2007

Participants: This is an AHRC funded project and it is being supported by the Ruskin Programme. The project is being lead by Professor Jeffrey Richards (Principal Investigator), Dr Kate Newey (Co-investigator), and Peter Yeandle (Research Associate), and it is a joint initiative between the History and Theatre Studies departments based in History.

Aim: According to the project website, the project has 4 major aims: a) To chart the interest and involvement of John Ruskin in the theatre, and examine the influence of his ideas about education, culture and society on the Victorian theatre; b) Assess the impact of Ruskinian aesthetics on the Victorian theatre, and chart the involvement in the theatre of leading practitioners of other arts, examining the stage as a meeting place of the contemporary arts; c) Trace the circulation and cultural significance of Ruskin's gender theories in the iconography of Victorian performers, and examine the relationships between the popular iconography of performers and the aesthetic principles of the Ruskin-influenced Pre-Raphaelites; and d) Examine the theatre as a national institution participating in the Victorian culture of improvement. See http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/ruskin/research/ruskiniantheatre.htm.

Ruskin's Venetian Notebooks: Reconstructing the Research Methods and Compositional Practices for The Stones of Venice

Participants: This is an AHRC funded project supported by the Ruskin Centre. It is being lead by Ian Bliss, Roger Garside, Ray Haslam.

Aim: According to the project website, the aim is to 'examine Ruskin's engagement with Venice (as well as other places visited and studied on his journey) and with the contemporary representation and context of the time'. The project will explore his 'working methods and will make the manuscript materials accessible in an edited electronic edition'.
See http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/ruskin/research/venice.htm

For The Table of Contents, click  | To return to our hub page, click 



The Eighth Lamp

Ruskin Studies Today

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

AT BRANTWOOD

2008, Revisiting Ruskin's Elements of Drawing, Graphite art with Patrick Corbett.

2008, Botanical Art, Pastel art with Valerie Wood.

2008, Secret Histories of Brantwood: a talk on selected items on display in the house by Brantwood's director.

2008, Craft Fair. The annual craft fair has a wide range of quality crafts from around Cumbria, on display throughout Brantwood house, which include pottery, jewellery, fused glass, felt bags, swill baskets, wood turning, photographs, bird & animal wood carving, lavendar goods, furniture restoration, driftwood clocks, children's clothes, lakeland scents, and food.

For dates for these events, see http://www.brantwood.org.uk/events.htm.

For The Table of Contents, click  | To return to our hub page, click 



The Eighth Lamp

Ruskin Studies Today

EXHIBITIONS

PAST EXHIBITIONS

12th March 2007 – 21st October 2007, ‘Mountain Gloom, Mountain Glory’. This exhibition displayed many fine paintings and drawings by Ruskin. Brantwood, The Brantwood Trust, Coniston, Cumbria

1st November 2007 – 28th February 2008, ‘Ruskin Revisited: George Rowlett at Chamonix and Coniston’. On show were powerful landscape paintings made on journeys in Ruskin’s footsteps, in both the Alps and the Lake District in and around Coniston. Brantwood, The Brantwood Trust, Coniston, Cumbria

CURRENT AND UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

12th January – 6th April 2008, ‘Sketching from Nature: ‘”Perceptions of the beauty of the natural world””, Ruskin Library, Lancaster University. See http://www.lancs.ac.uk/users/ruskinlib/Pages/futex.html.

5th March - 16th November 2008, ‘Proserpina and the Language of Flowers: John Ruskin’s Botanical Studies’. Brantwood, The Brantwood Trust, Coniston, Cumbria

19th April – 28th September 2008, ‘The Kingdom of the Eye: Ruskin’s Continental Tours’, Ruskin Library, Lancaster University. See http://www.lancs.ac.uk/users/ruskinlib/Pages/futex.html

For The Table of Contents, click  | To return to our hub page, click 



The Eighth Lamp

Ruskin Studies Today

PUBLISHED AND FORTHCOMING WORKS

EXHIBITION CATALOGUES

The Last Ruskinians: Charles Eliot Norton, Charles Herbert Moore, and Their Circle. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Art Museums, 2007.

George Allen of Sunnyside. Lancaster University, Ruskin Library, 2007.

Ruskin Revisited: George Rowlett at Chamonix and Coniston, Art Space Gallery, London: Michael Richardson Contemporary Art, 2007

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Anderson, Virginia. '"Plain Faithful Recording": John Ruskin and the Art of Charles Herbert Moore.' *In The Last Ruskinians: Charles Eliot Norton, Charles Herbert Moore, and Their Circle*, Exhibition Catalogue, 31-43. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Art Museums, 2007.

Birch, Dinah. 'Ruskin and the Bible.' In *Blackwell Companion to the Bible*, edited by Emma Mason and Jonathan Roberts. Oxford: Blackwell, 2008 (expected).

Casaliggi, Carmen & Paul March-Russell, eds., *Ruskin in Perspective: Contemporary Essays*. UK: Cambridge Scholars

Publishing, 2007. A review of this book will appear in *The Eighth Lamp*.

Chatterjee, Anuradha. 'Tectonic into textile: John Ruskin and the changing meanings of wall and ornament.' *Textile: the journal of cloth and culture* (expected 2008). Click here for abstract

Chatterjee, Anuradha, 'John Ruskin and femininity as the theoretical precondition for architecture.' *Fabrications: The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand* (expected 2008). Click here for abstract.

Cockram, Gill G. *Ruskin and social reform: ethics and economics in the Victorian Age*. London and New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007.

Dawson, Paul. *George Allen of Sunnyside*. Lancaster: Ruskin Library, Lancaster University, 2007.

Dawson, Paul. 'Sunnyside, Orpington. The home of George Allen from 1874-1907.' *Friends of Ruskin's Brantwood Newsletter* (Spring, 2007):15-18.

Hewison, Robert. 'John Ruskin.' In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, Vol. 48, 173-193. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Hewison, Robert. *John Ruskin.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Mallalieu, Peter. 'John Ruskin.' In *The Artists of the Alpine Club: A Biographical Dictionary*, 154-165. London and Glasgow: The Alpine Club and The Ernest Press, 2007.

Macarthur, John. *The Picturesque: Architecture, Disgust and Other Irregularities*. London: Routledge, 2007. A précis of the Ruskin sections from this book is to appear here.

O'Gorman, Francis. 'Ruskin's Mountain Gloom.' In *Ruskin and the Struggle for Coherence*, edited by Keith Hanley and Rachel Dickinson, 123-50. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007.

Reichler, Claude. '1790 – 1840 Leçons d'abîme.' In *L'image de Fribourg,* edited by Hermann Schöpfer et al, 53-78. Fribourg: Société d'histoire du canton de Fribourg, 2007.

Stiles, M.D. 'Deplorable Ruskin and the Mad Dog Creed.' *TBA, IAUV*, Venice, 24 October 2007.

Ulita, Maciek. 'Ruskin's Echoes in Poland.' *Ruskin Review and Bulletin* 3, 1/2 (2007): 64-67.

Weltman, Sharon Aronofsky. *Performing the Victorian: John Ruskin and identity in theater, science, and education*. Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 2007. Click here for the review in *The Eighth Lamp*.

Ruskin, John, 1819-1900. *Bible of Amiens. Pre´face, traduction et notes a` La Bible d'Amiens* de John Ruskin / Marcel Proust; e´dition e´tablie, pre´sente´e et annote´e par Yves-Michel Ergal. Paris : Bartillat, c2007. [Preface, translation and

notes by Marcel Proust ; new edition established, presented and annotated by Yves-Michel Ergal.]

RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY STAFF AT THE RUSKIN CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF LANCASTER

Dickinson, Rachel. John Ruskin's *Correspondence with Joan Severn: Sense and 'Nonsense Letters'*. Oxford: Legenda imprint of MHRA and Maney, under contract for 2008.

———. *Ruskin's Continental Tours*, co-curated with Keith Hanley at the Ruskin Library, Lancaster University, 19 April - 28 September, 2008.

———. 'Report on the AHRC Project 'John Ruskin and Cultural Travel'.' Paper presented at the Ruskin Seminar, Lancaster University, 18 October, 2007.

———. 'Making Sense of Nonsense: Editing Ruskin's Baby-talk.' Paper presented at Editing the Victorians Conference, The Centre for Textual Scholarship, De Montfort University, Leicester, 28 September 2007.

———. 'Mapping Ruskin's Travels.' Paper presented at Things that Move: The Material Worlds of Tourism and Travel Conference, The Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change, Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds, United Kingdom, 19-23 July 2007.

Hanley, Keith and Greg Kucich, eds., *Nineteenth Century Worlds: Global Formations Past and Present*. UK: Routledge, 2008.

———. *John Ruskin's Northern Tours 1837-1838: Travelling North.* New York: Mellen Press, 2007.

———. 'The Ruskin Gaze: John Ruskin's Guides to Cultural Travel.' Paper presented at Things that Move: The Material Worlds of Tourism and Travel, Conference at The Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change, Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds, United Kingdom, 19-23 July 2007.

———. Plenary Session, Roundtable Participant, Interdisciplinarity Now: In Honor of Richard Stein, INCS founding member, at Up-to-Date with a Vengeance Conference, organized by Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies Conference, University of Missouri-Kansas City, April 19-21, 2007.

For The Table of Contents, click  | To return to our hub page, click 



The Eighth Lamp

Ruskin Studies Today

REVIEW

Sharon Aronofsky Weltman, *Performing the Victorian: John Ruskin and Identity in Theater, Science and Education*, Ohio State University Press, 2007.

Reviewer: Dr Anuradha Chatterjee, Editor, *The Eighth Lamp*.

Performing the Victorian aims to counter the "popular and scholarly appropriation of Ruskin as the prime example of Victorian stodginess and stultifying patriarchy." It does so by showing how "fundamentally Ruskin destabilizes categories of identity in much of his writings, particularly in works on theatre, science, and women's education in the second half of his career."[1] The destabilization and subversion of identity is not just in terms of gender. It is also in terms of ontological categories like race, nation, species, and self, as well as epistemological categories like animal, vegetable, mineral, art, science, theater, and life.

The book achieves this aim by relying on Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990), *Bodies that Matter* (1993), and *Undoing Gender* (2004), and to some extent, Elin Diamond's *Performance and Cultural Politics* (1996). Butler and Diamond argue that gender is not a fixed and natural category, and that gender does not exist until it is performed, and reiterated through subsequent citations to previously performed gendered acts.[2] Weltman does not merely 'apply' current theories to Ruskin's work and life. Instead, she identifies and expands upon the theme of the theater – a concept that is common to gender theory as well as Ruskin's life and his writings. The theme of the theater is explored in three different ways, which explains the subtle structuring of the book into three interrelated parts.

The second part shows that Ruskin's aversion boundary blurring performances was undermined in his writings on science and women's education. This part consists of Chapters Two and Three. Chapter Two, "Pretty Frou Frou" Goes Demon Dancing: Performing Species and Gender, argues that Ruskin created a science that was "feminized as well as performative."[3] Firstly, science was theorized as a theatrical act, which involved observing and appreciating nature, and not plundering it. Secondly, male scientists were asked to possess qualities like passiveness and sympathy, thereby having to act like women. Along similar lines, Ruskin constructed a female audience (young girls and housewives) in his scientific prose. Thirdly, science was feminized as well as performed. This was evidenced in Ruskin's description of evolution, which according to him, occurred through the metamorphosis of one species into the other. Metamorphosis was significant because it was a shape shifting process, associated usually with women. The performative challenge was also posed to education. Chapter Three, Playground and Playhouse: Performance in Ruskin's Education for Girls, argues that Ruskin's Ethics of the Dust challenged the conventional power relation between the teacher and the student. Lessons were converted into a set of dialogues. As a result, education became a performance, which allowed the roles of performer and the spectator to become interchangeable. The interchangeability of identity was reinforced as Ruskin encouraged the girls to identify with their object of study, the crystals. In other words, the distinctions between animate and inanimate, subject and object, and the idea of a stable selfhood were questioned.

The third part of the book focuses on sexuality and its performative nature. It consists of Chapter Four and Five, and it reveals that the performative approach that served as the tool for undermining distinctions between gender, species, race, and self in Ruskin's work, was unproductively used by twentieth century theatrical portrayals of Ruskin and his friend Oscar Wilde. Chapter Four, Ruskin and the Wilde Life: Self and Other on the Millennial Stage, argues that the 1995 opera *Modern Painters* and the 1999 play *The Countess* highlight carefully framed evidence about Ruskin's personal life to emphasize the "prudish chauvinism" of Ruskin and his age. As a result, Ruskin's profound contribution to art, architecture, literature, and social reform was occluded. In addition, the Victorian age was pushed into a stable and convenient category, as the inferior and the historical 'Other' of the liberated and modern twentieth century culture.[4] Similar attitudes were shown to prevail towards Oscar Wilde. Wilde was portrayed as being more liberated that Ruskin. However, he functioned as a proxy martyr that the audiences could identify and sympathize with, and leave the theater feeling slightly better about their own tribulations. Chapter Five, Queering Ruskin, challenges the twentieth century theatrical portrayals as well as the biographical accounts of Ruskin's life, especially the accusations of pedophilia, which appears to have arisen due to his lack of sexual performance. Here performance is shown to have two meanings. Firstly, one must sexually perform to fit into a stable category – hetero/homosexual. Secondly, Ruskin's lack of sexual performance was in itself is a performance of "sexual dissidence" or perversity.[5] The chapter suggests that postmodern identities are not as fluid as we believe them to be. It argues that identities, which are fundamentally performative in nature, have tended to become rigidly bipolar.

In conclusion, book demonstrates the following. Theater provides opportunities to reinvent ones life and identity, by rendering the division between reality and theater artificial. Reinvention is possible because performance allows boundaries between gender, self, and race to be fluid. These ideas emerge out of twentieth century discourses on sexuality and identity. However, their historicity matters little. On one hand, twentieth century theatrical and biographical accounts of Ruskin have been resistant to the idea of shifting identities, and they have reacted negatively to the fact that he did not perform a specific sexual identity. On the other, writings by Ruskin performed the removal of boundaries

between self and other; men and women; animal and human; and organic and inorganic. Not only does Ruskin emerge as a more 'progressive' theorist, but also his work and his life reveals the gaps in current understandings of identity.

Performing the Victorian contributes to two related areas of scholarship. First is Critical Ruskin studies. Second is Theatre history. The field of critical Ruskin studies has emerged over the last decade or so, owing to the scholarship by Dinah Birch and Francis O'Gorman's (*Ruskin and Gender*, 2002) and Weltman (*Ruskin's Mythic Queen: Gender Subversion in Victorian Culture*, 1999). These authors have reinterpreted Ruskin's personal life as well as his attitude towards women and gender, to demonstrate postmodern as well as poststructuralist practices, such as the implicit subversion of gender roles, gendered subjectivities, and fluid sexual identities.[6] *Performing the Victorian* is a timely contribution to this growing field. Furthermore, Performing the Victorian coincides with and contributes to the growing body of scholarship on Ruskin's involvement in the Victorian theatre. An AHRC funded project titled *The Ruskinian Theatre: The Aesthetics of the Late Nineteenth Century Popular London Stage, 1870-1901* is underway in Ruskin Program at the Lancaster University, UK. This project investigates the extent to which Ruskin's ideas on society, culture, and education influenced the aesthetics of Victorian theatre.[7] Performing the Victorian contributes to this specific area of scholarship. However, it also subtly differs from it. The book is interested not in historiography or sociology of the Victorian theater, but rather in theater as a literary method.

Performing the Victorian is an extremely well written book. Not only are the arguments well substantiated, but they also balance 'empirical' evidence with insightful and confident interrogation of 'facts'. I particularly liked the last chapter, mainly because it is performative in style. It raises more questions than it answers. This is an important task, as the specter of "missing desire" has, in my mind, tended to compromise Ruskin's status as a 'serious' thinker.[8] I also thought that the book is a well-structured document, which allows resonances to occur between its interrelated parts. The only negative criticism is that I had to read Chapter Two several times, in order to grasp the relation between feminization of science and its performance in Ruskin's writings. However, it is entirely possible that this may have been due to my unfamiliarity with the specifics of the topic.

While *Performing the Victorian* will no doubt be an important critical text for students and scholars of gender studies and Victorian studies, I recommend it to scholars from other fields, such as architecture. As an architectural historian working in the field of critical theory, I find the competent literary criticism in this book valuable to the interpretation of architectural treatises. At a more personal level, I feel that the idea of performed and shifting identities is also relevant to the way Ruskin thought of architecture as performing its gender (feminine) through the act of dressing up; the way in which buildings are simultaneously masculine and feminine; and the way in which the craftsperson performs the act of divine creation by creating sculptural forms that mimic nature.[9] Overall, I enjoyed reading the book, and highly commend this brave piece of scholarship.

[1] Sharon Aronofsky Weltman, *Performing the Victorian: John Ruskin and Identity in Theater, Science and Education* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007), 2.
[2]Ibid., 9.
[3] Ibid., 40.
[4] Ibid., 88.

[5] Ibid., 114.

[6] Along similar lines, Giovanni Cianci and Peter Nicholls (*Ruskin and Modernism*, 2003) and Toni Cerutti (*Ruskin and the Twentieth Century: The Modernity of Ruskinism*, 1997) have shown that Ruskin was not irrelevant to modern thought and practice. Ruskin not only influenced modern thinkers like TS Eliot and Ezra Pound, but his 1853 essay, "The Nature of Gothic", had resonances with American architect Robert Venturi's 1966 publication *Complexity and Contradiction*, which laid down the foundations of the post-modern architectural practice. See John Unrau, "John Ruskin, Robert Venturi, and modernism in architecture," in *Ruskin and the twentieth century: the modernism of Ruskinism*, ed. Toni Cerutti (Vercelli: Edizione Mercuri, 2000), 159-168.

[7] See http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/ruskin/research/ruskiniantheatre.htm.

[8] Weltman, *Performing the Victorian*, 114.

[9] Anuradha Chatterjee, "The Troubled Surface of Architecture: John Ruskin, Human Body, and External Walls" (PhD diss., University of New South Wales, 2008).

For The Table of Contents, click  | To return to our hub page, click 



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Ruskin Studies Today

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For The Table of Contents, click | To return to our hub page, click

