

House are equally strong, underlining Gleason's creative approach, careful exposition, beautiful writing, and clear argument. These sections open and conclude the book, but they feel like the heart of the argument.

Sites Unseen is most successful when Gleason's "in plain sight" metaphor is readily apparent. Its arguments are less effective in the chapters that seem to be stretching the most. A chapter pairing Richard Harding Davis and Olga Beatriz Torres lies too far outside the familiar to make the archival material as effective as it is in other chapters. Elsewhere, especially in a section on Frank Lloyd Wright, Gleason relies so heavily on other scholars' insights—in one case reprinting another scholar's illustrations—that his analysis feels more like rearranging than innovating. That these are also the chapters in which Gleason moves from exploring the African American context to focus on Latin American and Asian American subjects raises the question of whether the unique characteristics and influences of African American literary and architectural history are really all of a piece with their Latino and Asian counterparts. Is the slave cottage on a par with wicker chairs imported from Asia or the Aladdin bungalow?

At its best when it reveals what other readers have overlooked, *Sites Unseen* is an innovative, solid work of scholarship that is a pleasure to read. Its best insights will help transform how readers see books and buildings—and especially built spaces in books—that we thought we already knew.

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STUART EAGLES, *After Ruskin: The Social and Political Legacies of a Victorian Prophet, 1870–1920*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xii + 304. \$110.

The title of this intriguing new study of John Ruskin captures something of the ironic trajectory of the sage's career. Though Ruskin died in 1900, his political influence had declined significantly by the time he took up his most visible public position, the Slade Professorship at Oxford, in 1869. Just when Ruskin was affirmed as an institutional insider, he began what seemed at times a campaign to resuscitate his own flagging reputation. The stridency of his Oxford lectures, the self-doubting and often

self-pitying letters and diary entries, the series of mental breakdowns that caused him to stop and restart various economic experiments make for a familiar story of a career that at its height in 1870 might be considered already “after Ruskin.” This is a story told poignantly from John Rosenberg’s *The Darkening Glass: A Portrait of Ruskin’s Genius* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1961) to the second volume of Tim Hilton’s magisterial Ruskin biography published in 2000, the centenary of Ruskin’s death.

Of course, the picture of Ruskin’s late years has been complicated in many critical studies over the last fifty years, and with particular force in publications that came out around the centenary. Several of those works have been devoted to tracing the reemergence of some of Ruskin’s key ideas in twentieth- and twenty-first-century political philosophy, economics, education, and gender studies. Stuart Eagles’s *After Ruskin: The Social and Political Legacies of a Victorian Prophet, 1870–1920* continues that work and acknowledges its continuity with, for example, Gill Cockram’s *Ruskin and Social Reform: Ethics and Economics in the Victorian Age* (New York: Taurus, 2007), but it takes up the question of legacy in a different way. The chronological span of *After Ruskin* puts an unconventional frame around Ruskin’s career, marking the period from Ruskin’s installation at Oxford, through his literary canonization in the monumental Library Edition of his works (1903–12), to the 1919 celebrations around the centenary of his birth. And surprisingly, Eagles’s book makes the case not for the afterlife of Ruskin, as we might expect from the title, but for the vital impact he had during this fifty-year period, even after his death. In this study the late Ruskin is not a lone, wavering voice in a rapidly altering political, economic, and social landscape, but a kind of institutional insider who had an influence on the government policy and institutional reforms that we associate with late-Victorian England. In fact, the belatedness of Ruskin’s official recognition as a prominent art critic so many years after the publication of his influential *Modern Painters* (1843–60) allowed him, as Eagles sees it, to influence a young generation who had not been tainted by the negative reviews of subsequent controversial works. What *After Ruskin* traces is in part the legacy of Ruskin’s thought in the last thirty years of his life and in the period immediately following. But it is equally, and perhaps more importantly, the story of those who directly shaped themselves “after Ruskin,” not Ruskin the sage but Ruskin the man who captured the attention of young imperialists at Oxford, who formed a connection with his infamous band of scholarly road-diggers at Hinksey, who corresponded with and visited the various

chapters of his St. George's Guild. The Ruskin we see here is not weak and mentally failing but an energetic figure who captured the imagination and hearts of disciples from all walks of life.

In fact, the story that this book tells most compellingly is of the interdependence of the intellectual legacy and the individual presence. For what Eagles argues is that Ruskin's important contribution to a reformed England was not a specific proposal or plan, but his spirit: "the significance of Ruskin's legacy lies in his inspirational call for social action" (p. 1). Using a deep and broad archive of diaries, letters, local histories, minutes of society meetings, and small magazines, Eagles shows how Ruskin's zeal for reform, and often the very testiness and stridency of his rhetoric, resonated with university students as well as with workers who were dissatisfied with the social injustices of *laissez-faire* economic policies. Though the book focuses on Ruskin, it provides an often fascinating window into the movement of ideas through institutions and across classes in late-Victorian England. In its very detailed descriptions of how specific proposals were taken up, reinterpreted, and modified along different social scales, Eagles's study challenges too-easy assumptions about how dominant values are promulgated and sustained. Indeed, in nearly every chapter, Eagles shows how difficult it is for even the most dogmatic principles to survive the centrifugal force of idiosyncratic perspectives and experiences. Eagles uses his archive to animate disputes about minute details of implementation, power struggles, and procedural questions that delayed reforms. Even the most ardent acolytes found their enthusiasm dampened when local economic conditions and personality clashes within groups derailed their plans. The only thing that really held Ruskin's disciples together was the power of his own personality, Eagles concludes in nearly every case study of influence he develops here: it was a "feeling of personal dedication" that kept many of his proposals moving forward, and after his death experiments like the Guild of St. George, despite the best intentions of its members, "simply drifted" (p. 87). Ruskin's most lasting impact, Eagles suggests in the end, was to move individuals to take social action, and that legacy ensured that, paradoxically, his specific ideas would seem "deradicalized" and less compelling by 1920. For many of his disciples became public servants, and they translated his call to action into specific components of the emerging welfare state: the new "bureaucratic machine" made his message seem less urgent and his "rallying cry . . . was largely lost under the clatter of modern typewriters" in administrative offices (p. 268).

Eagles does acknowledge that claiming a too-direct influence of one figure on a specific reform is tricky, especially as he follows the careers of the young liberals who studied at Balliol, where other compelling personalities—Benjamin Jowett, T. H. Green—also held sway. And at times it is hard to figure out how the book uses the term “influence”: does it mean admiration, or the implementation (lasting or not) of a specific idea, or an echo of that idea in a very different proposal or context? There are also some strange omissions of scholarly works that should have had an influence on parts of the argument, in particular Linda M. Austin’s and Catherine W. Morley’s studies of Ruskin’s late career. The summaries of Ruskin’s political ideas will be familiar to those who have read recent Ruskin studies. Territory that might have been less familiar is excluded up front: Eagles says he chose not to include early ecological movements, radical anarchist groups, and women’s organizations, but he provides minimal explanation for such choices, so that it is not entirely clear what larger social or cultural dynamic the separate case studies of the Guild of St. George, the Hinksey digs, the Ruskin societies, and early organized labor movements are meant to represent.

The strength of *After Ruskin*, however, is in the local details. In spite of the fact that those details revolve so closely around one figure, and that what Eagles reveals is how very singular that figure was, his book should have a broader appeal. It offers insight into the varying impacts of both entrenched institutions (like universities) and fleeting forms of local cooperation (like suburban clubs, agricultural groups, and city museums) on the development of key liberal ideas. This carefully researched study in Ruskin’s circle of influence participates in a wider conversation about the spread of certain strains of late-century liberalism.

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