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978-0-521-12867-4 - Ruskin: The Genesis of Invention

Sheila Emerson

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Although John Ruskin is widely considered to have produced some of the greatest prose in English, there has been no extended study of how he learned to write or of the language with which he represents his learning. This book begins with the prodigiously inventive child who looks ahead to what he will achieve, and ends with the adult who looks to his past for proof that he has never been inventive. Far from a simple about-face, Ruskin's self-denial is a culmination and extension of the art that he mastered in youth, and it is one of the most remarkable acts of self-representation in all of Victorian prose. Drawing on Ruskin's own sources as well as on recent directions in critical theory, Professor Emerson reveals the effects of early literary, familial, sexual, and social experiences on the shaping of a major writer's identity.

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FOR
SASHA PARNES

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CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	xi
Acknowledgments	xiii
INTRODUCTION	1
PART ONE · LOOKING AHEAD	17
1 Interrelations (1823–29)	19
2 Laws of Motion (1829–33)	35
3 Disciplines (1833–35)	68
4 Leading Lines (1830–36)	103
PART TWO · LOOKING BACK	129
5 Separations (1829–49)	133
6 Unlawful Motions (1843–80)	187
7 The Gender of Invention (1871–84)	207
8 The Invention of Genesis (1885–89)	229
Notes	239
Index	265

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[More information](#)

ILLUSTRATIONS

Frontispiece

James Northcote, *John Ruskin*, 1822. Oil on canvas. On permanent loan at Brantwood. (Reproduced by courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London.)

T. A. and J. Green, *John Ruskin*, c. 1885. Platinum print. (Reproduced by courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London.)

Between pages 128 and 129

- 1 John Ruskin, *harrys new road*, 1826–27 (*Works*, 35·54)
- 2 John Ruskin, *harrys river*, 1826–27, in “Harry and Lucy, Poems, etc.” (The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University)
- 3 John Ruskin, *My First tree! from nature*, 1831 (The Education Trust Ltd., The Ruskin Galleries, Bembridge School, Isle of Wight)
- 4 John Ruskin, “The Puppet Show, or Amusing Characters for Children,” 1828–29 (autograph manuscript, The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MA 3451)
- 5 John Ruskin, letter to his father, 31 December 1828 (*Works*, 2.facing 264)
- 6 John Ruskin, title page of *Iteriad; or Three Weeks Among the Lakes*, 1831 (The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University)
- 7 John Ruskin, finis page of *Iteriad; or Three Weeks Among the Lakes*, 1832 (The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University)

Cambridge University Press

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- 8 Sir Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology*, 1830–33, 3 vols., 3.78–79 (The British Library)
- 9 Sir Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology*, 1830–33, 3 vols., 3.80–81 (The British Library)
- 10 Sir Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology*, 1830–33, 3 vols., 3.90–91 (The British Library)
- 11 John Ruskin, *Early Geology*, 1830s (The Princeton University Libraries)
- 12 John Ruskin, *Early Geology*, 1830s (The Princeton University Libraries)
- 13 John Ruskin, *Traceries from Caen, Bayeux, Rouen, and Beauvais*, 1849 (*Works*, 8.facing 88)
- 14 Lily Severn's "picture writing," 1884 (*Works*, 29.facing 508)

Pages from Ruskin's *Works* were photographed by the British Library.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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