

**'THE SANCTITY OF WOMANHOOD': JOHN RUSKIN AND THE MEDIEVAL  
MADONNA**

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COLUMBUS STATE UNIVERSITY

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MADONNA

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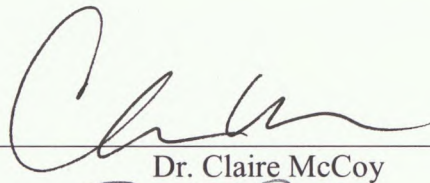
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This essay examines how art and gender become one and the same for British art and social critic John Ruskin. His complexly layered rhetoric, most poignantly expressed through the sanctified image of the medieval Madonna, serve as one interesting and much-judged example of the social conditions of industrial, imperial nineteenth-century Britain. Though Ruskin is often lauded by some scholars as a prime example of Victorian art criticism, an analysis of his reverence for and encouragement of virtuous womanhood will allow us to more fully understand Ruskin and his times.

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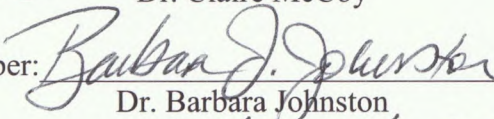
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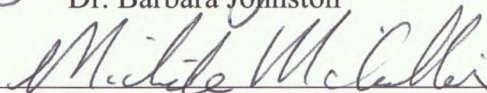


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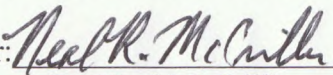


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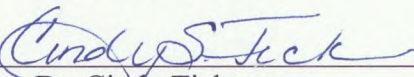


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INDEX WORDS: John Ruskin, Victorian Britain, Medievalism, the Madonna, Art, Society, Women.

## ABSTRACT

This essay examines how art and gender become one and the same for British art and social critic John Ruskin. His complexly layered rhetoric, most poignantly expressed through the sanctified image of the medieval Madonna, serve as one interesting and much-judged example of many reactions to the tumultuous new social conditions of industrial, imperial nineteenth-century Victorian Britain. Though Ruskin is often labeled by some scholars as a prime example of Victorian sexism, an analysis of his reverence for and encouragement of virtuous medieval qualities in art, society and womanhood will allow us to more fully, effectively and usefully understand Ruskin and his times.

INDEX WORDS: John Ruskin, Victorian Britain, Medievalism, the Madonna, Art, Society, Women.

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These two ideals of femininity cohered in John Ruskin's singular vision of womanhood, two forms reconciled in his "Of Queens' Churches" lecture that mirrored his accompanying lecture on male education in *Sesame and Lilies* (1865). It is this very lecture Kate Millet criticized as "one of the most complete leagues obtainable into that compulsory male fantasy one might call the official Victorian attitude."<sup>3</sup> In her 1970 essay, "The Debate over Women: Ruskin versus Mill," Millet offered a view reflecting the new feminist standards of twentieth-century feminist ideologies that deny the notion of possessing inherently feminine qualities or "natural" social "differences."<sup>4</sup> Millet's judgment of Ruskin came at a time when gender roles were

<sup>3</sup> John Ruskin, "Of Queens' Churches," in *Sesame and Lilies*, 1865. (Yale University Press, 1996; <http://www.earlychristian.org/76333>), 95. (Pewee State Online, <http://www.pewee.edu/~jruskin/cmc263.html>)

<sup>4</sup> With excerpts from Ruskin.

<sup>5</sup> Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics* (Liberty: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 19.

<sup>6</sup> Kate Millet, "The Debate over Women: Ruskin versus Mill," *Feminist Studies* 14, no 1 (1978): 63-82. In this light, Millet reexamines the issue when she says "compulsory" because some can fully create an attitude of any historical period. If such were the case, these male-dominated imaginations would be the hallmark of any well every attitude from the Puritans on up. Indeed, we must recognize the fact of female subjugation through literacy; however, we must not conclude "white people or vines is a knee-jerk reaction to this very fact without regarding the context beyond 'the past'." I believe R.N. Swanson, during his discussion of medieval women in his book, *Religion and Gender in England, 1215-1515* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), puts it quite poignantly when he says "What of the problem [with the canon]? Cultural analysis of the role of women in the practice of medieval religion may be the way to the search for stereotyping of women without perceiving an equivalent

Bathed in loveliness she is; sweet expressions in the indelible beauty of her face. Grace abounds. Her delicate hands cradle and comfort – mending hems, mending hearts. With patience, she listens; with love, she sings her lullabies. Serviceable. Dutiful. Loyal. True – Queen of her Garden.

A pillar stands before humanity, enthroned in the eternal strength of virtue. Gleaming in the sun, casting light over the war-laden wilderness – this is the divinity before all must bow. Behold – wearer of “the myrtle crown,” bearer of “the stainless scepter”<sup>1</sup>; protector of mankind, lantern of goodness: Woman. As a Queen in the world.

– Katherine Hinzman, 2015.<sup>2</sup>



These two ideals of femininity cohered as John Ruskin’s singular vision of womanhood: two forms reconciled in his “Of Queens’ Gardens” lecture that mirrored his accompanying lecture on male education in *Sesame and Lilies* (1865). It is this very lecture Kate Millett criticized as “one of the most complete insights obtainable into that compulsive male fantasy one might call the official Victorian attitude.”<sup>3</sup> In her 1970 essay, “The Debate over Women: Ruskin versus Mill,” Millett offered a view reflecting the now familiar standards of twentieth century feminist ideologies that deny the notion of possessing inherently feminine qualities or “natural” social “duties.”<sup>4</sup> Millett’s judgment of Ruskin came at a time when gender roles were

<sup>1</sup> John Ruskin, “Of Queen’s Gardens,” in *Sesame and Lilies*. 1865. (Yale University Press, <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10176365>), 95; (Penn State Online, *Bartleby* <http://www.bartleby.com/28/7.html>)

<sup>2</sup> With excerpts from Ruskin.

<sup>3</sup> Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 89.

<sup>4</sup> Kate Millett, “The Debate over Women: Ruskin versus Mill,” *Victorian Studies* 14, no 1 (1970), 63-82; In this light, Millett overstates the issue when she says “compulsive” fantasizing alone can fully create an attitude of any historical period. If such were the case, these male-dominated imaginations would be the hallmark of any and every attitude from the Paleolithic era on. Indeed, we must recognize the fact of female subjugation through history; however, we must not condemn certain people or views in a knee-jerk reaction to this very fact without regarding the context beyond “the patriarchy.” I believe R.N. Swanson, during his discussion of medieval women in his book, *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c. 1215-1515* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), puts it quite poignantly when he says “Part of the problem [with the current historical analysis of the role of women in the practice of medieval religion] may be the search for stereotyping of women without noticing an equivalent



hotly contested. In her attack on the "Victorian attitude," Millett ignored the critical consideration of Ruskin's historical context. She would have her readers believe Ruskin stood alone, painting for her modern audiences a picture of a backward, blind-folded man. Against the ever-rational John Stuart Mill, she posed Ruskin as a lecturer separated from reality who glared down from the podium to scorn the whole female sex.

In fact, in the nineteenth century, Ruskin and his contemporaries confronted a radical wave of change sweeping away prior notions of the role and involvement of women in society. The explosion of business and manufacture, wealth and commerce overturned social structures and establishments older than antiquity. The historical complexity following the Industrial Revolution came to the first and fullest fruition in England: almost every element and standard of prior life was challenged; almost every person felt and reacted to this radical societal uprooting in vastly different ways, asking questions still pondered today. The British Empire was at its peak: London was a world capital quite literally harvesting the resources of faraway and exotic colonies around the globe. Factory towers bellowed smoke into the sky: on one hand, new wealth allowed a growing merchant class to challenge aristocratic hierarchies; on the other, it created a huge class of urban poor laboring under the horrible conditions of those very factories. Modernization was completely changing the social and literal landscape of Britain, and these changes presented new opportunities and restrictions, roles and "duties" for women. Increasingly, women were more involved in society, whether as factory workers or cultural celebrities on stages and streets, in newspaper headlines and tearooms.

John Ruskin, as both an art and social critic, was only one of many reacting to these new social conditions. In Britain, the cultural response to the highly materialistic industrial

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stereotyping of men...The easy linkages built into some approaches to it may be too simplistic: a presupposition that women were oppressed and repressed leads to a search for evidence to support the interpretation" (303-4).

conditions of the nineteenth century varied greatly. The arts reflected great social change, integral to the ongoing dialogues on how to handle the storm of modernity. Different ideological movements expressed their points-of-view in the contentious visual language of art as new thinkers challenged not only the industrial ways of their new world but also questioned the way earlier thinkers had sought to challenge that very same "new world." Thomas Carlyle would lament the de-humanization of increased mechanization. The so-called Oxford Movement attempted to resurrect Christian morality in socio-religious standards of the medieval. The Pre-Raphaelites, supported in their initial growth by Ruskin, were young, romantic and short-lived as a cohesive "movement," richly painting Arthurian and Biblical scenes in an evocation of a distant, idealized chivalric lifestyle. Each of these groups was collectively bound by nostalgia for past days - the purity of an age untouched by the soot of urban factories. By contrast, the Aesthetic movement took a more eclectic approach, incorporating modern urban fashions with nostalgic elements in art and design. Consequently, they appeared distinctly more accepting of contemporary changes than their more conservative counterparts. This latter group, associated with outrageous characters like James McNeill Whistler and Oscar Wilde, professed "Art's for Art's sake." They forsook the strict moral reactions of prior ideologies, embracing art, décor, and fashion to design a sensually beautiful world made to please the self. Aesthetes, in literature, art and fashion, quickly gained popularity among a group of socially-eager middle class merchant businessmen and *nouveau-riche* socialites who took to the central concept of beauty and enjoyment of life itself in a world where life had revolved around ideas of cold morality or endless work. Therefore, Aesthetes offered a sort of freedom for a whole host of society at a time when people were attempting to discover and define new roles for themselves.

Even in this very fluid environment of definition, women still possessed little agency to craft their own lives and fashion their own identities. Defining a woman's social role typically remained the province of men. Therefore, Ruskin was not the only man determining where women should be and how they should behave.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, Ruskin was not so un-nuanced in his attitude towards women as Millett would have it. When she aimed her fire, she separated "Of Queens' Gardens" from Ruskin's vast repertoire of work, ignoring his complex, multi-layered vision. Born early in the century to middle-class, highly Evangelical Scottish parents, he died at its conclusion a renowned critic in the art and social world of Britain and Europe. Firm in his moral resolution, he considered himself a teacher whose many published lectures and letters were meant to guide art and society out of the dilemmas of modern industrialization. "Of Queens' Gardens" was but a thread of his philosophy, a small part of volume upon volume of written, spoken and sketched work. Art, virtue and community could not be separated, nor could one lecture be separated from another. He had a grand vision for the restoration of goodness, "cheerfulness," in his community and, in the realm of art, he articulated this moralistic message most often and most effectively.<sup>6</sup> Thus, when Millett isolated the gender issue from the ideas of art and collective social virtue, the true intentions of Ruskin are lost.

For Ruskin, art and gender became one and the same, a concept expressed in the sanctified image of the medieval Madonna. The Holy Mother, Queen of Heaven, anchored his two contrasting visions of womanhood, bringing together ideals of the divine warrior-goddess of

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<sup>5</sup> In her 1981 article, "Ruskin's Patronage of Women Artists," Pamela Gerrish Nunn says "he consistently failed to recognize the inherent contradiction in his position-or, rather, positions; this was not, of course, untypical of men who wish to influence women, particularly in Victorian England, and was perhaps genuine blindness rather than willful misapprehension on Ruskin's part" (8).

<sup>6</sup> In *Modern Painters*, Ruskin first defines "Greatness in Art" as "nothing more than language...peculiar to the painter as such...necessary to their greatness, but not the tests of their greatness. It is not by the mode of representing and saying, but by what is represented and said, that the respective greatness either of the painter or the writer is to be finally determined" (6).

Athena and a more domestic mother of hearth and garden. In "Of Queens' Gardens," Ruskin paraded out a series of historicized, legendary and literary figures, and although Athena featured strongly in this and many other lectures, the Madonna reconciled his various female inspirations whether they were wifely Shakespearean matrons or "rulers" with the powers of goddesses.<sup>7</sup> While to Athena the listener owed "whatever you hold most precious in art, in literature, or in types of national virtue," the Virgin Mary gave him the ability to introduce the qualities of Athena in a socially and religiously moral medieval canon.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the Madonna represented Ruskin's unified medieval vision of and for the world. In her, Ruskin recognized, highlighted and celebrated a series of historicized visual and spiritual virtues. Thus, socially *and* artistically, she was a moral and stylistic pillar: the standard, the "Statue," which guided Ruskin in his lifelong endeavor to improve his "State."<sup>9</sup> In lecture after lecture, he held up and referred to her image as the vital intermediary for the contemporary communities of Victorian modernity.

Medievalism, as a way of living that was perceived as purer, simpler and more natural, was prevalent in much of the artistic and ideological discourse of the nineteenth-century. Even beyond the Tractarians and PreRaphaelites of England, the Nazarenes in Germany continued to celebrate and resurrect the Gothic, considering it to be an important part of their distinctly

<sup>7</sup> He devoted *The Queen of the Air* to his worship of Athena, setting her against the opposing force of the wicked Medusa. John Ruskin, *The Queen of the Air: Being a Study of the Greek Myths of Cloud and Storm*, 1869. (The Project Gutenberg ebook, 2004 <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/12641/pg12641.txt>); Susan Aronofsky Weltman, "Mythic Language and Gender Subversion: The Case of Ruskin's Athena," in *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 52, no. 3 (University of California Press, 1997), 350-371.

<sup>8</sup> If Ruskin had enough time, he would untangle the long tableaux of historical and literary tradition, taking "Chaucer, and show you why he wrote a Legend of Good Women; but no legend of Good Men...I could go back into the mythical teaching of the most ancient times, and show you how the...Egyptian people, wisest then of nations, gave to their Spirit of Wisdom the form of a woman...and how the name and form of that spirit, adopted, believed, and obeyed by the Greeks, became that Athena of the olive-helm, and cloudy-shield, to whose faith you owe, down to this date, whatever you hold most precious in art, in literature, or in types of national virtue" ("Of Queen's Gardens," 72). In her 1997 article, "Mythic Language and Gender Subversion: The Case of Ruskin's Athena," author Susan Aronofsky Weltman rightly identifies Ruskin's literature as based upon a "mythical language"; however, the Madonna remained central, ranking above Arthurian domestic heroines and pagan goddesses (350-71).

<sup>9</sup> Ruskin, "Of Queen's Gardens," 65.

Northern identity.<sup>10</sup> As early as the 1750s, intellectuals and artists across northern Europe sought the cultural styles of the Celts, Gaels and other nomadic Germanic tribes they claimed as their ancestors. While those living around the Mediterranean continued to celebrate the epics of Homer and temples of Augustus, medievalists from Britain to Germany looked to counterparts from their own lands.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, this revivalist, nationalistic cultural tendency had been and continued to be prevalent throughout Europe when Ruskin revered the cathedrals, communities and the Virgin Mary of the thirteenth century in his literary works.<sup>12</sup>

For Ruskin, the foundational image of the Holy Mother was a carved Madonna and Child figure on the trumeau and lintel of the south transept door of the cathedral in Amiens, France; a sculpted social emblem encapsulating perfected thirteenth-century Christian art (Figure 1). As he sought goodness both in art and society, Ruskin traveled extensively, often to France. The cathedral at Amiens was among his favorite sites. In fact, in 1885, he wrote *The Bible of Amiens*, a historical survey of France, at the request of an English governess.<sup>13</sup> In that work, he set aside a portion to describe the wonders of the cathedral and specifically mentioned the Madonna above the doors there. The same Amiens Madonna figure had impressed him on one of his earlier voyages, as she also made earlier appearances in his other works.<sup>14</sup>

This emphasis on the medieval canon and the Madonna figure in art and society can be most effectively understood in *The Two Paths* lectures, particularly in his first installment, “The

<sup>10</sup> Chu, 162-7; Actually, there is a significant link to the Nazarenes in the formation of the PreRaphaelite Brotherhood through William Dyce (1806-64), a British painter well-acquainted with the German’s medievalist ideas. Chu, 334-336.

<sup>11</sup> Chu, 76-77.

<sup>12</sup> Barrie, xxvii-xxviii. Early in his critical development, Ruskin was influenced by the works of French art historian Alexis Francois Rio, who celebrated the “Italian primitives” much in the tradition of the Nazarenes.

<sup>13</sup> John Ruskin, *The Bible of Amiens*, 1885 (The Project Gutenberg ebook, 2006 <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/24428/24428-h/24428-h.htm>).

<sup>14</sup> When he mentioned her, he described her delicate stone beauty in an argument for a revival not only of the medieval style but the mindset of medieval artists, who were concerned not with perfect visual representation but the more significant spiritual “essence” of God-created objects.

Deteriorative Power of Art over Nations.”<sup>15</sup> Ruskin declared art had reached its “culminating power” in the thirteenth-century style of the “Christianized Goths” that he associated with the origins of his homeland. At this point in history, he said artists captured qualities of “tenderness” and “natural fact” – truth.<sup>16</sup> Their architecture and sculpture exemplified for him a pure curiosity reflecting noble virtues in their day-to-day living.

When Ruskin spoke to young artists in the late 1850s, he was clearly an urgent advocate for a noble, socially involved art. In Ruskin’s view, rather than simply revealing the morality of a single man, an artistic hand and mind displayed the collective goodness of a nation. Good and pure art, like untarnished nature, was a reflection of “higher” things. On the surface, this view appears to reflect the Royal Academy’s doctrine that true, pure, great art transcended the particular details of the present. Ruskin never completely accepted Joshua Reynolds’s celebration of the Classical world that formed the institutional standard of the Royal Academy. Ruskin’s own rules came in direct conflict with contemporary academic expectations.<sup>17</sup> Ruskin eschewed grand exhibitions featuring “figures with intellectual grandeur” and majestic collections in the houses of both the established and emerging rich.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, art was not to be cheapened and so simply degraded in the industrial, money-driven realm of modern commercialism.<sup>19</sup> Art for Ruskin was in the truest sense elevated; a physical presence of something spiritual possessing the authority of moral social instruction in an otherwise mechanical, lost age.

<sup>15</sup> John Ruskin, *The Two Paths: Being Lectures on Art and its Application to Decoration and Manufacture* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1859), in the *Open Library* <https://archive.org/stream/twopathsbeinglec00ruskrich#page/n13/mode/2up>.

<sup>16</sup> Truth, as Ruskin applied it to art, “signifies the faithful statement, either to the mind or senses, of any fact of nature,” – different from imitation in that where imitation is only material, truth is also “moral.” For him, “ideas of truth are the foundation, and ideas of imitation, the destruction, of all art...nothing can be beautiful which is not true” (*Modern Painters*, 13-14).

<sup>17</sup> Barrie, xxvi.; Alison Smith, *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality and Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 3; Dinah Birch, “Introduction,” *Fors Clavigera* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), xxxviii; Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, *Nineteenth-Century European Art*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed (Boston: Prentice Hall, 2012), 43;327.

<sup>18</sup> Joshua Reynolds in his “Third Discourse,” quoted by Petra Chu, 43.

<sup>19</sup> John Ruskin, “Fairy Land,” *Art of England: Lectures Given in Oxford* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1979), 133-4.

In earlier works such as *Modern Painters*, he appropriated the Greek terms *Aesthesis* and *Theoria* to define superficial and virtuous art respectively. Art with *Theoria* had at its core a deeper moral spirit and, consequently, represented true beauty. Those who recognized and created it naturally possessed a nobility of mind, spirit and sense, and those who did not instead succumbed to the base sensual appreciation of lowly *Aesthesis*.<sup>20</sup> In *The Two Paths*, he continued to emphasize and relate those contradictory ideas to an artist and his social duty. He confronted his listeners with what Susan Arnofsky Weltman, author of a 1977 article "Mythic Language and Gender Subversion: The Case of Ruskin's Athena," calls Ruskin's "binary oppositions," inherently integral to his ideas of the "degenerative evolution" of humanity and therefore nature.<sup>21</sup> The visual and physical make-ups of communal, and therefore national, settings and societies connected to deeper spiritual and artistic goals in his cross-roads "Two Paths" metaphor. Ruskin's analysis stretched through a wide swath of history; in his examination of the phenomena of *Aesthesis* and *Theoria*, he selected a few "schools of perfect art": Athenian, Florentine and Venetian.<sup>22</sup> Ultimately, he argued that these schools reflected the greater virtue of their societies in a certain, relatively pure era of intellectual, cultural and social activity. Ultimately, though, he would go on to lament their national decline, which he believed

*fiction. Ruskin was central to the formation of the Guild of St. George, designed to form communities of equal workers, men and women employing "natural" skills and talents.*

<sup>20</sup> In *Modern Painters* (189), Ruskin said, "...The Theoretic faculty is concerned with the moral perception and appreciation of ideas of beauty. And the error respecting it is, the considering and calling it Aesthetic, *degrading* [my emphasis] it to a mere operation of sense, or perhaps worse, of custom; so that the arts which appeal to it sink into a mere amusement, ministers to morbid sensibilities, ticklers and fanners of the soul's sleep." Author David Barrie, in the preface to his edition of *Modern Painters*, says that it is "obvious that his account of beauty and of the theoretic faculty through which it is perceived is essentially religious" (xxx). It is interesting to note that when Ruskin doubted his religion, he largely rejected the volume in which *Aesthesis* and *Theoria* were introduced; when he reconnected with his religious spirituality after 1858, he found it to be among his most prophetic early ideas.

<sup>21</sup> Weltman, 350.

<sup>22</sup> Ruskin, 19; Barrie, xxviii. Ruskin's first solo trip to Italy in 1845 was a major turning point. He followed the footsteps of art historian Alexis Francois Rio and was drawn to the works of "Italian primitives" Giotto, Masaccio, Ghirlandaio (it is interesting to compare Ghirlandaio's traditional portraits of women with a few portrait sketches Ruskin has made), and, particularly, Fra Angelico. Afterwards he travelled to Venice, where he fell in love with the work of Tintoretto.

to be paralleled by an artistic decline – each of which evidenced a sinking of *Theoria* into *Aesthesis*.

The Gothic remained his mainstay – in art, society and femininity. The distant Madonna consequently ranked above his “mythical” court of literary and legendary figures. The Virgin Mary, in her thirteenth-century form, epitomized the fully beautiful and moral concept of *Theoria* and consequently was the most pertinent example of goodness at the center of his ideal cohesive community.<sup>23</sup> Women – madonnas straddling the attributes of a mother and a leader – were integrally involved in his vision, acting not “in their households merely, but over all within their sphere.”<sup>24</sup> In Ruskin’s ideal community, everyone within this sphere was equal. In “Of Queens Gardens,” Ruskin declared whoever said the superiority of one gender over another was absolutely wrong – “foolishly wrong,” in fact, to believe that “woman is only the shadow and attendant image of her lord, owing him a thoughtless and servile obedience, and supported altogether in her weakness by the pre-eminence of his fortitude.”<sup>25</sup> In contrast to Millet’s assertions, the female nature was no less than the man’s – simply different and to be held in equal regard.

This espousal of equality he repeated throughout the social and artistic treatises of his lifetime. Ruskin was central to the formation of the Guild of St. George, designed to foster communities of equal workers, men and women employing “natural” skills and talents. However, when he created all these “spheres,” he inevitably positioned himself above the masses of “equals,” looking down at everyone as an interpreter of truth and godliness. In Ruskin’s

<sup>23</sup> Ruskin says “art is the greatest which conveys to the mind of the spectator, by any means whatsoever, the greatest number of the greatest ideas; and I call an idea great in proportion as it is received by a higher faculty of the mind, and as it more fully occupies, and in occupying, exercises and exalts, the faculty by which it is received” (*Modern Painters*, 8). The Madonna, not Athena, embodies this “greatness” to the fullest extent.

<sup>24</sup> Ruskin, “Of Queen’s Gardens,” 65.

<sup>25</sup> Ruskin, 66;76.



utopic sphere, all may wear the same clothes and make merry, cultivating the nature around and within them - but under Ruskin's direction. While he declared everyone was equal, he allowed himself to personally rise above fellow guild-men and women by simply standing at the podium. He was creating a society functioning as a medieval workshop where all below him – equal in their inferiority - must recognize him as the master with the authority to define and therefore rule.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, it is no surprise Ruskin reaped not only the criticism of Millett, but was personally confronted by contemporaries who questioned his ideas and therefore, defied his authority.<sup>27</sup> This was embodied by his various disappointing relationships with actual women who had ideas of their own. In his personal life, he lost the control of definition he wielded in his written, sketched and spoken works. After a youthful, failed love affair, he married, through arrangement, Euphemia "Effie" Chalmers Gray.<sup>28</sup> Their families were close, and the fathers of both Ruskin and Effie pressed for a union as early as 1841, when she was only twelve years old.<sup>29</sup> They would marry seven years later, only to divorce on grounds of non-consummation. There are many rumors about the failure of their relationship. Effie Gray was not the goddess of his imagination; disturbed by the true nature of the female naked body, he kept his distance. In fact, in a statement to his divorce lawyer, Ruskin said, "It may be thought strange that I could abstain from a woman who to most people was so attractive. But though her face was beautiful, her person was not formed to excite passion. On the contrary, there were certain circumstances in

<sup>26</sup> Birch, "Introduction," xxxv-xxxvi.

<sup>27</sup> When Ruskin addressed the critics of his own era in *Fors Clavigera*, it is almost as if he explained the reasons behind future Feminist judgments, founded simply upon his appreciation of nature, his just treatment of those who worked for him, and finally, most significantly, that "I never disobeyed my mother, because I have honoured all women with solemn worship, and have been kind even to the unthankful and the evil, therefore the hacks of English art and literature wag their heads at me, and...talk of the 'effeminate sentimentality of Ruskin.'"

<sup>28</sup> His first, unrequited love was for the daughter of his father's business partner, Adele Domecq. He met her in 1836 and was informed of her marriage in 1840. In 1848, he married Effie Gray.

<sup>29</sup> In fact, this was when Ruskin dedicated his fantasy novel, *The King of the Golden River*, to Effie.

her person which completely checked it.”<sup>30</sup> Thus, he was judging Effie by his social and artistic ideal. His experiences with her suggest he desired in his wife a clothed Madonna and in his lover, a nude Athena.<sup>31</sup>

His perception of the imperfect physical female form was not Ruskin’s only problem. Her personality did not suit his standards - Effie was more aesthetically and fashionably concerned than he could accept in any person no matter their gender. She was already all too close to Ruskin’s painter-friend John Everett Millais, and she would marry the Pre-Raphaelite five years after the divorce from Ruskin. The critic, however, would never marry again, but the flirtations of his later life were always with younger women who he could envision and foster as queens and sanctify as madonnas. Rose LaTouche was among his most infamous encounters: in his middle-age, he was attracted to her nine-year-old adolescence and would propose to her following her eighteenth birthday.

Ruskin was a patron, an educator<sup>32</sup> - in his rhetoric and in his relationships.<sup>33</sup> The commanding - and subsequently demanding - nature of his personality and his philosophy drew

<sup>30</sup> Quoted by Mary Lutyens in *Millais and Ruskin* (London: Murray, 1967), 191; Barrie, xxxi.

<sup>31</sup> Although the maternal qualities of “tenderness” associated with the Madonna appealed to Ruskin, he did not desire children himself (citing the nature of his writing and teaching career). So in his relationship with Effie, we can begin to envision him playing out his contradictory, fantastical desires in reality: from her he wanted those divine Madonna-like characteristics of both untouched virgin innocence and motherly tenderness and care.

<sup>32</sup> In all three main lectures analyzed in this paper - “Of Queens Gardens,” *The Two Paths*, and “Fairy Land,” - Ruskin describes and advocates passionately his vision of education, which, despite Kate Millett’s claims that he singles out women, remains surprisingly consistent between women, artists and children respectively.

<sup>33</sup> In his five month courtship with Effie Gray, we read in his letters already the precursor of his “Of Queens’ Gardens” rhetoric. He admonished her on writing more, caring for him more; instructing her who to associate with, to learn more foreign languages and practice more at the piano - even telling her what to wear (Susanna Fagence Cooper, *The Model Wife: The Passionate Lives of Effie Gray, Ruskin and Millais*, London: Duckworth Overlook, 2010. 35-43); Nunn, 8-9. Nunn says quite pertinently, “Until an artist had reached the peak of Ruskin-defined perfection, he would not dignify her work by purchasing it. At the same time, however, he was eager to act as teacher and guide to women who were imperfect artists: he wanted to influence artists, and to have that influence evident and acknowledged.” However, this is generally applied to Ruskin’s nature: this was his general attitude regarding artists, whether they be men or women, or people as a whole! In fact, Nunn cites a letter Ruskin wrote on the death of female artist Joanna Mary Boyce, who he was sorrowful to lose because he “always counted upon her as a friend whom I *could* make, if only I had time.”

him to the child-like submission of women and artists outside the academic and social norm.<sup>34</sup> Rose LaTouche exemplified his romantic fascination with the virginal innocence of very young women to whom he often gave informal drawing lessons.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, in his defense of the fledgling, non-academic Pre-Raphaelites, he hoped to discover, supervise and therefore mold ambitious, youthful medieval style in the art of Britain. These people – whether a man or woman – could never stand equally at his level. He could warrant them respect, praise and advice whenever and however he saw fit but only as long as they followed the medieval standard that *he* set and sanctified through the virtues and forms of the Madonna.

Ruskin found these standards fulfilled in children's book illustrator Kate Greenaway, who would combine his interests in and concern for social virtue in women and art. For Ruskin and for our historical analysis, she pertinently exemplified his ideological teachings in action. As both an artist and a woman, Greenaway achieved her noble task – her queenly duty as a contributor to the English communal “sphere.” In the “Fairy Land” portion of his lectures on the art of England, Ruskin bestowed both praise and criticism on her creations, describing her

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<sup>34</sup> Thus we are again reminded of his disdain for previous head of the Royal Academy, Joshua Reynolds, whose authority, even in death, challenged Ruskin's authority and therefore remained a target for Ruskin's criticism. In fact, Ruskin says Joshua Reynolds was “utterly incapable of explaining” the difference between high and low art, “and every effort which he makes to do so involves him in unexpected fallacy and absurdity....while the plain truth, a truth lying at the very door, has all the while escaped him...namely that the difference between great and mean art lies, not in definable methods of handling, or styles of representation, or choices of subjects, but wholly in the nobleness of the end to which the effort of the painter is addressed” (*Modern Painters*, 295). Even though Reynolds had died when Ruskin wrote this, the doctrines Reynolds articulated in his famous *Discourses* still dictated the standards of the Academy and were consequently the force against which Ruskin aimed his fire. Reynolds therefore had been and continued to be the authority with terms challenging Ruskin's own. It is interesting to note that R.H. Wilenski says the *Discourses* are truly “autobiographic. Reynolds is really talking about Reynolds” (*English Painting*, 147). Therefore, I believe it can be similarly said that in Ruskin's works, and even in his confrontation of Reynolds, Ruskin is really talking about Ruskin.

<sup>35</sup> Rose LaTouche and her sister, Emily, started taking drawing lessons from Ruskin at the request of their mother in 1858. Furthermore, an American dentist who played chess with Ruskin had his daughter, Louise Virenda Blandy, start lessons with the Oxford tutor in 1875 when she was fifteen. His letters of praise were notably flirtatious: “It was very sweet and pretty of you, and violet and snowdrop, to send me those flowers – but I never will have birthday presents from young ladies unless I get a kiss too” (Ruskin in November, 1875, quoted by Robert Hewison in *Ruskin and Oxford: The Art of Education* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996], 72).

“genius,”<sup>36</sup> and exhibiting to the crowd an example of “her ineffably tender and delicate” drawing of dancing fairies and children.<sup>37</sup> While the Academy would disregard the whimsy of her illustrations, Ruskin found an honest fulfillment of art’s noble purpose: to instruct.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, these “so-called fairy paintings” were viewed as a distinctly British genre, and in this lecture, Ruskin would lament the shortcomings of other fable illustrators of his own day.<sup>39</sup> Unlike other English “Fairy Land” artists whom Ruskin condemned, Greenaway sought both cheerfulness and truth, wanting her fairies to be “very like children.” In these little winged creatures, critics French and British alike found charm and “delicious smiles” representative of the good of Old England.<sup>40</sup> In her lively sketches, he could reminisce about the simpler life of the Scottish countryside; an untouched green fantasy where children and mothers skip about and eat pie (Figures 2, 3, and 4). These visual narratives, “bursting out like one of the sweet Surrey fountains, all dazzling and pure,” he claimed as the “radiance and innocence of reinstated infant divinity showered again among the flowers of English meadows.”<sup>41</sup>

By this interpretation, Greenaway was protecting and promoting a life that Ruskin saw diminished and replaced with urban fashion on one end and Dickensian poverty on another.<sup>42</sup> She fulfilled the standards he sought in the Madonna, virtuously performing a social duty

<sup>36</sup> Ruskin, “Fairy Land,” 143.

<sup>37</sup> Ruskin, 147.

<sup>38</sup> We can more fully understand the importance of instructive art and literature for Ruskin – combined poignantly together for children in illustrated fables – when we take into consideration his definition of myth in *The Queen of the Air* (1869). According to him, great myths represented great people; they were created by the wisest philosophers who were imparting great “secrets” to the people, who consequently represented their respective age’s noble virtue by believing those myths when in this purest form (16-7). This definition connects directly to a brief side-track Ruskin takes in “Fairy Land” when he says, “...I believe that we should many of us find it an extremely wholesome and useful method of treating our ordinary affairs, if before deciding, even upon very minor points of conduct admitting of prudential and conscientious debate, we were in the habit of imagining that Pallas Athene was actually in the room with us, or at least outside the window in the form of a swallow, and permitted us, on the condition always of instant obedience, to ask her advice upon the matter” (125-6).

<sup>39</sup> Chu, 327.

<sup>40</sup> Ruskin, “Fairy Land,” 145-147.

<sup>41</sup> Ruskin, 140.

<sup>42</sup> In a personal letter to Greenaway from Ruskin dated 25 December, 1881, he actually called her one of only two real philosophers of the nineteenth century (Nunn, 12).

inherent in both the artist and the woman. He said she could produce more great work, but only if “you, the British public...encourage the artist in doing the best she can for you. She will, if you receive it when she does.”<sup>43</sup> But despite his high praise of her, he criticized her as well, seeking areas of improvement “first, in her own method of design; and secondly, the manner of its representation in printing,” much of her current work being “too ornamental, or, in your modern phrase, decorative.”<sup>44</sup> Thus, on the one hand, Ruskin respected her as an artist, and, on the other, he exerted his authority over her in deciding the elements of her work that should be improved. Like the Amiens Madonna, distant, statuesque and therefore submissive to the historical roles Ruskin ascribed her, Greenaway was the ultimate embodiment of artistic, feminine and therefore social virtue – a contemporary model who he could mold in his lectures to his predetermined qualities of goodness.<sup>45,46</sup> The sculpted Madonna and the “sweet” Greenaway, together could fulfill their communal duties and therefore ensure the restoration of medieval qualities to modern England just as in the thirteenth century

...from the moment when the spirit of Christianity had been entirely interpreted to the Western races, the sanctity of womanhood worshipped in the Madonna [my emphasis] and the sanctity of childhood in unity with that of Christ, became the Light of every honest hearth, and the joy of every pure and chastened soul.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Ruskin, “Fairy Land,” 146.

<sup>44</sup> Ruskin, 148.

<sup>45</sup> Interestingly enough, when Ruskin commissioned women artists, it was most often as copyists, an occupation that was, as Pamela Gerrish Nunn says, “inextricably linked with amateur status” and something that “women artists had to disprove.” However, her description of women’s roles as copyists is particularly striking, especially when we consider Ruskin’s ideals of women as based on the features of the Madonna: copying was associated with “powers” that “were reproductive [my emphasis] rather than creative” (“Ruskin’s Patronage of Women Artists,” 10). In the context of Ruskin’s philosophy in life and art, creation would almost infer godliness; reproduction – motherhood.

<sup>46</sup> In an 1857 letter to female artist Anna Blunden, Ruskin says: “That is the worst of you women - you are always working to your feelings and never to plain firm purpose. If you cannot draw for drawing’s sake, and wouldn’t draw if you were alone in the world, you will never draw. This sounds sadly harsh, but it is true - *Art was never mastered but in pure love of Art* [my emphases]” (quote in Nunn’s “Ruskin Patronage of Women Artists,” 12).

<sup>47</sup> Ruskin, 137.

So for Ruskin, the medieval model – embodied in the iconic Madonna of Amiens - is key to understanding the true duties of a mankind in service of earthly good and heavenly divinity whether artist or laborer; man, woman or child.

In a letter to guild-members written years later, Ruskin reinforced this idea that moral harmony was reached in the thirteenth century when "...reverence for womanhood which, even through all the cruelties of the Middle Ages, developed itself with increasing power until the thirteenth century...consummated in the imagination of the Madonna, which ruled over all the highest arts and purest thoughts of that age [my emphasis]."<sup>48</sup> Thus, it is important to note the Madonna was not simply an example for his young Rose LaTouche but for Kate Greenaway, for the PreRaphaelites, and every man who sought to be moral in his work, his life and his spirit.

Ruskin's rival, James McNeill Whistler, had a completely different idea regarding the role of art and women in modernity, and is a useful contrast in the attempt to understand the full importance and meaning of the Madonna figure to Ruskin. Indeed, Whistler, an American migrant, never associated with artistic or nationalistic roots and had not the moral drive of Ruskin. Whistler strutted about London, blatantly exhibiting the qualities Ruskin so vehemently opposed - a man who adorned himself in "terrible" urban luxuries.<sup>49</sup> Rather than taking a scholarly, evangelical, community-based approach to the two issues of art or gender, Whistler advocated in his life and career the popular Aesthetic viewpoint of a structure-less appreciation of the sensual self. His lack of respect for the standards Ruskin upheld in his writing led the two men to come head-to-head in a libel suit in 1877. The courtroom showdown was the ultimate consequence of Ruskin's infamous criticism of Whistler's *Nocturnes*; in the Oxford lecturer's

<sup>48</sup> Ruskin, *Fors Clavigera*, 174-5.

<sup>49</sup> This is one of Ruskin's favorite and therefore among his most commonly used words when he describes the conditions of modern England, where, in the instance of children's tales, immortal beauty has been "long repressed by the terrible action of our wealth" ("Fairy Land," 139).

eyes, the Aesthete's impressionistic work was a worthless, overpriced socially-subversive "pot of paint in the public's face."<sup>50</sup>

Following the suit, Whistler convened a mock lecture mimicking the scholarly seriousness of his nemesis. It was a glamorous event given at the fashionable ten o' clock hour of after-dinner entertainment, afterwards published in his humorously titled, *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*. In the highly publicized gathering, well attended by celebrities and journalists alike, Whistler took the opportunity to vehemently "preach" against the ideas of Ruskin.<sup>51</sup> Unabashed, he spoke theatrically on the sensitive topics of art and women. Ruskin's garden queens were not to be found in the words of Whistler; nor were they to be seen in the glittering gowns of his *nouveau-riche* listeners. Indeed, Whistler stood at his podium before fellow fashionable Aesthetes defending "Art" and "Woman" just as Ruskin was, but for completely different reasons.

Art was not as Ruskin proclaimed her to be; nor was the woman personifying her. She could not be given a role, restricted tightly to a duty of saintly teacher or maternal guardian. "Alas!" Whistler cried. "Art has been maligned...She is a goddess....selfishly occupied with her perfection only."<sup>52</sup> He expressed an idea and value of different levels of "intimacy" with this goddess; that she had been a part of households striving for culture, a domestic realm which had inevitably and, quite ludicrously, been "invaded" by the men he called "false prophets." It was this contrived, dictated culture – made of set standards and educated morality – he detested; those philistines and the blind bourgeoisie that followed them.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Ruskin, *Fors Clavigera*, 265.

<sup>51</sup> James McNeill Whistler, "Ten O'Clock," in *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*, 1892 (Boston College [http://www.bc.edu/bc\\_org/avp/cas/fnart/fa257/10\\_oclock.html](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/fnart/fa257/10_oclock.html)).

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Susan Grace Galassi, "Whistler and Aesthetic Dress: Mrs. Frances Leyland" in *Whistler, Women, and Fashion*, 96; Interestingly enough, Ruskin talks about a similar phenomenon – of the bourgeoisie dictating to society what is right and good in art - in the introductory portion of *Modern Painters*. He says: "If I stand by a picture in the

Whistler's tone, like Ruskin's, was animated by desperation, though his diagnosis for the ailments of society and art were starkly different. His Art-Goddess had not been confounded by modernity but by education. No! This great beauty, both "whimsical...and capricious" did not tolerate the "dullness" Ruskin would prescribe for her cure.<sup>54</sup> It was this direct defense of art that blends directly into a defense of women. Whistler offered a refutation not only of Ruskin's feminine art but feminine modern-day woman:

Know, then, all beautiful women, that we are with you. Pay no heed, we pray you, to this outcry of the unbecoming –this last plea for the plain. It concerns you not...What! will you up and follow the first piper that leads you down Petticoat Lane, there, on a Sabbath, to gather, for the week, from the dull rags of ages wherewith to bedeck yourselves? That, beneath your travestied awkwardness, we have trouble to find your own dainty selves? Oh, fie!...Costume is not dress. And wearers of wardrobes may not be doctors of taste!<sup>55</sup>

Certainly, his visions of art and women cohesively subverted those of Ruskin. "She" – whether encapsulated in beautiful art or a beautiful woman – could not be accurately described in the simple delicacy of Kate Greenaway's drawings. Indeed, the women who appeared in her own "Pied Piper" illustration may indeed be those who Whistler desired to free; child-like and golden haired dashing down Petticoat Lane; bearing children, saying prayers, and dancing to the songs of their "philistine" piper, Ruskin (Figure 4). Whistler could not restrict them to this cheerfully moral world: he believed women, like art, should not be concerned with "dignity" or her "mode of help" to man or mankind. His ideal goddess of art and womankind was not faithful - she had no duty; no masculine master or religious calling. Whistler's decadent Art would make love to the "opium-eater of Nankin," and even though the Chinese painter was her fond "favorite,"

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Academy, and hear twenty persons...admiring some paltry piece...it is absurd to tell me that they reprobate collectively what they admire individually...or that the knowledge of such judges...could come to any right conclusion with respect to what is really high in art. The question is decided by them, for what?" (3).

<sup>54</sup> Whistler, 6-8.

<sup>55</sup> Whistler, 7.



Whistler said Art, selfish, gorgeous and guilt-free, could leave with the least regrets. She could find her next lover anywhere – perhaps, from China, she may travel to Madrid, where she could embrace an artist and “in their intimacy they revel, he and she...; and he knows the happiness untasted by other mortal.” Whistler justified Art’s rather scandalous sexual independence as a true form of beauty. Wherever or whenever, Art listened for the artist’s call:

So in all time does this superb one cast about for the man worthy of her love –and Art seeks the Artists alone. Where he is, there she appears, and remains with him –loving and fruitful—turning never aside in moments of hope deferred...With the man, then, and not with the multitude, are her intimacies; and in the book of her life the names inscribed are few –scant, indeed, the list of those who have helped her to write her story of love and beauty.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, for Whistler, art and woman were individuals who enjoyed the beautiful at their own

“selfish” whims. They were not for the communities, the nations, the “States” – “the multitude” - Ruskin held so dear.

Interestingly enough, although Whistler gave women these freedoms of love without duty, she remained at the call of man, “with the man” – “never turning aside.” He removed the domestic restrictions of wifeliness and motherhood from their shoulders to instead place sexual idealizations and expectations, and therefore a different kind of restriction, upon them. His praise of Art and Women was inherently tied to Whistler’s standards of luxury and status: their physical beauty and the aesthetic pleasures they gave to a man. Whistler’s sensual view of the world gave this pseudo-Art-Woman sexual independence, but in granting her a choice of lovers, he was not warranting them intellectual or social responsibilities and therefore, respect.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Whistler, 8-9.

<sup>57</sup> This is direct opposition with Ruskin’s standards of “Greatness” – what he would instead consider as adorned, contrived and “ornamental” as opposed to intrinsically dignified and “expressive” (*Modern Painters*, 6). This is the core of why Ruskin hated Whistler’s *Nocturnes* and celebrated Turner’s glowing works, seeing Whistler’s whole self as an example of the ornamentation that is at the central core of loathsome Aestheticism.

Like Ruskin, the women Whistler praised, befriended and painted corresponded with his idealized standards. Instead of the charming illustrators or social activists of Ruskin, in Whistler's portraits of his most intimate female friends (and he had many), we find mistresses in translucent Grecian and Japanese robes (Figures 5 and 6); actresses on center stage and in front-page newspaper headlines (Figure 7); and rising socialites with whom he attended dinners and plays (Figure 8). These women were not community involved; had no maternal, "queenly" role in either the domestic sphere or religious-political community. Whistler saw no such institutions for his art or for the women featuring within it and his life. The "dandy" rested his life on the fashions and patronage of luxurious London, cultivating his own celebrity status with the movers-and-shakers of Europe.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, while each man lined up goddess after beautiful goddess to make their cases for distinct ideal femininity and art, Whistler significantly omitted the Madonna. His disregard for her symbolic potency starkly contrasted her centrality in Ruskin's argument. The Madonna represented morality. Without her, Whistler's magnificent Aesthetic beauty, in art, femininity, and society, lacked virtue, since, according to Ruskin at his simplest, "Ideas of beauty, then, be it remembered, are the subjects of moral...perception."<sup>59</sup> Whistler himself, then, was a complete subversion to the moral strictures of Ruskin. By confronting Ruskin head on in the courtroom and in philosophy, Whistler committed an irreconcilable act akin to sin. In *The Two Paths*, Ruskin seemed to be speaking directly to Whistler and his cast of female friends when he said:

When Art was occupied in the function in which she was serviceable, she herself would be strengthened by the service; and when she was doing what Providence without doubt intended her to do, she would gain in vitality and dignity just as she advanced in usefulness. On the other hand...when her agency was distorted to

<sup>58</sup> Margaret F. MacDonald, Susan Grace Galassi, and Aileen Ribeiro with Patricia de Montfort. *Whistler, Women, and Fashion*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

<sup>59</sup> Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 16.

the deception or degradation of mankind, she would herself be equally misled and degraded...<sup>60</sup>

While many besides Ruskin and Whistler used the gendered pronoun “She” when discussing Art – much like the female names historically employed for ships – they were truly articulating their views based on ideals of both the art and women of the modern world that surrounded them.

In Ruskin’s case, he began to fully imagine and personify the subject as a woman from this point onwards. Art for him was a Madonna, a partner to God much as Woman was meant as a partner to Man. Art was either sensually-based (*Aesthesis*), and therefore skewed, or theoretically based (*Theoria*) and therefore righteous. Similarly, he saw that women could be on the one hand misleading and “degraded,” and, on the other, truly beautiful and elevated in their “queenly” virtue, as nature and God intended. Thus, when Ruskin equated Art with the female gender, he was doing more than following convention particularly at this point in his career and life. The same can be said for Whistler, who painted too clear a hyper-feminine vision of the art “goddess” whose beauty reigned superior. When examining their words (whether solely concerning the topic of art or of women) as a commentary on *both* art and women, their individual and highly contrasting social views can be seen more directly reflecting the different aesthetic and moral ideals of their very different lifestyles.

Thus, the ideals of femininity traced in “Of Queen’s Gardens” were but a thread of Ruskin’s greater vision for the betterment of his life and his society. His thoughts on art were inherently interwoven with his thoughts on women, examples for each “culminating” in the medieval Madonna and his contemporary Kate Greenaway. To line up his failed relationships with young women – to un-weave one thread from his massive body of lectures as Kate Millett did - is to throw away and completely disregard Ruskin’s ideal of the Amiens Madonna and,

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<sup>60</sup> Ruskin, *The Two Paths*, 16-17.

ultimately, his mentality and purpose. He advocated the virtues of Gothic style as “an art for the people...not...for churches or sanctuaries...[but] *for houses and homes*...not an art for England only, but an art for the world...of vital practice and perpetual renewal [my emphases].”<sup>61</sup>

Therefore, the Madonna, as a symbol for the power of the Gothic, represented Ruskin’s belief that the important qualities in art were the significant attributes of woman and vice versa.

Without art or the medieval Madonna, Millett misses Ruskin’s point and ultimate purpose.

Near the end of his life, as Ruskin reminisced over lost causes and loves in his life, he spoke on the blessing of God, which was

Not to be taken out of the world in monastic sorrow, but to be kept from its evil in shepherded peace; - ought not this to be done for all the children held at the fonts beside which we vow, in the name, to renounce the world? Renounce! nay, ought we not, at least, to redeem? The story of the Rosy Vale is not ended; - surely out of its silence the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing, and round it the desert rejoice, and blossom as the rose!<sup>62</sup>

When Ruskin died at the close of the century, he was a king without a queen. He could not fulfill the ideal for himself. And yet, his rhetoric began to recognize the social power of women in communities, giving impetus to the work of socially concerned talented women. Moreover, his much-loved Gothic theme continued potently in the distinctly English style of art. Furthermore, his moral and spiritual apprehensions echo forward to us to this day as we deal with aspects of modernity Victorians could not have even begun to conceive. His questions remain poignant; even in a completely different, twenty-first-century version of modernity, John Ruskin remains a concerned, paternal voice of morality – for better or worse, for men or women.

<sup>61</sup> Ruskin, *The Two Paths*.

<sup>62</sup> Ruskin, *Fors Clavigera*, 324. In his final mention of the rose, he alluded to his love of Rose LaTouche.

## Figures



Figure 1. Madonna from the south transept of the cathedral at Amiens, France. 13<sup>th</sup> century.  
 Reproduced from *Monumenta*,  
<http://www.monumenta.org/article.php?IssueID=2&lang=en&CategoryID=4&ArticleID=189>  
 (accessed 17 April, 2015).

Figure 2. Kate Greenaway. *To Baby*, illustration for Kate Greenaway's *Marigold Garden: Pictures and Rhymes* (London and New York: G. Routledge and Sons, 1885), 1885. Reproduced from *The Project Gutenberg eBook* <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/53029/53029-h/53029-h.htm> (accessed 9 April, 2015).



Figure 2. Kate Greenaway. *To Baby*, illustration for Kate Greenaway's *Marigold Garden: Pictures and Rhymes* (London and New York: G. Routledge and Sons, 1885), 1885. Collection of Kendra and Allan Daniel. Reproduced from *Journal of Antiques*,  
<http://www.journalofantiques.com/Oct07/feature.html> (accessed March 1, 2015).



Figure 3. Kate Greenaway. *C - Cut It*, illustration for Kate Greenaway's *A Apple Pie* (London and New York: G. Routledge and Sons, 1886), 1886. Reproduced from *The Project Gutenberg ebook* <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15809/15809-h/15809-h.htm>. (accessed 9 April, 2015).

Figure 4. Kate Greenaway. *The First Pie*, illustration for Robert Browning's *The First Pie of Hamelin* (London: Frederick Warne and Co., Ltd., 1888), 1888. Reproduced from *Indiana University Libraries*, <http://www.indiana.edu/~libref/essays/pies/41.html> (accessed 17 April, 2015).



Figure 4. Kate Greenaway. *The Pied Piper*, illustration for Robert Browning's *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* (London: Frederick Warne and Co., Ltd., 1888), 1888. Reproduced from *Indiana University Libraries*, <http://www.indiana.edu/~librcsd/etext/piper/41.html> (accessed 17 April, 2015).

Figure 6. James McNeill Whistler, *Parents and Rose: The Large Ladies of the Six Months*, oil on canvas, 1864. Oil on canvas, 30 1/4 x 24 1/8 inches. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia. The reproduction from Philadelphia Museum of Art, <http://www.philamuseum.org/exhibitions/permanent/101/003/whistler-10047289012> (accessed 17 April 2015).



Figure 5. James McNeill Whistler, *Three Figures: Pink and Grey*, 1868-78. Oil on canvas, 1391 x 1854 mm. London, Tate Gallery. Reproduced from Tate Gallery, <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/whistler-three-figures-pink-and-grey-n05971> (accessed 17 April, 2015).



Figure 6. James McNeill Whistler, *Purple and Rose: The Lange Leizen of the Six Marks*, oil on canvas, 1864. Oil on canvas, 36 3/4 x 24 1/8 inches. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA. Reproduced from *Philadelphia Museum of Art*, <http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/101800.html?mulR=1664728903|2> (accessed 17 April, 2015).



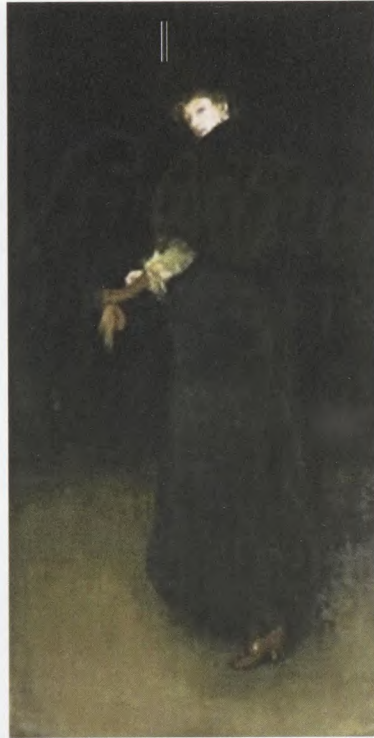


Figure 7. James McNeill Whistler, *Arrangement in Black: Lady in Yellow Buckskin – Portrait of Lady Archibald Campbell*, 1882-4. Oil on canvas, 86 x 43 1/2 inches. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA. Reproduced from *Philadelphia Museum of Art*, <http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/104367.html?mulR=1596872921|3> (accessed 17 April, 2015).



Figure 8. James McNeill Whistler, *Symphony in Flesh Colour and Pink: Portrait of Mrs. Frances Leyland*, 1874. Oil on canvas, 77 1/8 x 40 1/4 inches. The Frick Collection, New York, NY.

Reproduced from *The Frick Collection*,  
<http://www.frick.org/sites/default/files/archivedsite/exhibitions/whistler/leyland.htm> (accessed 17 April, 2015).

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