

‘The Laws of Life’: Ruskin and Cultural Value

An international conference

June 18th & 19th 2010

Universities of Liverpool and Lancaster

Keynote speakers:

John Carey

Robert Hewison

The highest and first law of the universe - and the other name of life is, therefore, ‘help’ The other name of death is ‘separation.’ Government and co-operation are in all things and eternally the laws of life. Anarchy and competition, eternally, and in all things, the laws of death.

John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, 1860

2010 marks the 150th anniversary of the serial publication of John Ruskin’s *Unto this Last*, and of the appearance of the fifth and final volume of *Modern Painters*.

Together, these works represent an uncompromising engagement with concepts of cultural value, in the context of the principles of political economy and social responsibility. Their influence on nineteenth-century thought, and on our own thinking, has been profound. A broad reassessment of Ruskin’s work will lie at the heart of this commemorative event, but papers are also welcomed on broader issues and themes relating to cultural value in Ruskin’s lifetime and beyond.

For this collaborative conference, the Universities of Liverpool and Lancaster seek papers on themes such as —

- Ruskin and culture
- The Victorians and cultural value
- The institutions of culture
- The uses of culture
- Social economy and the nineteenth century
- Political economy and religion
- The morality of wealth
- Life and art
- Society and the individual
- The influence of Ruskin’s theories
- The enduring legacy of Ruskinian thought

The event will begin in Liverpool on Friday June 18th and then move on Saturday June 19th to the University of Lancaster, where delegates will have the opportunity to see the Ruskin Library’s outstanding collection of pictures, books, manuscripts and photographs relating to Ruskin’s life and work, including the exhibition *Precious records: Ruskin’s Daguerreotypes of Tuscany*.

Abstracts (for papers up to 20 minutes duration or three-paper panels of 90 minutes including question time) to be emailed to: ruskin2010@liverpool.ac.uk by 1st March 2010