

The Aesthetic Cultural Significance of Samuel Rogers' Museumification*

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Kim, Jeongsuk. "The Aesthetic Cultural Significance of Samuel Rogers' Museumification." *Studies in English Language & Literature* 47.3 (2021): 1-18. This essay examines the cultural position of Rogers and the aesthetic function of his domesticated museum salon, St. James's Place in relation to the Romantic museum culture. Although Rogers has generally been classified as a minor poet, within the context of the flourishing Romantic exhibitionary culture, the aesthetic cultural significance of Rogers in this period was not insignificant at all. However, Rogers was not only an ardent Romantic art collector but also a great host who ran his own salon in London society. Most of all, his house, St. James's Place was not an ordinary private dwelling. Instead, it was Rogers' new concept of domestic museum salon existed as a crucial aesthetic and cultural space in London by offering the collector's personal visual world to the public. This essay begins by exploring how Rogers constructed his artistic version of Romantic museum at his domestic space with his unique aesthetic taste, and how he utilized this domesticated art collections for his domestic breakfast gatherings. Although Rogers has still been regarded as a supporting actor for other canonical artists' performances, this essay argues that Rogers was an important and influential cultural figure in the center of the Romantic visual culture. (Chosun University)

Key Words: Samuel Rogers, St. James's Place, Romantic Museumification, collecting, visual culture

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I. Introduction

For scholars of Romanticism, it has become natural to study Romantic poets in relation to visual culture, rather than anchor the Romantic antipathy to the visible. That is because the nineteenth century was the era for establishing and growing collections and exhibitions that boosted “a visual culture expanding at an unprecedented rate” (Gidal 127). As William Galperin’s *The Return of the Visible in British Romanticism* argues, many modern critics have rethought and reformulated the canonical Romantic poets’ attitude towards the visual. For instance, Peter Simonsen reassessed William Wordsworth, who was described as one of the most “iconophobic rhetoric of Romantic writers” (Wood 220), within the context of the print culture by analyzing his ekphrastic poetry. Gregory Dart elevated John Keats’ radical cockney art as the commercialized middle class’s metropolitan visual culture. However, there has been noticeably less attention paid to the aesthetic cultural significance of the minor or forgotten Romantic poets, like the banker poet, Samuel Rogers.

Although Rogers has generally been described as a minor poet, his contemporaries regarded him as “the Monarch of Parnassus, and the most *English* of bards” (Rogers *Poetical Works* 33) [original emphasis], and his republished *Italy* with steel-engravings became “one of the great nineteenth-century bestsellers” (Brown 120). In terms of Rogers’ socio-cultural position, modern critics mainly undervalued him as “a frequent guest at Holland House” (Schmid 105), which was “the most famous Whig salon of the age” (Cassliggi and Fermanis 83). However, as a great host for his famous breakfast parties, Rogers headed his own circle, providing his house, St. James’s Place as the most delightful salon of the chief artists, from Wordsworth and J. M. W. Turner to Alfred Tennyson and John Ruskin. Placing himself at the center of the socio-cultural transition between the French Revolution and the Great Exhibition, Rogers became a recognizable cultural figure in London society for two generations. Within the context of the flourishing Romantic

museum culture, what we need to remember in particular is that Rogers was one of the prominent art collectors at that time, thus introducing: "democratization of collecting" (Saisselin 12).

From "the wonder cabinets of the Renaissance" to "the modern museums of the Victorian period" (Thomas "Things on Holiday" 167), art collecting in the nineteenth century became more popular and accessible to the financially empowered middle class. Avid art collectors like Rogers participated in the widely available collections and exhibitions that were not only connected with the fine arts, but also with exotic curiosities. Subsequent to the establishment of the British Museum in 1759, there were various forms of collections and museums in London such as William Bullock's London Museum, the Sir John Soane Museum, and Rackstrow's Museum. As Bullock's London Museum crammed with "Fifteen Thousand Natural and Foreign Curiosities, Antiquities, and productions of fine arts" (Bullock ii) shows, collecting in the Romantic period meant amassing cabinets of books, fragmented architectures, paintings, relics, antiquities, and fossils in greater numbers than ever before (Pascoe 4). However, the nature of the Romantic collection differed from "the unruly randomness of the Renaissance cabinet" (Pascoe 60). Although they were a "hodgepodge of collections and exhibitions," these various displays were classified "in oddly unsystematic ways" (Pascoe 60-61), just as Bullock's different items were all juxtaposed and arranged attractively. In this sense, critics such as Sophie Thomas and Pascoe situate these transitional Romantic collections between the "unruly" collections of the pre-Romantic period and the newly established "rational" museums of the Victorian period (Thomas "Things on holiday" 167). Although these ambiguous Romantic museums implicated "the latent (dis)orderliness of things" (Thomas "Collection" 681), interestingly enough, they represented various different "equally pertinent, and interrelated, concerns" (Thomas "Things on holiday" 169): It was a space that allowed for the "diversity and experiment" (Thomas "Collection" 682) of exhibiting the eclectic collections by the collectors' visuality.

As a typical Romantic collector, Rogers filled his small house, St. James's Place,

with a large number of the most varied and refined works of art, as the auction catalogue for Rogers' property shows. Owing to his wealth, Rogers was able to purchase not only costly classical arts such as old masterpieces and rare exotic vases, but also modern visual images, including photographs. With "the universal taste" (Little and Littell 393) of a collector, Rogers' collection was not limited to classical art, but ranged from old to new. It represents the quintessential collection of the Romantic period. By domesticating art collections as home interiors, Rogers reconstructed museums in his private space. Moreover, by applying his "fastidious" (Waagen 74) elegant taste, Rogers experimentally rearranged his "hodgepodge of collections and exhibitions" as a "harmonious beauty" (Jameson 385). What we need to remember here is that, as previously mentioned, Rogers' house-museum was also a social place for "the dissemination of culture" (Schmid 14). This suggests that for Rogers, his domestic museumification went beyond redrawing the public visual phenomena. It was his aesthetic desire to create his "new [artistic] world" at home, which consisted of collections rearranged in his "new manner" (*Poetical Works* 105) to "[e]nlighten climes, and mould a future age" (*Poetical Works* 60), which he called its "noble action" (*Poetical Works* 425).

Considering all, the aesthetic cultural significance of Rogers in this period was not insignificant at all. In fact, as contemporary art historians, such as Anna Brownwell Jameson and Gustav Waagen, strongly emphasized, Rogers was "the one man," and his house was "the one house" that every stranger, even from the Continent and America, desired to "see" (Clayden I vi). This implies that Rogers' domestic museum salon was a place not only for conversation, "the chief activity" (Schmid 4) of the salon, but also for looking. This certainly suggests that the cultural position of Rogers and the aesthetic function of his domesticated Romantic museum, St. James's Place, need to be redefined in relation to the Romantic museum culture. Therefore, this essay sheds new lights on Rogers' aesthetic cultural position and the value of his house in terms of playing a pivotal role in nineteenth century spatial visuality, which seems to have been forgotten by modern scholars.

This essay begins by exploring how Rogers constructed his artistic version of the Romantic museum at his domestic space with his unique aesthetic taste and how he utilized these domesticated art collections for his domestic breakfast gatherings. Although Rogers is still regarded as a supporting actor of other canonical artists' performances, this essay argues that Rogers was certainly an important and influential cultural figure in the center of the Romantic exhibitory culture by offering his unique museumification of the salon to the public.

II. Rogers' Domestic Museum Salon

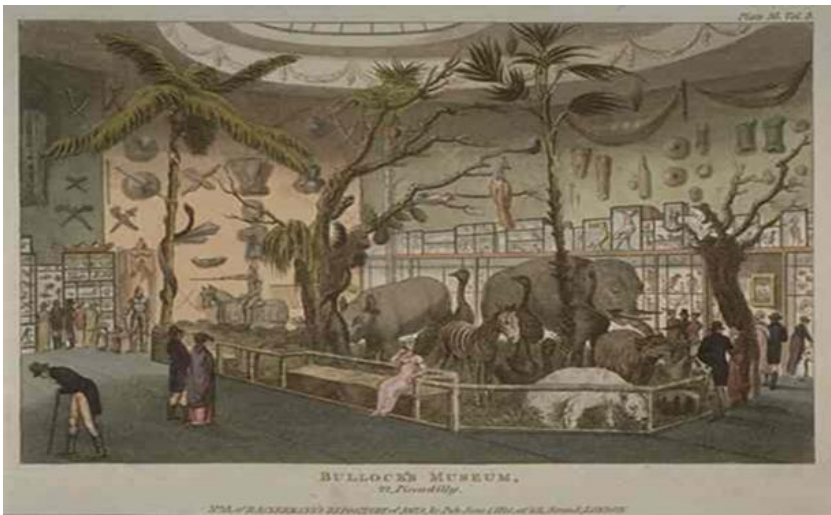


Figure 1. *Bullock's Museum, Piccadilly*, 1810. Welcome Library London.

In book seven of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth provides us with a vivid picture of the Romantic visual world of London through his multifarious visual encounters with both outdoor and indoor spectacles. In particular, he writes that there were natural

history museums of “troops of wild Beasts, birds and beasts / Of every nature, from all climes convened” (VII 246-27). As the picture shows above, Bullock’s London Museum in Piccadilly was one of the most popular natural history collections. As previously mentioned in the Introduction, the idiosyncratic characteristic of the Romantic museum is that all different kinds of visual and material collections were juxtaposed and arranged “in oddly unsystematic ways.” In the case of Bullock’s, these disparate objects shown in the picture were sorted not by a formal “orderliness and control” (Thomas “Things on Holiday” 167), but by category, as Bullock’s catalogue shows: “Containing a brief Description of upward of Seven Thousand Natural and Foreign Curiosities, Antiquities, and productions of the fine arts” (i). Thus, as shown the picture, these diverse, rare, and exotic collections included artworks, stuffed animals like birds, quadrupeds, reptiles, and various objects, including feathered cloaks, necklaces, and fishing tackle from other countries, which were represented as “pleasing sights” (Thomas “Things on Holiday” 169). As Wordsworth confesses his “gay confusion” by the “gaudy congress, framed / Of things by nature” (*The Prelude* III 661-62, 665), Bullock’s museum offered an odd but attractive visual pleasure of the artificial tropical forest.

In the same vein, in the case of Rogers, what his contemporaries were most impressed by was that, even though his private residence, St. James’s Place, was a small town house, it was crammed with 161 articles of furniture, 82 Egyptian antiquities, 54 Greek gold pieces, 13 antique glass objects, 58 ancient and fifteenth century bronzes, 45 terra cottas, 45 marbles, 8 modern statues, 14 casts, 322 coins and medallions, 2466 books, 97 objects of art and vertu, 210 Greek vases, 744 drawings, engravings, manuscripts, etc., and 2224 paintings (Rogers *Catalogue* 1). Indeed, Rogers was one of the typical Romantic collectors and did not restrict himself to a particular style or age of art. During more than fifty years of tenancy, in domesticating his accumulated collection of art, Rogers transformed this dwelling into the most exquisite house museum in London. However, as expected, Rogers’ domestic museum does not merely reflect the mix and match collections in the

Romantic period as the halfway collection between the private enthusiasms of the Renaissance wonder cabinet and the public institution of the Victorian museum, which “belie[s] any clean dividing line separating disorderly wondrousness and carefully managed order” (Pascoe 61). As noted above, different types, forms, and periods of items were arranged together in the rooms of Rogers’ house. His domestic collection was not an eccentric collection, a “collection for its own sake” (Stewart 154), but was reconstituted with his aesthetic self-representation. That is, it was the physical constellation of the desire represented by Rogers’ aesthetic sensibility. The house became an “extension of the self” (Carsten and Jones 2). Thus, Rogers’ art museum itself was his alter ego and his “self-image” (Higonnet xiii); the aesthetic interiority of St. James’s Place mirrored the interiority of Rogers’ mind. According to George Gordon Byron’s diary,

If you enter his house, his drawing-room, his library, you of yourself say, “this is not the dwelling of a common mind.” There is not a gem, a coin, a book thrown aside on his chimney-piece, his sofa, his table, that does not bespeak an almost fastidious elegance in the possessor. (qtd. Parsons 27).

Byron certainly encapsulates the interaction between the interior of Rogers’ house and his aesthetic disposition. The surface of his house became a canvas for the expression of Rogers’ taste “linked both physically and conceptually” (Carsten and Jones 3). Samuel Sharpe informs us that Rogers had the “habit of looking everywhere for excellencies and not for faults, whether in art or nature, whether in a picture, a poem, or a character” (*Poems* lviii-lix). As Mrs. Norton indicates, for Rogers, his “God was Harmony” (Clayden I 299); Rogers’ house was a place where “everywhere the graceful and the elevated prevail—everywhere the feeling of harmonious beauty” (Jameson 385). As Byron notes with amazement, Rogers’ “fastidious” sophisticated taste influenced the arrangement of every single collection to produce a harmonious whole, as in Waagen’s description: “every object being placed with so just a feeling for the space assigned it, [...] without in any way

being overladen” (74).

However, Rogers’ museographic arrangement did not simply follow a particular system of classification or chronological progression like other public museums (Maleuvre 3). Instead, to create the harmonized beauty in accordance with his aesthetic taste, he focused more on the amalgamation of artefacts with other domestic items rather than arranging them in a conventional manner.

It is the highest criterion of an exact, as well as an elevated taste in art, to select a small collection of pictures [sic] of various date [sic], style, and feeling; to hang them in the same room; and so to hang them, that neither the eye shall be offended by inharmonious propinquity, nor the mind disturbed by unfit associations. (Jameson 385)

As seen from Jameson’s praise, Rogers’ “good sense” is not merely “the perception of truth and beauty, but a certainty of tact and judgment” (384) to engender the coordinated beauties offered to the eye and mind without disturbance. For instance, Rogers displayed Sir Joshua Reynolds’ *Laughing Girl* close to Jacopo Tintoretto’s vivid sketch of the *Miracle of St. Mark*. Jameson points out that it was commonly considered unacceptable to exhibit a chef-d’oeuvre next to a modern picture because, in many cases, this brought more contrast in “tone and feeling” rather than “the positive difference in point of value and merit” (384). However, in Rogers’ arrangement, Reynolds’ painting did not lose its own spirit of tone and tint, even though Tintoretto’s was rather “splendid” (Jameson 385). Indeed, these two pictures’ own spirit remained intact and their juxtaposition heightened the effect rather than concealed their original lineaments. What Rogers was most concerned with in his ahistorical arrangement of artworks was a perfect match and mutual complementarity between the different domestic components. Within a complete harmony, his miscellaneous artworks could produce positive effects: “[I]n colour they did not eclipse each other, nor produce a harsh contrast to the eye, nor in subject strike a discord in the mind or the fancy” (Jameson 384).

In addition, Rogers applied his refined visual sensibility by intermingling hues of

various great pictures to offer “a keener and more discriminating sense of enjoyment” (Jameson 388). For instance, by displaying Titian’s luxurious golden “richness of landscape” (Jameson 389), *Noli me tangere*, opposite “a mellow moonlight scene” (Jameson 389) by Rubens, Rogers created “the deep feeling for striking incidents in nature” (Waagen 79). There was a rather obscure allegorical but rich composition by Rembrandt, painted in “brown chiaroscuro” (Waagen 80) facing a picture by Annibal Carracci of the *Coronation of the Virgin* which showed Carracci’s management of light and shadow (Jameson 393). Rogers’ effort to match colors within a small range, after all, was contrived to make his domestic space like Bullock’s tropical forest mentioned earlier. In particular, the most important fact is that to enhance the characteristic tint of each individual picture, Rogers intentionally used the gilt frame. As Clayden notes, Rogers knew the “axiom, that what suits the gilt frame will suit the picture within it” (509). These individual beauties were eventually integrated as a whole with the putting up of the red silk on the walls: Rogers’ remarkable color sense completed the rooms. What should certainly be stressed here is that his museumification of the house was not a simple arrangement of domestic objects, but a way of inventing a beautiful arrangement in his “new manners” (“An Epistle To a Friend” 132), as artisans polish their sculptures in accord with their taste:

Ah! What their strange surprise, their wild sight!
 New arts of life, new manners, meet their sight!
 In a new world they wake, as from the dead;
 Yet doubt the trance dissolved, the vision fled! (“An Epistle To a Friend” 131-34)

As has been shown, the hodgepodge of styles and cacophony of colors and tones in his collections were arranged according to Rogers’ “vision” and the house as a whole was transformed into an artefact. Through Rogers’ differentiated aesthetic sense, the amassed visual collections were reborn from the accustomed display to the “wild sight.” Rogers declared that this newly arranged space was “a new world”

providing a positive “strange surprise.” Indeed, Rogers made St. James’s Place an elaborate mosaic by harmonizing the individual collection of art, thereby evoking unexpected visual pleasure in his visitors.



Figure 2, Charles Mottram, *Samuel Rogers at his Breakfast Table*, 1815. Tate Gallery.

As earlier mentioned in the Introduction, Rogers’ breakfasts were some of the most famous events in London society. A great host, Rogers carefully selected guests who were almost all distinguished in politics, fashion, science, literature, and the art of the day, and these most illustrious men and women were glad to join his table. As Charles Mottram’s picture above shows, Rogers’ big table surrounded by invitees takes a central place in the room, as if to symbolize the intellectual exchange of the breakfast party. As an “excellent conversationalist” (Arvine 609), Rogers knew how to run his salon through “conversation,” “the chief activity” of the salon (Schmid 4). By having his guests from “different social and national backgrounds” (Schmid 4) mingling with each other, Rogers entertained them with “the charm of intelligent hospitality” (*Poetical Works* 58). Thus, sitting at Rogers’ table, especially for those new to letters or art, was a good chance to become

acquainted with eminent people and listen to these people's "rich [...] intellectual wealth" ("An Epistle to a Friend" 135). Indeed, it was because Rogers' table was a great place for conversation and an important social space that almost everyone from that time eagerly wished to be invited.

However, Rogers' salon in St. James's Place was not restricted to be used as a space for conversation. It was a vague and complex space where the images were mixed with words. I have discussed how Rogers intentionally and tactically conceived the house as a Romantic museum filled with miscellaneous images; he himself underscored that the new "sight" created by his "every care" ("An Epistle to a Friend" 141) was not just for boasting, but "each gay scene" ("An Epistle to a Friend" 203) of his house would be "searched with [an] anxious eye" ("An Epistle to a Friend" 203) by the visitors. This suggests that it is necessary to re-interpret Rogers' breakfast parties in terms of a looking place, an interpretation which has been previously overlooked by scholars.

As the picture shows, at the center of the breakfast room are celebrated men—R. B. Sheridan, Thomas Moore, Wordsworth, Robert Southey, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Byron, and J. P. Kemble, who are seated from left to right. However, what we need to reconsider in the image above is the beholders looking at the artefacts elsewhere in the room. They have been ignored and regarded as playing a supporting role at the breakfast party. When discussing Rogers' salon activities, scholars have failed to explore the significance of their presence in the same place as the guests sitting at the table conversing.

For instance, John Flaxman, standing behind Walter Scott on the left in the foreground of the print, is looking at the Greek vase intently with one of his hands under his chin. At the back, behind Sydney Smith on the left is Wordsworth; examining one of the landscape paintings. Even if Mottram's engraving is purely imaginary, these two figures demonstrate that looking at visual art was also offered as a crucial activity at the breakfast party. Furthermore, behind Byron, who is resting his chin on his right hand, are three artists—Thomas Stothard, Sir Thomas

Lawrence, and Turner—and a poet, Tom Campbell, standing on the right. They are seen discussing one of the paintings on the wall. It seems that by transforming the visual object into words, the picture becomes the topic for their talk, much like having a conversation at the breakfast table. The interesting figure here is Campbell, who seems to hold and adjust the picture as if he were trying to get a better sight of it while sharing his appreciation. Rogers contrived the “very simple machinery” for the largest pictures at the breakfast room, which allowed them to “turn in almost every possible direction” (Littell and Littell, 392). This fact certainly proves that by providing a “strange surprise,” Rogers seems to have enriched the appreciation of the spectators, and encouraged them to see and read the visual in various respects by swinging the picture forwards and sideways. Thus, their artistic discussion naturally continued at the table. As we see from this unexpected technical assistance, Rogers intentionally designed the breakfast room for not just talking, but for seeing, too. Therefore, without grand talks or crowds, the guests at Rogers’ table were satisfied with his visual entertainment. As the diarist Crabb Robinson notes: “The very rooms would have made the visit interesting without the sight of any person” (Clayden II 114). Robinson recorded that, on his first dining at Rogers’, he was overwhelmed by Rogers’ inimitable domestic arrangement, although he devoted his attention to his companions, the Wordsworths. Crabb even confessed that it was the “pleasure” from the collector’s “pleasant and engaging” space that drew him to re-visit London:

I will breakfast with you in the morning, or on Tuesday, or on both: one principal purpose of my coming to town again was the pleasure you held up to me when I was so kindly received by you: [...] and you made your own house all that was pleasant and engaging. (Clayden I 245)

Indeed, Rogers’ unusual visual setting and its unexpected pleasure induced curiosity and made people visit Rogers’ salon. In this regard, St. James’s Place did not just provide a place to talk, but a “sight.” Traditionally, “conversation and

exchange" are "the center of all sociability" in salons (Schmid 13). But, in Rogers' case, his salon was an art museum as a site of sociability.

Rogers' gatherings, however, were not limited to offering sensible pleasures. As the picture shows above, Wordsworth breakfasted at Rogers' whenever he visited London. As one of the "seekers out of Pleasure," Wordsworth enjoyed the "sights, from exhibitions of old masters and modern painters to panoramas and dioramas of Switzerland, Mexico and Pompeii, and even the Swiss Giantess" (Barker 565). But above all, as Wordsworth states in the dedication of *Yarrow Revisited, and Other Poems*, Rogers helped Wordsworth's "immersion in a number of important artists' circles" (Simonsen 126). By building up new relationships with artists at Rogers' salon, Wordsworth would directly or indirectly involve himself in the visual world in London.

In addition, Rogers frequently invited young artists in order to encourage them and he let them use his domestic museum salon as a site for cultivating their artistic taste. For example, the artist Frederick Goodall, the second son of steel line engraver Edward Goodall, who engraved the plates for Rogers' *Italy*, was invited to the breakfast party when he was sixteen. Rogers, impressed by Goodall's early work, generously encouraged the young artist and provided him the privilege of "see[ing] the pictures whenever he like[d] without the butler's guidance" (Clayden II 163-64). Goodall related that visiting Rogers' house museum gave him "a great impression" (Clayden II 164). The collector's "beautiful and glorious and precious things" (Clayden II 374) became instructive examples of enhancing the artistic sense of young artists or other beholders. Jameson highly praised Rogers' art collection, which she believed was selected by his "refined and unerring taste" (387), for more effectively educating our eye and judgment than other public galleries or cheap prints on the street, which were not refined and just aimed to "popularize [...] high art" (387). She felt that his house would be a better site to take other people to educate them in "a true comprehension of the characteristic excellences of various painters" than a larger gallery (387). In fact, Rogers' regular visitor, Moore, took

some of his friends who wanted to “see” to Rogers’ salon house (Clayden I 82). Extolled as the “coming poet” (Tennyson 72) by Rogers, Tennyson, who also frequently breakfasted and spent long mornings in Rogers’ society, also took his friend, the Rev. R. J. Tennant, to Rogers’ domestic museum: “Yesterday we went in a troop to see Rogers’s (the poet’s) gallery of paintings” (Tennyson 102-03).

For contemporaries, Rogers’ town house was not an ordinary private dwelling anymore, but was located at the center of the aesthetic and cultural transition of two generations; this “semi-private / semi-public space” (Pastalan and Carson 84), which combined the dual concepts of space, became one of the sights in London which contemporary visual seekers wished to see. For these reasons, St. James’s Place was identified as “the chief private show of London” (Weeks 483), receiving attention from domestic visitors as well as foreign tourists. For foreigners, Rogers’ domestic museum was perceived as one of the major tourist spots in London.

My dear Mr. Rogers,—The Hereditary Grand Duke of Weimar is anxious to pay you a visit. Will you allow me [Lord Rowe] to ask whether it will be perfectly convenient to you to receive His Royal Highness at three o’clock this afternoon? (Clayden II 318)

In his visit to England in 1847, the Grand Duke of Weimar from the Continent asked Lord Rowe to arrange an invitation to Rogers’ museum salon. As the passage shows, foreign visitors who did not have any acquaintance with Rogers were introduced to him through intermediaries. Like Lord Rowe, a leading American statesman and senator, Daniel Webster, who was a frequent visitor at Rogers’ house, also acted as a go-between to introduce his friends to Rogers. In his letter to Rogers in 1847, Webster informed Rogers that Mrs. Schuyler and Webster’s friends, Mr. and Mrs. Miller of New York, would like to visit Rogers’ domestic museum salon during their trip to the Continent and England (Clayden II 319). Clayden’s two volumes of *Rogers and His Contemporaries* suggested that every prominent man from Europe and America, including art critic Dr. Waagen from Berlin, American

travel writer Henry Tuckerman, and historian W. H. Prescott, went to this domestic museum, and Rogers kindly entertained them.

As has been discussed, Rogers' domesticated Romantic museum salon, St. James's Place, seems to have been designed for various purposes: A space for amusement and a place for inspiration and cultivation. Even though it was renowned as a place for conversational gatherings, his domesticated museum salon, which was formed with "peculiar charm" (Jameson 387) and contained a refined and valuable art collection, offered a space for looking, just as public museums aimed to provide artistic "enjoyment and edification" (MacGregor 254).

— Ah! most that Art my grateful rapture calls,
Which breathes a soul into the silent walls;
Which gathers round the wise of every tongue,
All on whose words departed nations hung;
Still prompt to charm with many a converse sweet;
Guides in the world, companions in retreat! (95-100)

As he proclaims in "An Epistle to a Friend," for Rogers, his domesticated hodgepodge collections did not remain on "the silent walls" as inanimate decorations. Rather they became not only a crucial medium to gather "every tongue," but also a main subject for guests' sweet "converse." After all, what mattered for Rogers was how his "Art" in his museum salon provoked the most "grateful rapture" (95) of him and other people under his roof. As Rogers himself announced, his art collection was not just for the inhabitants, but "for love, for companionship, for communion" (Jameson 383). While cultivating his own tastes, Rogers also enjoyed the pleasure of being useful and guiding the tastes of others to open and show his treasures (*Poems* lvi). Consequently, by offering his aesthetic salon culture to the contemporaries and "the world" through his unique museumification of the house, Rogers played a crucial role as a "Maecenas of art and letters" (Hood 712) in the nineteenth century.

III. Conclusion

This essay discussed the aesthetic cultural value of Rogers and his domesticated museum salon within the context of the Romantic museum culture. As has been shown, the hodgepodge of styles and cacophony of colors and tones in Rogers' Romantic collections were strangely but attractively arranged according to Rogers' aesthetic "vision" ("An Epistle to a Friend" 134) as a space for socialization, conversation, and looking. For two generations, Rogers' new concept of a domestic museum salon existed as a crucial aesthetic and cultural space in London by offering the collector's personal visual world to the public to "Enlighten climes, and mould a future age." Of course, the significance of research on Rogers' literary and cultural value in the Romantic studies has not attracted much attention. However, with the boom of the Romantic visual culture studies, Rogers' visibility in literary and aesthetic dispositions has gradually received the interest of scholars. In fact, many modern critics such as Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews, and Mary L. Shannon have newly evaluated the significance of Rogers' *Italy* with steel-engraved illustrations in terms of the Romantic print culture. Moreover, if we remember Jeffrey Cox's emphasis on the studies of Romantic groups and associations, it is the right time to explore Rogers' circle at St. James's Place in order to understand the Romantic literary and visual cultural connections with other nineteenth century artists, such as Byron, Tennyson, Turner and Ruskin or circles like the Holland House Set or the Cockney School. In fact, for a while, Leigh Hunt and his circle, the Cockney School, was not a major study subject in Romantic studies. However, once Hunt, who was a minor poet or a shadow of Romantic poets, was reevaluated as a crucial cultural figure forming the Cockney art of the metropolitan commercial artistry, many studies on the aesthetic cultural value of the Cockney School have been conducted in various perspectives. In the same vein, as a springboard, this essay hopefully could pave the way for follow-up studies by rethinking the implication of Rogers' literary and cultural value in the wider context of the nineteenth century.

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