

*John Ruskin and the Fabric of Architecture* by Anuradha Chatterjee. London: Routledge, 2018. 144 pp. +10 colour plates. ISBN 978-1-315-61136-5. \$140.

Anuradha Chatterjee's *Ruskin and the Fabric of Architecture* provides an innovative look at an under-explored theme within Ruskin's thought and work: the connection of clothing to architecture and, more specifically, how fabric and the veil function in his architectural discourse. Chatterjee uses dress, gender, visual studies, and science to explore the concept of the "wall veil" in Ruskin as it relates to the aesthetics of his architectural thought. Chatterjee notes that, for Ruskin, this wall veil was a correspondence "between cladding and textile, wall and dress, building and body," repositioning how adornment is theorized on buildings. She presents an astute study of Ruskin's focus on surface through an exploration of ornamentation and polychromy. Though there are many complex angles to Ruskin's apparent fascination with surface, this text presents engaging arguments which leave the reader pondering the connections of surface aesthetics and theoretical depth. It also raises provocative connections to the Pre-Raphaelites, especially in the first and third chapters where Chatterjee presents Ruskin's theory of dress in relation to bodily movement and artistic representations of gender.

Ruskin's preference for decorative elements that seem to have no apparent architectural purpose has often been a source of significant discussion among art theorists, Ruskin scholars, and students of architecture, for ornamental elements are crucial to understanding Ruskin's architectural aesthetics while they often are at odds with certain architectural styles. Often, Ruskin is critiqued on the grounds that he did not have any formal architectural training, nor did he ever design a building; thus, he would have no educational or practical foundation to discuss architecture. However, as Chatterjee emphasizes, his focus on surface and the larger implications of surface and ornament to an analysis of skin and the gendered discourse of buildings is incisive and significant. By understanding surface we can explore the larger consequences of Ruskin's architectural thought. One of the strengths of Chatterjee's work is the way she incorporates gender and literary theory, such as Sharon Marcus's concept of "surface reading," with architectural theory to support her argument in a very accessible manner for those whose background may not be in architecture.

Chatterjee connects fragments in Ruskin's work to form a cohesive whole of building, fabric, and dress. Each of the five chapters emphasizes a specific argument about fabric, dress, and architecture, from ornament to the influence of Carlyle, to Ruskin's social theory of dress, to the language of draping and structure, to the aesthetics of architecture advocated by Ruskin. The first chapter sets the foundation of Ruskin's surface studies and the way in which