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The Significance of the "temple *idea*" in William Lethaby's *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* (1891)

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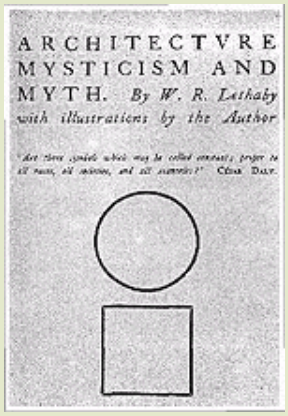

Fig. 1 William Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, Percival, London, 1891, title page

In *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* (1891), the English architect and theorist William Lethaby (1857-1931) developed a syncretic theory of modern architectural invention in which the subjective world of the 'imagined' is reconciled with the objective or 'known'. Lethaby's thesis was motivated by a desire to work the contrasts generated from John Ruskin's (1819-1900) Victorian imagination into a systematic theory of design. The vehicle which enabled this reconciliation was the temple *idea*, an architectural construct demonstrating the two ways of seeing inherent in mythic man's [sic] engagement with nature and its subsequent translation into the architectural form.

Introduction.

Published in the final months of 1891, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* (Fig. 1) was the first architectural treatise written by the late nineteenth century English architect and theorist William Richard Lethaby (1857-1931).[1] His goal, Lethaby tells us in the introductory statement of the text, was to determine the future direction of stylistic developments in architecture with the specific intention of identifying how the architect could develop an artefact that would "excite and interest, both real and general"—by possessing "a symbolism that was comprehensible [to] the great majority of spectators"—and be of "sweetness, simplicity, freedom, confidence and light."[2] This could be achieved, he asserted, through the study of the "temple *idea*," an architectural construct embodying mythic man's [sic] dual conceptions of the natural world.[3] Drawing on a multiplicity of secondary sources within the fields of ethnology, archaeology, mythography, philology, anthropology, architecture and art history, Lethaby positioned the cosmological imagery of the temple *idea* as the original motive underlying the architectural form.

In 1928, three years prior to his death, Lethaby chose to rewrite *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* as a series of articles for the journal the *Builder*.[4] Revising the text, Lethaby introduced a number of significant changes. He renamed the series *Architecture, Nature and Magic* and he removed the introductory chapter, the theoretical core of the original text. He also lamented that his original study was "very insufficient and in many ways feeble," a criticism directed at his inexperienced use of sources and the fact that "second-rate and second-hand authorities were mixed up with true sources" resulting in a "whole" that was "uncritical and inexpert."[5] However, despite such misgivings Lethaby maintained that the central hypothesis of the original text remained valid.

The main thesis, that the development of building practice and ideas of the world structure acted and reacted on one

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another I still believe to be sound, and much of the material brought together to give substance to the proposition is not without its value.[6]

Lethaby's reworking of *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* can be interpreted as a response to the reaction it had evoked amongst his contemporaries. While the reviewer for the *Architectural Association Notes* and *The British Architect* declared the text to be "the germ of all noble building. . .a sign of the ripeness of the times" and "a full and true interpretation of [architecture]"[7] others, were more critical. The reviewer for the popular journal the *Builder* argued that the text failed to fulfil its stated objectives. Noting that the "moral" of the text "is that architecture should still be designed in its highest forms, under the influence of, and with some relation to the known and imagined facts of the universe," and "that it must have a symbolism immediately comprehensible by a great body of spectators," he also observed that, "of what kind and in what relation architecture must have to the 'facts of the universe' as at present 'known,' Mr Lethaby does not define."[8] The reviewer for the *Times*, was equally unsympathetic, dismissing the study as esoteric and "obscure."[9]

The uncertainty about Lethaby's core philosophy of architecture persists in more recent attempts to assess the text by the present day historian. Godfrey Rubens in "The Life and Work of William Richard Lethaby" (1977) has argued that the text is dogged by an inherent "paradox" stemming from Lethaby's conflicting desire for a "rational symbolism" and an interest in the transcendental thinking of his time.[10] Julian Holder, in "*Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* and its influence" (1985) echoes Rubens, concluding that Lethaby's fascination with mystery in architecture conflicts with his interest in narrative and the clarity of story-telling.[11] Similarly, Trevor Garnham in "William Lethaby and the Problem of Style in late Nineteenth Century English Architecture" (1980) argues that Lethaby's inability to separate the pure idea of architecture" from the "compromising and physical processes of building" fosters confusion and obfuscation.[12]

The conflict sensed by each of these authors stems, I would argue, from Lethaby's simultaneous promotion of two contradictory propositions on architecture. One is that all design is informed by universal principles; the other, that it is a continuous response to changing conditions. Garnham, in his 1980 dissertation, has argued that the principal thesis developed by Lethaby in *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* is that "architecture is a pure idea" compromised by the mechanical processes associated with building.[13] He has attributed this conception of architecture to the influence on Lethaby of John Ruskin (1819-1900), and, in particular, to the latter's hierarchical isolation of architecture from the mechanical realities of building.[14] The association of *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* with the doctrines of Ruskin is significant for a number of reasons. First, it binds the text to a design tradition that associated the creative act with the Victorian Imagination, the mental faculty described by Samuel Taylor Coleridge as possessing the "esemplastic" power to shape, fuse and combine existing data to produce something new and unique. Thus, the subject (the producer or user of the artefact) was established as the originator of form.[15] Second, it suggests that Lethaby adhered to the belief that form was determined by universal principles, as the actions of the imagination were perceived to be an index of the divine laws determining all

Reviewed by Katherine Kuenzli

Charles Conder
Reviewed by Petra Chu

creation.[16] Finally, it fixed the text to a celebration of the past or tradition, and more specifically to Ruskin's identification of the Gothic spirit as a paradigmatic model for future practice.

By contrast, Charlotte Vestal Brown in her 1974 dissertation, "Architecture as Process, Implications for a Methodology of History and Criticism," has argued that the true lesson of Lethaby's text is that there is no constant canon of form but that architecture is a continual response to changes in customs and conditions.[17] Thus, architecture is presented as constantly evolving and in an ongoing process of flux and development; it is never static or fixed.[18] The implications of Vestal Brown's study are twofold. Arguing that Lethaby links the flux evident in the multiplicity of architectural styles to changes in physical and cultural conditions, Vestal Brown implies that Lethaby identifies the material qualities of the object and object world, rather than the subject, as the true catalyst for form. Secondly, she places *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* within a historicist movement, one that accepts the achievements of each historical epoch as unique and specific to their time and place. This conception of history also encourages those in the modern world to identify and build upon the attributes characteristic of their own time rather than those of the past.[19] Both tendencies are in direct conflict with the Ruskinian themes identified by Garnham as being central to Lethaby's thesis.

Significantly, evidence for both propositions can be found in *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*. Noting that his intention was to "ask [what] are the ultimate facts behind all architecture which has given it form," Lethaby argued that "behind every style of architecture there is an earlier style, in which the germ of every form is to be found. . . ."[20] He also asserts that "all architecture is one, when traced back through the streams of civilisation."[21] Such statements support Garnham's claim that Lethaby's intention, like Ruskin's before him, was to isolate from an ideal past, a universal set of principles which lay at the core of "all" architecture. On the very same page as the above statements, however, Lethaby also asserted that "all" in architecture "is the slow change of growth," that "it is impossible to point to the time of invention of any custom or feature," and that "alterations. . .may be traced to new conditions, or directly innovating thought in religion."[22] These lines appear to bolster the reading given by Vestal Brown. These dual yet opposed conceptions of architecture in *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, as Godfrey Rubens has noted in *William Richard Lethaby, His Life and Works*, "make the book difficult to come to terms with." They also demonstrate, to quote Rubens once again, the "paradox that was an essential part of Lethaby's writing and complex personality."[23]

The theoretical tension detected in *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* stems from the historian's focus on the cosmological symbols—the ziggurat, world mountain, labyrinth, world tree, etc—and their architectural applications discussed by Lethaby. An alternative reading, it is suggested, arises from a questioning of key concepts introduced in the introductory essay. There, Lethaby examines, in more general terms, the outcome of cosmological thinking and planning—"the temple *idea*"[24] —and the conceptual strategy that motivates it. He identifies this as the desire to represent both the "known" and the "imagined facts of the universe." An examination of these two terms—the "known" and the "imagined"—and their debt to earlier architectural theory is useful as it demonstrates that the "paradox" detected in Lethaby's work is in fact an attempt to develop a systematic and syncretic theory by drawing together two seemingly divergent

modes of seeing and representing nature, and in turn, the methods of architectural invention they suggest.[25]

Architecture, Mysticism and Myth and the "temple *idea*."

In the opening paragraphs of the introduction to *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* Lethaby clearly outlined his objectives. Noting that his intention was "to ask [what] are the ultimate facts behind all architecture which has [sic] given it form," he isolated three key principles.

> *First*, the similar needs and desires of men; *secondly*, on the side of structure, the necessities imposed by materials, and the physical laws of their erection and combination; and *thirdly*, on the side of style, nature.[26]

"It is [of] the last" of these, Lethaby tells us, "that I propose to write." He then proceeds to explain what he intended by the terms "style" and "nature." It is, he wrote:

> the influence of the known and imagined facts of the universe on architecture, the connection between the world as structure, and the building, not of mere details of nature and the ornaments of architecture, but of the whole—the Heavenly Temple and the Earthly Tabernacle.[27]

In this statement, Lethaby clearly equated architecture, or more specifically form, with the natural world. Lethaby then proceeded to divide the representation of nature into two categories of knowledge or different modes of perception. He described these as the "known" and the "imagined facts" of the universe. In making this distinction, Lethaby allowed for the possibility that nature could be interpreted in two different but equally valid ways and that these in turn acted on building practice. The focus of his examination was the cosmological myths of the ancient world. For Lethaby, the significance of such constructs was their reliance on both conceptions of nature. Working on the assumption that "the development of building practices and ideas of the world structure acted and reacted upon one another,"[28] Lethaby isolated the "temple *idea*" as demonstrating a tradition that readily accommodated a dual conception.

The "known facts" of nature, Lethaby claimed, are material objects which can be seen or physically experienced, such as trees, mountains, the sky, and the sea. Such known facts, he explained, offered ancient man concrete allegorical images of what could not be seen or directly experienced. "The unknown universe," he argued, "could only be. . .explained in terms of its known parts; the earth shut in by the night sky, . . .a tree, a tent, a building."[29] These in turn, Lethaby maintained, were used to "form. . .world system[s]" for "peoples [then] living."[30] The simple and observable fact of "a tree with wide over-arching branches", Lethaby concluded, "must have formed an apt and satisfactory explanation" of the universe in general, as "legends of [the] world tree are so widely distributed."[31] Similar uses of the "mountain" and "built chamber" also appear to have been popular, as they, like the tree, Lethaby explained, are prolific in the cosmological myths of the ancient world.[32]

The presence of "known facts" in cosmological myths demonstrates that ancient man based his understanding of the

world around him, at least in the first instance, on what he visually witnessed within the material world. Thus, the mythic mind extracted knowledge from the contemplation and study of an object world, which existed outside of the subject, and was autonomous and independent of that subject. Working on Herbert Spencer's assumption that "given the data as known to him, the inference drawn by the primitive man is the reasonable inference,"[33] Lethaby felt that this aspect of ancient man's response to nature was comparable to the scientific methodologies adopted by modern man.

> If we erase from the mind absolutely all that science has laboriously spied out of the actual facts of the material universe, and ask ourselves what would have been the thoughts by which man attempted at first to explain and image forth the natural order, we may put ourselves in sympathy with notions that at first seem absurd. We may see that the progress of science is merely the framing and destruction one by one of a series of hypotheses, and that the early cosmogonies are one in kind with the widest generalisations of science—from certain appearance to frame a theory of explanation, from phenomena to generalised law.[34]

Arriving at conclusions, which were driven by methods comparable to those produced by modern science's contemplation of relative phenomena, the inference was that mythic man's reliance on "known facts" produced a world-view that was also relative. Mythic man's understanding of the world fluxed and evolved as the data and belief systems (mythologies) he gathered accumulated.

However, the world-view cultivated by the mythic mind, Lethaby argued, did not rely solely on the "known." In an attempt to explain the unknown—that is, phenomena that could not be seen or directly experienced—mythic man employed known facts (the tree, the mountain, and the built chamber) to explain the unknown, such as the order of the cosmos. Thus "known facts," such as the tree, were transformed by ancient man into "imagined facts." The tree, a fact extracted from the observable, material world, was transformed into the "world tree," a fact that had no validity but in the imagination of the subject. These imagined facts of "world tree," "world mountain" and "world chamber" in turn provided the foundation for complete cosmological systems. As Lethaby explained, "the Chaldean inscriptions described. . .a tree as growing at the centre of the world; its branches of crystal formed the sky and drooped to the sea" while "the Phoenicians thought the world like a revolving tree, over which was spread a vast tapestry of blue embroidered stars."[35] Others saw the,

> earth [as] a mountain,. . .around its base flows the ocean. . .;beyond is a high range of mountains which form the walls of the enclosure, and on these is either laid the ceiling in one great slab, or it is domed. . . . The firmament is sustained by the earth mountain in the centre. . ."the earth with the sea supported by it, rests upon pillars, and covers an under-world accessible by various entrances from the sea, as well as from mountain clefts. Above the earth an upper world is found, beyond which the blue sky, being of solid consistence, vaults itself like an outer shell, and, as

> some say, revolves around some high mountain top in the far north."[36]

The significance of the "imagined" was that it demonstrated a shift in the perceptual strategies adopted by mythic man. The "known facts" which were based on the observation of the object world, a world which was autonomous and independent of the subject, were transformed into the imagined, and, thus, originating within the inner resources of that same subject. In transforming the "known" into the "imagined," so that man could come to some understanding of the unknown, the mythic cosmologies of the ancient world demonstrated a dual reliance on the scrutiny of an independent object world and on the inner, mental and imaginative resources of the subject. The passive act of observation of the known was transformed into a creative act. In possessing both "known" and "imagined facts," the universe for mythic man was both subjective and objective, and the strategies he adopted to understand this world were both passive or contemplative and active or inventive.[37]

The importance of this transformation of the "known" into the "imagined", however, lay not only in a dual reliance on knowledge originating in the object and the subject. It also indicated a movement from "phenomena" to "generalised law"; from the relative to the fixed and universal.[38] A key attribute of the "imagined" was that it appeared to point to beliefs that were common to multiple cultures, times and places; to a core body of knowledge that was universal and valid for all.[39] A distinguishing feature of the "world tree," Lethaby explained, was that it was common to multiple cultures; being found not only in the inscriptions of the Chaldeans, but in the writings of the Phoenicians, and "later tomes of culture."[40] Similar conclusions could be drawn for the "world mountain" or "world chamber". "The Egyptian system," noted Lethaby, "compared the sky to the ceiling of an edifice," as did the "old poet Job" who described the cosmos as a "vast box whose lid is the sky." At the centre of Job's box rose "the earth mountain," which acted as the "prop and the pivot of [the world's] evolutions."[41] Similar examples, Lethaby continues, could be found in the cosmogonic theories of the *Rig Veda*, as well as other early writings.[42]

Lethaby's objective in *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* was to document the universality of such "imagined" facts. Working on the assumption that form is dependent on the representation of nature, he also argued that imagined facts represent an essential core or set of principles that motivate form. In the introduction of the text, Lethaby pointed out that his aim was to identify what was common and universal, to,

> attempt to set out, from the architect's point of view, the basis of certain ideas common in the architecture of many lands and religions, the purposes behind structure and form which may be called the esoteric principles of architecture.[43]

Noting that "it has, rightly, been the habit of historians of architecture to lay stress on the differences of the several styles and schools of successive ages," he also argued that it was equally valid to consider the alternative; that "in the far larger sense, all architecture is one, when traced back through the stream of civilisations, as they followed or influenced one

another."[44] Lethaby's search for the universal—observing that "behind every style of architecture there is an earlier style, in which the germ of every form is to be found"—and his association of such facts with the "imagined," established the importance of the past and the significance of traditional values.[45] However, Lethaby also concluded that nature, and thus architecture, cannot be read solely in terms of the "imagined" but must also respond to the "known"—the varied objects and conditions which constitute the material world and inform human culture. Thus while the "imagined" maintained the integrity of tradition, the "known" established the validity of change, progress and evolution, and thus offered an explanation for,

> such alternations as may be traced to new conditions, or directly innovating thought in religion, [and] all [that] is the slow change of growth, [so that] it is almost impossible to point to the time of invention of any custom or feature. As Herbert Spencer says of ceremonial [sic] generally: "adhering tenaciously to all his elders taught him, the primitive man deviates into novelty only through unintended modifications. Every one knows that languages are not devised but evolve; and the same is true of usages."[46]

Lethaby presented this dual reliance on the "known" and "imagined" as being a unique and admirable attribute of the mythic mind and mythic world system. It is only "at the dawn of record" and in the "'wild in woods' [where] the savage runs," Lethaby observed, that we find such dual conceptions of nature.[47] Such duality is also presented as an attribute of the architectures produced by such peoples. Drawing the reader's attention to the ancient mythological construct of the "temple *idea*," Lethaby argued that in the first instance it functioned as a direct imitation of the pre-established and presumably "imagined" order of nature. The underlying objective of the temple *idea*, he explained, "was to set up a local reduplication of the temple not made with hands, the World Temple itself—a sort of model to scale."[48] However, for Lethaby, such "imagined facts" represented only half of the equation. Of equal importance were facts extracted from the "known" which were based on a direct observation and documentation of the object world. The temple *idea* also demonstrated this second, more arbitrary aspect of form. While the form and construction of the temple imitated the fixed order of the "World Temple" it also responded to the "science of the time." It was, as Lethaby explained,

> an observatory, and an almanack. Its foundation was a sacred ceremony, the time carefully chosen by augury, and its relation to the heavens defined by observation.[49]

Agreeing with the French anthropologist De la Saussaye, Lethaby concluded that the "temple *idea*" not only "refer[red] to the structure of the world," one that was imagined and thus universal, but also spoke of "the religious relationship of men to the gods," conditions that were specific to the time, place and culture.[50]

In the closing paragraphs of the introductory chapter Lethaby draws his discussion of the temple *idea* into the present day by suggesting that his contemporaries, like the builders of the mythic

world, should ground their design practice in contemporary readings of the physical universe. Modern architectural invention, he suggested, was equally dependent on the dual representation of the "known"—the need to address the changing conditions imposed by the object world, both physical and cultural—and the imagined—the expression of the internal inventions of the subject. In subsequent writings he reiterated this conclusion by arguing that architecture must "once again," reconcile "Science"—"all that had been spied out of the actual facts of the universe"—with "Art"—the "imaginative, poetic, even mystic and magic."[51] Only then would it regain the cultural relevance and meaning it once held.[52]

Ruskin and the subjectivity of the Victorian Imagination. Lethaby's use of "mysticism" in the title of his text and his association in the preface "of the purpose behind structure and form" with the "esoteric principles of architecture" encourage the historian to link Lethaby's thesis with transcendental and arcane traditions of thought. The difficulty with such an argument is that Lethaby himself rejected such associations. In 1928, he noted that "there was little or nothing in the book about mysticism" and that he had simply included it in his title for the "jingle of words, after the manner of Andrew Lang's *Myth, Ritual and Religion*."[53] Lethaby's statement is validated by a series of notations in a small notebook now held in the St Martin's Art and Design Archive in London where he refers to his book on a number of occasions simply as "Architecture and Myth."[54] An analysis of the two concepts at the core of Lethaby's thesis—the known and the imagined—and the recognition that each refers to alternate world views, one subjective and the other objective, reinforces this conclusion by suggesting that the motive for the text lies closer to home. An obvious source is the observation by the English critic John Ruskin that two different modes of seeing, represented by the faculties of the Imagination and Fancy, could be employed by the artist when viewing and portraying the landscape.

Ruskin's discussion of the Imagination and Fancy was undertaken in a number of his texts including the second volume of *Modern Painters* (1846) and the first three volumes of the *Stones of Venice* (1851-1853).[55] One of his most articulate explanations of these two faculties, however, is found in a letterwritten to Rev. W. L. Brown, in 1847. He writes:

> There was a time when the sight of a steep hill covered with pines, cutting against the sky, would have touched me with an emotion inexpressible, which, in the endeavour to communicate in its truth and intensity, I must have sought for all kinds of far-off, wild, and dreamy images. Now I can look at such a slope with coolness, and observation of *fact*. I see that it slopes at 20° or 25°; I know the pines are spruce fir—"Pinus nigra"—of such and such an age; that the rocks are slate of such and such a formation; the soil, thus, and thus; the day fine, the sky blue. All this I can at once communicate in so many words, and this is all which is necessarily seen. But it is not all the truth; there is something else to be seen there, which I cannot see but in a certain condition of mind, nor can I make any one else see it, but by putting him into that condition, and my endeavour in description would be, not to detail the facts of the scene, but by any means whatsoever to put my hearer's mind into the same *ferment* as my mind.[56]

Ruskin's distinction between what is merely seen and its imitation, and what is felt—"the ferment of mind"—and the need to capture and in some way replicate this experience through the literary or artistic process can be attributed to his debt to the Romantic theory of the "IMAGINATION;" a mental faculty defined by the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) in 1817 as the "living Power and prime Agent of all human perception." Rejecting the empiricist assumption that the mind was a *tabula rasa* on which external experiences and sense impressions were imprinted, stored, recalled, and combined through a process of association, Coleridge divided the "mind" into two distinct faculties.[57] He labelled these the "Imagination" and "Fancy."

> The IMAGINATION then, I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree*, and in the *mode* of operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealise and unify. It is essentially *vital*, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.
>
> FANCY, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definites. The Fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word CHOICE. But equally with the ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association.[58]

"Fancy," in Coleridge's eyes was employed for tasks that were "passive" and "mechanical", the accumulation of fact and documentation of what is seen. "Always the ape," Fancy, Coleridge argued, was "too often the adulterator and counterfeiter of memory."[59] The Imagination on the other hand was "*vital*" and transformative, "a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation." For Coleridge, it was the Imagination that was responsible for acts that were truly creative and inventive and, in turn, that identified true instances of fine or noble art.[60]

Ruskin maintained Coleridge's division of the mind. In the second volume of his *Modern Painters* (1846), he dedicated almost one hundred pages to the subject of the Imagination, adopting a terminology and intent that was reminiscent of Coleridge.[61] However, as Susan Gurewitsch has argued in her essay "Golgonooza on the Grand Canal: Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* and the Romantic Imagination" (1981), Ruskin was never satisfied with these early attempts to define the imagination and it is only in the later publications of the 1850s, and specifically the first three volumes of the *Stones of Venice* (1851-1853), that the issue is resolved.[62] Like Coleridge before him, the distinction made by Ruskin between Fancy and the Imagination rested on the fact that Fancy was concerned with the mechanical operations of the mind,

those which are responsible for the passive accumulation of data and the storage of such data in the memory. Imagination, on the other hand, described the "mysterious power," which extracted from such data, "hidden ideas and meaning." It also determined "the various operations of constructive and inventive genius."[63] In the fourth volume of *Modern Painters* (1856), Ruskin explained this distinction.

> Imagine all that any of these men had seen or heard in the whole course of their lives, laid up accurately in their memories as in vast storehouses, extending, with the poets, even to the slightest intonations of syllables heard in the beginning of their lives, and with the painters, down to minute folds of drapery, and shapes of leaves or stones; and over all of this unindexed and immeasurable mass of treasure, the imagination brooding and wandering, but dream-gifted, so as to summon at any moment exactly such groups of ideas as shall fit each other: this I conceive to be the real nature of the imaginative mind.[64]

The significance of the Imagination for Coleridge was that it represented the sole faculty within man that was able to achieve the romantic ambition of reuniting the subject and the object; the world of the self and the world of nature. By establishing the creative act as mimicking the "organic principle" or "one"—a divine principle believed to underlie all reality—the romantic theorist sought to establish a harmonious relationship between the ideal world of the subject and the real world of the object. Baker has demonstrated that Coleridge was convinced that the Imagination acted as "a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM," and that it not only reinforced the notion that perception was active and creative, it established the cosmos as an organic entity.[65]

Coleridge explained this property of the "Imagination" as "ESEMPLASTIC," to "shape into one" and to "convey a new sense."[66] The key attribute of the esemplastic function, Engell has argued, was that it ensured that,

> all the arteries of life and thought returned to the heart after dividing into invisible capillaries. The subjective and objective poles intertwine and fuse, spirit informs matter and the dynamic synthesis and coalescence of both systems occurs.[67]

However, while the objective of the romantic critic was to facilitate a synthesis of subject and object and to unite the ideal and real, the "active" and "creative" powers given to the Romantic Imagination guaranteed that no such synthesis could take place. Rather, the theory of perception demonstrated by the idea of the Imagination allows the subject to subsume the identity and autonomy of the object.[68] The relationship between the subject and nature, in such an instance, Paul de Man has demonstrated in "The Rhetoric of Temporality" (1969),

> is superseded by an intersubjective, interpersonal relationship that, in the last analysis, is a relationship of the subject towards itself. Thus the priority has passed from the

> outside world entirely within the subject, and we end up with something that resembles radical idealism.[69]

Sprinker in "Ruskin on the Imagination" (1979), has described this phenomenon as,

> man's inexorable will to power over reality. To look upon nature and behold there an image of the mind which is not necessarily evidence for a preordained harmony between mind and nature. Though the rhetoric of the Romantic may tend to blur the distinction between subject and object, the distinction is not thereby annulled. . . . the aesthetics of romanticism was an indication of the profoundest dissatisfaction with reality, the sign of a peculiar sort of nihilism in which the wish to integrate the self and nature was merely a disguise for the imperialistic designs of the imagination on the real world.[70]

Attempting to "make the senses out of the mind—not the mind out of the senses," Coleridge's system of perception, like that of his romantic colleagues, ensured that thought and reality grow indistinguishable, like two sounds of which no man can positively say which is the echo. In such a system our intelligent self-consciousness becomes inseparable from our perceptions of the world.

The "fallacy" of Coleridge's belief—that a synthesis of the subject and object could be obtained while the identity of each was maintained—was one, Sprinker argued, that Ruskin acknowledged. It was also one that he avoided. Thus, while Coleridge's idea of the Imagination demonstrated an attempt to unify subject and object, Ruskin's theory of the Imagination was designed to demonstrate the profound and irreducible gulf that separated the object—the world of facts, things as they are in themselves—from the subject—the perception of facts by human consciousness—within the Romantic world- view. Accepting that we can never really know the true nature of the object world for itself, and thus are unable to even "fathom the mystery of a single flower," Ruskin's exploration of the imagination, as Sprinker has demonstrated, was to offer a "strident rebuttal of the positivistic tendencies of nineteenth-century thought" and to produce a "defence [for] the imagination against the prevailing devaluation of its importance in the modern world."[71] "The most curious, yet most common deficiency of the modern contemplative mind," Ruskin stated in "The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism" (1878), "is its inability to comprehend that phenomena of true imagination are yet no less real and often more vivid than phenomena of matter."[72] It was this, the need for "noble art" to reflect the "phenomena of true imagination," which Ruskin sought to articulate in his critical writings on art and architecture.

Defining "Art" as a "divinely imagined thing" and identifying the creative act which elevates the artefact to a fine art—be it a painted image, architectural structure or literary text—with a "certain condition of mind" that "groups ideas" and "reveals the unseen," John Ruskin promoted a theory of invention which privileged the subject, the producer or user of the artefact.[73] For Ruskin, the role of the object (be it the multiplicity of objects which made up the material world or the architectural artefact) was simply to demonstrate "the perception or conception of the mental

or bodily powers by which the work was produced."[74] Ruskin established, with these convictions, the intrinsic qualities of the artefact (the object) as being bound to and determined by the subject; the user or producer of the artefact. He also effectively subjugated the importance of the artefact and its physical properties within the creative process.[75]

While Ruskin cultivated a thesis which privileged the world of the subject and the imagination, his writings often appeared to contradict such a conclusion. This is a fact that Ruskin himself openly acknowledged. In a footnote in the fifth volume of *Modern Painters* (1860), he writes:

I do not wonder at people sometimes thinking I contradict myself when they come suddenly on any of the scattered passages, in which I am forced to insist on the opposite practical applications of subtle principles. . . . It would be well if you would first glance over the chapter on Finish in the third volume. . . The general conclusion reached in that chapter being that finish, for the sake of added truth, or utility, or beauty, is noble; but finish, for the sake of workmanship, neatness, or polish, ignoble—turn to the fourth chapter of The Seven Lamps, where you will find the Campanile of Giotto given as a model and mirror of perfect architecture, just on account of its exquisite completion. Also, in the next chapter, I expressly limit the delightfulness of rough and imperfect work to developing and unformed schools.[76]

In the same footnote, Ruskin goes on to cite a passage from *The Stones of Venice* where he concludes, "the demand for perfection is always a misunderstanding of the end of art." He then juxtaposes this comment with a later chapter on the early Renaissance where he argues "the profoundest respect [is] paid to completion."[77]

Philipa Davis in "Arnold or Ruskin?" (1992), has argued that the development of such opposing statements by Ruskin is intentional.78 Having set up an apparent maze of contradictions, Ruskin tells us that his objective was to bring the reader "into a wholesome state of knowing what to think."

> Now all these passages are perfectly true; and, as in much more serious matters, the essential thing for the reader to receive their truth, however little he may be able to see their consistency. If truths of apparently contradictory character are candidly and rightly received, they will fit themselves together in the mind without any trouble. But no truth maliciously received will nourish you or fit with others.[79]

This aspect within Ruskin's writings—the seemingly intentional cultivation of inconsistent positions—peaked Lethaby's interest. Noting that it was the element of "paradox" in Ruskin which most appealed to him, as it "shocked people into thinking" and "but for that they would have remained wholly indifferent to art," Lethaby embraced this element of Ruskin's work.[80] However, while Lethaby celebrated the tension evident in Ruskin, he also sought to resolve it.[81] For Lethaby, the equitable balance of the known and the imagined, articulated by the mythic construct of the temple *idea*, offered a pragmatic resolution to this problem.

Conclusion.

Lethaby was familiar with ideas of both Ruskin and Coleridge.[82]

His thesis of creation, however, differs from those of Ruskin and Coleridge in that it fails to assert the primacy of either the subject or object but presents both as having an equal role in the creation of the architectural form. In *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* the temple *idea* is presented as being reliant on both the ideal or "imagined" image of the cosmos—"the temple not made with hands" or "World Temple"—and the "known"; "its form governed by the science of the time; . . .an observatory. . .an almanack."[83] With this example, Lethaby argued that both cognitive strategies, one passive and accumulative, the other active and formative, contributed to the perceptual and creative act.

Lethaby confirmed this conviction in later writings. In the essay, "What Shall we call Beautiful" (1918) he writes that,

> it is a trite truth that we have never really seen a thing, a tree, for instance, but only partial aspects of many trees. Even these partial aspects are conditioned by our relations in time and space. They are images which arise between the object, tree, and you, the observer. If, for instance, the seasons were hurried up and became a thousand times quicker, we should see our tree bud, spread out its leaves and fade in an afternoon—it would gush out like a fountain into green and be gone. It is changing all the time now, but we do not see it. Again, if it were magnified several thousand times, its solidity would dissolve into a vague fog form. Its colour, green, is partly in the leaves, partly in the light, but most in our eyes. What, apart from our ways of apprehending it, can a tree be, the thing in itself? All we know of it is struck out by the contact of a 'thing' and our senses. 'Tree' is not objective or subjective. Turning from such 'material' and 'tangible' objects to our generalised ideas on the aspect which possess the qualities that we call Beauty, we find that phenomena are conditioned by a great number of still more complex and confusing factors. They involve many questions in regard to what we see, what we think we see, when we see, and who does the seeing. Doubtless the executioner thought of his fine new rack, 'That is a beauty;' but what did the executee think?[84]

In being neither subjective or purely imagined, nor objective or simply known, the "temple *idea*," much like the tree, captured the "great number of still more complex and confusing factors" which, Lethaby felt, determined what we see, think, and identify as being beautiful. Like the tree, the "temple *idea*" "was neither subjective nor objective," but both. Seeking to establish the entity of both the "known" and the "imagined"—of the objective and subjective—rather than a romantic synthesis, Lethaby maintained, at least theoretically, the balance of Fancy and Imagination which Coleridge was denied. His departure from Ruskin, on the other hand, is found in the fact that he did not privilege the subjective Imagination over objective Fancy. Rather, the two, in Lethaby's eyes, offered equally valid world-views and thus both were essential to the architectural form. It is this central thesis which Lethaby articulates through the "temple *idea*" as it is presented in *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*.

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1. William Richard Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* (Bath: Solos Press, 1994). Originally published by Percival, London, 1891. A second edition was published the following year.

2. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 16.

3. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, preface.

4. William Richard Lethaby, "Architecture, Nature and Magic," *The Builder*, cxxiv (1928), p. 88 to cxxxv, (1928), p. 984; collated in 1956 as William Lethaby, *Architecture, Nature and Magic* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1956).

5. Lethaby, *Architecture, Nature and Magic*, 1956, p. 15.

6. Lethaby, *Architecture, Nature and Magic*, 1956, pp. 15-16.

7. *Architectural Association Notes*, 6 (1891-2), p. 167; T*he British Architect*, 37 (1892), p. 21.

8. *The Builder*, January 2 (1893).

9. *Times* (London), 31 December 1892, p. 54.

10. Godfrey Rubens, The Life and Work of William Lethaby 1875-1931 (Ph.D. diss., University College London, 1977), p. 52.

11. Julian Holder, "*Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* and its Influence," in *W. R. Lethaby, 1857-1931: Architecture, Design and Education*, eds. Sylvia Backemeyer & Theresa Gronberg (London: Lund Humphries, 1985), p. 63. See also Holder, A Thought Behind Form: *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, and Its Place in Architectural Theory 1880-1910 (MA. diss., University College London, 1986).

12. Trevor Garnham, William Lethaby and the Problem of Style in late Nineteenth Century English Architecture (MA. diss., Exeter University, 1980), p. 61.

.13 Garnham, William Lethaby and the Problem of Style, pp. 60- 61.

.14 Garnham, William Lethaby and the Problem of Style, p. 48, 58 & 37.

15. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. J. Shawcross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), vol 1, p. 202. The problem of Imagination is considered by Ruskin in chaps. 1-4 in vol 2 (1846) of *Modern Painters* (1843-1860) in John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin*, eds. E.T Cook & Alexander Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1912), vol. 4, pp. 223-313. See also Michael Sprinker, "Ruskin on the Imagination," *Studies in Romanticism*, 18 (Spring 1979), pp. 115-39; Susan Gurewitsch, "Golgonooza on the Grand Canal: Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* and the Romantic Imagination," *The Arnoldian*, Winter (1981), p. 25-39.

16. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, p. 202.

17. Charlotte Vestal Brown, Architecture as Process, Implications for a Methodology of History and Criticism (Ph.D diss., University of North Carolina, 1974).

18. Vestal Brown, Architecture as Process, pp. 7-8.

19. See E.H. Gombrich, *In Search of Cultural History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); and A. Colquhoun, *Modernity and The Classical Tradition: Architectural Essays, 1980-1987* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), pp. 3-20.

20. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 13,

21. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 12.

22. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 12.

23. While Rubens acknowledged the presence of dual themes in Lethaby's writings, he fails to offer an explanation for its presence. Mark Swenarton in his 1989 *Artisan and Architects* has also argued the duality in Lethaby's writings suggesting that Lethaby's intention was to seek a "conflation" of Ruskinian idealism and rational structuralism. However, he also noted that for Lethaby these two positions did not necessarily represent contradictory ideologies as Lethaby saw "Viollet-le Duc sharing Ruskin's belief in the ';free craftsmen' of the middle ages." This made it easier for Lethaby to regard the two authorities as compatible, even though in fact their theories—the one positing art as spiritual

communication, the other as the application of reason—were profoundly at odds. Similar acknowledgments of the paradoxical nature of Lethaby's position on architecture are found in Reyner Banham's *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, where Lethaby is described as "not a systematic thinker." Thomas Faulkner in "WR Lethaby: Tradition and Innovation," where it is noted that the tragedy of Lethaby stems from the "unresolved conflicts and inherent contradictions in him," and finally by Shams Eldien Eissawy Naga who asserts that "Lethaby took an untenable position concerning the nature of architecture." Godfrey Rubens, *William Richard Lethaby, His Life and Works 1857–1931* (London: The Architectural Press, 1986), p. 82; Mark Swenarton, *Artisans and Architects: The Ruskinian Tradition in Architectural Thought* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1989), p. 97-101; Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (London: Architectural Press, 1960), p. 46; Thomas Faulkner, "WR Lethaby: Tradition and Innovation," in *Design 1900-1960: Studies in Design and Popular Culture of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Thomas Faulkner (Newcastle upon Tyne: Petras, 1976), p. 4. Shams Eldien Eissawy Naga, William Richard Lethaby: The Romantic Modernist, p.4.

24. Lethaby's italics. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 14.

25. The author has undertaken an examination of the concepts of the "known" and the "imagined" in Lethaby's writings in two earlier papers. The focus of those papers was to consider Lethaby's use of Victorian mythography and the Hypnerotomachia Poliphili as theoretical precedents for the model of architecture he proposed in *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*. While segments of this earlier argument will be repeated in this paper the objective in this instance is to consider the motive underlying his architectural thesis; to consider the why rather than the how. See Deborah van der Plaat, "William Lethaby's *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* and its Debt to Victorian Mythography," *Architectural History*, 45 (2002), pp. 364-385; "Would you know the new, you must search the old." "William Lethaby's *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* (1891) and the Hypnerotomachia Poliphili (1499)," *Fabrications*, 12, no. 1 (2002), pp. 1-26.

26. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 13

27. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* p. 13.

28. Lethaby, Architecture, Nature and Magic, p. 10.

29. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 18.

30. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 18.

31. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 18.

32. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 18.

33. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 18.

34. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 17.

35. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 18.

36. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 21. Lethaby quoting Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, (London: Williams and Norgate), 1870-72, vol. 1.

37. The terms subjective and objective are used here as meaning respectively, knowledge which originated from the object world (nature) and the subject (the mind or individual who seeks that knowledge.)

38. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 17.

39. In this respect, Lethaby appears to be working on a similar assumption to that developed by Ruskin who argued that the actions of the subject functioned as an index not of the individual but of a set of fixed and eternal principles..

40. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 18.

41. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 22 & 20.

42. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 20-23.

43. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, preface.

44. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 12.

45. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p.14.

46. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 12.

47. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 18. I have argued elsewhere that Lethaby's conception of the mythic mind was not unusual for the time and was a characteristic attribute of Victorian mythography. See van der Plaat, "William Lethaby's *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* and its Debt to Victorian Mythography," pp. 369-371.

48. Lethaby, Architecture Mysticism and Myth, p. 14.

49. Lethaby, Architecture Mysticism and Myth, p. 14. Note, augury is the practice of seeking auspicious signs in the observation of natural phenomena such as the flight of birds, the growth of crops, or the patterns found in the liver of a slaughtered bull. See Joseph Rykwert, *On Adam's House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981).

50. Lethaby, Architecture Mysticism and Myth, p. 15.

51. William Lethaby, "The Architecture of Adventure," in *Form in Civilisation. Collected Papers on Art and Labour* ed. William Lethaby (London: Oxford University Press, 1922), pp. 92 & 94. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 17. van der Plaat, "Seeking a Practical Aesthetic. The Reconciliation of Art and Science in the Writings of W.R. Lethaby" in *Architecture as Aesthetic Practice, International Journal of Architectural Theory*, 6, no.1, (September 2001). Retrieved on 18 December 2003 from http://www.theo.tu-cottbus.de/wolke/eng/Subjects/subject011.htm.

52. For a detailed discussion of how the reconciliation of the known and the imagined could achieve these goals see: Deborah van der Plaat, "Seeking Symbolism Comprehensible to the Great Majority of Spectators: William Lethaby's *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*," *Architectural History*, 45: 2002, pp. 363-385; "*Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*" *(1891): William Lethaby and the Foundation of a Syncretic Modernism* (Ph.D. diss., University of New South Wales, 2000) chaps. 5 & 6.

53. Lethaby, *Architecture, Nature and Magic*, p. 15.

54. Notebook, n.d., B. 4783, Central St Martin's Art and Design Archive, London,.

55. Ruskin, "Modern Painters," vol. 2, part 3, section 2, chaps. 1-4; *Works*, vol. 4, pp. 223-313; Ruskin, "Stones of Venice," vols. 1-3, 1851-53, *Works*, vols. 9-11.

56. Ruskin, Letter to Rev. W. L. Brown, September 28, 1847, *Works*, vol. 36, p. 80. Ruskin's distinction recalls an earlier example given by Coleridge in The Statesman's Manual. Here Coleridge describes what the Imagination perceives in the landscape. He writes: "I seem to find myself to behold in the quiet objects on which I am gazing, more than arbitrary illustration, more than mere *simile*, the work of my own Fancy. I feel an awe, as if there were before my eyes the same power as that of reason—the same power in a lower dignity, and therefore a symbol established in the truth of things. I feel it alike, whether I contemplate a single tree or flower, or mediate on vegetation throughout the world, as one of the great organs of the life of nature. Lo!—with the rising sun it commences its outward life and enters into open communion with all the elements, at once assimilating them to itself and to each other. . .. Lo!—how upholding the ceaseless plastic motion of the parts in the profoundest rest of the whole it becomes the visible *organismus* of the entire silent or elementary life of nature."
Coleridge, *The Stateman's Manual* (London: Gale and Fenner, 1816), Appendix B.

57. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, vol. 1, p. 202.

58. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, vol. 1, p. 202.

59. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, vol. 1, p. 194.

60. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, vol. 2, p. 208 & vol. 1, p. 202. It was the ability of the imagination—and more specifically the secondary imagination—to transform and recreate which ensured its association with the fine arts. Engell has demonstrated that Coleridge's division of the imagination into the "primary" and "secondary" draws a distinction between creative acts that are unconscious and those that are intentional and deliberate. "The Primary Imagination" was for Coleridge, the "necessary imagination" as it "automatically balances and fuses the innate capacities and powers of the mind with the external presence of the objective world that the mind receives through the senses." It represents man's ability to learn from nature. The over arching property of the primary imagination was that it was common to all people. The Secondary imagination, on the other hand, represents a superior faculty which could only be associated with artistic genius. It was this aspect of the imagination, one which could break down what was perceived in order to recreate by an autonomous willful act of the mind that has no analog in the natural world—which Coleridge associated with art and poetry. A key and defining attribute of the secondary imagination was a free and deliberate will; "superior voluntary controul. . .co-existing with the conscious will." The secondary imagination, once activated by the will, "dissolves, dissipates in order to recreate." Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, vol. 1, pp. 193, 202. James Engell, T*he Creative Imagination: Enlightenment to Romanticism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 344.

61. Ruskin, "Modern Painters," vol. 2, part 3, section 2, chaps. 1-4, *Works*, vol. 4, pp. 223-313. It is unlikely that Coleridge was the sole source of Ruskin's interest in the imagination, as the imagination, Engell has demonstrated, was a concept that was "quintessential to Romanticism" itself. However, the fact that Coleridge, "states more about the imagination than any other Romantic," does isolate him as a probable source. Engell, *The Creative Imagination*, pp. 4 & 328.

62. Ruskin, "Stones of Venice," vols. 1-3, 1851-53, Works, vols. 9-11. Susan Gurewitsch, "Golgonooza on the Grand Canal: Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* and the Romantic Imagination," *The Arnoldian*, Winter (1981), p. 25.

63. Ruskin, "Modern Painters," vol. 2, 1846, in *Works*, vol 4, p. 222.

64. Ruskin, "Modern Painters," vol. 4, 1856, *Works*, vol. 6, p. 42.

65. For Coleridge, the most important aspect of the imagination was that it was active to the highest degree. The creative act called the whole soul of man into activity. As Baker has argued: "the creative act, on the contrary, is a godlike-act-of-power and causing-to-be, imagination being the divine potency in man. The creative act by which the poet writes the poem is similar to the creative act by which God ordered the world out of chaos; if the poet's creative act is not a creation *ex nihilo*, it is a process of organic becoming through which the materials are transformed into something absolutely new, and also very likely, strange." James Volant Baker, *The Sacred River. Coleridge's Theory of the Imagination* (Louisiana State University Press, 1957), p. 4.

66. Coleridge in the tenth chapter of *Biographia Literaria* described this ability of the imagination as "Esemplastic." Noting that esemplastic was a word he borrowed from the Greek "to shape," Coleridge explained that it referred to the imagination's ability to "shape into one, having to convey a new sense." He felt such a term was necessary as "it would aid the recollection of my meaning and prevent it being confounded with the usual import of the word imagination." *Biographia Literaria*, vol. 1, p. 86.

67. James Engell, *The Creative Imagination*, p. 333.

68. Not only did the subject subsume the object it can also be argued that Imagination subsumed the role of Fancy within the creative work. Thus while Coleridge argued that the poet relied on both Fancy and Imagination when inventing a poem, and that the poet should seek a balance of these two faculties, (Coleridge, *Biographia Literari*, vol 1, p. 194) the "active" and "transformative" powers of the Imagination negated the contribution of, and representation of Fancy. In Coleridge's system, the Imagination is ultimately the only faculty which contributed

to the creative process.

69. Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," in *Interpretation: Theory and Practice*, ed. Charles S. Singleton (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1969), p. 180.

70. Sprinker, "Ruskin on the Imagination," pp. 116-7.

71. Sprinker, "Ruskin on the Imagination," p. 139. In this respect, Ruskin's thesis of the imagination has been labelled Victorian as opposed to Romantic.

72. Ruskin, "The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism," 1878, *Works*, vol. 34, pp. 163-4.

73. Ruskin, "Stones of Venice," 1853, vol 3 in *Works*, vol. 11, p. 119; "Modern Painters," vol. 4, 1856, *Works*, vol. 6, p. 42; letter to Rev W. L. Brown, September 28, 1847, *Works*, vol. 36, p. 80.

74. Ruskin, "Modern Painters," vol. 1, 1843, in *Works*, vol. 3, p. 93. In the case of the natural world, the mental powers represented were those of a "moral God." When considering an object, be it art or architecture, the "mental powers" referred to by Ruskin were those of the artisan producing the artefact. In "The Nature of Gothic" (1853), Ruskin argued the Gothic structure was little more than a representation of "certain mental tendencies of the builders, legibly expressed in it; as fancifulness, love of variety, love of richness, and such others." The "ugly goblins. . .formless monsters, and stern statues, anatomiless and rigid" adorning the Gothic structure," Ruskin concluded, functioned as "signs of the life and liberty" and of the "freedom of thought" of the individual "workman who struck the stone."(Ruskin, "The Nature of Gothic," in *Works*, vol. 10, pp. 183, 198-9.) In honouring the subject, Ruskin's intention was to extract from the flux of every day phenomena "laws" or "essential principles" that were "consistent" and "eternal." ("Inaugural Lecture on Art," and "Relation of Art to Religion," *Works*, vol. 20, pp. 39, 53-54.) Arguing that there are "certain elementary principles of right, in every picture and design," and that "everything which men rightly accomplish is indeed done by Divine help," and "under a consistent law which is never departed from," Ruskin concluded that both art and architecture must always be "executed in compliance with constant laws of right, [that they] cannot be singular and must be distinguished only by excellence in what is always desirable." (*Works*, vol. 20, pp. 26 54, 33) The "desirable" Ruskin explained, was a universal code of "morality" or "the law of rightness in human conduct."(*Works*, vol. 20, p. 49.) Thus the highest function of art was to relate to us "the utmost ascertainable truth respecting visible things and moral feelings: and this pursuit of *fact* is the vital *element* of the art power,—that in which alone, it can develop itself to its utmost." (*Works*, vol. 20, p. 46)

75. This negation of the object is demonstrated by Ruskin's theory of savagery or roughness in the architectural ornament. For Ruskin such qualities revealed the working imagination of the artisan and his freedom to think and create, and inevitably, to make mistakes. When the desire for perfection in design, finish or utility was given precedence, Ruskin argued the artisan became enslaved and his liberty to freely invent removed. Ruskin, "The Nature of Gothic," 1853, *Works*, vol. 10, pp. 188-90

76. Ruskin, "Modern Painters," vol. 5, 1860, *Works*, vol. 7, pp. 356-57n.

77. Ruskin, "Modern Painters," vol 5, *Works*, vol. 7, pp. 356-57n.

78. Philipa Davis, "Arnold or Ruskin?," *Journal of Literature and Theology*, 6, (December 1992), p. 334. However Davis also argues that these contradictions are of little consequence as they fail to subjugate Ruskin's principal thesis, that the moral will always identifies the good.

79. Ruskin, "Modern Painters," vol. 5, *Works*, vol. 7, p. 358n. Davis, "Arnold or Ruskin?," pp. 334-45.

80. Sir Reginald Blomfield, "W.R. Lethaby: An Impression and Tribute," *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 39 (1932), p. 6.

81. For Ruskin the resolution of such conflicts was enabled by the imagination. "This is imagination. . . . By its operation, two ideas are

chosen out of an infinite mass. . .two ideas which are separately wrong, which together shall be right, and whose unity, therefore, the idea must be formed at the instant they are seized at, it is only in unity that either is good, and therefore only the conception of that unity can prompt the preference. Now what is that prophetic action of mind. . .?" (Ruskin, *Works*, vol. 4, pp. 234-45) However, this resolution is never found in Ruskin as his thesis relied, as Kristine Ottesen Garrigan has argued, on fixed contrasts. Thus while Ruskin does fluctuate between a privileging of the subject and the object, as demonstrated by his shifting opinion on finish and roughness, and works on the "hope" that the "two" positions "may fit themselves in the mind" of the reader "without any trouble," the moral basis of his central thesis, and the suggestion of a singular right and wrong which it facilitates, prevents any such resolution. It is ultimately the subject (the divine principle represented by the imagination) which is given primacy in Ruskin's system. Kristene Ottesen Garrigan, *Ruskin on Architecture: His Thought and Influence* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), p. 41.

82. Lethaby's essays which pre-date *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* demonstrate his knowledge of Ruskin. Lethaby's writings and notebooks also indicate that he was familiar with Coleridge's ideas on the imagination. In his 1890 essay, "Of the ';Motive' in Architectural Design," he directly cites Coleridge noting that: "You must (to quote Coleridge) have a lantern in your hand to give light, otherwise all the materials in the world are useless, for you cannot find them, and if you could, you could not arrange them. It is the "principle of selection," this expression of our instinct for order and beauty, life, and right, which no formula will make clear—but once seen, we feel there is a common instinct for its enjoyment, and call it "art" or "style"—it is this alone which expressed in building, is Architecture." Lethaby, "Of the "Motive in Architectural Design," *Architectural Association Notes*, 4 (1889), p. 24. See also Lethaby, "Cast Iron and its Treatment for Artistic Purposes," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 38 (1890), pp. 272-82. Abrams has argued that the term lamp or lantern in Romantic literature referred to the perceived shift in romantic theories of creation from mimesis, where the artist mirrored what "he" saw around him, to the lamp, where the artist becomes the source or originator of form. M.H. Abrams *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953).

83. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, p. 14.

84. William Lethaby, "What shall we call beautiful- A practical view of Aesthetics," *Hibbert Journal*, April (1918) reprinted in Lethaby, *Form in Civilisation*, p. 148.