



Science

## LITERARY ARCHITECTURE

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### Abstract

Architecture and Literature are the social forms of art peculiar to the mankind. Architecture creates a story with a thread of spaces whereas Literature builds a visual representation of a place with words. They have been practiced together from ancient times in order to leverage the experience of users in their respective fields. The primary purpose of the research is to study the amalgamation of these domains of art in order to enhance the prospects of designing in a better-experienced way. Architects and Writers work on the same base with an alike goal and, Architectural concepts could be kindled and inspired by anything in the world henceforth, it could be stimulated by novels and narrations of literature. Thus, the result and conclusion would be exploring an exercise and posing an example of the novel *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand, manifested by the literature review and case studies, henceforth triggering the thoughts of future evolution and enhancement of practice on the topic.

**Keywords:** Architecture; Literature; Architecture of a Novel; Concept in Architecture; Literary Architecture; *The Fountainhead*.

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### 1. Introduction

Art is a domain of human activities in which individuals have the liberty to express, and where one can express, one can connect. There goes a diverse range of ways, how one can express. Irrespective of the non-identical manners to convey their thoughts, the main aim of every art form is to serve its users in one or other way. Every sector on this planet is operating for the comfort of humans, for them to thrive. With time, the profile of the fields are changed, how they are represented, how they are practiced but they still behold the culture values even in this age of modernity and their sole purpose is yet preserved.

Architecture is a social art form serving the basic need of habitant's life; shelter. Besides fulfilling the basic requirement of surviving, it has shaped the cultural and traditional profile of society. By the time, houses and buildings are not seen as mere space of four walls and a roof to dwell into or to functionalize in but also as an aesthetically rich envelope enhancing the profile of a city or town.

Whereas literature is a verbal art form creating a domain for readers to locate their thoughts, likewise a shelter in parallel universe. Where architecture is continuously evolving being a part of the ornamental livelihood, Literature has always been persisted and heeded as an exquisite figure of thoughts.

When we ponder upon the thought of integration, it alters our perspective to look out ways of satisfactory need. Creators and artists are known for their idea of perception and inventiveness from anywhere around. Subsequently, what could be superior than acquiring that thought of inspiration by uniting with a domain which is emerging and functioning with identical approach?

## 2. Literature Review

There exists several texts of research and philosophy on Architecture and Literature, confined in certain approaches in order to lead to an exceptional conclusion. There are various forms of art which are related to each other in persona, they are all transpiring from the same root; the depiction of brilliance. On one hand there is Architecture which is expanding its domain of visual conception, and on the other is literature, portraying elite imaginations in the monarchy of instincts. Many a times, the two have been integrated in manifesting masterpieces through trading. A research conducted in 2013 entitled as “Similarities between Architecture and Literature: A Quest”, was primarily done to study the visual concepts of Architecture and Literature, and the conclusion outlined several mutual terms shared by both the fields carrying similar concept.

Architecture and Literature both creates an atmosphere or space for their user. In all forms of art, designing a space is the main aim irrespective of the approach. An architect creates variety of spaces in order to manifest kind of atmosphere, as done in a piece of poetry in creation of divine surrounding. Though both the terms are manifested in architecture and literature differently, the alikeness between them is unavoidable in the creation of an imaginative mental atmosphere for the beholder. In terms of shape or form, whilst in architecture it is about the third dimensional mass of an object or building having particular weight, in literature, it is the exterior structure of words. Furthermore, Style in architecture follows same features and way of work and in literature it is the process of a poet or author to express thoughts in a certain era, nation or community. Lastly an idea in architecture is the proneness of a mind following certain approach to solve problems, creation of space or designing a structure while in literature an idea expresses a subject or concept involving incidents or persons. (Azari, Shirchi, & Tamrin, 2015)(1)

According to David Spurr, architecture and literature has undergone changes in this age of modernity and spectacle where a book is judged by its cover and building is appreciated aesthetically by its exterior façade. He has picturized the problems faced in bringing together two different fields of cultural production in title. The author further accepts using reflections of Le Corbusier, Heidegger, Adorno, and Derrida along with primary texts in his discussions. (Spurr, 2012)(5)

Various authors have talked about the interactive relationship between architecture and literature. The use of architectural metaphors and literary pieces in architecture and literature has attenuated the evolution for both the art forms respectively. Architecture has served as important analogue throughout the evolution of literary practice. Akiko Busch observes, architecture and literature

have considerable correlation between exhibiting words and spaces that “both are ways of finding those arrangements with which we can live”. (Mezei & Briganti, 2002)(2)

In the novel, *The Fountainhead*, Ayn Rand has used architectural metaphors and similes for the depiction of the narration of the story. It is a story of an architect battling against the society for his firm belief that architecture is about evolution and not replication. As a scene represented, “*The reception room of the office of Francon & Heyer, Architects, looked like a cool, intimate ballroom in a Colonial mansion. The silver-white walls were paneled with flat pilasters; the pilasters were fluted and curved into Ionic snails; they supported little pediments broken in the middle to make room for half a Grecian urn plastered against the wall. Etchings of Greek temples adorned the panels, too small to be distinguished, but presenting the unmistakable columns, pediments and crumbling stone.*” If this scene had been written in a simple language it might have needed just the first sentence but without the use of architecture in the depiction of the scene, it would not have been felt and experienced by the reader, it would have been incomplete. Here architecture enriched literature and vice versa, and correspondingly, upholding the approach and analyzation of the research. (Rand, 1943)(4)

Confronting alike concepts shared by architecture and literature, in workshops conducted by architect Matteo Pericoli, called “Laboratory of Literary Architecture”, Literature and Architecture students collaborate and physically build the architecture of a text. Each literature student brings a novel to the class, whose inner story he or she knows intimately. They start with the plot, the subject or simply a feeling that the student has about the text. They break the piece of writing into most basic elements and analyze the relationship of each part to the overall structure, making sure to avoid any literal translations of the text for example, a specific building or setting. Once the literature students understands an idea for their structure, they construct 3-D models along with the architecture students. (Pericoli, 2013)(3)

One of the model of this literary architecture practice is based on Ernest Hemingway’s *Hills like White Elephants*. In the novel the couple never really understands each other. Their different perspectives leads to their endless conversations, creating a loop that doesn’t find an end. Starting from the different perspective, the couple never reaches a meeting point, and as none of them really understand whether the other one is trying hard or not, they are left with the option to focus on their path only.

The story ends without any proper conclusion of conversation between the couple. They never find the basic problem and pretends everything is fine. The pathways are inspired by this only. They seem tangled but are not and never touch each other, the more they extend, the more separated they become.

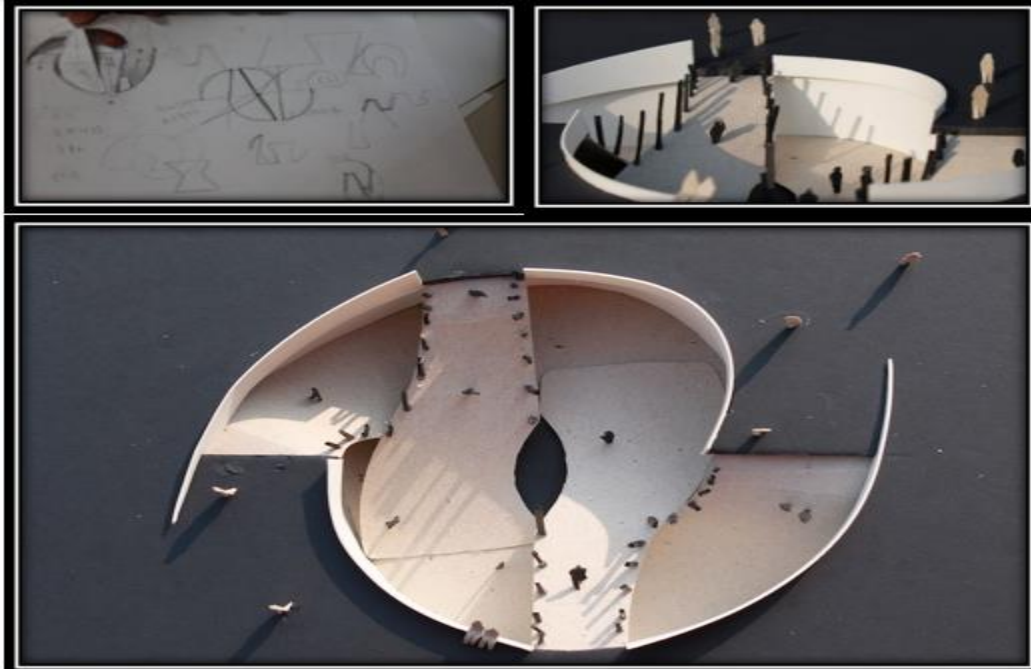


Figure 1, 2, and 3: Architectural model of the Hills like White Elephants,  
Source: <http://lablitarch.com/project/wang-lin-wang-cheng/>

### **Literary Architecture Series by Architect Matteo Pericoli**

Matteo Pericoli's literary architecture series featured his pen-and-ink drawings of the views from the writers' window. In the series, he shares some of his designs revealing the stories they are modelled on.

#### **Annie Ernaux, *Les années***

The book is an autobiographical novel of Annie Ernaux. In which she has written about the multiplicity of her images which are changed with flow of generation and the paradox of her life history. The model of the building is perhaps the clearest manifestation of the author's intent to tell her life story.

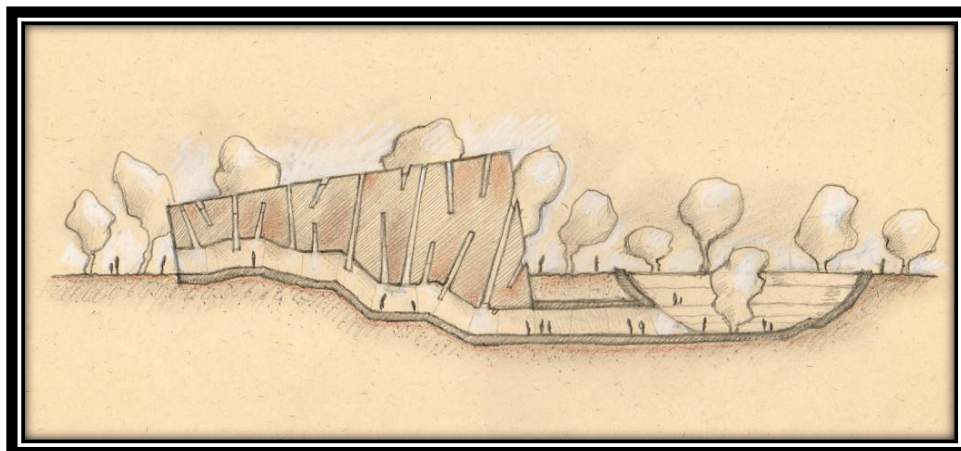


Figure 4: Conceptual section of Les années,  
Source: <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2016/06/27/annie-ernaux-les-annees/>



While reading the story it feels like the body is immersed in a space consisting of emotions and growth, and the historical events constantly shedding light on progression. From outside the structure seems sunk by its own weight into the ground and is fractured by an arrayed irregular silvers thin slits that breaks the solidity of history. Some of these slits extends providing an access to the path.

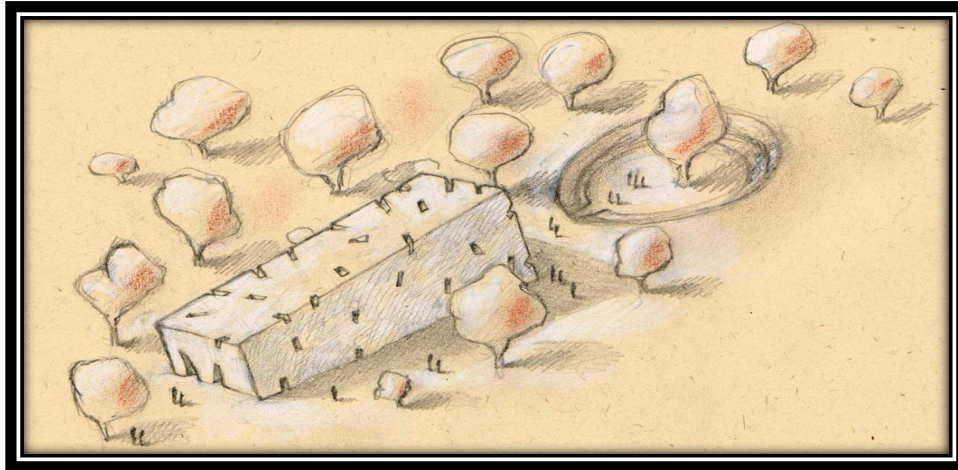


Figure 5: Bird's Eye View,

Source: <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2016/06/27/annie-ernaux-les-annees/>

### 3. Case Study

#### Berkowitz-Odgis House

Based on novel description “Moby Dick”



Figure 6: the Berkowitz-Odgis House,

Source: [https://www.architectmagazine.com/design/buildings/steven-holls-house-at-marthas-vineyard-a-poignant-loss\\_o](https://www.architectmagazine.com/design/buildings/steven-holls-house-at-marthas-vineyard-a-poignant-loss_o)

Steven Berkowitz and Jane Odgis approached Architect Steven Holl to design a residence. The House was designed at Massachusetts. It was built between 1984 -88. The area of the site is about 2,800 square feet.

### Concept

Steven Holl decided to base it on a description of a structure in Herman Melville's Moby Dick. In the novel, the author has described about the particular type of shelters designed by an Indian tribe. They assembled a certain type of abode on the island. They used the skeleton of beached whales as the structure of their house, they used to drag the skeleton of whales above the tide lines and cover them with skin, transforming them into a house. Henceforth, the depiction inspired Holl to design the house as an inside-out balloon frame structure, elevated over the landscape.



Figure 7 & 8: Inside out balloon structure of the house,

Source: [https://www.architectmagazine.com/design/buildings/steven-holls-house-at-marthas-vineyard-a-poignant-loss\\_o](https://www.architectmagazine.com/design/buildings/steven-holls-house-at-marthas-vineyard-a-poignant-loss_o)

### Design

The site is located on a hill near the Atlantic Ocean. The house is elevated according to the height restrictions recommended on a sea side site, having a 1 storey elevation when seen from the beach. The wooden bones of the frame structure encircles a veranda. At ground level, Front Square is used for retail above which there are offices and over the courtyard is a residential accommodation. The latter consists of maisonettes facing east and west. The former enjoy setting sun, overlooking the public square.

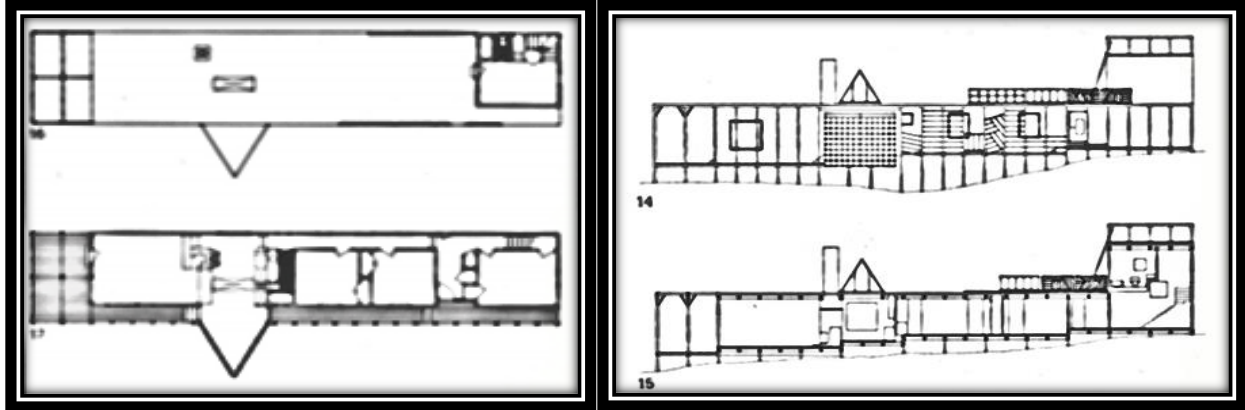


Figure 9: i. Upper level plan, ii. Ground floor plan; Figure 10: i. Main elevation, ii. Section,  
Source: <https://www.architectural-review.com/Journals/2011/08/24/t/e/1/AR-1989-February---Berkowitz-Odgis-House---Metropolitan-Tower-apartments---Seaside-Hybrid-Building-by-Sтивен-Holl-Architects-pages-2-and-3.pdf>

#### 4. Prodigious Exchange of Literature and Architecture

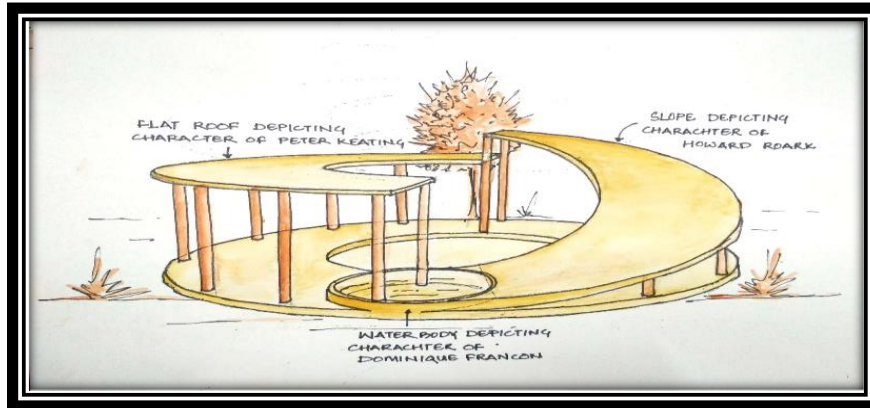
Comprehending the case studies and literature review, the understanding to integrate literature and architecture is quite clear with the approach to follow the conceptual thoughts of the existing literary text. Besides designing functional dwellings for habitants, architecture is also about summoning concepts. Concept design requires an architect to scuffle with the requirements, form, scale and area along with the generic exterior of the building in context of the surrounding. A guiding concept resolves the issues faced by an architect while designing accordingly.

Here, the researcher has posed an example by exercising the narration of *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand into a conceptual building form.

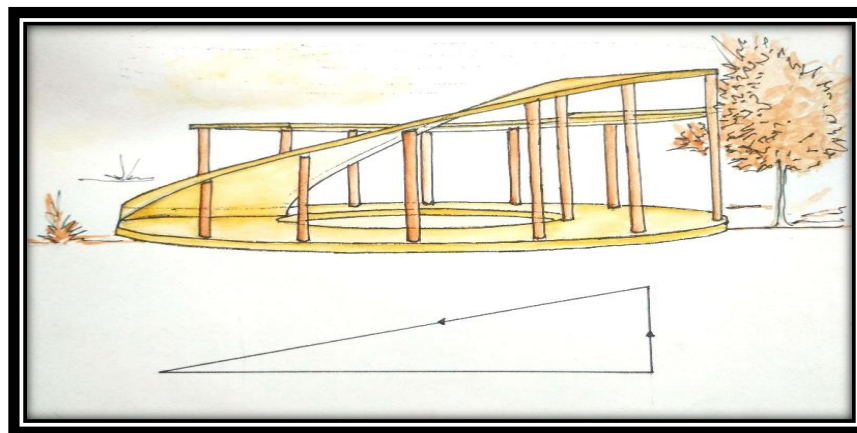
##### Narration as a Structure

In the novel, the main character Howard Roark, was expelled from his college as he didn't want to follow the masters and believed in modernization as well as evolving with the time. Whereas, his colleague Peter Keating was an obeying student of his faculties, he followed the masters as well as created what have been practiced till then, henceforth, was not willing to do anything self-generated. Apart from their same college background, both of them had a relationship with the same woman Dominique Francon. Whilst, Howard and Dominique had a relationship of fondness, Dominique married Peter under self-loathing. Yet, by the end of the story, the relationship of Howard and Dominique fosters.



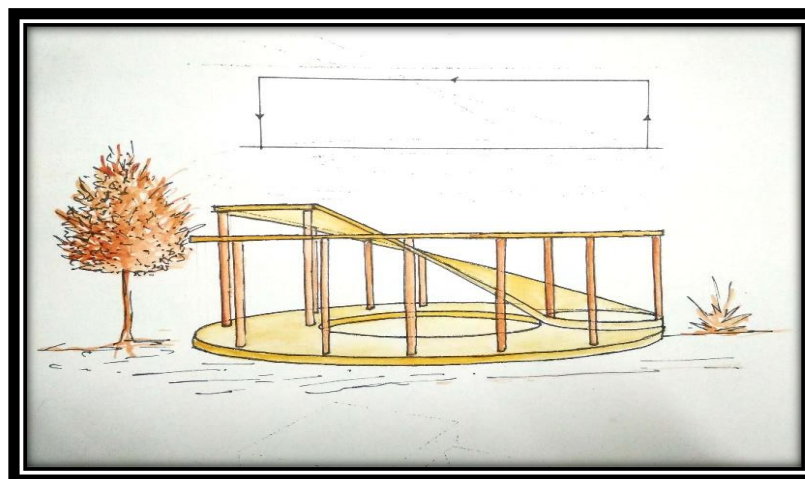


Depiction of characters of the novel into a conceptual structure of pavilion.



Manifestation of Howard Roark's Character

The rise and slope of the slab depicting Howard Roark's character is presenting his approach towards his career. The vertical line is showing the rise of his character as an architecture student and the slope depicting his path towards self-satisfaction, henceforth, concluding the fact that if a person starts with himself, even after reaching heights of the world and acquiring enormous knowledge, the only way of survival is to find the satisfaction within.



Manifestation of Peter Keating's character



Whereas the rise, continuity and fall created by the slab depicting Peter Keating, is presenting his rise as an architecture student, the horizontal line as his wish to always be there where he has reached and grow more irrespective of anything and another vertical line as the fall he had after self-realization.

The level difference between the slabs is depicting the superiority of Howard Roark. The slope meeting the water body is manifesting the relationship of Dominique Francon and Howard Roark, whereas the flat roof coming towards the water body and yet not merging is showing the relationship of Peter Keating and Dominique that even after they were at the same point, they didn't meet.

## 5. Conclusion

The conclusion of the research endorses the integration of Literature and Architecture. The literature review and case studies manifested the concept derived as structure or concept for forms from the non-fictional narration or depiction. Whilst writers and authors also works on the substantiating philosophy which could also turn out to be the concept for the functional spaces in a building. Henceforth, the researcher has posed an example of conceptualizing functional spaces from philosophical narration which could assist further in exploration of Literary Architecture.

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