

Literature And Architecture

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Abstract

Understanding architecture is an individual phenomenon in a sense that it is an individual's perception. As architecture can be understood directly, i.e. by its function, form, colour, texture, material, composition, rhythm, volume, scale etc., it can also be understood more subtly through lateral thinking. This thinking pattern based on sensitivity of an individual opens many new doors towards understanding architecture. One of such ways can be by relating architecture to other forms of art. This paper aims to establish a link between one such art form - literature - and architecture through a lateral way of perception.

Key words : function, form, texture, composition, rhythm, volume, scale.

Introduction

Literature displays many similarities with architecture. Language takes form of literature through a progressive journey from alphabets to words to sentences to paragraphs to chapters to a full size novel. Similarly architecture evolves through a journey from point to line to plane to volume that defines space. Though literature or architecture is understood by its evolved final form, it keeps on displaying its identity through all its fragments as specified.

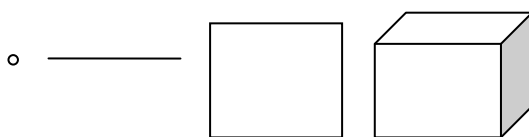


Figure 1: Point – Line – Plane – Volume

Literature and architecture

Literature is a building of words and a building can be described in words. The foundation of literature is purity of grammar, punctuation, use of verbs, adverbs, adjectives, nouns, pronouns etc. and that of architecture is purity of form, mass, rhythm, symmetry, proportion, texture, colour, material etc. The journey of both resembles to that of a river, which is very thin at its origin but as it flows ahead, becomes more and more wide, deep and comprehensive with a wide range of biodiversity. Literature and architecture, both very conceptual at their origins, take a completed physical form at the completion. As a river merges into sea of unlimited depths and varieties, literature and architecture converge into unlimited sea of eyes and minds of human beings.

Both literature and architecture are helpful in healing process of the preceptor. Imagine a sad person trying to calm his mind by reading something inspirational and a person with same state of mind visiting a temple for the same reason. Words have power to reduce stresses and the same is of architecture also. Both of them evoke many more emotions to all those whoever seeks to experience them.

Writer and architect

Although there are many similarities between literature and architecture, the medium to express them is different. A writer or poet creates a scene through his words and an architect creates it through space enclosed by materials. A poet phrases different poems for different emotions e.g. patriotism, love, anger etc. and an architect designs buildings for different emotions, e.g. a temple, school, mall, cinema theater, discotheque, a river ghat, club house and so on. A writer portrays an image of the situation in a reader's mind and a reader perceives as per his own imaginative power. A creation of an architect put to use is experienced by the user through his own perception.

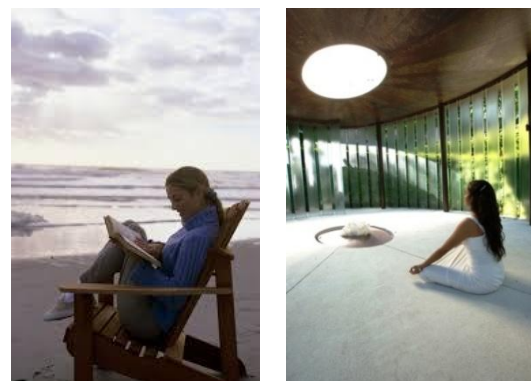


Figure 2: Literature creating calmness in reader's mind and space supporting meditation.

It is essential to be sensitive to create something by which an experience is offered to the user. Observation ability is an inherent quality of writer and architect. Both of them need to be super human beings with correct attitude to "create". A write up can be kept very simple by using simple language and can be decorative with ornamental words. Architecture also can be expressed simply e.g. through minimalism or can be very heavily decorated e.g. Art Nouveau.

*After the crash
the doll's eyes
jammed open*
-Michael Gunton



Figure 3: Haiku and Minimalism in architecture

SONNET XVIII
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.



Figure 4: Sonnet and Art Nouveau architecture

Styles

Literature reaches the society through its various forms such as poetry, novels, essays, drama etc. Every form has its own characteristics and rules. Its structure defines its identity. Similarly, architecture displays various styles. By the characteristics and rules, style is recognized.



Figure 5: Art Deco and Deconstructivism

Conclusion

As it is important to read between the lines and understand what a writer or a poet wants to express, it is equally important for a perciever to 'read' the building and understand what an architect wants to express. It is a perciever's own understanding by which both the art forms can be understood.

References

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