I, Elizabeth T Lamb, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture in Architecture.

It is entitled:
The Alchemy of Space: A Translation

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This work and its defense approved by:

Committee chair: Elizabeth Riorden, M.Arch.

Committee member: Aarati Kanekar, Ph.D.
Literature builds whimsical lands of the conceptual, worlds which merge the known and the unknown. Architecture is a tectonic manipulation, working to conceal and reveal the necessary information needed to grasp the whole, which sharing similar narrative strategies as literature. This thesis aims to unearth the existing relationships between architecture and the text by examining translations across media. Meaning derived from a text allows for the capacity of expression to permeate traditional material barriers, taking away the dividing line between the disciplines of literature and the visual arts.

In the world of Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist*, the reader and Santiago, the protagonist, seek out a pilgrimage route given in a dream. Guided by an invisible force, the elements, and a universal language of the metaphysical realm, they search for and discover a new perspective in the magical realism text of *The Alchemist*. This thesis serves as a pilgrimage of growth, questioning the perception of spatial creation and meaning through our lens of the literature using themes and narrative construction strategies from within the text of the unnatural narrative.
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Linguistic structures are tools for the creation of visualizing spatial depth and discovery. Similar in nature to literature, architecture depends on the development of tectonic patterns which link units of perceptual information to disclose a sequential arrangement in both the structured and conceptual realms. *The Alchemist* is an unnatural narrative, a text that orchestrates the collision of the worlds of the understood and the odd. Author, Paulo Coelho, inspired by his personal pilgrimage experience, shares the tale of Santiago, the protagonist, and his journey to reach the pyramids of Egypt. Embarking on a pilgrimage into the unknown, Santiago encounters a host of characters, who enrich his forward progress, enhancing his understanding of the world around him and himself.
Chapter one of this document begins with establishing historical context for the translation studies across media by looking at writings, research, and criticisms from Walter Benjamin, Jacques Derrida, and Annie Bassett. Following a historical understanding, translation across media shifts to the relationships between the visual arts, specifically literature and architecture, by discussing writings by Aarati Kanekar and Sophia Psarra. Finally, three precedents that use the methodology of translation to derive meaning are discussed and analyzed. The work of Peter Eisenman, Bernard Tschumi, and Guiseppe Terragini illuminate the significance of translations across media.

The second chapter introduces narratology, and the narrative strategies used in the formation of the magical realism to form the structure of the narrative. Narratology is the study of narrative’s formal structure, language, and perception. It allows for a broad range of narrative mediums to have a regulated system of structuring, theory base, and analysis. In Spatial Form in Narrative, Joseph Frank wrote that it is only after separation that the whole is conceptualized. Within the field of narratology, this document examines the narrative strategies of doubling, focalization, hybridization, and the irreducible element.

The third chapter provides a summary of Paulo Coelho’s The Alchemist, which drove the design of this thesis project. The text tells a story of the protagonist, Santiago, and his pilgrimage from the Andalusian Hills of Spain, across the Sahara Desert, to the base of the pyramids of Giza in Egypt. Prompted by a dream, the reader begins with Santiago in a realm of the known, but soon senses a shift into a metaphysical layer of discovery once the bubble of the known is pierced. Accompanying the synopsis, are a list of four themes found in The Alchemist, which are also common themes for unnatural narratives.
The fourth chapter explains the author, Paulo Coelho, and his muse, pilgrimage. The pilgrimage is an activity that consistently influences translation into other forms of human expression. It has a powerful impact on the human psyche.

Chapter five explores the architectural elements and their individual embedded micro-narratives which come together to form spaces of meaning through techniques much like those of structural narratives, frame and control. Looking at Chambers for a Memory Place, written by Charles Moore and Lyndon Donlyn, themes of architecture are presented as a way to invoke meaning. Rem Koolhaas’s book series, a project with the Harvard Graduate School of Design for the 2016 Venice Biennale is discussed. The two ideas from the books, architecture’s themes and core elements, are discussed through the impact on the conscious and subconscious.

The sixth and final chapter fuses together the concepts of translation, pilgrimage, and the narrative strategies derived from narratology research to express the translation of The Alchemist from text to architectural formulation.
“Unlike a work of literature, translation does not find itself in the center of the language forest but on the outside facing the wooded ridge; it calls into it without entering, aiming at that single spot where the echo is able to give, in its own language, the reverberation of the work in the alien one.”

1 Benjamin, W., The Translation Studies Reader, 20.

figure 2. Interpretation of Walter Benjamin’s translation of translation
Translation is an act of communication, presupposing the existence of two distinct reciprocal media forms. It allows for the capacity of expression to surpass traditional material barriers, taking away the dividing line between the disciplines of literature and the visual arts allowing for permeability.

Walter Benjamin, a German-Jewish philosopher, cultural critic and theorist, and author of *The Task of the Translator*, references the creative process of translation as a method of comprehension, followed by deformation, which allows for embedded meaning to be extracted, and lastly, the illumination of the translation. For Benjamin, translation is thought of more like a “kinship” than a direct reflection of the original work, orbiting the intent. Likewise, Annie Brisset, Professor of Translation Studies and Discourse Theory, postulates in *The Search For A Native Language: Translation and Cultural Identity* that translation is a “dual act of communication” allowing for the existence of two paths, the translation giving life to the original. This belief stemmed from the development of translation studies in the 1930’s, which was influenced by German schools of literary philosophy. The German schools of hermeneutics and phenomenology viewed translation methodology as “an interpretation which necessarily reconstitutes and transforms.”

In *The Translation of Architecture, the Production of Babel*, Mark Wigley, author and Dean Emeritus at Columbia GSAPP discusses translation studies within the discourse of deconstructivism in architecture. Wigley referenced Jacques Derrida’s thoughts in *Architecture, Where the Desire May Live*, stating that deconstructivist architecture could communicate a

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depth of meaning in a similar way as the language arts, which highlighted a dialogue between architecture and the language of translation.

Visual artist, Marcel DuChamp’s *Nude Descending a Staircase, No.2*, inspired a translation into the textual realm of poetry by Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, XJ Kennedy. Additionally, Franz Liszt, composer and pianist, translated Raphael’s *Betrothal of the Virgin* in the 1850s. Liszt derived translation across media by applying allusions echoing the religious experience. By capturing the essence of the painting which included a Gregorian chant reminiscent of chanting monks, capturing an exhale of the virgin, and a meek prayer-like tonal section, Liszt achieved a successful translation of visual art to music.

Steven Holl’s *Stretto House* drew directly from a translation of Bela Bartok’s 1936 *Music For Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*. Paralleling the use of overlapping Stretto found in music, water’s reflection on the landscape and interior is used. Besides materiality and light, numerology is also an important feature for Holl’s design, for example, the use of four structures, mimicking the four movements of the piece. “Where music has a materiality in instrumentation and sound, architecture attempts an analog in space and light.”

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\text{material} \times \text{sound/time} = \text{material} \times \text{light/space}
\]

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4 Martin, E., *Architecture as a Translation of Music*, 56
figure 3  Marcel DuChamp’s Nude Descending a Stair, No. 2
figure 4  Raphael’s Bethrothal of the Virgin
figure 5  Steven Holl’s Stretto House
In *Architecture’s Pretext’s: Spaces in Translation*, Dr. Aarati Kanekar, who received a Ph.D. from Georgia Tech University in 2000 and wrote her dissertation on Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, rigorously investigates the junction between architecture and literature, among other media translations. After an analysis of the textual and architectural relationship between the two, she discusses the methodology of numerology and geometric language used by Terragni to each part of the structure of the original. The Danteum’s methodology furthers the idea of construction logic through patterning utilized by both literature and architecture, which forms a genuine awareness of the whole using components found in both languages, form, composition, and rhythm. Both literature and architecture rely on sequencing of a composition to allow analysis of the whole. In regards to the architectonic elements, Kanekar suggests that these elements, used in both visual and non-visual arts have embedded meaning but are also used to imply a deeper meaning. Kanekar states that “architecture can be seen as a manifestation of syntactic combinatorial structures that unfold into patterns, which generate and transform meaning.”  

Sophia Psarra, author and educator at the Bartlett School of Graduate Studies, writes in her book *Architecture and Narrative* that the concept of conceptual versus perceptual, regarding their convergence within the realms of architecture and literature give depth to meaning and understanding. Translation is examined through analyzing the narrative structural strategies of numerous Jorge Borge’s short stories through diagrammatic mappings of narrative structures. By looking at how media translation can inform spatial understanding in architecture, the architectural methodology is enriched by gaining embedded meaning in

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architecture, as opposed to standardized methods of architectural development. *Architecture and Narrative* calls for a paradigm shift regarding the known method of conception by exploring the “morphological properties of architecture in terms of how they relate to conceptual and perceptual notions of space and embodied experience.”

This thesis finds itself walking the line between the conceptual and the perceptual. While architecture represents a solid footing in the known world, literature lives in the abstracted realm of the explored versus the unexplored. This thesis situates itself between architecture and literature, relying on one another to begin the morphology of architectural space through the methodology of translation.

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Figure 6 diagram illustrates thesis’s position between the realm of the conceptual with the perceptual.
Guiseppe Terragini, a modernist trapped in the Italian Rationalist movement, developed The Danteum from a textual translation of Dante’s *The Divine Comedy* communicated through geometry and numerology. It was created for the Roman Exposition of 1942, which never came to fruition because of WWII. The war not only claimed the life of the architect, but also halted the actualization of the project. It survived only because Terragini’s partner, Pietro Lingeri, rescued the project from imminent destruction from American bombings in 1944. Thirteen years later, one surviving design, scheme A, was published in black and white. After an additional nine years, the world was able to enjoy Terragini’s project in full-color renderings.

The project is praised for its successful translation, which abstractly translates *The Divine Comedy*’s structure, instead of replicating it. The Danteum is organized into three parts: Inferno, Purgatory, and Paradise, echoing the structure of ascension in the poem.

*The Divine Comedy* follows the ascent of the soul from the deepest realm of despair to the most heavenly sphere. This ascension is echoed through material usage as well as light and darkness. Hidden in *Paradise* lies another level, *Empyrean*, serving as a reflection of the journey from *Inferno* to *Paradise*. The Danteum used a construction pattern of level hierarchy, punctuated by circulation paths with rhythmically shifting wall widths. The symbolic use of columns in the space, material use, and scale work together to abstractly develop an active context of symbolism and architectural metaphoric relationships in the poem, while also maintaining the language of the favored political architecture of the fascist government.
Established hierarchy of progress

figure 7  Empyrean
figure 8  Paradise
figure 9  Purgatory
figure 10  Inferno
Peter Eisenman’s architectural project *Moving Arrows, Eros and Other Errors: An Architecture of Absence*, is a precedent which utilizes the concept of translation of a text into a theoretical architectural project. It was completed for the 1986 Venice Biennale, which was curated by Aldo Rossi. The project prompt was a call to challenge the conceptual understanding of the urban fabric. Taking from the literary movement of deconstruction, which parallels the ideas of deconstructivism in architectural theory, Eisenman proposed a rethinking of the site, program, and representation. He gave them new life by applying the principles of discontinuity, recursivity, and self-similarity. His methodology was removing objects from their contextual base and scale, and transposing them into other locations of scale and context.

The Eisenman project is a dialogue between the language of urban fabric and the fictional tragedy of Romeo and Juliet. Eisenman derived the program from three themes extracted from Romeo and Juliet: “division (the separation of the lovers - the balcony); union (the marriage of the lovers - the church); and their dialectical relationship (the togetherness and apartness of the lovers - Juliet’s tomb).” The city plan of Verona was organized by allowing the cardo and decumanus to divide the city, allowing the Roman grid to reunite, and finally using the Adige River to bring together yet firmly split the two factions in the urban fabric.

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8 The cardo is the north - south oriented road in the ancient Roman city.
9 The decumanus is the east - west oriented road in the ancient Roman city.
Created by Bernard Tschumi in 1976, *The Manhattan Transcripts* were a theorized vision of the urban scale of Manhattan through the lens of death and desire in four parts: The Park, The Street, The Tower, and The Block. Tschumi’s objective was an architecture of permanence through “maintaining itself beyond the moment of realization of materialization,” with the goal of interpreting reality using the murder archetype. The structure of the narrative echoes the development of a film narrative, similar to a Sergey Eisenstein film, within a set of extreme locales within Manhattan.

The Transcripts, existing in a triad of diagrams, aimed to highlight both the divide and the reliance between formality, use, and social values. Each element occurred within the triad frame, expressing a relation to one another while occupying their own individual plane of existence. The architecture of the transcripts serves as a tool for the interpretation of our reality, mapping the movements of people driven by the desires of the city and space. The diagrams form a narrative that outlines the space, movement, and events of the city, while the city, representing a stage set, remains autonomous. The project separates space, movement, and event. This creates a new relationship between the three, unlike traditional architecture, which converges all three components into one. This project ponders the concept of architectural programs and the actions that happen within space. Do programs choose themselves, or do change actions within, not choreographed by the architect, determine the space?

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figure 15  The Park, one of twenty-four panels
figure 16  The Street, one of four panels
Both *The Tower* and *The Block* are “dechronochologized”, with emphasis placed on the organizational language of logic. The frames exhibits the organizational logic. The frames work together to stage and isolate particular movements which contextualize the story.

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figure 17 *The Tower*, one of ten panels
The Block, exhibits the organizational logic

The Block, 3A, one of fifteen panels
NARRATOLOGY: METAMORPHOSIS IN UNNATURAL NARRATIVE
Author Mieke Bal interprets narratology in *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, as being an aid in the comprehension, analysis, and assessment of narrative. In such a vast field of study, narratology is the all-inclusive collection of the theory of narratives. Reaching beyond literature, narratology examines fictional relationships in a chasm of communicative disciplines, cultural events, and artifacts within micronarratives. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, a text by Gerard Genette, a French literary theorist, helped develop the methodology used for the analysis of narrative, which are order, frequency, duration, mode, and voice.

*Narratology beyond Literary Criticism: Mediality, Disciplinary*, a text edited by Jan Christoph Meister, theorizes that beyond Mieke Bal’s works on narratological theory, visual and spatial structures of the text have been largely neglected until recently. By examining *Spatial Form in Narrative* in conjunction with Mieke Bal’s, *Narratology* and Julian Wolfrey’s *Readings: Acts of Close Readings in Literary Theory*, the reader gains a visual understanding of the relationship between the literary form in narrative structures and the form of architectural elements.

The spatial structure of *The Alchemist* is governed by the concept of bildungsroman \(^\text{12}\) and the unnatural narrative, magical realism. Bildungsroman is a narrative which relies on forward progress and consequence to teach the protagonist and allow an elevated sense of understanding. In *The Alchemist*, the unnatural narrative takes the concept of bildungsroman, and uses the character’s ascension as a bridge, merging the realist world with the unreal.

\(^{12}\) According to Merriam-Webster, (noun) bildungsroman \(\text{ˈbil-dün(k)s-rə-mən, -dunz-}\) in literature: a novel about the moral and psychological growth of the main character.
figure 20  merging of two worlds
“An unnatural narrative violates physical laws, logical principles, or standard anthropomorphic limitations of knowledge by representing storytelling scenarios, narrators, characters, temporalities, or spaces that could not exist in the actual world.” The natural world, seemingly containing what the reader understands as real-world cognitive conditions, is merged with the unexpected unnatural realm, working outside of what the reader accepts as natural law and its limitations. In *The Alchemist*, the elevation of the protagonist is associated with the bridging of the natural and unnatural worlds. The presence of the familiar in unconventional ways compliments their existence in an unnatural state of being, which aims to prevent disbelief. Spatial formality in the worlds both reconcilable and irreconcilable materialize from successful textualization, described by Jon Thiem in *Magical Realism* as “the idea that a person in the world outside of a text might literally enter the world of a fictional text.” The metamorphosis between the fictional space obeying its governing laws and understood space from experience, delicately joining the two is magical realism literature. Author Gabriel Garcia Marquez and his worlds of mystery and enigma are a prime example of Latin American magical realism. Worlds occupied with levitating cups filled with chocolates and worlds with golden flowers falling from the sky challenge the reader to imagine a realm incomparable to the perceptual and shift to an imagining of the conceptual.

During the mid 1920s, in Germany, an art critic, Franz Roh and a museum director, Gustav Hartlaub, independently termed the styles they saw as following German expressionism as magical realism, *Magischer Realismus* and *New Objectivity, Neue Sachlichkeit*. This new style, taking influence from Giorgio de Chirico, took known everyday objects and transformed them into new objects of fascination, with a shift of contextual understanding of the object. Carl Jung wrote that the ordinary

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13 Pier, *The Living Handbook of Narratology*.
with the world of magical realism earned a new identity of mystery from within in the outside world. He declared it “objectivism as spiritual creation.” In 1927, American artists like Edward Hopper and Grant Wood helped bring the concept of magical realism into the United States. It was not long before a new term for this style was coined, Americanism. France and Russia also found influence in magical realism. Henri Rousseau, a French Neue Sachlichkeit artist, used the techniques of Magical Realism, smooth, cold depictions of bleak subjects in a stagnant state of silent existence, and added a sense of naive escapism. In the 1940s, magical realism was given the name Marvelous Real by the Latin American community of creatives, which was meant to give a new identity of individualism, particularly literature thus greatly influencing the European style of magical realism. In the chapter Territorialization of the Imagery in the text Magical Realism, Amaryll Chanady states that the adaptation of unnatural narrative by Latin American artists and writers was the culmination of a multiplicity of elements such as “the tradition of the artist’s vindication of the imagination and subversion of hegemonic models, the French Surrealists’ indictment of restrictive empirical knowledge and valorization of non-European mentalities, the appropriation of the indigenous Other as a marker of difference, and the general delegitimation of values and conceptual frameworks of the past few decades.” The starting point of magical realism finds itself the same, a “microscopic analysis of objective reality.”

Julian Wolfrey’s Readings: Acts of Close Reading in Literary Theory in conjunction with Spatial Form in Narrative and Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community edited by Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris in Magical Realism call out construction methods of narrative strategies which work together to form the narrative of the magical realism genre. Doubling, hybridization, focalization, and the irreducible element uniquely format the structure in the magical realist text The Alchemist.

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15 Zamora, Magical Realism, 36.
16 ibid, 141.
17 ibid, 45
METAMORPHOSIS IN UNNATURAL NARRATIVE

figure 21  Giorgio de Chirico  *The Enigma of a Day*
figure 22  Henri Rousetta  *The Dream*
figure 23  Otto Griebel  *The Stoker*
Hybridization allows for the morphology between conflicting realms, the textualized world and the convergence with the understood world of the reader. This connection builds within itself a network of “fenestral translucency through which reality flickers.”

**ARCHITECTURAL RESPONSE**

**BRIDGING**
**THE IN-BETWEEN**
**SHIFTING**
**BLEND**

18 Zamora, *Magical Realism*, 220
figure 24  merging paths
FOCALIZATION

Focalization is the lens the narrator shares the elements of the story to the reader. It is solely dependent on understandings, biases, and worldly perceptions. It can be understood as the compression and expansion of insight into the understandings of the narrator’s surrounding world. It frames and focuses the comprehension of the progression through the text. Focalization is a notion of perspective, it is associated with matters of vision; it is a theoretical bridging of the perceptual and conceptual, and can be gainfully employed to analyze artifacts that combine the visual and the verbal.

ARCHITECTURAL RESPONSE

FRAMING
LAYERING
CONCEAL V REVEAL
COMPRESS V RELEASE
Figure 25: Narrow tunnel of site
The Double is a common narrative strategy in magical realism used in expressing concepts of metamorphosis forming within characters. Similarly to the concept of bildungsroman, it can represent new identities within a single character or an evil alter-egos of opposition.

19 Warner, Fantastic Metamorphosis, Other Worlds, 161.
Figure 26  One person gaze at their reflection
“The event in poetry, meaning and inscription which escapes human control, grounding, or anticipation.”

The irreducible element is the disturbance and displacement of the logic of the understood realm. The irreducible element represents a shift in perception to conceptualization of a new structured logic of the textual domain, re-associating the reader with the understood notions of the perceived reality. The unexpected exchange can occur in objects and their abilities in the new realm or through interactions within nature.

ARCHITECTURAL RESPONSE

DISPLACEMENT
BEND/SHIFT OF PERSPECTIVE
PARADOXICAL RELATIONSHIP
ASKEW

20 Wolfreys, Readings, 39.
figure 27 an element of askewness occurs within the understood
PAULO COELHO
& PILGRIMAGE
Pilgrimage is defined by Alan Morris in *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage* as “a journey undertaken by a person in search of a place or state that he or she believes to embody a valued idea, a search that has no fixed goal: as the goal is hidden or unknown until it is actualized.” It serves as a narrative of reflection and peace among a world of distribution. In the past, sacred sites have been considered a place where the realms of the divine and human collide. During the Middle Ages, going on a pilgrimage was widely prized by many, scaling social structure.

In today’s structured society, the pilgrimage allows for escaping the limitations of that social structure. Ian Reader, a professor at the University of Manchester in the School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures, lists the influential elements of the increased interest in modern day pilgrimage as being a desire to shift away from social influences, a search for national and social identity, and an individual search for meaning, and autonomy, for example.

Santiago de Compostela, a popular pilgrimage route that ends on the western coast of Spain, was one of the most prominent pilgrimage routes in Europe during the medieval period. After experiencing several centuries of decreased participation, it has grown in popularity yet again.

Paulo Coelho wrote *The Alchemist* in 1987 after his life-changing
pilgrimage experience on the Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage, via the route of Saint James. The first copies of the book were published in 1988, in Portuguese, with only nine hundred copies printed. After a time of disappointing sales, the publishing house broke their contract with Coelho. Eventually, *The Alchemist* was published in English, among other languages, by a different publishing house. In 1998, *The Alchemist* reached one million copies sold. Coincidentally, global pilgrimage routes were simultaneously increasing as well.

![Map of Santiago de Compostela Pilgrimage route taken by Paulo Coelho](image-url)
THE ALCHEMIST
*The Alchemist* was chosen because it is a story of progression and perception through space. Like other magical realist texts, the protagonist shifts from the understood realm to the conceptual which challenges the reader’s interpretation of reality. Challenging the ideas of reality and stagnation versus exploration, this story of pilgrimage is an intriguing way to look at structured spaces of progressive momentum and their impact on understanding and readings of reality within the walls.

**SYNOPSIS**

*The Alchemist* is an allegorical story following the pilgrimage of the young shepherd, Santiago, from the Andalusian Hills in Spain to the Egyptian pyramids. The journey begins because of a dream experienced by the protagonist. His forward progression holds spiritual enlightenment by way of resistance and triumph. He is guided along the way by omens and chance encounters with numerous characters, always moving him toward his goal.

*The Alchemist* serves as a metaphor, speaking to a societal quest to find the real self, navigating against a narrative orchestrated by norms. Santiago accepts the quest laid out in front of him to seek out his ‘personal treasure’ revealed by his dreams to be at the foot of the pyramids. After analysis, episodic events were extracted and morphed into architectonic metaphors. Architectural abstraction of the events is achieved by breaking down all assumed correlations with frequently encountered spaces with embedded meanings of the everyday built environment by returning to the core architectural elements. He experiences the alchemic process of turning common metal to gold; a metaphor for transforming the soul through a process of a pilgrimage. The observer experiences the alchemic process, the transformation of self by the narrative of space brought on by the transferring of spatial qualities across mediums.
The Alchemist is rich in themes common to texts of unnatural narrative. The combination of the known and unknown, the discovery and the ascension, the extraordinary in the ordinary, and the ever-increasing intensity of rhythm in his journey.

THEMES

KNOWN AND THE UNKNOWN

The protagonist begins the journey into a realm of known experiences, swiftly embracing unknown challenges and paths. The known and unknown worlds are merged by the displacement of the understanding of the understood realm of existence. Santiago, a shepherd because of a desire to travel, orbits the familiar hills of Spain. His routine is upended by a dream of an unknown destination that pulls him towards it. By merging into the unknown, a different realm holding the extraordinary is unearthed.

DISCOVERY AND ASCENSION

As Santiago experiences milestones of maturity and spiritual growth, his understanding and perception of the world shifts to a wider lens of understanding and perception. Each milestone he encounters holds within a lesson that grants ascension of knowledge and belief. As his journey progresses, the metaphysical realm of possibilities seems to contradict norms of physics and logic.
The protagonist starts as a façade of a dull shepherd. Slowly, he transforms, to reveal the man of action that is within.

RHYTHM

Santiago confronts a slow and steady increase of resistance on his quest for his personal legend. Much like Maurice Ravel’s *Bolero*, which repeats eight measures, starting with a soft beginning and loud endings, as does Santiago’s journey starting at a gentle pace which swiftly shifts to a tone of aggression.
representation of increased rhythm in the novel, ignited increase by the omen of the hawk
The diagram illustrated above is a narrative diagram, mapping out all the elements which influence Santiago’s experience.

_The diagram illustrated above is a narrative diagram, mapping out all the elements which influence Santiago’s experience._
Dream of treasure under the pyramids of Giza

Arrival to crystal shop

Arrival to Oasis

Arrival to Pyramids

Journey proves to be harder than anticipated

Journey across Sahara Desert begins

Journey continues across desert with Alchemist

PEOPLE

a. Santiago
b. King Salem
c. Thief
d. Crystal Shop Owner
e. Englishman
f. Fatima
g. Alchemist

OBJECT & OMEN

1. dream
2. book
3. butterfly
4. urim & thummim
5. sword
6. clocktower
7. hawk
8. snake
9. gold
10. scarab

LESSONS

A. perception
B. nature
C. language

PLACE

aa. Spain
bb. Morocco
cc. Sahara Desert
dd. Oasis

ee. Egyptian Pyramids
The Alchemist as described previously, is a journey across the Sahara Desert to the base of the pyramids of Giza from the Andalusian Hills. Between the text lies a metaphysical journey taken by Santiago in his return to where his journey began. When reaching the pyramids, enabled by a violent coincidental meeting, he realizes that the treasure was within himself from the beginning.
figure 31 map of southern Spain and northern Africa

Sahara Desert

Al Fayoum, Egypt

Pyramids of Giza, Egypt
ALLEGORIES OF ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS
A PHYSICAL NARRATIVE

The architectural elements set the stage for the production of living. Beyond necessity, allegory within the elements constructs meaning and depth in their placement. The architectural themes and their elements have a genealogy that can be traced back through thousands of years, across cultures, weaving a tapestry of narrative, housing within it a micro-narrative. The elements hold power to effect our subconscious through memory association and instinct. For example, the door is a portal into the depths of space. The portal is regarded, in the Shinto religion, as a symbolic crossing between the realms of the sacred and profane. It can also hold nightmares, buried deep in the subconscious, revealing itself in the dream world.

In Chambers for A Memory Place, an exchange of letters between authors and architects Charles Moore and Donlyn Lyndon, examine the essential themes of architecture. The text explores the collective affect of spatial impact on memory and perception. Similar to the translation, the ordering of these experiences gives meaning to parts of a whole. Place is enriched through moments of emotion, memory, curiosity, and identity. These associations give meaning to space which allows for it to be extracted and re-associated.

Similarly to Chambers For A Memory Place, Rem Koolhaas and Harvard’s Graduate School of Design studio collaboration, Elements of Architecture, a project for the 2014 Venice Biennale, expands on themes of embedded meanings of the fundamental

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21 Identified in Chambers for A Memory Place as openings that frame and portals that bespeak, markers that command and allies that inhabit, borders that control and walls that layer and pockets that offer choice and change, orchards that measure and pilasters that temper, platforms that separate and slopes that join and stairs that climb and pause, and roofs that encompass and canopies that center.
fifteen elements, which leave out concepts of light versus dark and commanding markers, instead, giving priority to interior functions.

The built environment’s lexicon serves as the medium of translation to narrate the text of *The Alchemist*. The elements of architecture and the themes created for spatial meaning and understanding give spaces of activity a rich sense of depth.

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22 A fifteen series catalogue created by Rem Koolhaas and a Graduate School of Architecture graduate studios for presentation at the 2014 Venice Biennale. The fifteen elements are door, window, corridor, wall, ceiling, toilet, fireplace, escalator, elevator, balcony, floor, ramp, facade, roof, and facade.
CONNECTIVE ARTICULATIONS

The path is composed of the floor and flanked by corridor. They work in unison to negotiate sequence through space. Axes inviting us to wander and meander, or asking us to move to the next point quickly. The floor, the foundation of the path, a silent guide, allowing for occupied space and relaxed negotiation, morphing itself to appease. The corridor is arguably the most symbolic architectural metaphor, used in folklore and myth for centuries, for example, the Minotaur of Knossos, was made even more nuanced and mysterious because of the open-plan of the twentieth century. It continues to sculpt narrative at its leisure which arouses excitement and anticipation for the possibilities as to what lies beyond the portal.
figure 32  corridor
figure 33  floor
CURIOUS OPENINGS

Windows and doors are apertures that work together to frame, stage, seating, secure, allow passage, illuminate the darkness, act as a Norman Rockwell painting, and break barriers. Punctuation and rhythm in walls create spaces of privacy and public domains, while also alternatively creating curiosity for the public on the exterior. According to Alberti, a window should be large enough to accommodate a conversation between at least two people. Windows and doors are valuable assets for tectonic relationships, revealing and concealing necessary information, lighting or shading, all of which work to form a larger narrative and depth of meaning. Punctuating the borders that define the public and private realm, windows and doors communicate to our subconscious. The unwelcomed opening of a door, a thing of nightmares, a portal waiting to deliver its cargo to an unknown location. The door represents a multiplicity of opportunities: The single act of opening a door involves a sequence of particular steps which respond to ergonomics and security. Carl Jung vividly recalled a dream as a narrow, hidden door which allows entry into its deepest, most intimate thoughts of the ego, beyond the conscious in his text, Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious. Openings allow a shift from one state to the next, while giving life and motion to layers that choreograph.
figure 34    window
figure 35    door
THE TIES THAT BIND

Borders, a metaphor as much as an element, serves as a guardian of the human ego, serving as a separation of stage and audience, creating public and private. Physically, a border can allow, or not, a sense of security or impose property rights. Historically, it meant many things to a nation. Borders affect the subconscious, whether we realize it not, letting us know which zones are off-limits versus welcoming. They act as a controlling mechanism, keeping cars on the road, or keeping unwelcome feet off a front lawn. Borders are not just walls, they are elements that work to choreograph and organize movement through time and space, sometimes solid and other times merely symbolic, but by learned experience, we understand them just the same.
figure 36  walls
AN ASCENSION

This theme depicts a metaphor of hierarchy embedded in society, of significant success, ascension, or great failure. It signifies a transition in plane or paradigm. Platforms and stairs encourage wander and curiosity, like the stairs of M.C. Escher. Ramps and gently moving slopes, like those of Siena, gracefully usher people forward, letting contextual awareness wander, however, stairs demand the attention of the climber, an awareness of the movement of the physical body. Lastly, it can act as a platform or stage that exhibit the ascender and descender.
Both large and small scale, markers and placemakers serve as nodes of a path. Small scale aids in the existence of human life; the larger scale gives a sense of place on a much larger scale. Toilet and fireplace, are human scale allies, evolving with human needs, making the environment more hospitable. These two elements specifically, have impacted the arrangement of rooms in space. The larger scale markers, like towers, or the ornate church steeples, which served as markers, for the Roman city plan by Pope Sixtus V, morphing the urban plan, which allowed pilgrims to navigate the city easily. Towers, in myth, are usually powerful isolated challenges. Today, skylines like New York City, challenge the idea of place and scale within the urban fabric.
figure 41  tower
figure 42  toilet
figure 43  fireplace
SHELTER AND A WINDOW TO THE SKY

Roofs and canopies, the most vital part of man’s primitive hut, serve as a protector against the elements. They offer a sense of scale and hierarchy within the interior. The exterior roof provides a visual clue of the typology within. In The Danteum, the exposure of the sky within the ceiling is a climax of the translation of *The Divine Comedy*, serving as a metaphor of ascension to the heavens.
figure 44 roof
figure 45 ceiling
Organization and logic are the backbone of architectural meaning. The grid, as Charles Moore discusses, gives order to the orchards. As columns and structural members populate a structure, their dependence on the governing grid grows. Order and rhythm orchestrate the elements in space, as well as on applied surfaces, like façades. These elements and their order serve as the foundation for memory and association. Terragini’s use of orchards that measure enriched the experience of circulation, while also serving as the ordering translation from poem to space. Historically, columns and pilasters served as procession maker and storyteller. The grandeur of the hypo-style hall would have far less impact on the viewer without the ordering and scale of the columns.
Figure 46  façade
THE ALCHEMY OF SPACE
Figure 47 diagram represents how physical elements, translation, and unnatural narrative strategies work together in the formation of an architectural experience.
figure 48  diagram places the design translation into the space of the narrative diagram from chapter 4, The Alchemist.
DESIGN SYNOPSIS

The Alchemist is an unnatural narrative of the otherworldly journey of Santiago. The reader discovers increased awareness and perception of Santiago’s reality as time moves forward. The experience of the journey is translated into a series of transformations based on a progression through time, resulting in a mediation that presents an altered insight and reading of architecture’s reality. By referencing the narrative strategies and themes established in The Alchemist, the design parallels a similar technique in utilizing the architectural elements to portray their allegory of space and time.

The journey is one concerned with a collection of objects, knowledge, and omens to bridge two worlds, the design, using the narrative structures discussed and architectural elements, becomes a collection or bricolage of the composition between architectural elements and themes, narrative structures, and text themes. The forms of the omen or enigma, the aspect of place, and a narrative structure or theme come together to inform an allegory of place. All seven structures collaborate to translate a journey of clarity, ascension, and perspective. The interplay between conceptual and perceptual elements within the architectural verbiage portray the magical realist quality.

omen + element of place + narrative strategy/theme

The journey was broken down into seven parts. The points of the journey were used because of discovery and ascension within the text. Each point of the journey leads to a growth of comprehension.
One

The Innocent In the Nest\textsuperscript{23} begin the journey in a state of clarity. Clarity, symbolized by the proximity of the sycamore tree to Santiago and his flock. At this point, the dream state has entered the realm of Santiago. This design assumes the ordinary form, symbolic of Santiago’s state.

Two

The Explorer in the Garden is the journey’s first descent into northern Africa. The protagonist suffers one of many hard knocks on his journey, after being distracted by a sword in a narrow plaza. The reader soon realizes that the protagonist’s perspective is narrowly framed and will widen slowly with time, beginning with the realization that the journey will be a slow progress. The theme of slowing rhythm is presented by a clock, which dominates the plaza. Narrow walkways are representative of place, but also aid in the representation of focalization.

\textsuperscript{23} Nature and the Human Soul, authored by depth psychologist Bill Plotkin, Ph.D, calls out the life stages of human development, termed the Eco-centric Stages of Human Development based on principles of the self archetypes associated with Carl Jung. Plotkin’s steps highlight a journey of enrichment of the individual’s ego and self-actualization. Stages include The Innocent In the Nest, The Explorer in the Garden, The Soul Apprentice at the Wellspring, The Wander In The Cocoon, The Thespian at the Oasis, The Master in the Grove of Elders, and The Sage in the Mountain Cave.
Three

The Soul Apprentice at the Wellspring finds itself moving ever so slowly toward the pyramids. On another hill, the protagonist is faced with two decisions, moving forward or retreating. During the protagonist’s eleven month stay at the crystal shop, he discovers a knowledge of the Arabic language, and understanding of trade, and the wisdom gained from the crystal shop owner. During this time, a balance of bridging new and old understandings is achieved. The hill used as an element of place and representative of struggle. The omen of innovation is used to represent the success and slow incline of Santiago.

Four

The Wander in the Cocoon allows for observation by incorporating Urmin and Thummim, observation, and the infinite. Urmin and Thummim are omens which progress Santiago’s journey forward, serving as a reminder of his magical meeting with a king. Observation serves as a characteristic of place.

Five

The Thespian at the Oasis gives an opportunity for a short reprieve by incorporating water. The introduction of water signals a quench and discovery for Santiago. The merging of two realms marks Santiago’s ascension into the realm of the unexplainable. This irreducible element is characterized by an element of division. The wing of a hawk serves as the representation of the omen which marks Santiago’s stay on the oasis. Water, the hawk’s wing, and the theme of discovery form the fifth structure.
Six

The Master in the Grove of Elders is the moment of greatest ascension and understanding of the universal language spoken by the worlds and elements. This structure is compiled of a connection between the two worlds, represented by a bridge. The theme of reflection is used to represent the elevation of self. The sand dunes serve as the element of place.

Seven

The Sage in the Mountain Cave allows for reflection on the process of the pilgrimage by incorporating the scarab, the form of the pyramid, and the theme of ordinary to extraordinary. The scarab serves as a marker of extraordinary coincidence and fate’s progress forward. The pyramids are the overwhelming climax of the completed journey. The element of extraordinary is explored through scale.
figure 49  Architectural representation of magical realism
figure 50  Architectural representation of magical realism
figure 51  Architectural representation of magical realism
figure 52  Architectural representation of magical realism
figure 53 Architectural representations of magical realism to convey perceptual and conceptual feeling of place in architecture.
*The Alchemist* is a journey that follows the protagonist into the depths of the unknown. It guides the reader through the perceptual and conceptual, ending in a metaphoric growth of the journey as self. Like literature, architecture is an exploration of the narrative pilgrimage, but within physical space. Translation offers a deeper meaning of narrative within space. It has the ability to serve as a mediator for the individual that exposes micro-narrative within.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


