ABSTRACT

A NUDIST RESORT

by Phillip Edward Buchy

An architecture thesis focused on designing a project to suit the particular needs and wants of a specialized client group, in this case, nudists. Literary research coupled with years of personal experience and interviews, revealed nudism to be mostly an act of self-discovery. The focus of the project thus became designing a resort that would facilitate the process of discovery and ideally correlate the spiritual nature of the experience of nudism with the architectural environment. Design decisions to accomplish this were primarily based on people’s environmental preferences and our predispositions for natural settings as well as material quality. This thesis is experiential and process oriented, not empirical. Conclusions of the successfulness of the finished design are at the discretion of the reader.
A NUDIST RESORT

A Thesis

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DEDICATION

to the memory of my friend and mentor,

Ann Cline

It always astonished me how effortlessly Ann could enable a student to see more in themselves than they knew was there. She knew the value of patience, ...the value of compassion, ...the value of 'simpleness.'

Ann once told me that she believed that God was by committee, and that when she died, she wanted to be put on the committee of minor miracles. ...Those curious moments that make you pause, ...tilt your head, ...and say 'Huh'.

As I go forth, I will keep a corner of my eye on the lookout for those moments. And when I come across them, I will pause, ...tilt my head, ...and simply say...

...'Thank you Ann, ...Thank you.'
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love. I suppose my parents played a part in all of this as well, ...thirty-three years ago for sure. ...Actually they have been there every step of the way seeing that I had everything I could possibly need. I suppose of everyone in the family, finishing this Master's degree means the most to Mamaw. Thank you so very much for your love and support, ...this degree means an whole lot to me too.
Introduction

It all began on an unusually stifling late-September morning in 1992. I, like most of my classmates, was in a semi-conscious haze, attempting to recapture an hours rest from the night before. Scott Johnston was giving a lecture on mechanical systems and their relationship to human physiology. This of course did not help anyone to stay awake. The material wasn't boring mind you; it was Scott's delivery. It isn't really his fault; his voice just has a grandfatherly reassuring tone to it. The effect is not unlike the drone of a fan on a hot summer night.

So there I was, blurrily staring out the window thinking of fans, when Scott began talking about the insulating effect of clothing, or clo values. He went on to point out that at an ambient air temperature of 84°F. with no breeze, like that day, the human body is most comfortable without any clothing. This caught everyone's immediate attention. He added something to the effect that there were obvious reasons why we shouldn't act upon this fact. We all politely chuckled, and realizing that this was the highpoint of the lecture, began to return to our individual diversions.

Perhaps if it had been cooler, I wouldn't have given his little joke a second thought. I would have alertly taken notes and gone about the day's business. Instead, I gave into the conditions of the moment, and I began to drift back into half slumber where I thought erotic images of unclothed women playing with portable fans would be waiting for me. But when I dozed off, all that was there was a very serious voice that said 'Why Not'.

Now I was embroiled in a sociological quandary within the confines of my mind. "Why Not? Five billion people in the world, half one way, half the other.... We're all adults here, what's the big deal? If you're in college and you haven't seen what the human body of both sexes looks like by now, then you've been sheltered too long.... And what as a society are we sheltering our children from? The truth? Knowledge? Understanding who they are? Other cultures and societies openly practice public nudity without inflicting ill effects upon their youth, why doesn't our nation? And if we are more comfortable at certain temperatures without clothing, then why do we force ourselves to be uncomfortable? Does our society have a pernicious streak?"

In the summer of 1994, I packed up my belongings and my questions, and moved to Texas. While wandering the Lone Star State, I finally stoked up the courage to visit a clothing-optional club northwest of Fort Worth. Little did I know that I was starting a journey of self-discovery that would change my outlook on my life, our nation, and what motivates us.

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Bluebonnet, so named for the native wildflower of the area, resides in the rolling plains of the National Grasslands. It was a bright spring day, a year and a half removed from my first thoughts of what a nudist lifestyle entailed on that September morning in Scott’s class, and as I drove down the dirt road that lead to the club, a strange mix of eager anticipation and nervous dread overcame me.

Pulling up to the gate at the crest of a hill, I wondered if there was a club there at all. Despite the view, the club’s buildings were well hidden by strategically placed mounds, shrubs, and trees, and tucked into the hillsides. The only indication of civilization was an ordinary farmer’s barbwire fence, a metal gate, and a call box. Having phoned ahead, I knew to buzz the office and wait for a response, so I pushed the call button with a tremble.

It seemed an eternity for them to answer. I surmised that they could sense my hesitation when I pushed the button and were having a good laugh at my expense. Foolish thoughts began to dance in my head. ‘I’m out of shape, I’m going to look terrible… what if I stutter and say something stupid like, ‘how’s it hangin’?… what if someone catches me as I’m scratching myself?…what if I get an erection!’

Right then, a man said through the box; “Come on in.” The gate swung open, and before my mind could absorb the monumentality of the moment, my hands and feet had driven me through.

Rounding a bend in the drive, the office was revealed to be nothing more than a doublewide mobile home, and I briefly thought; ‘Thus begins my return to nature?’ I parked my car, got out and was greeted by a gray-haired man from the doorway, who was wearing only his tan. After initial pleasantries, the man, who had a thick German accent, took on a very matter-of-fact, let’s get down to business tone. (Not the laid-back atmosphere that I had anticipated, but to each his own) He adopted a rather stern line of questioning. “Why do you want to try nudism?” “How did you hear about us?” “What do you hope to gain from this experience?” “Do you have a criminal record?”

At some point I realized that this barrage was a systematic interrogation. Annoyed and somewhat offended, I stopped trying to accommodate him with answers, and angrily interrupted him. Bluntly, I told him that this had been of interest to me for a couple of years, and I told him the story of the morning in Scott’s class, even including the part about the portable fans. After which he said, “Gud, I just had to be sure you weren’t some zort of child pornographer or zumzing. You can’t be too careful, you know.” and smiled as though all was right with the world.

Now it was time for me to go on a tour of the facilities. The man got on a walkie-talkie to summon the person with the golf cart to the front office and told me to wait out front. A cart came from around a hill driven by a woman. She was in her mid-
thirties, with long, sandy blonde hair, an even golden tan, and a very pleasant smile. Actually, she was drop-dead gorgeous, but after my recent inquisition, I didn’t want to appear hypocritical.

We set out down the gravel drive back the way she came. She began to tell me about the history of the club as we bounced down the lane, but I wasn’t really listening. I couldn’t understand why this woman, who by all rights fit the description of the woman of my dreams, didn’t turn me on. After all, I’m sitting right next to her and she isn’t wearing a stitch of clothing! Then the epiphany hit me. She wasn’t doing anything of a sexual nature. She was simply going about a normal day’s life, except she wasn’t clothed. I began to realize and accept that nudity, sex, and hence love were three distinct and mutually exclusive concepts, both in theory and reality.\(^2\)

We continued our ride over hills with long grass, past groves of trees and people with tents and campers, until we came to a cluster of one-story ranch style buildings which were the club’s only permanent structures. We got out of the cart and she showed me the facilities. The main building was nothing more than a ranch blockhouse with a kitchen, eating area, pool table, restrooms, and a large room with a fireplace that she said was used for dances, card tournaments, and other group activities. There was an outdoor pool, hot tub, and sun deck with an attached pavilion that housed separate restrooms divided by an open shower room. Other smaller buildings I found out were maintenance sheds and a sauna. Not much to write home about.

At this point I really began to feel out of place, since I was still clothed, …and it had become readily apparent to me that I was the only one. Later, in my literary research, I came to discover that this is a common sensation for those indulging in their first social nudist situation. Such was the case for an American couple who visited a German nudist resort in the early 1900’s. “We, on our part, were not at ease. Suddenly conscious, as never before, of our clothes, we blushed with embarrassment before this man. We felt a positive sense of shame, of impropriety- not on his part, however, but our own.”\(^3\)

So, I quickly stripped in front of this strange woman whom I had known for no more than ten minutes, and did so quite relaxed. She giggled a little, and said something to the effect that she wondered how long I would hold out. Wishing me well, she hopped in her cart and sped back up the road toward the office.

I gathered my clothes, towel, sunglasses, book, and sun bloc, and set out for the sun deck to stake out a spot. Picking a chaise lounge that was flanked by other unoccupied chaises, I thought I could pass myself off as a veteran nudist who simply

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\(^3\) Frances and Mason Merrill, *Among The Nudists* (Garden City: Garden City Publishing, 1933) 25.
wanted to read his book while enjoying the great outdoors. Unfortunately, I was the only one who was buying this act.

It took about five minutes before a woman from across the pool got up, grabbed her towel, walked over to my side of the pool, laid her towel on the lounge next to mine, sat down, and introduced herself by saying, “So, this is your first time, huh?” So much for the book. Most of the day would be spent meeting the other people who were there. I met a doctor, a librarian, a plumber and his family, and many others, whose professions weren’t revealed to me. The woman who first sat beside me was a housewife and mother of two grown kids. But I couldn’t have guessed, until I took the time to talk with each of them and got to know them for who they really were, not the clothes they normally wear. Topics of conversation were wide ranging. I remember discussing everything from taxes to sports to gardening, and, inevitably, sharing the experience of their first visit to a clothing-optional facility.  

One person even admitted to me that they had started practicing nudism as a prescribed treatment from their psychologist. Suffice to say, that practicing social nudism would challenge one to shed the reclusive nature of their persona. Looking back, I would also contend that nudism helps us to shed society’s ills and expectations, if only for a moment.

By the end of the day, I found myself to be regenerated and ready to take on life in a new way. My trepidations had vanished. For the first time in my life, I saw strangers as simply people, and not for what their clothes represented. I began feeling more comfortable with myself, and with those around me. Of course, this is what I gained from my first experience with nudism, and admittedly, I was looking for a rather significant change in my outlook. Not everyone’s first experience will have the same impact. For some it may even contain larger revelations, and for others perhaps it will be more of a novelty. In any case, you are sure to leave the experience with a new perspective.

In some ways, practicing nudism is no big deal once you get past the initial shock. It’s not unlike jumping into a pool without testing the water, once you’re in there, you might as well swim. …Speaking of which, I also became acutely aware of how much of the physical world had been shielded by my clothes. You wouldn’t think that a swimsuit makes that much of a difference, but it does. It is amazing how much one of those restricts your movement, and for me personally there is not another feeling quite as invigorating and centering as swimming in the nude. The freedom of just being me, while suspended between two planes gives me a sensation of absolute unity with the world. Similar thoughts can be expressed for what can be experienced and learned from the air and sun. Not since early childhood, had I been so alive and aware.

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About now I’m guessing that the reader of this thesis, is wondering how is this an architectural thesis? It sounds like the introduction to a sociology thesis! And you would be right. And the knee-jerk answer would be, ‘architects design the built environments in which societies interact, blah, blah, blah...’ It is my contention however, that this topic goes beyond the realm of rational logic and consciousness, and into the depths of our intuition, desires, and understanding.

For on that bright day in Texas, and almost every time since that I have been to a clothing-optional resort, something just wasn’t right. I just had a nagging feeling in my gut. Then in the fall of 1998 after I moved back to Ohio, I was visiting a local resort, and it hit me. The buildings were incompatible with the experience of nudism! While the interaction of social nudism was indeed liberating, the facilities themselves were still a reflection of suburbia, and hence whether conscious of it or not, were still providing a reflection of society at large.

The picture was not complete. The form, quality, and touch of the building materials did not relate well to the human grip, and our skin’s sensibility. They were too refined and machined beyond recognition. I mean, what the hell is gyp. board anyway? Well, besides gypsum. When I touch it, it feels dull. It has been refined beyond our ability to intuitively recognize how that material was brought from its inherent state, to its current application. Stonework is so much easier to appreciate. You just have to run your skin along its surface, to feel all the edges created from cutting the material from the quarry to the mason who set the stone. Woodwork, simply sanded and stained, tells such a richer story, than when we slap a coat of paint on it. Gypsum board... For me, it loses its presence into a dimensionless, white, endless plane.

Given a choice of travel, people naturally move in arcs\(^5\), but our buildings, furniture, street-grids, etc. make us turn corners at right angles. So why, in an environment that is meant to celebrate our bodies in a natural state, do we submit ourselves to a hard-edged, grid-like physical environment?

My voyage into social nudism has been one of discovery and inspiration. Why shouldn’t the built environment around these activities foster personal growth? Why not build an environment that is spiritually compatible with the experience? Perhaps I

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\(^5\) I have no scientific reference to support this point, …but when was the last time you marched through your house?
just might discover ways that the built environment can be more supportive to the
philosophies and dynamics that underlie nudism.

My thesis will include three major parts: Nudist History, Customs, & Philosophy;
Clothing-Optional Needs; and Juvenation, the name of my design project.

The first part will be a brief history of the practice of social nudism, looking at
the attitudes and events that have shaped what is today’s concept of a clothing optional
lifestyle. Going back to that hot day in September 1992, we will actually begin with a
look at clothing, and its impact on our lives, as well as some of the physiological needs
of the human body. Here we will find key insights as to what motivates a person to
deviate from society at large, and go without protective layers. Then we will look
deeper into that first time experience, and broaden our understanding of the
philosophies and guidelines that all nudists share, as we reflect upon the major periods
of growth of the modern nudist movement. And we will see how that history has
evolved into today’s multitude of outlooks and resort choices.

The second part, Clothing-Optional Needs, examines our interactions with our
surroundings, with or without clothing, and forms a picture of what I believe some of
our inherent predispositions are. Here we will focus on aesthetic preferences, and
psychological dynamics as they relate to our built environments, and the activities found
in an up-scale nudist resort. This part also chronicles the field research that I have
conducted towards the design of my own clothing optional resort, and culminates with
my resort’s program.

Design specifics are addressed in the third part. Decisions related to site
orientation, circulation, adjacencies, program areas, community, massing, presence,
seasonal use, and material choice & quality will illustrate how I integrated my research
with my design solution.

All that’s left for this introduction, is to share with you the reader, what in the big
picture of things, my thesis is. Perhaps my friend and mentor, Ann Cline, said it best,
“What is your thesis but an artifact? In 1000 years, an archaeologist might dig up a
copy of this thesis ...and what will they think of it? Just another piece in the puzzle of
humanity.”

My thesis is experiential, not empirical. There are no conclusions to be made,
only questions to discover. I want to write this as a conversation, a story that I’m
sharing with a friend. This is a piece of our puzzle, and this is my journey.
PART I
NUDIST HISTORY, CUSTOMS, & PHILOSOPHY
CLOTHING & PHILOSOPHY

It was a scorching summer day in Texas, at Vista Grande Ranch, just west of Ft. Worth. (Ft. Worth sits right on the dividing line between two distinct biomes, to the north and east is grassland/savanna where Bluebonnet is located, and to the southwest is scrub desert.) Vista Grande Ranch is the most accurately named clothing-optional resort I’ve visited. There is definitely a grand view to the west, across the desert to the horizon and the term “ranch”, as opposed to “resort”, is far more accurate at capturing the club’s decidedly rustic facilities. “Open air conditioning”, if I correctly recollect, was the term one club member fondly used.

Fortunately I was wearing my Teva sandals that day, and not just because of the cactus. As I was crossing through the dance hall (tin roof on stilts with a concrete slab and plywood riser at one end), I met a new friend as I reached the trail at the far side. About a foot and a half from my next step at the edge of the concrete, taking in a sunbath, was a four-inch long (with tail curled!), black scorpion. We politely greeted each other with defensive postures, and to “welcome” me to his or her part of the club, the scorpion made a couple of swift steps in my direction. I quickly stamped my sandal down about a foot in front of it. Apparently I was correct in my assumption that an inch thick rubber slab slamming in front of someone who was no taller, would give them a moment’s pause. For I would guesstimate a minute, we silently stared at one another. Noticing that the scorpion’s skin was a tad thicker than my own, I finally decided to return from whence I came.

Clearly, clothing has role to play, even in the life of a nudist. By examining why we wear clothes, it is my intent to illustrate the viewpoints of nudists, and discover why some of us have chosen to periodically go without attire.

At this point, I feel that it is only fair to acknowledge the pitfall of debating in our minds, whether or not nudism is right or wrong. Given the personal nature of this topic, I often fell into this trap throughout my research. I suppose feeling the need to defend oneself is a characteristic that most minority groups share at times during their respective histories. Excuses aside, nudism is a matter of personal choice. I bring it up simply to suggest that keeping this view in mind is something that could be helpful while reading this text, since this subject is often associated with concepts that most of us hold dear as deep personal beliefs and convictions.

This thesis is about designing for a particular type of client. The clients are nudists and my focus here is to learn about the beliefs and practices of these clients in order to best design a resort to suit their particular wants and needs. Maintaining this level of focus has been essential in order to complete this thesis, and avoid straying too far off on tangents.
The Purposes Of Clothing

So why do we wear clothes? The most common reaction I get to this question is ‘For protection, of course’, and this is absolutely correct. Obviously, there are physical extremes and extreme physical environments that the human body itself cannot withstand for long. I know I would prefer not to fight a fire, climb a mountain, or be stranded in a blizzard without clothes. It is easy to assume that this is the basic need for clothes. Well, …at least I did when I started all this, but when I got into it, I found a myriad of uses.

There is no clear and agreed upon theory as to why people began wearing clothes. Accepting the hypothesis that mankind began as hunter/gatherers, it stands to reason that the first garment might have been a carrying device.

Beyond functionality there are other reasons for wearing clothes. The West German swim team once went to the trouble to prove that swimsuits slowed the times of swimmers, versus swimming in the nude. Yet, at the Olympics, a venue that prides itself on rewarding the swiftest and displaying mankind’s physical bests, the West German team still wore suits. Apparently, some cultures have decided that modesty has a place.

Clothing’s widest variety of uses stems from its ability to draw attention to the wearer. Perhaps the original use of clothing was to draw attention to our genitals. There are “primitive” cultures still today, where the penis sheaf is a man’s most prominent (if not only) adornment.

From a semiotic point of view, clothing acts both as sign and symbol in society. How would a police officer function without a uniform? Clothing delineates social rank, identifies a person’s skills, identifies groups, and acts as a cultural map for nationalities, religions, and clubs. Along spiritual lines, it plays all these roles, as well as providing additional uses regarding rites of passage, the display of symbols, and uses in ceremonies. From a fashion point of view, clothing gives society another vehicle for expressing itself aesthetically.

Clothing has become sophisticated to the point that almost every article of clothing simultaneously accomplishes four things; it has a functional use such as body

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6 Lawrence Langner, The Importance of Wearing Clothes (Los Angeles: Elysium Growth Press, 1991) 4. Provides multiple possibilities of the origin of clothes and examples that bring into question the validity of any one correct reason.
7 Smith & Sparks, Growing Up Without Shame, 92.
10 Robinson, Body Packaging, 27.
protection; it identifies a rank or lack there of; it is ornamental having aesthetic qualities; and it has qualities that stimulate sexual acknowledgment.\textsuperscript{11}

So, after deeper consideration, we can see that clothing is used for a wide variety of purposes.Ironically though, the only true answer to why we wear clothes is the initial reaction, “For protection.” At least this is the viewpoint of most nudists. Speaking as a nudist, we believe that many of the reasons we wear clothes is out of fear and not need. Besides physical protection, all other uses of clothing are also protection, because all of these uses are based on fears and assumptions. The assumption becomes a comfortable security blanket. Hence, so do the clothes we wear.

Let me illustrate this by looking at some of the primary reasons that we wear clothes. We’ll articulate a use of clothing, the assumption behind it\textsuperscript{12}, the viewpoint of most nudists, and as a result, identify the major points of nudist philosophy.

\textbf{Clothing And The Body}

At this point I would ask you to consider the concept of nudism as it applies to aspects of your everyday life. I find it easy to come up with examples for extreme conditions, but quite another to think in terms of little things. The little things and during everyday activities though, are where we find aspects of life that we take for granted while wearing clothes. As it turns out, I discovered I have a habit of putting little things like pens and post-it note pads in my pockets as I move from place to place at work. I realized this when I was at home and had to keep holding these items in my hands from room to room.

\textbf{PROTECTION:} Compared to other animals, we do seem ill prepared for daily life without clothes. After all, we have neither a thick hide nor fur, we lack fangs, scales, or claws to defend ourselves, and we don’t have beautiful plumage to either attract a mate or camouflage us. Clothing can fill these needs. There is a difference though between using clothing as a tool, and seeing it as a means to improve upon nature.\textsuperscript{13}

Many nudists believe that this is society’s viewpoint. What they recognize is that the judgment to improve perpetuates a mindset that separates humans from nature and also victimizes humankind by focusing our energy on our frailty, rather than celebrating our resilience. The real result is that we create overprotection, which serves to weaken us over the years and even to pose life-threatening situations from time to time.

\textsuperscript{11} Langner, \textit{The Importance of Wearing Clothes}, 36.
\textsuperscript{12} The assumptions that we will be referring to are those based in American society, for simplicity of viewpoint, and since the project site is located in this country.
\textsuperscript{13} Langner, \textit{The Importance of Wearing Clothes}, 203.
Take tropical climates, for instance. Sunstroke is much more likely to occur, clothed than unclothed, as clothing inhibits evapo-transpiration cooling of the skin.\textsuperscript{14} As well, clothing holds in moisture, which makes for a prime breeding ground for bacteria, mold, and viruses. It also is commonly assumed that the primitive indigenous cultures of tropical climes wear loin-clothes to protect their genitals from the thorns of plants. This is not always the case, as there are tribes where both sexes live completely naked all the time.\textsuperscript{15}

Nudity changes our relationship to our stimulation, and increases our awareness. Let’s go back to my love of skinny-dipping. Without a swimsuit, my brain is able to receive continuous feedback from all surfaces of my skin.\textsuperscript{16} I can feel the currents from my toes to my crown, as they roll over my body. The swimsuit interrupts this process, and as a result, disjointed and incomplete messages are sent to my brain. Consider for a moment, your understanding of a warm summer breeze, ...or the wind just before a storm. What of the rain? Clothing holds the water to our skin and dries slowly, keeping us clammy. What sensations of the rain would we have without our clothes?

Such experiences give our senses more information about the world around us. The amount of protective layers we wear impacts our education and cognitive processes, perhaps more profoundly than we might casually assume.\textsuperscript{17} Taking moments to go without clothing affords us the opportunity to reflect on our lives in a different way. This is one of the biggest aspects of nudist philosophy, yet one of the most difficult to articulate. Nudism facilitates new perspectives.

Nudists believe that humans \textit{are a part} of nature and that the conscious act of nudism promotes body acceptance. We are bound by our physiology, regardless of our efforts to improve beyond it. Nudists see clothes (and cosmetics, including elective plastic surgery) as a means to hide from the truth of our bodies abilities. In practicing nudism, each of us as individuals can define our physical needs and know our own physical limitations, rather than rely on our clothes to define them for us. Nudists see the need for protection as an issue of self-awareness and self-acceptance.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{14} Merrill, \textit{Among The Nudists}, 207. Discusses the research of Dr. Fougerat de David de Lastours regarding the relationship of health effects and the amount of skin exposure to various environmental conditions.
\textsuperscript{15} Smith and Sparks, \textit{Growing Up Without Shame}, 105. Comparative descriptions of tribal choices to live with or without clothes, of four native tribes in an identical physical environment, the Adaman Islands.
\textsuperscript{17} Irwin Altman, Joachim F. Wohlwill, and Amos Rapoport, “The Wild Child” in \textit{Children and the Environment} (New York: Plenum Press, 1978) 9-11. Details the case of a twelve year old boy who grew up in nature without human interaction, and the subsequent attempts to teach him. The boy’s senses developed dramatically differently, and he exhibited extraordinary acclimation to adverse conditions of cold, wind, and rain.
HEALTH & COMFORT: There is a bit of irony with these two topics, as the clothed assumption is that we wear clothes for health and comfort, and the philosophy of nudism is that nudists don’t wear clothes for health and comfort. I believe that much of the association between clothing and health comes from assumptions about cold weather and health. As a child, I lost count of the number of times my mother would yell after me to put on a coat, so that I don’t catch pneumonia, …yet not once did I catch it.\(^\text{19}\) If the cause and effect relationship between sickness and layers of clothing during cold weather held true, then Polar Bear Clubs would die off from natural causes.

This is an issue of acclimation. If you have grown up not knowing any better, your body will adapt and adjust to the climate inherently. Australia, for instance, has bitter winters, yet the native Aborigines practically wear nothing all year.\(^\text{20}\) Eskimos rarely wear anything inside their igloos. And skinny skiing is quite popular in much of the Alps.\(^\text{21}\)

While becoming accustomed to the environment is part of our ability to run naked in the snow, the specific environmental conditions also play an important part. After all, hypothermia is evidence that the human body has its limits. One of the big keys to this is wind. Evapotranspiration of the skin is the inherent means that humans have of cooling themselves. This is the act of perspiration or moisture on the skin vaporizing into the atmosphere. When there is a breeze, this process is exponentially accelerated.\(^\text{22}\) Hence, anyone could go outside on a below freezing winter’s day, and be physically comfortable lying out in the nude, provided that it is a calm and partly sunny day.

Humidity is another factor. In a highly humid environment moisture is constantly being replaced on the skin, thus reducing the evapo-transpiration rate. That is why on a 55°F. autumn day with a warm front passing through, you might find yourself taking your sweatshirt off, and on a 55°F. autumn day with a cold front passing through, you might add a coat.\(^\text{23}\)

One of the most definitive examples of our ability to acclimate to the environment is evidenced by the Finnish sauna. Essentially, the sauna is little more than a one-room hut made of logs, or by modern standards, a wood-lined interior, and

\(^{19}\) In all fairness to pneumonia, I was a clumsy kid and could hardly catch anything.
\(^{22}\) Bradshaw, *Building Control Systems*, 33.
a simple stove stacked with stones. Slatted wood platforms are built along one or more of the walls of the sauna for nude bathers to sit and lie down. The stones are heated, causing temperatures to rise as high as 280° F. Temperatures are ideally held between 190° and 200° F.

The Finnish sauna is often confused with the Russian bath. The difference is that the sauna's air is dry, whereas the air is moist in the steam baths of Russia. The wood interior absorbs whatever moisture is created when water is tossed on the stones. As a result, the Finnish sauna can be comfortable at much higher temperatures. Accounts have placed thermometer readings as high as 170°F. As well, many Finns will think nothing of venturing outside the sauna without putting any clothes on. This illustrates my earlier point that we have the ability to acclimate ourselves with the climate, because the air temperature outside the sauna has been recorded as low as negative -50°F. The Finns have been known to do this for an extended period of time too, even so long as to complete various chores.²⁴

Part of the rejuvenating effect of the sauna comes from allowing plenty of time to enjoy the sauna. All movement should be deliberate and easy, and the sauna actually is an eight-step process. Each step has its own intricacies, do’s and don’ts, and options so for simplicity’s sake, I will only list each. The sauna begins with perspiration, as it should have been properly heated before the bather is ready to use it. Then the bather will change positions over a period of time while producing steam as needed. Most people are unaware of the third phase, beating oneself with leafy birch branches. This process of whisking stimulates blood circulation in the skin. The fourth phase is washing, followed by rinsing. The last three phases, cooling off, drying, and rest and refreshment, actually occur outside the sauna. As you can imagine, everyone develops his or her own techniques and preferences for each phase. One of the best aspects of the process of the sauna is that it allows each individual to personalize the experience.²⁵

²⁵ Viherjuuri, Sauna: The Finnish Bath, 32-43. Passage goes into detail of Finnish traditions of each phase.
The sauna due to its simplicity and flexibility has remained unchanged throughout its history, although ironically, the origins of the sauna are unknown. All that is needed is an untreated wood structure, fire, stones, water and of course, air. In Finland, the sauna has traditionally been used in mixed company, and for any amount of people from an individual, to an entire village. It has been replicated throughout the world with the process modified to meet the customs of each culture.

So, ...going back to Scott’s class where this all started, ...if we can acclimate ourselves, how is it that we can determine that at an ambient air temperature of $84^\circ$ with no breeze the human body is most comfortable without clothing? Given the previous examples, it’s obvious that such a magic temperature can vary widely depending on the individual and the conditions. And regarding clothing and comfort, this is the position of virtually all nudists; at some level going without clothing is simply more comfortable.

This is where I have to wonder a bit. In this age of central heating and air conditioning, why don’t we opt for the comfort of nudity more often in the privacy of our own homes? Why do we so often sacrifice our own comfort? These questions pose no relevance to this thesis, just some food for thought. And just to share with you, this is my take on the concept of acclimation. Winters used to chill me to the bone, and I used to get a serious bug, like the flu, every year along with one or two other colds. In 1994 I started regularly participating in nudism just during the summers. Over the past five plus years, I can remember being sick only twice, and I find myself at times surprised when other people around me complain about the cold.

SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS: One of nudism’s biggest claims is that it promotes healthy sexual relationships. The idea is that clothing, through the concealment of erogenous zones of the body, perpetuates unrealistic fantasies regarding the opposite sex and
leads to unhealthy expectations, that when not met, hinder the relationship. The same ideas are espoused for non-romantic sexual relationships, such as within families. The general feeling is that it’s a wholesome way for children to learn about puberty, and to identify family members more readily as people, and not just by their family roles.

While this may indeed be true, to what extent nudism by itself can alleviate the problem, I don’t know. I believe that healthy relationships begin and end with honesty, and that people are capable of practicing this with or without clothes. Now, I do see and have experienced that nudism does expedite the process of meeting other people, since it removes so many of the easy judgments that we can make about one another based on our clothes. This concept is not restricted to sexual relations alone though, but applies to all of our interactions. We initially get to see people as people, not as the expectations of bankers, bikers, fathers, sons, mothers, daughters, or lovers.

Remember sex ed. at school? In my experience, all of us boys were separated from the girls. The whole time, all I thought about was ‘what are they learning over there?’ ..Guess how much I learned. And growing up, the playground and summers at the swim club felt more like a battleground. Lines were rarely crossed, not only between the sexes, but also between grade levels. I grew up not considering any other way of relating myself to the other children outside of the incremental divisions of growth given to me by the school and my family.

This is in a large part why I found myself in awe of the maturity level of the youth, while I was at Sunshower Country Club in Indiana, one day during the summer of 2000. For much of the day as I sunned myself, I found myself reminiscing about my childhood at the pool. Yet that day was so different, ..calm and quite. As I laid on my stomach, I set to take a peaceful nap, and as I nestled my chin into a towel I had folded into a pillow, thought ..‘this is so much nicer to have just adults around, instead of a bunch of obnoxii... And I saw a kid. And another, and another, and ...the place was packed with kids! It was a 50-50 split between adults and adolescents.

Here was a group of over thirty kids of all ages, harmoniously interacting with each other throughout the day. No fighting, name-calling, or taunting. Unlike my developing years, noticeably absent was the flirting and sexual overtones. No cruelty, ...and not just for an hour, but all morning and afternoon.

That evening I had the opportunity to talk with some of the teenagers, and unlike what I’ve come to expect from most pubescent adolescents, these kids weren’t evasive. They made eye contact. They contributed and maintained dialog. They were open and up front with answers to questions. Not once did they interrupt someone else during the conversation! ...It became crystal clear to me that these kids were well grounded with who they were and what they wanted their lives to be.

At some point, I let them know about the thesis I was working on, and invariably we discussed how they saw the impact of nudism on their lives. The points that stood out to me were their focus on relationships. Their focus was toward issues of content, of ideas, compatibility, and what they had to offer, rather than what they wanted, needed, or desired.

All of them felt that going through puberty without the sense of taboo played a large role in their outlook. Granted, none of this is impartial or scientific on my part, but what it does illustrate is that (at least for these kids) growing up with nudism gave them a different perspective on the concept of relationships and human interaction. ...And with noticeable results.

Without clothes to hide behind, the immaturity of youth (and adulthood) regarding sex seems to go away. Sexual change and the physiology of each sex is no longer a tormenting mystery. Nudism reduces sexual tension between people. Nudists believe this.

**Clothing And The Mind**

This is where the “need” to be clothed despite the environment exists. Here, the need for clothes is completely a matter of perception and belief. The reality of the physical world is irrelevant. These needs are not inherent, they are learned.

MODESTY: I would venture to say that most of us, at least here in the Midwest, grew up with the belief that we are born with an inherent sense of modesty, or shame with respect to our bodies. Original sin. By all rights, from my inherent guilt, I should instinctively wear clothes. Yet, that first day of nudism, I experienced an inexplicable compulsion to take my clothes off. And this was during a moment when I was feeling apprehensive and insecure. Vulnerable even, ...amidst a new experience of strangers and unfamiliar surroundings.

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29 Ableman, *Beyond Nakedness*, 90.
Our sense of decorum, the idea that we should be humble, has been taught to us from generation to generation. To illustrate this, let’s look at the implementation of our modesty from a variety of dimensions.

Modesty is extremely sensitive to change and definition when it is considered across cultures, circumstances, and time. Consider that women from the Middle East will cover their faces rather than their bodies if they are surprised while naked.  

Given the right circumstances, modesty is habitual. For instance, if a friend were to walk in on you unexpectedly while you were walking around your house in your underwear, you might be embarrassed despite the fact that you’re wearing the same amount, if not more cover than when you’re at the beach.

The amount of skin we show also varies with the fashions of the time. Bathing suits are an excellent example of this. Over the past century, the permissive amount of exposed skin has gone from near full coverage, to thong bikinis whose composition best resemble strings.

But bathing suits are indicative of a specific activity and as such, connotes a modified sense of modesty. Wearing a string bikini while running errands or dining out, would even by today’s standards, constitute a breach of social decorum. Believe it or not, this has not always been the case. There have been periods in various western cultures when publicly wearing sheer or revealing garments on a daily basis, particularly for women, was the fashion of the time. One such time was throughout most of Europe during the early 1800’s.

If we accept that our sense of modesty is dynamic, then we can dismiss the notion that modesty is inherent. Given that there are “primitive” societies in which nakedness is the norm, and a sense of shame about the human body is absent, this holds true. Modesty is about being unassuming and lacking pretensions. It’s about fitting in.

31 Smith and Sparks, Growing Up Without Shame, 102, 108.
32 Langner, The Importance of Wearing Clothes, 77-78.
33 Robinson, Body Packaging, 67.
34 Langner, The Importance of Wearing Clothes, 72.
Now my compulsion to remove my clothes makes sense. I was the only one wearing clothes. Given the circumstances, I was the one who was being immodest.³⁵

A common viewpoint of nudity is that it is an extreme, or aggressive. Given the right circumstances, I agree that it can be viewed as such. The state of being nude itself, is not. Nude is neutral. It is in our actions, not our clothes or lack of clothes, that contains our shame. This is the viewpoint that most nudists operate from, and is one reason that nudists have difficulty in understanding why society at large disapproves of nudist activities.

MORALITY: def.: n. principles of right and wrong in conduct; ethics

Often, the idea of modesty and morality are easily confused, and that is the point I was really setting up in 'Modesty' to illustrate here. Modesty is fluid. It's parameters change across boundaries of culture, time, and situations. Morality is a constant. It sets the boundaries between right and wrong, and while not impossible to change, it is far more inflexible. Morality maintains a level of control over any aspect of the modesty of a people, era, or event. I am much more apt to believe that we have an inherent sense of morality, than inherent sense of modesty.

I feel that it is important to be as clear as possible with these two concepts (and to include them despite their tangential nature to the content of my thesis) because as we will explore later, during our discussion of the history of the modern nudist movement, these concepts have played pivotal roles in nudism's direction, development, and customs.

Time and time again across this country, the same basic pattern of interaction between nudist groups and the most reserved members of society has played itself out. A nudist group establishes itself in an area, or is discovered to have already existed, and various people see this as a threat. Action is usually taken to remove the threat. The problem is that this has typically occurred without first verifying the threat. The nudists discover that there are elements against them, and feeling persecuted, also view this interaction as a threat. This cycle often snowballs out of control until all communication stops, both groups are totally defensive and insular, and legal action, by default, is the only remaining option.³⁶

³⁵ Smith and Sparks, Growing Up Without Shame, 108.
³⁶ Throughout my research examples of this pattern has been repeatedly reported on almost a monthly basis in The American Association for Nude Recreation's periodical, “The Bulletin”, as well as such historical periodicals, “Nude & Natural” and “Sunshine and Health".
order to survive. Hence the widely held but mistaken belief that the effect of wearing clothes is to inhibit sexual stimulation.\textsuperscript{37}

One of the things that I have come to know in my life, is that many of our beliefs are born out of fear and not faith. And here we are, with our fears and assumptions, making decisions and taking action, ...impacting each others’ lives ...without knowing the truth. Fears, all fears, by their very definition are irrational. I’m not saying that it isn’t healthy to have some of them. I know my fear of death has saved my ass on more than one occasion, ...it also has held me back from living my life to the fullest, many times. And this is the irrational part, ...not that my fear may or will (in this case) be realized, but that I allow my fear to suck my energy and focus away from what I want.

The point here is each side acted out of fear, and the first ones to do so usually are the nudists. Rarely have nudists announced to a community their intention to locate there. Typically this has been based on the assumption and fear that they would be rejected out of hand. However, the clandestine approach of quietly setting up shop, does the most damage. It sets up an atmosphere of mystery and intrigue. Ironically, nudists have thus engaged in the very activity that they strive to free themselves from. Just as with wearing clothes, concealment stimulates curiosity and leads to fantasies of our imagination.\textsuperscript{38}

Nudists though do believe that ideas like “desires must be controlled”, “nudity is aggressive”, and “nudity leads to the degeneration of a society”, serve only to victimize humanity. As if we are incapable of self-determination. No One ever stated that we have to control the world around us in order to control ourselves. Responsibility comes from within.

In fact, nudists find that social nudism has the opposite effect of those commonly held misconceptions, actually promoting responsible behavior. Without clothes, we are enhancing our body’s awareness of its surroundings, and in turn, increasing our self-realization. This release from our protective layers of clothes produces a sobering effect, and indeed, as we will see in a later section of this thesis, clothing can be a drug.

“Traditionally, a kind of Puritanism has governed the regulation of nudist establishments and it is virtually certain that orthodox sexual morality has been higher inside nudist establishments than in the world at large. But this may prove to have been a phenomenon required for initial acceptance rather than an inherent part of the concept of nudism”\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{37} Langner, The Importance of Wearing Clothes, 83.
\textsuperscript{38} Robinson, Body Packaging, 31.
\textsuperscript{39} Ableman, Beyond Nakedness, 91.
Truth be told, there have been times when I've seen an attractive woman at a nudist resort, and had a sexual thought or two. I am a human male with a healthy sexual appetite. Not to mention that besides our faces, our genitals are the most individuated parts of our anatomy, and from such distinctiveness do have the capability to attract attention. What I’ve noticed though is that these thoughts pass far quicker than say when I see a beautiful woman in a tight pair of jeans. ...There is also a big step of commitment to act on such thoughts.

MORTALITY: You could easily make a case for this section, “Clothing and the Mind”, to be renamed “Sex and the Mind”, because given today’s relaxed standards of modesty, little else of the body besides the genitals has remained covered. ...Which brings me to one of the things that has always struck me as odd throughout my research. Perhaps I’m naïve, but I regard sex as a deeply intimate and private matter to only be shared with those you’re participating with, and I see nudity as a no brainer, ...something we all have in common. Yet, our society is saturated with sex throughout all forms of media and fashion, and nudity by itself is taboo. We avidly study and document sexual practices, preferences, and techniques, but unless linked to sex, nudity has largely gone untouched outside of the arts, and has held an air of unmentionability in regards to daily life.

This long perplexed me until as I was reading I realized the difference between the phrases “improving upon nature” and “rise above nature”. Rising above clearly is putting distance between people and nature. Of course, this is impossible since we are a part of nature. We die. We are not immortal. Despite this fact, we try none the less to deny our mortality. Clothing does “provide” one layer of distance between our desire to live and the inevitable. Perhaps this sense of comfort is part of the reason why we wear clothing on an every day basis regardless of physical surroundings or need.

As well, since the fountain of youth has yet to be discovered, procreation has been the closest means to immortality. In these lights I can see how society has come to embrace sex, and modesty as a means of fostering sexual curiosity, while ignoring or even shunning nudity and its associations with nature.

So what does this say about nudists? To be honest, nudism hasn’t issued a formal stance on this perspective of life. Nudist literature by and large has been written to promote nudism awareness, interest, and its professed benefits. Alluding to an acceptance of death isn’t good for business. It is my belief though that nudists on the whole, whether conscious of it or not, have come to accept that they are a part of nature. This is only my belief.

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40 Ableman, Beyond Nakedness, 96.
41 Langner, The Importance of Wearing Clothes, 110. By inevitable, I am referring to the irrefutable truth that we are animals that are a part of nature, and indeed will die.
42 Langner, The Importance of Wearing Clothes, 40. Clothing inspires curiosity by keeping the nude body from becoming commonplace, and stimulates erotic impulses at the removal of clothing.
This perspective also came clear to me when I spent a week at a live-in meditation seminar.\footnote{Next Step” seminar, presented by Life Success Seminars Inc.} What I experienced there was an acceptance that “...All is as it should be, ...the world is perfectly imperfect, ...and that all things ...even my life, ...is meant to end.”\footnote{Steve Sherwood, “Next Step” facilitator, May 2003.} What came with this simple fact was a long-lasting sense of peace. For a number of months afterwards, both myself and others around me noticed a difference in my behavior. Most notably there was a lack of boastfulness, pride, and competition on my part. Perhaps it’s only coincidence, but I’ve taken note of the same distinctly relaxed social dimensions while at nudist resorts.

Without clothes, fewer judgments can be made about each other. What this does, is help us let go of the fear that others are judging us. This is important, because without that fear, we are less concerned about someone else holding us back from our dreams. The emphasis has shifted in nudist society from approval to acceptance. The value is that it is now easier for us to be honest with ourselves about what we truly want. Nudism may be a way to gain a sense of place and purpose of oneself.

**Clothing And Behavior**

Much of society is designed to keep us agitated though. As consumers, we have to feel the need for something, in order to buy it. We must have this whatchimawidget in order to finally be complete. ...Only after that whatchimawidget, we’re told we need some other whatchimawidget, or some new whatchimawagget. Much of advertising is designed to keep us feeling unsatisfied, while it purports to be filling one of our needs. A confused consumer is a good consumer.

In recent years, nudity has begun to be used in this deception, or rather partial nudity. A snippet here, a flash there, ...everything indicates to you that the person in the ad is nude, or naked, except that you don't actually see simple nudity. There is always another overtone of context. I have my own term for this phenomena, ...Nudsloexivity.\footnote{Combination of the words nudity, sex, and love: nudsloexivity.} This is where advertising, as well as other sensationalist forms of media, purposely blur the lines between nudity, sex, and love.\footnote{Smith and Sparks, Growing Up Without Shame, 121. Our society considers it “normal” to be uncomfortable about anatomy and sex.} Three distinct concepts both in theory and reality, thrown together as one image, one soundbite, one innuendo. The truth: nude is a physical state of being; sex is an act; and love is something that is beyond our ability to describe.

The reason I point this out is that I believe this perspective leads us to a personal frame of reference as we discuss aspects of clothing and behavior. Take a quick look through your closet. ...Why did you buy the clothes you did? How do you
feel about yourself in this shirt vs. that shirt? What clothes do you still keep, but don’t wear, ...and why!? Are there any clothes in there that you hate, ...but wear anyway? Do you feel your attitude or behavior change when you change outfits?

CONTROL & IDENTITY: Most nudists today don’t advocate nudism to be an all or nothing lifestyle. It’s considered to be more recreational in nature. Indeed, society as a whole may not be able to function without clothes. Our society, in order to grow, needs mechanisms of control and organization. Clothing is one of these. Or at least this is the assumption.47

Perhaps the clearest use of clothing as an arbiter of control is the uniform. Uniforms convey rank, and even fear.48 They can foster teamwork and give a group a sense of belonging, but in so doing, a conformity of thought needs to occur. Individuality becomes a counterpoint to the uniform. Some societies, such as communist China, use the uniform, in its most drab incantation, to eliminate individuality and distinction, even between the sexes.49

Such conformity becomes our concern here. Consider how much of our business attire and service uniforms have become plain and unassuming. How much time do we spend each day in these clothes, muting our individual personalities, in favor of “fitting in”?50

Conformity transcends formal uniforms, and manifests itself in everyday attire.51 The result is a reinforcement of the divisions of our society along the lines of social class, ethnicity, clubs, gangs, religions, etc.52

From this perspective, nudism more strongly identifies with the individual. It gives us the opportunity to say, “Wait a minute ...Who am I?”

Clothing can also be used to identify with the individual. It becomes a vehicle for a person to make an aesthetic expression about who they are. One thing to keep in mind about this is that we pick the clothing we wear to speak about one or two aspects of ourselves, whereas the truth is that we are more complex than the message of our clothes. Quite often I imagine, the clothing we wear is not picked to emphasize who

47 Irwin Altman and Martin M. Chemers, Culture and Environment (Cambbridge: Cambridge University, 1993) 86-91. Describes sophisticated privacy mechanisms of primitive cultures. I would contend that so called “primitive” cultures that are nude indeed have organized societies every bit as well developed as “civilized” cultures, only less technically sophisticated.
48 Langner, The Importance of Wearing Clothes, 129-131. Depicts an occasion when Welsh women lifted their red skirts over their shoulders exposing their white thighs, and marched with broomsticks along the seashore, thwarting an invasion of Napoleon’s troops without a shot fired.
49 Langner, The Importance of Wearing Clothes, 133.
50 Langner, The Importance of Wearing Clothes, 185.
51 Robinson, Body Packaging, 45. Passage attests to the power of belonging.
52 Ableman, Beyond Nakedness, 33.
we are, but rather who we would like to be, ...who we think society believes we should be, ...or even to hide some inner parts of who we are.

In this regard, identity can easily blend into clothes compulsiveness, where a person is constantly searching for the message he or she wants to portray. And it extends to other aspects of our lives. Consider how much time you spent shopping for your couch. To put this identity attachment into architectural terms, if you’ve ever redecorated a room in your home, how many emotions did you expend?\(^{53}\)

From this perspective, nudism more strongly identifies with our sense of unity. It gives us the opportunity to say, “Wait a minute, ...don’t we all have something in common?”

Given that the vast majority of people in this country do not practice nudism, it’s easy to adopt a perspective that nudists are going to extremes to express themselves. Yet, for nudists this is hardly the case. Our perspective is that clothing can be used to push us to the extremes of conformity and identity, away from our sense of self and unity with others.\(^{54}\) All this is, is a different perspective. The dynamics of whether we wear or do not wear clothes hasn’t changed, only how we choose to view it.

ROLE PLAYING:
Candace Bergen: This is the first time I’ve ever been to a college mixer.
Art Garfunkel: Me, too. I hate them!
CB: I hate them too!
AG: It’s such a phony way of meeting people.
CB: Everybody puts on an act.
AG: So even if you meet somebody you don’t know who you’re meeting.
CB: Cause you’re meeting the act.
AG: That’s right, and not the person.
CB: I’m not sure I agree.
AG: With what?
CB: With what you said.
AG: I’m not either.
CB: You don’t agree with what you said?
AG: How do you feel about it?
CB: I think people only like to think they’re putting on an act, but it’s not an act, it’s really them. If they think it’s an act they feel better because they think they can always change it.
AG: You mean they’re kidding themselves because it’s not \textit{really} an act.
CB: Yes, it is an act, but \textit{they’re} the act. The act is them.


\(^{54}\) I have reached this conclusion based on my formal and informal interviews with nudists spanning 1994-present.
AG: But if it’s them, then how can it be an act?
CB: Cause they’re an act.
AG: But they’re also real.
CB: No.
AG: You mean I’m not real?
CB: No.
AG: I’m an act?
CB: It’s all right, I’m an act too. Don’t you behave differently with different people?
AG: No.
CB: With your family?
AG: I thought you meant different people. Well, sure, with my family.
CB: And with your friends you’re another way.
AG: Well, sure, with my friends.
CB: And with your teachers you’re still another way – so which one is you?
AG: Well, when you put it that way. ...

AG: You ought to be a lawyer.
CB: I’m gonna be a lawyer.

I don’t whole-heartedly agree with Candace Bergen’s character from the 1971 Avco Embassy Picture, “Carnal Knowledge”\(^{55}\). I have come to know that we are more than an act. At our core, each of us is still a child who only wants to be loved and accepted, ...the real us. We choose though not to communicate from our core, and to oblige others with our acts, and continue them oftentimes whether we want to or not, out of habit.

We do put up with our acts, almost constantly. Clothes play a role in this.\(^{56}\) I’m reminded of the Bugs Bunny cartoon, where Bugs is being hunted by Elmer Fudd, and a hat factory truck’s doors burst open on the highway. Hats of all kinds are spread by the wind across the woods, and as each new hat winds up on Bug’s and Elmer’s heads, they instantly change their behavior. Perhaps cartoon characters are a bit more one-dimensional than we are, but I think that the point is sound. As I go through each day, I can feel the change as I “put on different hats”.

What this routine does, is accumulate stress within us. It takes a lot of energy, self-doubt, and concentration to continually evaluate ourselves on how we are supposed to behave.\(^{57}\)

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\(^{56}\) Langner, *The Importance of Wearing Clothes*, 141.

\(^{57}\) Concept first presented to me in the “Basic Seminar”, Life Success Seminars Inc.
Nudism is one way we can relieve that build up of stress. We can remove our clothes, and in so doing, remove the physical connotation of our “act”. Without the vehicle of clothing, it is harder to maintain our performance. Our props are gone and we are left with only our true self. To continue the show, we would have to become method actors, ...and this can wind up looking downright silly. Imagine a group of un-clothed people playing charades, who don't know they're playing charades!

...Yet we have no trouble doing just that when we put on our clothes.

Some have said that nudism is the ultimate in stress reduction for just this reason. The action of releasing our “act” has a cleansing effect for our soul.

ESCAPE: Clothing, like any aspect of our lives, can become an addiction. This perhaps more soundly than anything else explains why we wear clothes in this age of climate control.

Do we use our clothes as psychological armor?

“In other words, when an individual doubts his boundaries he may try to reinforce them by making them more visually vivid through the use of attention-getting clothing. I wonder whether uniforms may not be often similarly employed. The soldier with his helmet and decorated chest and the motorcycle policeman with his leather gloves and boots may gain a good measure of security from their official cocoons. One psychologist (Popplestone, 1963) has compared putting on a uniform to providing yourself with a protective exoskeleton similar to that possessed by lobsters and turtles. It might also be compared to being draped with a security blanket.

I don't know if we’re addicted to clothing or not, I’ll leave that up to each of us to determine on our own. I am addicted to TV, but I know that when I leave the TV off, as uncomfortable as it is, I feel better about myself. And I know that when I’m nude, I feel better about myself and I have less trouble confronting myself. When the security blanket is tossed away, and all that’s left is me, ...then there’s nothing left to do but be honest with myself...

Given my research and personal experiences as a nudist, I believe that these are primary beliefs shared by most nudists. Nudism heightens our awareness. It promotes self-acceptance and the acceptance of others. Given the right conditions, nudity is healthier and more comfortable. Sexual tension is reduced. With it, comes more clarity and responsibility regarding our interactions. Nudism gives us the opportunity to see

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58 Rudofsky, The Unfashionable Human Body, 199.
59 Langner, The Importance of Wearing Clothes, 346.
ourselves as we are. It reduces stress, and for those that choose, nudism can be a means to spiritual peace.

Simply put, nudists see clothes more as a burden than a form of security, not just physically, but spiritually. In fact, I believe the physical feeling of confinement from clothes is a manifestation of the spirit’s need for freedom.
Have you ever seen the movie “Groundhog Day”? Bill Murray plays a weatherman who somehow gets stuck in a time warp, and everyday is Groundhog Day. Everyday he gets up and has to repeat the same day. At first he hates it. He feels frustrated; he wants to escape, to get on with his life, to breathe a new day. He tries to reach out to others, but no matter what he does or how he approaches his predicament, he gets slapped down. He feels paranoid and persecuted. Finally, he accepts his fate, stops fighting, and just focuses on improving himself. Each day as life throws him a new twist or turn, he just picks himself up, and pushes a bit further the next day. Eventually, he does push through to breathe a new day.

That in a nutshell is the history of the modern nudist movement over the past century. Like a groundhog coming out of its hole to see its shadow, nudists every so often have come out to see if society will accept them. In the wake of the Victorian era, this has been difficult. Something happens, invariably it gets blown out of proportion, and nudists have become paranoid, as we feel persecuted by society. But of late, nudists have been pushing ahead regardless of what others think. Nudists have started working to breathe a new day.

No place in the world have nudists had more difficulty-gaining acceptance than right here in the United States. On one hand this seems very odd to me given that our nation has been forged on the principles of freedom and rugged individualism. Skinny-dipping is as American as apple pie. It’s been idolized as a rite of passage of American youth, and immortalized in the works of Mark Twain and Norman Rockwell. Yet, our nation has placed nudity as a taboo with regards to many aspects of the law. I have to remind myself that the puritans founded us, and that many of their beliefs have been imprinted on our identity.

The Modern Movement

Throughout the centuries, nudism practiced co-educationally, has sporadically occurred within Western Civilization and the Far East. Most of us I’m sure are acquainted with the tales of ancient Greece and Rome. Nudism has, and in some cases continues to be, regularly practiced in societies of the “Third World.” For our purposes, we’re going to confine our discussion of nudist history to what has become known as the Modern Nudist Movement. This began around the turn of the last century, and continues to the present. It was born out of a simple idea to lay out, in the sun.

Many aspects of health contributed to the rise in sunbathing none more important than a new attitude towards clothing. The Victorian Era, through its prudery, required complete coverage of the body at all times. As a result, people’s skin could

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not function properly. Perspiration was held in. Fermentation on the skin could easily take hold. Rashes and other skin ailments became commonplace. Oh, and parasites like fleas and ticks had so many wonderful layers of cloth where they could take up residence. Combine all this with garments such as corsets that would horribly disfigure the human body, and its no wonder people started to think that maybe nudity was the healthiest thing to wear.\textsuperscript{62}

Air and sunbaths were actually two different things. During an airbath, the human is to be actively engaged in some sort of "light-gymnastic" exercise, whereas during the sunbath, the body is to be at rest, fully absorbing the warmth of the sun. Each sought the same result, to gradually accustom the skin to exposure.\textsuperscript{63}

Heliotherapy as it became known, even went so far as to conduct studies as to whether or not complete heliotherapy (fully nude) was better than local heliotherapy for treating localized diseases. Apparently the results came back that those who tanned thoroughly showed the greatest improvement.\textsuperscript{64}

Organized nudism is an immigrant to this nation. The Modern Movement's official beginning was in Germany in 1903. Richard Ungewitter published a book entitled \textit{Die Nacktheit} (Nakedness). In it he described his vision of a utopian society where everyone followed strict guidelines of health. Alcohol and tobacco would be forbidden. Everyone would be a vegetarian, and everyone would be nude.\textsuperscript{65} Coincidentally, Paul Zimmermann opened his resort, "Freilichtpark" (Free Light Park) near Klingberg, Germany. People from across the globe came for the meatless meals, clothes-free environment, and early morning calisthenics. By 1926 estimates indicate that there were 50,000 active nudists in Germany.\textsuperscript{66}

Guidelines were established from the outset. The one that has become the most readily identified with nudism is the use of towels. Every nudist keeps a towel with them at almost all times. This was born as much out of respect as hygiene. The idea is that you always sit on a towel on any surface that someone else may sit on after you. Not sitting on a towel is the biggest taboo you can commit at a nudist resort, and to do so will quickly draw scornful looks from those around you. And yes, I know this first hand, although in my embarrassing towel story I incurred more laughs than stares.

It was a windy and crowded Saturday at Bluebonnet, back in Texas. I had arrived the Friday evening before, to camp out for the weekend. So on Saturday morning, I slept in as usual. It was a little after noon when I decided to leave my tent, and there was going to be a bar-be-que for lunch. I’m the type of person though that

\textsuperscript{62} Ableman, \textit{Beyond Nakedness}, 88.
\textsuperscript{64} Merrill, \textit{Among The Nudists}, 202-203.
\textsuperscript{66} Merrill, \textit{Among The Nudists}, 174.
has to have a shower, first thing, to get that “filmy” feeling from last night’s sleep off of me. Otherwise I don’t feel good about myself, the rest of the day.

Well, I only had about a half an hour before lunch, so I grabbed my towel (the only one I brought that weekend) and headed for the shower area. Took a quick shower, and decided to swim some quick laps in the pool until the dinner bell rang. The pool area was packed, and I couldn’t find a vacant chair, lounge chaise, or table to put my towel, ...and the hook I used by the showers had already been re-occupied. So I layed my towel by the pool and dove in.

About ten minutes later, I heard the call of “Come and git it!” , and havin’ the hankerin’ I do for Texas bar-be-que, I hopped out of the pool and hustled over to the picnic area. Didn’t even occur to me to dry myself off, nor did I need to as I quickly dried in the warm breeze while waiting and chatting in line. Got my ribs, and went to sit down. As I was straddled over the picnic bench poised to sit, Gary, who was sitting next to me, glanced at the bench and asked if I was forgetting something. Suddenly, I felt naked. “Shoot, I left my towel by the pool”, I said, sat my food down and went to fetch it.

I spent the better part of ten minutes looking for that damn towel! I searched under every lounge chair, every corner of the pool deck, the hot tub area, everywhere at least three times. I asked people if they had seen it, or mistakenly taken it. I even looked under the pool deck, as if the towel melted between the deck boards. Eventually I noticed friends and strangers alike began snickering at my predicament.

A little about my towel, ...it was a crystal blue underwater scene with two silver-grey dolphins on it. ...Yes indeed, as I had been going round and round the pool searching for it, it was behind me all the time, ...perfectly camouflaged in the ripples of the pool. Upon my realization of this, the audience that had gathered broke into uproarious laughter.

Now it is impossible to eat bar-be-que from a paper plate while standing up, and sitting on a squishy towel isn’t the most comfortable of situations either. Fortunately for me, there was a woman, Pam, who sympathetically let me use her spare towel, until mine dried out. Lesson learned, always have at least two towels, a rule of thumb most nudists swear by.

Back at Freilichtpark in the early 1900’s, the towels were all white,\textsuperscript{67} but with the development of beach towels, over the years the towel has become a form of expression for the nudist. In this manner the towel acts like clothing, however, at most it is draped over one’s shoulder. Wrapping up in a towel typically only occurs at a nudist resort when the weather suddenly changes, or if you’ve acquired a sunburn.

\textsuperscript{67} Towels were club-provided.
During the 1910’s, visitors from other European countries and America returned home from Germany with stories of what they experienced. In countries where public nude bathing was already a part of daily life, the new organized nudism was well received. But in England, France, and America, the new ideas were met with negative press and legal hostility.\footnote{Ableman, Beyond Nakedness, 89.}

The Athletic Period

While the modern movement got its start in Europe, we’re going to further narrow our focus to its history here in America. This is due mainly because my project site is in this country, but also because the development of the movement adopts tremendously different rates of growth and acceptance between the Old World and the New World over the past century.\footnote{This is not to say that events and growth rates between Europe and America did not affect each other, because they most certainly did. For our purposes, there is not a need to go into detail of European nudist history.}

In this country, nudism has had three major periods of growth. The first of these, I refer to as the athletic period, simply because the focus of clubs at this time was still closely rooted in German nudism’s physical fitness origins. As well, newcomers to nudism during the first two decades of the 1900s, often from wealthier circles, sought it as an experience of daring indulgence. This attitude carried through the roaring twenties, and what had been a slow-growth, word-of-mouth novelty, gained a national stage during the 1930’s.

The nudist movement in America had burrowed its way in quietly. In 1929, a German immigrant Kurt Barthel published an ad in German-language newspapers to see if other German nudists in the country would be interested in founding a club.\footnote{Ed Lange, Family Naturism in America (Los Angeles: Elysium Growth, 1988) 12. By founding a club, we specifically mean purchasing land and building facilities.} The American League for Physical Culture (ALPC) officially opened Sky Farm, the first permanent nudist park in America near Millington, New Jersey in 1932.\footnote{Schaefer, Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!, 292.} While obtaining the necessary permits legally, the group managed to move in without a lot of fanfare to alarm the neighbors.\footnote{Baxandall, World Guide, 20. Other similar clubs developed informally in New England, and groups would randomly practice in a natural area. Sky Farm was the first to officially notify local government of their activities.}

The early American nudist clubs followed the ideals of body health set forth by Barthel, but the average American wasn’t as interested in group exercise and bodybuilding as their German counterparts. Our independent spirit was too strong for conformity to physical regimen. As a result, eastern clubs sought to be a nude alternative including the same amenities as “clothing required” resorts.\footnote{Lange, Family Naturism in America, 16.} This mindset
that a nudist resort is nothing more than any other resort except that no one has to wear clothes, has shaped, or perhaps misshaped the design of nudist resorts to this day.

An interesting conundrum is revealed when it comes to applying nudism to the functional side of resort architecture. If there is nothing shameful about our bodies as the philosophy of nudism professes, is there any reason for the sexes to separate when it comes to going to the toilet? There is no question that our modesty regarding our elimination processes is culturally defined. The question is where do nudists define it? This is the one area of resort design where nudists have consciously deviated from clothed resorts. There is no consensus though, and facilities vary from club to club.

Many of today’s larger, amenity filled clubs that seek to attract tourism have maintained fully separate toilet rooms. No doubt these clubs are looking to appeal to a broad range of visitors, including those that are newcomers to nudism. In this way, their introduction to nudism is a less confrontational change of lifestyle. And most nudists today do not ascribe to nudism as a wholesale departure from America’s societal customs, but as a break from the routine of our daily lives. There isn’t a strong driving force at such clubs for communal toilets.

At some of the smaller, more private clubs, the rustic clubs, and at many of the older clubs, you will encounter communal toilets. When I first encountered one of these, it wasn’t a big deal at all, mainly because each toilet, just as in any public restroom, had partitions and doors. In fact, I’ve never heard of a nudist resort that hasn’t got some sort of physical privacy device where the toilets are concerned.

Showers are completely different. While the larger clubs have hotel rooms that naturally have private bathrooms, there also is always a communal shower area. This is true of all developed clubs. There is no privacy stigma involving bathing. Typically showers are outdoors and physically open. If indoor showers are provided, then there aren’t any doors or privacy walls between adjacent spaces. Often times, these showers

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74 Smith and Sparks, *Growing Up Without Shame*, 113.
76 Cleaning of the body and elimination processes are seen as distinct activities requiring facilities for each to be clearly separated.
are the transition zone between locker rooms and indoor sauna, hot tubs, and/or swimming pools.

At one club that had this indoor arrangement, a weird sensation overcame me as I crossed the threshold from the open shower to the pool area. I took a double-take as if I had missed something, and I felt like I had made a mistake. Unlike health clubs and typical spa resorts, there wasn’t any vestibule space between the lockers and showers and the destination space of the pool. Without that extended passage of privacy, my body felt lost, and ironically I felt naked.

It’s been my experience that showers are in almost constant use on crowded days. Showering is frequently done between activities as a matter of personal respect for others, whether it is to wash off sand or sweat acquired from active events such as volleyball, or to remove tanning lotions before jumping in the pool. Every place I’ve been, maintaining the cleanliness of the facilities for the other participants has been a part of the club’s guidelines. This attitude has been maintained from the movement’s health conscious approach of the early days.

The fledgling movement received an unexpected boost in membership following an incident that occurred on Dec. 7th, 1931. Police illegally raided Sky Farm and arrested its members. The judge acquitted the group, and ruled that not only were they not guilty of any lewd behavior, but that they did everything possible to maintain their privacy. What was meant to end nudism actually gave it the publicity it needed to grow.

One of the ALPC’s members, the Reverend Ilsley Boone (a.k.a. Uncle Danny) broke away from the ALPC in 1933 to form his own organization, the International Nudist Conference. Uncle Danny’s aim was to advance the cause of nudism with his charisma and gift of oratory. Depending on which nudist you ask, he is either the most celebrated or controversial figure nudism has ever had. In the spring of ’33, he launched a magazine, The Nudist (later renamed Sunshine & Health) in New York. Despite the fact that the genitals were airbrushed away, protests of the publication were rampant. This was the notoriety Boone was looking for. He even began a crusade against the Post Office to allow him to send the magazine with unretouched photos through the mail.

Boone renamed the INC in 1935, when it became the American Sunbathing Association. He with a board of his cronies maintained total control of the organization until control was wrested from him in 1952. It was found that Boone had misused

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77 Sharing of showerheads usually is strictly prohibited, and also accounts for the open nature of shower areas. This helps to ensure a family atmosphere, reducing the likelihood of romantic interludes at the club.
78 Lange, Family Naturism in America, 14.
79 Schaefer, Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!, 292-293.
80 Schaefer, Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!, 293.
ASA funds. He had financed a camp with which ASA had no contractual interest. *Sunshine & Health*, Boone’s magazine, had been subsidized by the ASA without the organization’s knowledge. As it turned out, the reverend gave not only to his followers, but to himself.

Another figure from the 1930’s that helped to place nudism on the cultural map of America was filmmaker Brian Foy. Hollywood also had an interest in “promoting” nudism. His first nudist travelogue film, *Elysia, Valley of the Nude* claimed to be more than just a collection of newsreel clips that other films of the genre were. To some degree this was true, but what set this movie apart was that it included a shot of full-frontal female nudity. This set in motion a debate between filmmakers, nudists, news, lawmakers, and society at large that continues to this day. There are two basic camps of thought. One side believes that nudism is natural and that body concealment serves to perpetuate an unhealthy interest in sex. The other side claims that clothing is a mark of civilization and that having both sexes nude together only leads to immorality.\(^\text{81}\)

Another major film that impacted nudism was Allen Stuart’s *The Unashamed* of 1938. Unlike the other nudist movies of the time, this one had a complete story attached to the scenery of the nudist camp. The story though included a love triangle and resulting suicide, which by association placed the context of nudism in a questionable light.\(^\text{82}\)

All of the nudist movies of the era were promoted as having sexually-charged, controversial content.\(^\text{83}\) In this regard, the nudists of the time were naïve. They opened the doors of their camps to Hollywood looking for simple publicity for their ideas. In some of the earliest of these films, the actual content held true to this vision, more or less acting as a documentary professing the benefits of nudism to the American public. Nudists looked the other way as to the billing of the films, accepting the tactics as a means to stimulate interest in the public, and trusting that the truth of nudism would override the hype.\(^\text{84}\)

*The Unashamed* became the straw that broke the camel’s back. From within the movement, more nudists started to voice their concerns of these portrayals of their lives. To nudists, these films were insincere. Social scientists even polled nudists as to why these films lacked realism. Three major things were discovered. One was that nudists are not actors by trade, yet the directors were filming staged scenes rather than letting their cameras roll. This gave the films a forced appearance. The other two related to the misrepresentation of the demographics of nudist camps of the time. The nudist movement stresses that it is family oriented, and yet very few children appear in the films. And most clubs of the time did not allow many single members, especially


\(^{82}\) Schaefer, *Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!* 296.

\(^{83}\) Schaefer, *Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!* 297.

\(^{84}\) Schaefer, *Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!* 299.
single men, yet the films emphasized attractive single women. Clearly Hollywood was targeting single men as its audience, the very demographic the nudists were not looking to attract.\textsuperscript{85}

Despite the sexed up atmosphere of the films, they did provide a vehicle promoting the wholesomeness of nudism, as interest did increase with singles and families alike.\textsuperscript{86} Nudists, feeling used, were now faced with how to control the message of nudism. Concerns were raised more than ever about various levels of government shutting down the camps. Many clubs would now take a harder line regarding their rules. Now it was virtually impossible for a single male to gain access to a club.

Photos also became an issue. Many clubs outlawed them altogether. Today, photography is still a highly guarded subject. While cameras have been allowed back into most clubs, a universal rule remains, that the photo’s subject’s permission is required.\textsuperscript{87} And everyplace I’ve been to, doesn’t allow video cameras. Official photographers from nudist publications or other news publications, including television, are only allowed on the premises with permission from the club’s management. Such visits are made aware to guests well in advance.

Spatial distance between nudists became another item of scrutiny. A few clubs even tried to establish acceptable measurable distances between people.\textsuperscript{88} These efforts of course are futile, since the spatial distance we place between ourselves and others is not necessarily a conscious act. To impose an artificially derived standard of behavior on people, and to expect it to be observed despite the awkwardness it creates, is counter to the natural freedom to be ourselves that nudism promotes.

An anthropologist, Edward T. Hall, did an extensive study of the spacing Americans typically maintain in various social situations. He defined four spatial zones that Americans employ: intimate, personal, social, and public. Each of these also included close phase and a far phase.\textsuperscript{89} These zones and phases also relate to our ability and methods of communication.

The intimate zone (0-18 inches) generally is reserved for romantic and immediate family (0-6 inches), and the closest of friends (6-18 inches). The personal zone ranges from 1.5’ to 2.5’ close, and 2.5’ to 4’ far. This zone is considered as a typical contact distance in our culture that allows for effective communication, without breaching the comfort of our intimate zone. The social zone often occurs in formal business settings and amongst strangers. This zone ranges from 4’ to 12’. The public

\textsuperscript{85} Schaefer, Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!, 297.
\textsuperscript{86} Schaefer, Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!, 299.
\textsuperscript{87} Douglas, Observations of Deviance, 32.
\textsuperscript{88} Manager of Bluebonnet, personal interview, 1995. For the life of me, I cannot remember the name of the German man, the manager who I first met at Bluebonnet. We had a number of conversations about the history of nudism, both in Germany and America, and this all took place well before I thought of doing this thesis.
\textsuperscript{89} Altman and Chemers, Culture and Environment, 103-106.
zone, greater than 12’, typically occurs with activities such as public speaking, or teaching.\(^90\)

Time and time again, I have observed a different set of zones at nudist resorts. While the close phase (0-6 inches) of the intimate zone is maintained, the other zones are compressed. The personal zone communication in nudist resorts occurs between 6 inches and 2 feet, pushing well into the intimate zone. I’ve found that the social zone, typically maintained by those new to nudism, also is reduced to about 2 to 6 feet.\(^91\)

One place in particular where this is noticeable is in a hot tub, or jet pool. When I go to swim laps at the Mercy Healthplex near my home, I like to stretch out before and after my laps in the large whirlpool. Now, I’m of course wearing trunks, and the whirlpool, being in the men’s locker area, isn’t gender inclusive. As other men enter the whirlpool, I delight as I witness the same pattern. Each new entrant picks a spot equidistant from the others in the pool. Then after awhile, someone seeks to start a conversation from distances greater than 5 feet apart, and over the roar of the jets. If I then move to get closer to hear better, the person I move closer to automatically shifts away a bit, seeking to maintain an equal spacing. As the pool fills, there comes a point (8-12 people) when others will pass getting in, even though there is still room.

Over the years, at nudist resorts, I’ve witnessed the following pattern. If I’m the first person in, the next person sits right next to me with no more than about 2 inches skin to skin at our sides, and almost always starts the conversation upon entering. The next person sits immediately next to one of us, and then the next person does the same. And nudists have no problem squeezing together to help get as many people as possible into the tub.

Yet, each individuals’ intent at both the Healthplex and the nudist resort is the same, ...to relax, unwind, and meet someone new. Nudists, through their customs,

\(^{90}\) Altman and Chemers, *Culture and Environment*, 107.
\(^{91}\) Personal observations at nudist resorts spanning 1994-present.
have established their own cultural norms. And in this case I believe it has occurred without conscious effort. There is definitely less space required between people.\(^{92}\)

Much of the space that we maintain between ourselves and others relates to how secure we feel about our own borders.\(^{93}\) Numerous studies have been done in regards to personality correlations to personal space.\(^{94}\) People with high self esteem, low authoritarianism, high self-concepts, and who are self-directed, tend to have smaller than average spatial boundaries. The aforementioned traits are all a part of the self-realization that the philosophy of nudism promotes. In this regard, I believe it is clear to see how nudists have adopted tighter spatial distances between one another, than in American society as a whole.

Getting back to the history of the 1930’s, besides notoriety from films and lawsuits, American nudism had a third boost to its growth. The nazi’s, ever so fond of persecuting and killing those with different views than their own, set their sights on nudists early in their rise to power.\(^{95}\) Many German nudists alertly left their homeland in the mid-30’s for other parts of Western Europe, and the U.S. Until this point, nudism in the U.S. had mainly been confined to the two coasts. Many of these new German immigrants settled in areas with already established Germanic populations, particularly from Western Pennsylvania west through Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, and throughout the Great Plains States.\(^{96}\) These immigrants reinforced the athletic roots of the movement.

Since most nudist resorts of the time were located in rural areas, the war years, with gas rationing, slowed if not reversed the growth of nudism. Entering the 1950’s though, nudism was back on its feet, and many of the eastern clubs began upgrading their facilities. Nudists in this nation now demanded more amenities, larger pools, and finer accommodations. As well, some of the resorts, particularly in Florida began to compete with the excellent resorts of the time that were in Europe.\(^{97}\) “Roughing it” was no longer enough.

**The Social Period**

This commenced what I call the social period of nudist growth. The focus of nudism had now shifted from its athletic lifestyle beginnings, to that of a relaxing vacation. Now clubs weren’t just a private, close-knit group of regulars with the occasional visitor from outside seeking to join. Now they started to be far more accessible for families and couples to come and stay for a weekend, week, or even

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\(^{92}\) Personal observations at nudist resorts spanning 1994-present.


\(^{95}\) Ableman, *Beyond Nakedness*, 89. I know that grammatically, nazis should be capitalized, but given their history, I just don’t believe that they deserve even that amount of respect.

\(^{96}\) Manager of Bluebonnet, personal interview, 1995.

\(^{97}\) Lange, *Family Naturism in America*, 20.
month at a time. The novelty of meeting others of like mind from across the country took hold. Nudists began networking across the country, and unlike previous years where each club operated as an island unto itself with limited contact from the ASA, the ASA with it’s restructure in 1952, would start acting as an umbrella for the individual clubs, linking communication between them and providing active support regarding lawsuits and legislation.98

In the Midwest nudists have faced more intense opposition from religious organizations than on the coasts. The “Radio Pulpit” of Braxton Sawyer and other fundamentalist leaders helped to cement in the minds of many in the Bible belt that nudism is immoral.99 Regardless of location in the country, nudists have been under fire from the religious right and government alike. In my research I have come across dozens of accounts of injustice. One of the most heart-wrenching I found occurred in the early 1980s, when a family was arrested in their home. The children were taken to a foster home. Legal proceedings lasted for years, and the parents were not allowed to be in the presence of their children without social worker supervision. All of this stemmed from an anonymous tip that “Lewd things are going on in there.”100 Similar proceedings still occur today.

What these incidents have done is to give nudists a strong sense of paranoia. As a result, nudist resorts have adopted similar customs regarding behavior. These guidelines include issues of club admittance and membership status, personal contact, language, ogling, and norms about privacy.

Every resort has some sort of physical barrier at its entrance. Often, established club members will have a code or pass key that allows them access any time. Guests though usually need to call ahead, as well as wait for admittance at the gate. Such visits usually must be made during hours set by the office. This is done to keep unannounced guests out, perverts and reporters alike. In addition guests usually need to check in at the office to pay fees for a day’s visit. This is another opportunity for the club’s management to determine whether the guest’s motives are in concert with the philosophy of the club. Some clubs even require a mark of body paint or emblem worn to verify admittance.

98 Lange, Family Naturism in America, 84.
99 Lange, Family Naturism in America, 28-30.
100 Smith and Sparks, Growing Up Without Shame, 116.
Membership to the club also has its own sequence, and this can vary widely from club to club. Most of these measures are designed at discouraging singles, particularly single men. The assumption is that single men are motivated to “admire the scenery” rather than partake in the ways of nudism. I have encountered clubs where day visit fees are much higher for single men than couples, and they don’t even charge single women. The number of probationary visits prior to membership application usually is far more in number for single men than couples, families, or single women. Some clubs have instituted quota systems to “preserve a harmonious membership balance” by only admitting an equal number of single male members as female members.

Personal contact is a touchy subject among nudists, and guidelines have been ever changing since the 1950’s. At times clubs have taken a puritanical approach where even husbands and wives weren’t to show affection for one another. Common sense is the order of the day. Committed couples are generally permitted to kiss and have non-sexual contact. A good rule of thumb for couples or otherwise, is to not engage in any contact that you wouldn’t do wearing clothes in public. Of course these guidelines work between people who already know each other. By tradition, body contact between strangers is strictly taboo. Considering the reduced spatial distances we discussed earlier, this makes for some tight predicaments. Nudists will twist and contort themselves to maintain this ideal of respect.

I remember observing one woman who was carrying a plate of food in each hand squeezing between two men. The men had their backs to each other, were about a foot or so apart, and were each engaged in conversations. Rather than backtrack or interrupt, she simply bent her knees, took one large stride between the men, lowered her hips below the level of the men’s buttocks, aligned her torso between the two plates of food, exhaled, slid sideways between them by shifting her center of gravity from one leg to the other, and then stepped her other leg through. I don’t think either man knew she was there, let alone less than an inch from touching them. At least they didn’t make any acknowledgement of it.

When I consider similar situations I’ve been in at parties and other social occasions in clothed settings, much less effort has been made not to brush each other. In fact oftentimes the effort is made to brush against each other.

Language standards can also vary from club to club, but by and large sex talk, “dirty” and off color jokes, and swearing is a rarity. Of the nine clubs I’ve visited, there was only one that was lax on this point.

101 Douglas, Observations of Deviance, 29.
102 This is discrimination, despite the rationales given to me by the new manager of that local club I first went to during their open house, while I was in college.
103 Pun intended.
104 Douglas, Observations of Deviance, 30.
Staring is another form of respect taken seriously. Some nudists have become suspect of men and sometimes women wearing sunglasses, especially mirrored sunglasses. The ironic part of this is that as a single male, at times when I’ve worn sunglasses at clubs, I’ve felt the stares of people, particularly women, seeking to discover whether I was staring at them or someone else. A simple wave of my hand and a smile has always been returned with a sheepish, knowing grin. For the truth be told, it is not a crime to admire the physical beauty of another person. I believe the human body is a work of art, as do many nudists.

Along those lines, beauty pageants for women and men used to be an annual event at nudist resorts and at the national convention. This is a tradition that has since been reconsidered from its original intent. Opinions amongst those I’ve asked have differed as to why they started in the first place. Some have said it came out of the physical idealism nudism was founded on. Others point to it as a competitive release, and that it was more for fun. Yet I talked to one former winner from the seventies that took it seriously. Most have said it was started as a counterpoint to the Miss America pageant, a statement that true beauty was shared by women and men alike, and wasn’t meant to be flirted about. Personally I got the sense that it was just another activity that promoted social interaction between members. At any rate, today’s standard is set not to judge others based on appearance, eliminating such contests from the vast majority of clubs. I believe that nudism’s willingness to re-evaluate itself over the years is testimony to the movement’s commitment to creating an atmosphere free from the daily pressures of American life.

Privacy was the last standard I mentioned. In this regard, we aren’t referring to physical privacy, but psychological privacy. I have come to find through trial and error, there are certain topics that lead to suspicions at a nudist resort. One evening while at Vista Grande, a man finally asked me in a cautious way, “You like to ask a lot of questions, are you in the military?” I said “Noooo.” He then asked if I was working with some government agency. I again said “Noooo, …I work for a geographic research company.” He then exclaimed “I knew it! You are spying on us!” …It took me a half an hour for me to assure him that all I did for a living was evaluate properties for flood insurance.

What I had been doing was asking about people’s careers. A common topic to start conversation in clothed society, but unacceptable at nudist resorts unless someone offers up what their career is as conversation. This is in part because most nudists are looking to leave that part of their lives outside the gates, but also because there is a fear that their identity as a nudist might be used against them “back in the real world.”

105 Douglas, Observations of Deviance, 30.
106 Altman and Chemers, Culture and Environment, 87-89. Passage gives multiple examples of societies that practice privacy through a variety of etiquettes.
I have found that people are often skittish talking about their children, probably for similar reasons, given the horrific incidents some families have gone through in their home communities once identified as nudists. Nudists consider these common “clothed” society topics an invasion of privacy.

On the other side of the coin, I’ve found deeply personal subjects such as philosophical views, the physical stimulation derived from the nude state, religion, emotional hardships, and spiritual experiences to be openly discussed, even upon first encounters between people. In the clothed world, I find it typically takes much longer for me as well as others to open up on these subjects.

“Nudist club membership grew steadily, if quietly, in the predominantly conservative 1950s, then exploded in the following decade of Woodstock, body acceptance, and hippie culture”\(^\text{107}\) As the youth of the nation was openly challenging all forms of social control, they saw to it that the bare human form was not going to remain behind the fences and gates of rural clubs. The nude-in became a tool of social protest. But besides just using nudism as a show of disobedience, it was also sought to establish legitimate forums for public nudity. The clothes-optional use of public shorelines was under way by the end of the sixties. The most popular sites included San Francisco, Cape Cod, Martha’s Vineyard, Lake Michigan’s dunes, remote parts of Florida’s coast, along Georgia’s rivers, and in Vermont quarries.\(^\text{108}\)

All of this happened without the ASA’s blessing, in fact many within organized nudism were afraid that this push for exposure would result in a renewed effort of anti-nudist legislation designed to squelch nudism once and for all. At the same time, resort owners were afraid that nude beaches would put them out of business.\(^\text{109}\) Many hoped it would go away.

Instead, in 1975, the “free beach movement” officially formed, and in 1980 renamed itself The Naturist Society, a parallel organization to the ASA.\(^\text{110}\) Another similar organization, Beachfront USA formed about the same time, and rather than compete with each other, the three organizations have realized that they all have the same goal: to promote nudism and to secure legal support for the practice of nudism. Working together has benefited all involved. The ASA discovered through Beachfront USA and The Naturist Society that there were many skinny dippers

\(^{109}\) Lange, Family Naturism in America, 62.
in America who were not aware of the existence of resorts, or who had been content to
stick to their hideaways. Many of these people began to use the resorts too.\footnote{Lange, Family Naturism in America, 62.}

Traditionally, there have been two types of clubs recognized by the ASA, non-
landed and landed clubs.\footnote{North American Guide to Nude Recreation (AANR: 1993, 18\textsuperscript{th} ed.) 28.} Non-landed clubs or travel clubs, are groups of people that
either meet at each other’s homes, rent a gym or pool facility, or travel to beaches or
other nudist destinations. Landed clubs, then are all clubs having on site premises. Of
landed clubs, I divide them into two types. Rustic resorts are little more than
campgrounds, relying on the natural setting for all activities, such as hiking or
swimming in a lake. Developed clubs are those that are located in natural settings, but
also have built amenities such as swimming pools, clubhouse facilities, and maintained
courts such as for volleyball and tennis.

Then in the 1980s what I would call a new type of club, at least in this country,
appeared, ...the up-scale resort. Clubs such as Paradise Lakes in Land-o-lakes, Florida,
and Treehouse Too, later named Desert Shadows Inn, in Palm Springs, California, were
pulling away from the natural setting, and were focusing on providing a setting of
luxury for guests.

These developments effectively bring us to the time when I became interested in
nudism. Treehouse, Paradise Lakes, and a fledgling travel agency founded in 1990
named Bare Necessities that is dedicated to nudist travel, were signaling to the modern
nudist movement that major change was in the air.\footnote{Baxandall, World Guide, 21. A 1983 Gallup Poll showed that 3 in every 20 Americans (15\%) had tried coed
nude recreation.} Little did I know that I was
diving into nudism during a transition period. A transition, that as a single male naïve
to nudism, discovered to be a mine field between traditional outlooks and the quest for
total exposure in America.
THE FIRST TIME

While the philosophy of nudism is widely shared by nudists, and the basic customs and guidelines are generally consistent amongst clubs, attitudes regarding the practice of nudism can vary between regions of the country, and from club to club.

In the early 1990s, I found it difficult, given the isolated points of contact between nudist clubs and society at large to gather a sense of a club’s atmosphere ahead of time. It was hard enough just to find out if a club existed in an area, and where it was, let alone the club’s guidelines, friendliness towards singles, amenities, and general approach to nudism.114

Overlay this with the trauma of transitioning between clothed and unclothed society, and I had the makings of an intense and confusing situation. Whenever we make a change in our lives or try something new, we all go through the same process of trepidation, acclimation, and liberation. Sometimes we aren’t even aware of this process as it happens during our daily life. But after twenty plus years of social situations with the protection of clothes, suddenly shifting to au natural in the company of others makes a person acutely aware of the process.

Trepidation

So as I was saying before, ...as I drove down the dirt road that lead to the club, a strange mix of eager anticipation and nervous dread overcame me, and before my mind could absorb the monumentality of the moment, my hands and feet had driven me through. In truth, my trepidation started long before the gate. It began shortly after Scott’s class. That was in 1992, and my first day at Bluebonnet wasn’t until May of 1995. It took me two-and-a-half years of false starts, giving in to my fears, before I tried social nudism for myself. Of course it took some time and effort to learn something about nudist resorts and where they were located. Eventually I stumbled upon the North American Guide to Nude Recreation, which contains basic club descriptions and in some cases even maps to their locations.

I found one club that was only a half-hour drive away, and while a part of me wanted to go, at this time in my life, there was no way that I was going to disappoint my parents who I was sure would disapprove. Then one day during the spring of my junior year, a rock-and-roll radio station was promoting an open house at the club. This was of course sensationalized. Since visitors weren’t expected to disrobe, I figured it was safe enough for me to go as an observer ...although while there I decided not to use my real name, ...just in case.

114 The internet has improved the ability to find information on nudist resorts.
The whole affair was surreal, having a circus atmosphere, and obviously wasn’t at all what nudism was about. So I didn’t think much about nudism until I moved to Texas. Now independent and a thousand miles from my family, the idea of going to a resort was again intriguing. Dozens of times I had the inspiration to go though I distracted myself from the thought. Slowly I gave the notion deeper consideration. At least five times I had my bag packed, but procrastinated from getting into the car. And once I drove halfway there before turning back. Finally I grew tired of my cowardice, and that was the day my hands and feet drove me through.

I mentioned before the German immigrants of the 1930s, and the man who first met me at Bluebonnet was one of those. He of course was a child when his family immigrated, and since he grew up as a German nudist, his outlook on nudism was far different from mine.

His line of questioning was rather stern, similar to the way it was during the 1930s. Here is a list of questions that an American couple, the Merrills were asked upon their visit to Freilichtpark in the early thirties.

Why do you want to participate in the Light Movement (Nudism)?
How and through whom did you first learn of it?
Are you familiar with the literature of the Light Movement?
What books have you read on the subject?
What periodicals?
Which books and what periodicals do you consider the most valuable?
Have you ever practiced Freikorperkultur (Free Physical Culture)?
Where?
Alone or in company with others?
Do you engage in sports?
Which ones?
Since when?
In gymnastics?
Which system?
Do you swim?
Have you any bodily ailments?
What are they?\textsuperscript{115}

My line of questioning was much the same as theirs, although without questions about my physical health.

Whatever the content, the experience is an unnerving one, as you feel as though being picked apart. I can’t speak for all nudist resorts, but most that I’ve been to conduct these interviews in an office or small room, separated from the club.

\textsuperscript{115} Merrill, Among The Nudists, 22.
Logistically, this makes sense given the intent to screen out unwanted guests. Hence in many clubs the office is located between the vehicular entrance and the primary facilities of the club. However, for the legitimate first time guest, which is presumably the majority of visitors to a club, this set up can be akin to a detention center.

Ultimately, this guilty until proven innocent approach to new guests is a result of nudism’s perceived need to prove itself to American society. This practice though is not in concert with nudism’s tenet of accepting others at face value.

My experience at Sunshower was far different. There the office is located amidst the club’s amenities, and where you park is in full view of the patrons at the pool area. The office is off to the side, and the check-in itself is located at one end of the main building within the main room. Here the interview is an open proceeding within the club. This is much friendlier to legitimate pursuers of nudism, and according to the club’s management, unwanted visitors find the situation intimidating. As well, since nudists are in full view, the voyeur in search of a thrill is immediately confronted with the reality of the situation. When the interview location is cordoned off from the club, the mystique of nudism is maintained, which can further the imagination of the first time visitor, regardless of their intentions.

This is where my impatience to the German man’s line of questioning emanated. His point of view was traditional, and mine, unbeknownst to me at the time, was in line with a new perspective on the organization of nudism. With the growth of nude beaches, open to all regardless of intent, nudists were learning to deal with the occasional gawker as well as press and local law enforcement personnel. These nudists no longer felt the need to hold themselves to a higher standard than the rest of society. And like in any society. As incidents occur, they’ll be dealt with on a case by case basis. Nudists finally gave themselves permission to be honest and open in the public eye, and even be aggressive in the promotion of nudism.

This was my naivety. I went into the experience not thinking there was anything to hide. I was fully aware that most of me was seeking a statement of my independence, a part of me was seeking a voyeuristic thrill, and a third part of me was fully aware that intimating anything overtly sexual would be inappropriate, ...just as in any social occasion. His line of questioning though started me to doubt my motivation, offend me that my innocence was on trial, confuse me as to the openness and accepting nature of nudists that I had read about, and make me overly self-conscious, bringing my trepidation to a head. I sensed an unnecessary amount of tension between us.

Then came the moment of signing the club registry. This was a monumental moment, as this was the final act of commitment to partake in this adventure of mine.

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The Merrill’s experience was similar, as they noted in their book that their sense of humor had deserted them in that moment. Like me, they were sobered and terrified in the act of signing their names. Of all the people I’ve met at nudist resorts, everyone which have shared their experience of signing a club’s registry for the first time, have expressed feelings of “the weight of the world upon their shoulders.” The commitment made with your signature signifies the transition between trepidation and acclimation.

**Acclimation**

Now the whirlwind in my head intensified. My mind was still trying to grasp the comforting familiarity of my trepidation. As odd as that sounds, I wanted to remain fearful of the event simply because it was easier. Not knowing what was ahead, personal embarrassment, worrying if my name would end up on some secret list of government subversives, sexual fantasies, cult rituals, were all a jumble of thoughts I had while I was standing outside waiting for the woman with the golf cart to show me around. Looking back, none of these thoughts held any merit, but they seemed legitimate concerns at the time. I must have had a desperate look on my face as she pulled up in the cart.

The ride in the cart from the main entrance to the pool area was thankfully, rather long. I would estimate at least a quarter mile. This gave me a chance to come to grips with my predicament and as I mentioned in the introduction, have my first epiphany regarding the experience of nudism. In that three minute ride, it became clear to me that the experience that I had both dreaded and dreamed of wasn’t going to be anything close to reality. And it was calming, as I let out a sigh, to allow myself to go with the flow for the rest of the day, and take the experience as it came.

When it came to removing my clothes, in the introduction I phrased it as I “stripped”, reflecting my mindset of the time. My viewpoint was still mired in the general societal outlook that I was losing my protection. It was later that day when someone explained to me that the terms nude and naked are not interchangeable to nudists, as they are in our everyday culture. Naked, as a state of being, holds the connotation that something, whether it be clothing or dignity, has been taken or stripped from someone, by someone else. ...Nude is by choice.

Then there was the woman who first sat next to me. How did she know it was my first time? Anyone new to the club, veteran nudist or not, would receive a tour on their first visit. Well for one thing, Bluebonnet’s club personality is very sociable. This is especially true around the pool. If you want privacy at Bluebonnet, then you had to stay in your tent or go read under a tree away from the main buildings. If you’re in the open then it’s assumed that you’re open to personal interaction. Personality aside, I

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118 Ableman, *Beyond Nakedness*, 49.
still could’ve been a nudist visiting from a club with a more subdued atmosphere. No, …there were other things about me that tipped her off that this was my first time.

A big piece of this was that I was being a method actor as I was consumed by the transition I was amidst. Looking back, trying to appear as an old-pro when I was anything but, seems foolish. I’m sure each of my moves were overly cautious as I had consciously assessed how I did everything. Simple things, such as laying a towel on a chaise lounge and sitting down. Everyday action that shouldn’t take any thought, and yet given my heightened awareness to my surroundings, became complicated tasks. I think it took three tries to adequately lay my towel down, and I vaguely remember nearly falling over as I tried to sit down, and having one of my feet tangled in the rubber slats.

As I picked a place to sit, I had also maintained an equi-distant spacing between myself and the nearest people to my right and left. This was a dead give away. Another similar incident happened later that day. I was the first in the hot tub, after going on a nature walk. I felt as though I had become fairly well acclimated with nudism, until a man got in next to me. Suddenly I was again conscious of my spacing and began to scoot away a bit. It was to no avail though. Within five minutes, five or six more people came in , and quickly eliminated my scooting options. Deciding not to make a scene by getting up and moving to the less congested part of the tub, I toughed it out, and before long had forgotten again about matters of personal space as I became enveloped in the conversation.

That first day, I also was wearing mirrored sunglasses. And worst of all, they were the type that form fit to your face and wrap around your eyes, which would be perfect for ogling women. To my credit, I was playing competitive volleyball in those years, and having read that volleyball was the national pastime of nudists, I came ready to play. These are the perfect glasses for volleyball. The form fit helps keep sand out of my eyes, and the mirrored surface not only reduces glare better than other sunglasses, but also prevents my opponents from reading my eyes. At any rate, the nudists at Bluebonnet weren’t competitive players, and given that situation, I can see how it tipped them off that it was my first time. Ever since, I only wear those glasses when I’m actually playing and I use a standard pair of sunglasses the rest of the time.

And of course, as I engaged in conversations I was asking a lot of questions regarding people’s occupations. Since I was new to nudism, they tolerated my questions and obliged me, …at least for a while. Asking questions about what a person
does for a living had become so commonplace to me that I wasn’t conscious that my intention was to judge them, ...to compare my status to theirs. Without clothing as a means to cast a quick decision of our compatibility, I had to take the time to ask. By slowing down and communicating it gave me an opportunity to get to know another person based on the content of their ideas and beliefs.

As the day progressed, my behaviors began to change. My bias towards professions relaxed, and the conversations became a sharing of ideas, beliefs, and experiences. My spatial distance decreased. Gradually I allowed others into my intimate zone, not just physically, but also mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

In reality, my behaviors didn’t change. If we consider that behaviors are a set of agreements we make with another person, then what was happening was that I was creating a new set of agreements with these people. The old way I had of meeting strangers wasn’t going to be acceptable with nudists. I had to learn another way of meeting these people. Of course we unconsciously go through this process with every new person we meet. The intense experience of trying nudism made me conscious of this process, and served as a catalyst to what has now become my approach to meeting people, ...to relate on a personal level.

Liberation

During the last few hours of my first day, I was embracing my new perspective of life. Or I should say renewed perspective, as I felt like a kid again. A late day storm front rolled through while a bunch of us were gathered in the hot tub. Just a hard shower, no lightning. After a couple of minutes, without thinking, I exclaimed that we should go play in the mud! And one woman and I would have, except that the rain tapered off just as we were getting out.

Increasing my awareness that day has had an empowering effect in realizing how others see me. I do try to act like I belong, as if I’m an old pro, when it’s actually something brand new. I’m motivated in this behavior by my fears of being ridiculed, hazed, feeling stupid, identified as being a novice, and imposing a burden on others. In short, I have great difficulty showing vulnerability. This behavior allows me to be a coward, so I don’t have to muster up the courage to ask for help. While I’ve always subconsciously known this, it wasn’t until I went through the experience of nudism that I was able to admit it to my conscious.

The most sobering revelation I had that first day, was recognizing the connection between eye contact and judging of others. Through the day, I noticed twinges and burning or warming sensations in my belly, as I averted my eye contact from other people, or as they averted theirs from mine, and as we re-established eye contact. I

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believe maintaining eye contact is a mutual behavior agreement to focus on communication rather than judgment and our hidden agendas. The simple act of breaking eye contact tapped into my fear of rejection and abandonment, and was tugging at my deep seeded need for love and acceptance.\textsuperscript{120}

Becoming conscious of these sensations, I believe has a direct correlation with the reduced spatial distances between nudists. Eye contact is easier to maintain at close range, since fewer distractions come into our field of vision. In this manner, a tight proximity to another nudist is not an invasion of privacy, nor an interest of sexual intimacy, as it might be considered in clothed society, but actually a show of trust. A sincere effort to eliminate distractions and judgments of physical appearance is being given to each other, in order to increase each other’s sense of security, acceptance, and enjoyment.

And ever since my first day, ...I’ve known when it’s someone else’s first day.

\textsuperscript{120} Brissett and Edgley, \textit{Life As Theater}, 97.
TODAY’S EXPERIENCE

During the first century of the modern nudist movement, the focus was on survival and growth. As organized nudism enters its second century, the challenge has drastically shifted to keeping pace with its own rapid growth.

While the recent growth of nationally recognized members and membership in clubs has been modest, growth from tourism has been phenomenal. Much of this has been by nudists not affiliated with any club or organization, and by people new to nudism. Over 100,000 people visit the finer resorts in Pasco County, Florida each year, yet the American Association for Nude Recreation (formerly the ASA) only claims 50,000 members nationwide.\textsuperscript{121} Not to mention the phenomenal growth of nude cruises and clothing optional resorts in the Caribbean.\textsuperscript{122}

This increase in interest and travel from people across a wider cross-section of American society has put significant pressure on landed clubs to significantly expand and upgrade their facilities and services. Just a decade ago, an in-ground pool, hot tub, a well kept volleyball court, and a handful of air-conditioned cabins was enough to be considered a top-of-the-line nudist resort. Today, top-notch resorts are fully staffed hotels with fine dining, bars, nightclubs, pool complexes, tennis courts, playgrounds for the kids, and full-service spa facilities. Some even have miniature golf courses.

\textbf{The Spiritual Period}

This latest era of growth that began in the early 1990’s and has continued to the present, I refer to as the spiritual period. I admit that given the increased focus on amenities of luxury, this name seems incongruous. But the drive for improved surroundings I believe is merely the result of the deeper motives behind this current growth of interest in nudism.

\textsuperscript{121} North American Guide to Nude Recreation, 21\textsuperscript{st} ed., 9.
\textsuperscript{122} North American Guide to Nude Recreation, 19\textsuperscript{th} ed., 178. Bare Necessities, a travel company dedicated to clothing optional tourists, was founded in 1990, booked their first cruise for 540 passengers in 1992, and by 1997 were booking 4 full luxury cruise liners a year (roughly 2,200 per ship). Over a five year span, that’s roughly an increase of sixteen times the volume of business for this one aspect of Bare Necessities services.
Americans are finding themselves time-starved. Many people feel like their lives are out of control and overstretched with work. To find more time for family and self, many people are putting a higher emphasis on services, to free up time consumed by chores.\textsuperscript{123}

Another aspect of our lives that has been contributing to stress is technology. With unending access to cell phones, email, the internet, and continual annoyances such as computer viruses, spam, and tele-marketers, we’re constantly feeling hounded and “connected”. Never a moment to ourselves. Funny, ...but in this age of open and instant communication, we’ve developed a sense of claustrophobia about it.\textsuperscript{124}

In this hurried state, we also feel attention starved. With advances in technology, and higher expectations of service, Americans have come to expect more in the way of entertainment. This creates a “body vs. soul conundrum” when compared to our need for “me” time. We eat fast food and want our shopping malls to be entertainment destinations, yet we want to meditate at home and pamper ourselves.\textsuperscript{125}

The result of all of this has been to turn a bath or shower into luxury time. For many Americans, this simply isn’t enough. As we have felt as though their lives have been pushed to extremes, I believe Americans have developed more willingness to go to extremes to find relief. And to someone who has publicly worn clothes all their life, nudism appears as an extreme.

Nudism is one way that satisfies these seemingly contradictory needs. The sensory need to indulge our senses is met. Our deeper need to escape our routines and society-at-large also happens. If so desired, the opportunity to reconnect with our true selves, our purpose, and the universe can be achieved, satisfying our spiritual needs. And the experience is significant enough to act as

\textsuperscript{124} Miller, “The Millenial Mind-set”, 60-65.
\textsuperscript{125} Miller, “The Millenial Mind-set”, 60-65.
a marker against the routine ness of a person’s life. Leading this trend has been some of the California clubs. As early as the 1980’s Elysium Fields in the Los Angeles area, and Lupin, near San Francisco, have offered programs designed to encourage personal growth. Here lies the growth of nudism now and into the future.

**New Challenges**

The challenge now facing organized nudism in America, is to keep up with its rapid growth. The increase in both visitors and their expectations has placed demands on clubs to re-evaluate many of their policies as well as make significant upgrades to their facilities. This is especially so for upscale resorts. Many nudists feel that much is at stake. Most concerns center around maintaining touch with nudism’s core values, respect for nature, and the image of nudism to the rest of society.

Health issues have also had an influence. Most clubs today refer to themselves as clothing optional, as opposed to nudist. Increased, or at least perceived increased risk to skin cancer has been the driving force behind this change. Most clubs advocate a common sense approach, relying on people’s integrity regarding body coverage. The difficulty with this is there are those that will abuse the practice to the point that they aren’t participating in nudism, but are observing it.

Women’s issues have also contributed to the change to clothing optional. In the past, women simply wouldn’t come to the nudist resort during their menstrual cycle. A clothing optional designation allows women to go topless during their time of the month.

A couple of new norms have been instituted to head off abuse of clothing optional use. One is that men must go bottomless at all times. So if my butt starts to get burned, I better seek out some shade. The other new consideration is that whatever clothing is worn, it must be loose fitting. This is to avoid introducing garments that enhance sexuality.

Alcohol used to be prohibited at most clubs, but with the shift towards hotel type resorts, adult beverages are now included. The fear has always been that alcohol would breakdown people’s inhibitions and lead to erotic overtures and possibly even acts. Today’s logic is that clothing optional resorts will deal with such incidents just as you would in clothed society. Personally, I have concerns with this situation. I have been to one of the upscale resorts in this country, where the late-night atmosphere around the hot tub became rather friendly. Now we were all consenting adults, and as

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126 Lange, *Family Naturism in America*, 50.
127 Based on my personal interviews with nudists.
such there wasn’t a problem. But at this time of night with a reduced size hotel staff to monitor the pool area, there was nothing to stop a minor from wondering into the setting.

Even more disconcerting to me, is through my research I came across a number of swing clubs that presented themselves as a nudist organization.\textsuperscript{131} I believe that nudists will need to be vigilant about their identification and reputation in comparison to sex clubs, and diligently monitoring situations at clothing optional resorts where alcohol is present may need to be considered towards this end.

Historically, accentuation of the body at nudist resorts has been discouraged.\textsuperscript{132} With an increase in tattoos and piercing over the past decades, this has now become an issue as these often attract attention to erogenous zones of the body. At present I have not been able to find a consistent outlook between clubs, partly because many clubs haven’t addressed the issue, and partly because it’s not clear where to set the standard. Personally I don’t see what you could do about tattoos. To deny admittance to someone because of body art would be blatant discrimination and an open invitation to a lawsuit. I would surmise the same could be said regarding a person’s choice to shave or trim their pubic hair. Piercing is another matter, as earrings have long been accepted, but piercings of a person’s nipples, tongue, navel, and genitals clearly would be distracting as they also signify a distinct intent for sexual stimulation.

Other forms of jewelry can be problematic as well. Once I saw a woman at a Midwest club who wore a gold chain around her waist. In back where the clasp was, an added length of chain dangled between the top half of her buttocks, and in front, a similar chain dangled to just above her vagina and had a diamond pendant attached. Clearly this display was designed to both sexually stimulate herself as well as others around her. Since the club did not have any standards regarding jewelry, nothing was done despite the disturbance it created in the decidedly family oriented atmosphere of the club.

The modern nudist movement has predominantly been populated by Caucasians. Today one of the AANR’s priorities is the inclusion of all races,\textsuperscript{133}...yet the organization as a whole has not addressed the many clubs that still employ discriminatory practices against single males. This promises to be one of the most controversial issues facing nudism in this decade.

\textsuperscript{131} After talking with people from these organizations, it seems clear to me that they are flying under false colors. What advantage this affords them is unclear to me, because it is not illegal to own and operate a private sex club in this nation, nor do I see any marketing advantage since nudism is largely family oriented. A good rule of thumb to use if interested in trying nudism, and you are unsure of a club’s legitimacy, is to check with the American Association for Nude Recreation.
\textsuperscript{132} Douglas, \textit{Observations of Deviance}, 32.
\textsuperscript{133} Lange, \textit{Family Naturism in America}, 76.
With more people partaking in nudism, resort facilities are becoming stressed from overuse. For example, most nudists have been conscientious of cleaning up after themselves and keeping the natural surroundings of their clubs litter free. For a person new to nudism though, and who is looking to be pampered, their focus isn’t going to be on chores that are a part of their daily routine.

As clubs have added dining facilities it’s been discovered that greater distance between tables is needed than in clothed society. Most restaurants look to minimize aisles and space between tables, to get as many seats in the dining space as possible. As most people’s waistline is at table height or above, in a clothing optional environment it’s disconcerting if people are passing close to your table, or squeezing behind your chair to get to their seat.134

Perhaps the biggest demand on the facilities of upscale resorts is the sharing of amenities between groups with differing focus. I have observed three major activity groups at resorts, which roughly follow the philosophies of the three major periods of growth. One group is into physical fitness and sports, a second type of group is quite sociable, and the third type of group is looking to unwind with peace and quiet. When there is only one common recreation area for everyone to share, conflict is inevitable. The most heated conflicts occur between those who take sports competitively, and those who play for fun social interaction, with one group seeking to dominate the courts or the pool (usually water volleyball). Invariably the group seeking reflection and relaxation are bound to become annoyed as the drama unfolds. I believe the need to satisfy these three types of activities will be the driving force behind future nudist resort designs.

**Design Approach**

Ultimately, nudism is an experience of self discovery. Nudism operates on a highly personal level. This is where I believe the value of nudism exists. This also makes it difficult to justify a general outlook or philosophy of nudism as a guide for design. I feel that such an approach would lead to an iconic, watered-down image that would not relate well to anyone. Instead, I decided to focus on creating an environment that would best facilitate the process of self discovery, and then tailor the design, or tweak it as necessary to meet the specific needs of nudism.

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Self discovery was the common thread in all of my experiences with nudism, and it was a recurring phrase in the conversations I had with others about their experiences. So if I’m going to design a resort that promotes the process of self discovery that has the potential to relate to anyone, I need to discover environmental preferences that we all share.

I believe nudism heightens our awareness and helps to bring the discovery process to the forefront of our conscious. When I’m in the process of self discovery, I often have butterflies in my stomach when I get to the cusp of change. I can feel the edge of something new approaching. In part two, we’ll see how our relationship with the edge, that moment of change, plays a principal role in our process of discovery, our preferences, and the development of my nudist resort.

15 Water volleyball can turn the pool area into a tense situation
PART II
CLOTHING-OPTIONAL NEEDS
ARTISTIC PREDISPOSITIONS

People prefer scenes of natural landscapes. Evidence of this can be found in almost any cube farm, which is business slang for any windowless open office area subdivided by cubicles. In such environments, it has been documented that people consistently and predictably put up posters of natural scenes.\footnote{Grant Hildebrand, \textit{Origins of Architectural Pleasure} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) 16.}

In a more scientific approach, assessment models of landscape quality have been developed, and are classified as one of five types: Ecological, Formal Aesthetic, Psychophysical, Psychological, and Phenomenological.

Ecological models assess landscapes in terms of biomes, focusing on the physical features, flora, and fauna of a landscape, placing humans on the outside looking in.\footnote{Irwin Altman, and Joachim F. Wohlwill, \textit{Behavior and the Natural Environment} (New York: Plenum Press, 1983) 77.} These models though start with the assumptions that pristine areas are preferred to those disturbed by people, and that people are not a part of nature.\footnote{Altman and Wohlwill, \textit{Behavior and the Natural Environment}, 78.} Other model types incorporate a range of landscapes for analysis from fully natural to fully urban.

Formal Aesthetic models seek to define landscapes in terms of forms, lines, variety, and other parameters of composition such as figure-ground relationships. Here again, people are non-participating spectators making judgments of the scene.\footnote{Altman and Wohlwill, \textit{Behavior and the Natural Environment}, 77.} These models are also suspect in their conclusiveness since they rely on the opinion of experts trained in landscape architecture and art.\footnote{Altman and Wohlwill, \textit{Behavior and the Natural Environment}, 79.}

Psychophysical, psychological, and phenomenological models place humans in an interactive role with the landscape, but they too have their deficiencies.

Psychophysical models rely heavily on precise measurements achieved from statistical sampling methods.\footnote{Altman and Wohlwill, \textit{Behavior and the Natural Environment}, 79.} The role of the human in this model is specifically as a scientist, and as a result speaks little to the affections that experiencing the scene arises within us.\footnote{Altman and Wohlwill, \textit{Behavior and the Natural Environment}, 79.}

Psychological models are far more subjective, as humans play the role of experiencers of the landscape. This situation places a higher bias towards factors
The difficulty with these types of models is that the preference for a particular landscape is ever-changing, as the person’s perspective changes moving through the setting. This has the potential to skew a person’s final judgment of preference for a particular landscape, based on one exceedingly positive or negative moment of the experience.

Phenomenological models are even more subjective than psychological models. In these models each individual experiencing a landscape interprets each moment of the experience. These models are greatly affected by an individual’s state of mind during the exercise. As well, the mechanics of these models lend themselves to losing sight of the landscape as a whole, and considering that landscape in comparison to another.

Ultimately all these models fail for our purposes. They were designed to define the most preferred landscape. Given the multitude if not endless number of variables involved, how is this possible to determine using these approaches? Instead of seeking to define the perfect landscape, we only need to identify particular features and patterns of landscapes people prefer.

There is a much simpler way of determining preferred landscapes and landscape features, and it is similar to the formal aesthetic models. The major difference is that instead of experts, photos of various landscapes are placed in front of a diverse sample of people, and they are simply asked which photos they prefer, and why.

**Scene Preference**

Multiple studies have concluded that people prefer natural scenes to those with built features. This is especially true when views of built environments lack features of vegetation and water. In fact, it has been found that the preference levels for natural scenes are so much higher than urban views that the distributions of scores for the two domains hardly overlap.

The particular landscape type that studies strongly indicate to be the most preferred is savanna-like environments. One key insight to this is that of all age groups involved in one study, children decidedly preferred the savanna both to “live in” and to

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142 Altman and Wohlwill, *Behavior and the Natural Environment*, 78.
143 Altman and Wohlwill, *Behavior and the Natural Environment*, 79.
144 Altman and Wohlwill, *Behavior and the Natural Environment*, 78.
147 Altman and Wohlwill, *Behavior and the Natural Environment*, 110-111. Natural was not exclusively defined as wilderness. Specifically, a scene was described as natural if 1) it contained extensive vegetation or water, and 2) if buildings, cars, and other built features were absent or not prominent.
“visit”. This speaks volumes towards the hypothesis that the preference for savanna biomes is an innate predisposition of humans. Most of the participants of the study had not grown up in a savanna setting, as the biome is not prevalent where the study’s subjects lived, North America and Europe, so this preference isn’t born from familiarity. From age fifteen and up, familiarity with the landscape does increasingly become a factor as deciduous forests and coniferous forests become equally preferred with savannas. Rainforests and especially deserts are much less preferred across all ages.\footnote{Barkow, Cosmides, and Tooby, \textit{The Adapted Mind}, 558.}

Among natural scenes, the data suggests that people differentiate between the scenes with and without water, favoring those with water. Within those, there is also a higher preference for water that is flowing rather than stagnant.\footnote{Irwin Altman and Ervin H. Zube, \textit{Public Places and Spaces} (New York: Plenum Press, 1989) 224-225.}

Looking at the spatial features and specific contents of an environment that influence preference patterns, studies of adaptive responses reveals the following key elements. Besides water, large trees, a focal point, changes of elevation, semi-open space, even ground cover, distant views to the horizon, and moderate degrees of complexity are major determinants of preference. All of these features are indicative of savannas.\footnote{Barkow, Cosmides, and Tooby, \textit{The Adapted Mind}, 560.}

So why do we prefer savannas? Habitat selection theories provide the most plausible explanations to date. In today’s world where we have sought to decidedly control the boundary between our dwellings and nature, conscious decisions regarding habitat selection often surpass the basic needs of picking a location that provides adequate food, shelter, and breeding opportunities. Yet scientists believe that humans fight for survival in nature during human kind’s formative years has shaped our DNA, giving us instincts of habitat selection, that unconsciously still guide us.\footnote{Richard Conniff, “The Natural History of Art” \textit{Discover} Nov. 1999: 96.} The basic tenet of habitat selection theories is that animals, including humans, will have a tendency to select a habitat where past generations have thrived.

Savannas have a rich interplay of a variety of features whereas forests and deserts are more-or-less one-dimensional. This interplay invites exploration, promising both resources and refuge. Changes in elevation provide vistas of far away features which give a person a means of orientation. Partly obscured views and winding trails help to peak our curiosity to explore.\footnote{Conniff, “The Natural History of Art” 98.} In contrast, deserts leave people fully exposed
lending to feelings of agoraphobia and paranoia. Forests keep people enclosed and can become oppressive leaving people feeling anxious and claustrophobic.

A number of visual properties influencing aesthetic preference and interest create the savanna’s rich interplay. These properties include complexity, structural properties, focality, depth, ground surface texture, threat/tension, mystery, and water. You’ll notice a strong correlation between these properties and the previously mentioned spatial features that were identified by participants of various landscape preference studies. To be clear, the results of the studies were defined as elements contained within preferred landscapes, here we are defining those elements as parts of a visual composition. This analysis is consistent with traditional formal aesthetic models.

Simply defined, complexity refers to the number of independently perceived elements in a scene. Landscapes of high complexity have large numbers of elements with dissimilarity among elements. Complexity as it pertains to the attractiveness of a landscape is, pardon the pun, the most complex of preferred attributes. There is a delicate balance to this aspect of the landscape. Too little complexity and the scene becomes boring and predictable. Too much complexity and the scene becomes confusing and uninviting. And it is impossible to determine exactly where the boundary of acceptable complexity exists. In this regard, complexity is not unlike pornography, we can’t seem to agree on what constitutes pornography vs. art, …but we know it when we see it.

Structural properties refer to the manner in which the elements of a landscape are grouped or arranged. Research has shown that animals, including humans, have a strong orientation to information that is structured or patterned. A human example of this is the distinction each of us makes between music and noise, the latter being commonly connotated as an annoyance. Patterns in landscapes enable us to group multiple elements as one entity. This expedites our ability to recognize familiar surroundings. Our recognition is derived from the relationships between the individual elements of an entity, and can be created in infinite ways. Some of the predominant factors though have been demonstrated to be homogenous textures, redundant elements, groupings of elements, and properties that provide continuity among separate or dissimilar elements.

Focality refers to the ability of a scene to contain or create a focal point. In containing a focal point, one prominent feature, or grouping of features creates an area of dominance, attracting the viewer’s eye. In creating a focal point, various features such as textures, contours, or other patterns create a visual flow and direct observers

\[^{153}\text{Altman and Wohlwill, Behavior and the Natural Environment, 96.}\]
\[^{154}\text{Altman and Wohlwill, Behavior and the Natural Environment, 98.}\]
attention to one area of a landscape. Focality is highly preferred as it creates a means of orientation within the landscape.

Regarding depth, the research suggests that a lack of depth in a scene is the driving factor for our preference for landscapes with depth, rather than the amount of depth a landscape has. In other words, there comes a point where increasing the depth of a scene returns no increase in preference. Our main issue regarding depth seems to stem from our fear. Maintaining distance between ourselves and what cannot be seen affords us a margin of safety via escapability from unknown threats.

Ground surface textures play a significant role in defining depth. Textural gradients give our eyes a continuous feedback of information between individual elements of a landscape, and can affect the accuracy of our depth estimates. Even or smooth textures, (textures that create a sense of a continuous “sheet” between elements), are far better for establishing accurate estimates of depth between elements, than rough or uneven surface textures. Smooth textures also imply ease of movement and exploration. Rough textures are often associated with impediments to movement, such as rock outcroppings, thickets, or debris, and with more unstable walking surfaces, such as gravel. Rough surface textures that intercede a smooth texture, or a line of sight that crosses a series of different textures act to diminish our ability to determine depth. Hence, smooth textures are highly preferred.

Threats are inferred from a landscape, based on our learned expectations and associations. The result is tension is created within us. Probably the most recognizable threatening feature of a natural landscape is the cliff. From above we fear falling. From below we fear avalanches falling on us. And perhaps worst of all, cliffs restrict our ability to escape and find shelter from mobile threats such as predatory animals.

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155 Altman and Wohlwill, Behavior and the Natural Environment, 99.
156 Although, depth in combination with other parameters is preferred as it contributes to a desire to explore.
157 Altman and Wohlwill, Behavior and the Natural Environment, 100.
158 Altman and Wohlwill, Behavior and the Natural Environment, 101-102.
159 There is a notable amount of people that have a type T (thrill seeker) personality, in which case elements of height are actually desired as a means to create an adrenalin rush. The majority of people though do not fir this personality description.
thunderstorms, or flash floods. Obviously, landscapes containing threatening features are far less preferred than those without such salient features.\footnote{Altman and Wohlwill, \textit{Behavior and the Natural Environment}, 103.}

Other terms used to describe the quality known as mystery are deflected vista or anticipation. This condition is created when part of the landscape is obscured from view but clearly the landscape promises more to discover beyond the obstruction. Mystery peaks our curiosity and taps into our instinct to explore and thus acquire information. Instances of this phenomenon are easy to find in both urban and natural landscapes, such as would be found with a bend in the river or a winding street. Even in the case of a street corner, where light emanating from beyond the edge of a building suggests an opening beyond. Although it is significant to note that there is a fine line between curiosity of the unknown, and fear of the unknown. Hence, the preference for a landscape containing mystery lies with the perception of risk of each individual.\footnote{Altman and Wohlwill, \textit{Behavior and the Natural Environment}, 104.}

Water is indeed powerful. So much so, that scientific studies have given it credence as an abstracted visual property of a landscape, despite the fact that it is a physical element of a landscape. Trees have been reduced to inferences of depth, cliffs as visual obstacles, and shrubs and grasses as ground surface textures, but water is water. Water evokes interest, tranquility, and can add energy to any scene. Simply put, water adds a dynamic to the landscape that in itself enhances scenic quality. Consistently, landscapes with water “are accorded especially high levels of preference.”\footnote{Altman and Wohlwill, \textit{Behavior and the Natural Environment}, 104.}

\textbf{Symmetry, Flow, \& Fittingness}

The aforementioned visual properties were derived from studies that did not seek to distinguish between natural and built elements. The purpose of those studies was to establish preferences based on visual cues, not specific element identification (water being the exception). For our purposes we need to now consider the dynamics of preference created from the interaction of natural and built elements of a landscape.
As we undergo creative endeavors, our play in art tends towards graded complication. For instance, as a child is playing a game such as bouncing a ball, there comes a point when the activity becomes monotonous and unappealing. At this point, the child has the choice to either stop, or introduce a new element to the game to increase interest, such as alternating hands or clapping between bounces. Creating a variety of options helps us to match and anticipate patterns in our environments.  

When we encounter regularity in nature, it often comes as a surprise. Our mental expectation is that order is created by humans and that natural patterns are asymmetric, unless controlled conditions exist such as the circular rings created when a stone is tossed in a calm pond. We expect to find either chaotic scatterings, clusters, and at best, flowing transitions, patterns, and forms. An example of unexpected regularity would be fairy rings, a phenomenon where mushrooms are arranged in a perfect circle. 

I believe our sense of symmetry within nature also is dependent on scale. Perfect symmetry theoretically can exist on a micro scale such as a snowflake. At larger scales, a macro, or apparent symmetry exists, such as in animals and leaves where a mirror image of features exists along at least one axis. In these cases, a perfect symmetry does not exist as the sizes and proportions of the individual features are not identical. As well, change occurs over time. Thus maintaining symmetry means that symmetrical elements must maintain symmetry as they change. Hence, pure symmetry is a concept that largely exists in our minds and not the reality of the world.

Please indulge me for a bit as I get on my soapbox. Symmetry is stagnant, lifeless, and fights the natural order of life. Enacting symmetry in built form reveals our arrogance as we attempt to impose order and stop time, in defiance of change. “For all their presence and materiality, the four-square composure of a Palladian villa or suburban house by Mario Botta can seem smug and contrived: the buildings not themselves but portraits of themselves—impervious, imperious, and ideal.” Such an approach is futile, shallow, frustrating, and boring. I believe that perfection is found within imperfection. We need the unexpected, the flowing, and the ever-changing to challenge us to discover, learn, and grow.

Order and flow are inextricably linked though. In music for instance, there is considerable order and even symmetry as pieces can be evenly measured and passages arranged with codas and chorus lines creating elements of repetition. The entire composition though is always flowing, and as we initially experience a selection of music, we cannot accurately anticipate where the piece will take us, despite our familiarity with the structural parts of the piece. 

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Architecture is much the same. Symmetrical buildings, or the symmetrical portions of a building, are chorus lines within a larger composition. They are familiar and comforting, but the song needs to move on. Otherwise our environments become broken records.

The order and flow of our built environment extends beyond the building envelope, as it interacts with the order and flow of the surrounding landscape. This flow occurs both in 2D, view from a distance, and 3D, physical arrangement. The question becomes whether the two flows clash or blend, an issue of fittingness.

One study developed a model to analyze the visual impact of man-made changes introduced in a landscape, by measuring the perceived difference between landscapes with changes, and equivalent control landscapes. Visual impact was found in this and subsequent similar studies to depend largely on proportion of area covered by developments, opacity of vegetation, textural contrast, congruity of shape, and the extent of color contrast. Developments found to be highly compatible with the landscape were smaller in scope, had considerable amounts of vegetation surrounding them, had low textural contrast, were curvilinear or clustered forms, and had low levels of color contrast.

These parameters have a greater impact when the developments are being viewed from a distance. As we come closer to the man-made elements, material qualities become the predominant factor determining fittingness with the landscape.

Our built environments are composed of natural substances and materials although they are often refined well beyond their inherent state. We typically build in forms, particularly rectilinear, which do not characterize forms in nature. The material quality of natural environments is characterized by curvilinear and irregular lines and edges, irregular and rough textures, and continuous gradations of shape and color. Highly refined man-made environments consist of straight lines and sharp edges, consistent and smooth textures, and abrupt

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discontinuations and transitions. Given that people prefer natural environments and built forms that demonstrate compatibility with their natural surroundings, it stands to reason that finish materials that maintain reference to the material’s natural state are preferred.

**Design Attributes**

Given these preferences, I made a series of design decisions regarding the character of the resort.

The first is that the resort will be sited in a savanna-like setting. While this type of setting can be created almost anywhere in America, I prefer to select a site that will not require extensive intervention to create savanna conditions. In America, this setting is naturally occurring in the Midwest where the grassland biome meets the biome of the eastern deciduous forest. As well, the extensive agricultural practice of the area has created fields interspaced with stands of trees. This is the closest we have in America to a savanna, so the search for a site will be in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio.

I have also decided that the site must have a significant amount of water present. I believe this is a necessity to give an aspect of tranquility to our resort. While flowing water elements are preferred to stagnant water, I see the water as a counterbalance for the energy that I anticipate a successful design facilitating discovery will create in the guests. Accordingly the search will be for a site with a lake or pond.

In order to blend the buildings of the resort with the landscape, I will restrict the height to two stories. This is important because given the scope of the program of a resort, I am assuming that a significant area of the site will be developed regardless of height, and the perspective of a person either viewing the resort from a distance, or walking immediately next to it need not be dominated by a towering building, in this manner, the trees will be able to be taller than the resort, allowing them to be seen even if behind the buildings. Of course restricting the height will mean that a larger amount of land will be built upon.

To help moderate this, the site will have to have some undulations of topography. This will afford us the opportunity to build into the side of a small hill or two, giving the landscape more opportunity to assert dominance on the built environment. Beyond dominance, this will also give the resort the opportunity for a rich interplay between the extent and blending of building and landscape. I believe this dynamic will aid in the uniqueness of the resort, making it a memorable location for all who visit. Thus the integration of the landscaping, including both softscape (plants)

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and hardscape (pathways, site walls, etc.) with the buildings will be of paramount concern to as seamlessly as possible blend the site with the buildings.

The buildings themselves will need to have an aesthetic rhythm, or visual flow to minimize textural contrast with the landscape and landscaping. Thus, let’s seek to minimize the amount of planar solid wall area of the envelope of the resort. As well, I feel that redundant patterns/elements of the façade should be carefully balanced in proportion to one another, so that no one pattern or element becomes monotonous, essentially creating the same effect as a flat wall.

I’ve also made a choice of primary materials for the resort. Considering the attributes of brick, concrete, glass, steel, stone, and wood, I decided that glass, stone, and wood are the materials that are the most conducive for referencing nature, and for facilitating discovery.

Brick simply will not be used. While brick can be formed in a variety of shapes and can be placed in a variety of patterns, what I find is that the repetitious nature of brick is problematic. The regularity of form coupled with the contrast between the mortar and brick creates a pattern of predictability that is not naturally occurring.

Concrete will and can be used for foundations, structural walls, sub-floors, and exterior paving. I plan though to minimize its use as a finished vertical surface. Even with surface aggregates, finished concrete tends towards uniformity, and on cloudy days, I find that concrete is especially cold, uninviting, and impervious to the human touch. So much so, that often I have felt smooth concrete walls take on a life of their own, standing in defiance of my existence, and refusing to allow me to get to know them. This is the one building material that I find merits personification.

I do like concrete as a paving material, since even textured ground covers are preferred, and because concrete can be finished with a variety of inlays, aggregates, and textures. In this way it is flexible and I plan to use that flexibility to our advantage to either camouflage control and expansion joints, or place these joints in slight curves rather than straight lines. My goal is to avoid the grid-like effect that these joints have when placed rectilinearly and uniformly.

Glass is the material that within it I believe will help facilitate discovery. Whether transparent or translucent, the material allows us an image or at least an inclination that there is something else to see or experience on the other side. When applied en mass, the division between interior and exterior can begin to disappear, when viewed from the interior during the day, and from the exterior during the night.

Steel will be used only for structural purposes, and I plan to take care not to leave it exposed to guest’s view. I just feel that steel’s shape is far too refined to be conducive for use as an exposed component of a resort seeking to blend with the
landscape. Other metallic surfaces will be used only as accents, and their surfaces will be warm colors with matte finishes, i.e. no silvers, and no highly polished surfaces.

Rough cut stone I think will be an ideal material for expressing a natural character for this resort. The naturally occurring shapes of stones preclude the concern for regular patterns forming from interaction with the mortar. With sufficient depth of the face of the stones, much of the mortar can be hidden by the shade and shadows of the stones themselves. Stone can also be cold or warm, both to our sense of touch and mental expectation. The degree of warmth is determined by three primary factors, the shape and smoothness of the stone, the color of the stone, and the environmental conditions surrounding the stone. This gives us flexibility to change the mood of the stone as guests progress through different areas of the resort. Utilizing a musical analogy again, my plan is to make the stone the melody of the resort.

Nothing provides a sense of warmth like wood. For the interiors of the resort, this will provide a needed balance to the cold nature that stone adopts when continually sheltered from sunlight. Since I plan to use steel sparingly, wood will also need to carry much of the structural load as well as be a finished veneer. To give liveliness to the interior, I envision a range of colors of stain, probably no more than five, and types of wood, probably no more than three. By limiting the number of stains and types of wood, the continuity of the resort can be easily enhanced by applying wood and stain systematically. In this way, elements of structure and decking, stairs and railings, partitions, casework, and detailing are of consistent quality throughout the resort, thus allowing the configuration of these items to vary widely.

For the exterior, I feel the color of the wood will need to be clearly consistent throughout the resort, so that the wood again acts as an element of continuity between multiple and varied building forms. The base color will be kept as a light tone, and only one darker color will be used for exterior accents. The light tone should help to lift people’s spirits even on cloudy days. The exterior colors will need to carry through to the interior on any elements of wood that engage with the envelope of the building. This will maintain the integrity of these individual pieces of wood as well as the building envelope as a whole, allowing them to be identified as interactive pieces of the interior and exterior, rather than seen as a symbol of the division of two unrelated environments.

Putting these materials into built form, I’m favoring a massing of clustered forms rather than linear stretches of buildings to better accomplish blending with the landscape. And I am open to having spaces that are curvilinear in plan, rather than just rectilinear, in order to facilitate flow between building and landscape. The easiest way to accomplish this will be to design from the inside (core of the building) –out, using a form follows function approach. This relates well to human ergonomics, as space for activities, counters, seating, circulation, etc., will only be added as needed, where needed. Dead space, typically found in the corners of rooms, will largely be eliminated
from the design. Hopefully this will translate to smaller footprint of the resort’s buildings.

I believe clustered and curvilinear forms will also help to build focal points by drawing a visual flow to a slender vertical element of the resort. Having a large site, I am assuming that this would be of benefit to guest orientation while exploring the site. A security blanket if you will, so that the fear of getting lost is less likely to prohibit someone from discovering the far reaches of the resort.

Creating a sense of mystery and generating an interest to explore for the resort’s guests, I believe will be the most important feature of this design. Hand in hand with this will be eliminating or reducing the impact of built elements that have characteristics enhancing people’s fears. Before making a hasty decision on how to accomplish this, let’s further examine the interplay of our desire to explore, and our fear to explore as they relate to our interpretations of our environments.
REFUGE, PROSPECT, & EXPLORING

Our environments can be broken down into two conceptual pieces, refuge and prospect. These two form a binary relationship as balanced opposites. Prospect is expansive and bright, refuge is small and dark. We need both refuge and prospect. From the prospect where we are exposed; we need to be able to retreat to the refuge, and from the refuge where we are protected; we need to be able to scan the prospect for opportunities and threats. The basic premise is that refuge and prospect occur contiguously, rather than simultaneously.\textsuperscript{169}

Exploring occurs as we navigate the prospect, and as we transition between refuge and prospect. The act of exploration, or perhaps the pace of our exploration, is determined by another binary relationship, mystery and fear. Mystery, just as we previously discussed, is created by the composition of the environment and entices us to enter. Fear comes from within us, and holds us back from exploring environments where much of the scene is opaquely hidden.

Refuge & Prospect

Refuge-prospect theory is a habitat selection theory that seeks to explain why we choose the places we do to live. Unlike the scene preference studies, in refuge-prospect theory, the environment is evaluated based on prolonged human interaction with the environment. One of the primary tenets of refuge-prospect theory is that people should prefer environments that allow them the advantage of seeing without being seen.\textsuperscript{170} Generally characterizing our built environment as refuge, it stands to reason that we would prefer to have entrances to our buildings held in shadow or camouflaged with vegetation.

We also should prefer spaces that have multiple opportunities for view of the prospect, and multiple ways of moving to and through the prospect.\textsuperscript{171} In this manner, we prefer not to be trapped in our areas of refuge by a single entry/exit. This is also in concert with our desire for windows which afford panoramic views. It also stands to reason that we should prefer a balance of refuge and prospect opportunities in an environment,\textsuperscript{172} as this would provide us with multiple choices of both refuge and

\textsuperscript{169} Hildebrand, Origins of Architectural Pleasure, 22.
\textsuperscript{170} Barkow, Cosmides, and Tooby, The Adapted Mind, 571.
\textsuperscript{171} Barkow, Cosmides, and Tooby, The Adapted Mind, 571.
\textsuperscript{172} Barkow, Cosmides, and Tooby, The Adapted Mind, 571.
These concepts are easily witnessed in restaurants where patrons can seat themselves, and has a large room with tables around the edge and in the middle of the room. While in college, I frequented a restaurant with this arrangement. Typically I would get there before the lunch or dinner rush, so I could get my favorite table along the back wall. Meal after meal, year after year, the same pattern repeated itself. The first tables to fill were the ones along the front window, and then the tables along the walls, finally people would occupy the tables in the center of the room when no other tables were available around the perimeter. Rarely did anyone sit in the middle of the room before they had to, and some people would even wait for a perimeter table to be bussed rather than sit in the center of the room. The majority of people have a tendency to prefer the edges. The restaurant as a whole was an area of refuge from the whole outdoors, and the large room was an area of prospect within the restaurant, with other smaller rooms, the bar, kitchen, and entrance surrounding it. People first picked to occupy the edge between the largest prospect and the refuge as a whole, secondly picked the edges between the interior prospect and the deeper interior refuge, and third occupied the interior prospect. You can test this for yourself. A fun way is to reverse the experiment and pick a table in the middle of the room when plenty are available around the perimeter. You might be surprised by how many other people there will take a moment to watch you with a quizzical look on their face.

This relates to another of refuge-prospect theory’s tenets that people prefer edges of spaces because edges provide the best visual access. This is simply so we don’t have to keep turning our heads to see what is around us. Being in the center of a space has a higher connotation of risk, since potential threats have access to all sides.

Water has a profound impact on habitat site selection, as archaeologists can attest. It is a matter of common sense that throughout history humans has built settlements at the edge of water, as we must have water to survive. Beyond drinking, water plays a role in all aspects of refuge-prospect theory.

Water plays a central role in creating landforms and vegetation along it’s banks that are conducive for refuge. From those edges many aspects of prospect are available: we can survey the landscape across the water, fish can be found, other animals that can be hunted are attracted, and oftentimes the soils near a source of water are conducive for agriculture. A sense of mystery is generated as our eyes are invariably directed to follow the line where water and land meet until it disappears around a landform. And clearly water is a hazard to our escapability from animate
threats, as we are not particularly adept swimmers. Not to mention the occasional flood or tidal surge that could wipe out a settlement.\textsuperscript{176}

People choose to live at the edge, whether it be the edge of a body of water, or the edge of the forest next to a field. Typically, the edges of biomes tend to be richer in life forms, and tend to be safer for humans, as they offer a balance of refuge and prospect.\textsuperscript{177} Arcades are an excellent example of this preference in today’s built forms, as this is a re-creation of that edge of the forest effect.

As we survey the prospect from the refuge, one thing that we are looking for is a sense of depth to the landscape. We have a preference for “bands” of objects, or landmark objects within an open space because these provide opportunities for refuge if so needed as we are exploring.\textsuperscript{178} Gazebos and picnic pavilions in a park for example provide shelter from sudden afternoon thunderstorms.

Similarly, we prefer to walk on trails that have openings, such as when we come across a clearing in the woods. These are welcome respites that help to alleviate the tension of being on an “endless path”.\textsuperscript{179} In large elongated office buildings, the lobbies of individual offices play this role. In academic buildings of similar size, it is not uncommon to find seating nodes created along corridors.

Another major point of refuge-prospect theory that forms the physical nature of our definition of refuge is that spaces with a back and side should be preferred to those without vertical elements, and that spaces that provide protection overhead should be preferred to those without.\textsuperscript{180}

Frank Lloyd Wright was a master of integrating refuge-prospect theory within his work. Most anyone in America is captivated when just viewing a photo of one of his prairie style houses, and when visiting one of these houses, you find yourself sucked-in, immersed within the house without realizing how you got there. I know for myself, I always end up wondering what it would be like to live there day-in and day-out. And

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[179] Kaplan, Kaplan, and Ryan, \textit{With People in Mind}, 47.
\item[180] Barkow, Cosmides, and Tooby, \textit{The Adapted Mind}, 571.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
sometimes it perplexes me as to why we don’t insist on living in homes with similar features instead of bland gyp board boxes.\textsuperscript{181}

Let’s evaluate some of the features of his prairie houses as they relate to refuge and prospect. The form of these houses often is a cluster of rooms and roofs around a large or group of large stone or brick walls that penetrate the roof line. This clearly states even from a distance the existence of protective cover with substantial protection to our back. The fact that the rooms surround the center mass of stone or brick gives an occupant the ability to survey the landscape from all sides as well as enter/exit from a variety of locations. This is further confirmed by Wright’s extensive use of horizontal stretches of windows. The deep eaves of the roof further accentuate the protective cover of the roof, and casts deep shadows across the face of the house.\textsuperscript{182} Most notably the windows are shaded in this manner which confirms our ability to see from this refuge, without being seen.

Typically, Wright either lifted the main floor of the house above grade, or situated the house on a high point of the site to overlook the terrain as it falls away from the house.\textsuperscript{183} This further enhances a person’s ability to survey the landscape, as does the next feature.

Often Wright would have a series of patios and terraces around the house, giving a transition zone between the refuge of the interior, and the prospect of the outdoors. The key to the success of this feature is that the terraces are surrounded by low opaque walls which identifies that a series of refuge features exists. This hierarchy, coupled with the extensive eaves, gradually acclimates a person as they move between refuge and prospect. This is one way Wright is able to “suck-in” people to his designs, by eliminating the abruptness of the transition between interior and exterior.

\textsuperscript{181} Stephen Kaplan and Rachel Kaplan, Humanscape: Environments for People (Ann Arbor: Ulrich’s Books, 1982) 188. One of the results of their scene preference studies that came as a surprise was that “the various residential scenes were liked least of all.”
\textsuperscript{182} Hildebrand, Origins of Architectural Pleasure, 28.
\textsuperscript{183} Hildebrand, Origins of Architectural Pleasure, 35.
On the interior of the refuge, the ceiling is the most important part for creating a sense of containment.\textsuperscript{184} The ceilings of the prairie style are indeed quite low. I can personally attest that in some of Wright’s houses the height of some passages is as low as 6’-6” aff. The amazing part is that you don’t feel the presence of the ceiling weighing down on you.\textsuperscript{185} Wright accomplishes this feat in a number of ways.

First of all, the lowest ceilings in his houses are in the passageways between rooms and around the perimeter of rooms. Within the main rooms the ceilings are raised, giving a feeling of lift as you enter. Usually though the height ends up being no greater than 8’ to 9’ aff at its highest point.\textsuperscript{186} This is still quite low. Offsetting this is the breadth and length of the main rooms. Wright provides significant proportional area to the room to keep it from being too narrow in any direction, thus enhancing the volume. The space flows to our sides instead of rising above our heads and out of view. We are protected, but not cramped.

This interior volume translates well to the exterior, meeting people’s expectations for size of the interior space as indicated by the horizontal stretches of windows.\textsuperscript{187} Some claim that Wright’s placement of major spaces directly under the roof, coupled with this consistent approach of changing ceiling elevations provides a sense of living under the protective canopy of a tree.\textsuperscript{188} I think it’s important to note that while the ceiling plane allows the most flexibility in creating a sense of enclosure, wall and floor configurations also contribute to the sense of enclosure.

Alcoves, bay windows, window seats, built in seating, hearths, and wall pocket shelving/cabinets are all perimeter features of a room that can be applied to either give the occupiable space a greater horizontal expansion, allow people to inhabit space normally occupied by the building envelope, or provide an effect of horizontal expansion while maintaining distance between people and the walls of the space. Floors typically are the least flexible however it is possible to have multiple levels within a space, or even a sunken portion. The other way floors impact our sense of enclosure is with patterns and borders. Simply applying these 2D features on the floor surface can

\textsuperscript{184} Hildebrand, \textit{Origins of Architectural Pleasure}, 32.
\textsuperscript{185} Unless of course you’re over 6’-2” tall.
\textsuperscript{186} Wright’s ceilings used a variety of forms and combination of forms in his designs.
\textsuperscript{187} Hildebrand, \textit{Origins of Architectural Pleasure}, 33.
\textsuperscript{188} Barkow, Cosmides, and Tooby, \textit{The Adapted Mind}, 572.
psychologically define a space within the space. This effect can be particularly effective when the floor pattern aligns with elements or changes in the ceiling plan.

Combining all the features of the ceiling, wall, and floor surfaces, I see the effect of enclosure more akin with a cave rather than a tree. Almost invariably, there is a domed effect to the ceiling of a cave. Seldom is there a shear vertical connection between the floor and walls, so there usually are elements of extended space in the wall surfaces. The ground plain is uneven and will often have sunken pockets. These features create the form of the space of the cave, and give credence to this volume as a force against its enclosing elements. Our sense becomes that the space of the cave heaves the stone up into a dome. The space pushes the sides out. The space shoves the floor into the earth.

As well, caves provide the human form a variety of spaces and features to fit into and explore, all within what is clearly a space of refuge. This interaction of exploration within a refuge is also a key point of the awe of the prairie house.

Now consider the planar boxes of our gyp board houses in comparison to the concept of the cave and the genius of the prairie style. Now we can see how rigid these surfaces are as they relate to us. The space we occupy within these boxes has no power. The space is unable to heave the ceiling, push the walls, or shove the floor. The result is we feel pushed by the ceiling, the walls, and the floor out the largest opening of the space. This is not a refuge at all. Hence, it is no wonder to me, when looking at the application of planar surfaces in this context, why people have consistently shown low levels of preference for these type of domiciles in the scene preference studies we discussed earlier.

I encourage you to take a break from reading this thesis and go experience refuge and prospect as they’re created in our buildings for yourself. Take time to identify some of these features, and then consider how you feel as you move between them. I think this might enhance reading the second half of refuge-prospect theory, about exploration.

Exploring

“What is apparently required is the right level (not yet established) of novelty and complexity to stimulate curiosity plus sufficient openness and connectedness to allow easy access to new settings and experiences. Exploration can satisfy what may be a basic human need for new experience. By increasing individual interaction with novel and complex environments it leads to growth both by broadening the individual's
categories and concepts about the world and by increasing his sense of competence and capacity to formulate and execute new plans.  

Humans explore for two reasons, we need to acquire knowledge of our surroundings to survive, and because it’s fun. After all, young children explore without any preconception of why their exploring, so they must be achieving some degree of pleasure from the activity itself. This is an important point to recognize, because from this we can derive that both reward and fear are things we learn, after an act of exploration. As we continue to explore as we age, we learn more and more about our environment, and we assess each of our experiences as positive, neutral, or negative. As we encounter similar circumstances as we continue to explore, we start to prejudge the experience we’re about to have based on our past patterns. If we anticipate a positive result we eagerly seek the upcoming experience, if we anticipate a negative result, we fear the impending experience. We continually acquire both fears and anticipations of success. There comes a point when our fear prevents us from exploring. In other words, we only commit to explore something new if we’re virtually guaranteed success.

Virtually all of us have had two decidedly negative outcomes during our first childhood explorations. At some point, we turned a corner and were startled and scared by something we didn’t expect to find, and at some point, we were unable to find our way back home. So we fear the unknown, and we fear being lost. As adults, overcoming these two fears are imperative for us to continue to explore.

The other thing we must overcome is the neutral experience. This is where we fully expect not to find anything new, thus discouraging us to explore. Been there, done that. Fortunately, we can design our environments to mitigate our basic fears, and surpass our boredom. We must create a sense of mystery to the environment.

Familiarity with our environment helps us to alleviate our fears. We make quick assessments regarding our comfort with an environment without realizing it. Familiarity can occur even in a place we’ve never been if there are aspects of the environment that remind us of places we have been. Familiar elements by themselves will ultimately tend towards boredom. It is the arrangement of familiar elements that enhances our understanding of a new environment that matters most.

Visual access increases our confidence to explore. Yet as we learned in our examination of our basic preferences, we are enticed by partially blocked views. The

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192 Kaplan, Kaplan, and Ryan, *With People In Mind*, 32.
195 Kaplan, Kaplan, and Ryan, *With People in Mind*, 33.
manner in which our view is obstructed plays an important part in determining visual access. Think of it this way, opaque objects and dense vegetation fully block a portion of the view, whereas objects with openings and whispering vegetation such as a branch of a tree, partially block a portion of the view.

Japanese gardens exemplify an effective use of obstructed views to encourage exploration. Much of this is accomplished by employing techniques to maximize the illusion of depth within what is actually a confined space. The ultimate intention of the design of a Japanese garden is to create a tranquil view, or series of views, that will allow someone to lose oneself in meditation.\(^{196}\)

European gardens, by contrast, are designed to be formal, utilizing a symmetrical approach where typically large trees are placed around the perimeter for privacy, with smaller trees and shrubs concentrically getting smaller towards the center of the garden. While this gives a person a commanding view of the entire garden, the effect makes the garden appear smaller than it is, because the open space is fully enclosed by vegetation. Japanese gardens also use large trees around the perimeter for privacy and as a backdrop, but within the rest of the garden, the arrangement is composed to increase our sense of depth. Trees are planted in the foreground with smaller trees towards the far reaches of the garden, giving the illusion that the smaller trees are farther than they actually are.\(^{197}\) Using large-leafed plants in the foreground and smaller-sized-leafed plants in the background can also accomplish this effect.

Depth is also achieved through asymmetry. A tree or large grouping of plants would not be centrally located, but would be placed in a strong position towards one side of the whole composition.\(^{198}\) This allows the main view through the garden to pass numerous such trees further and further into the scene.

Another technique is to design in detail the features that are near to the path or planned viewpoint, and to treat forms further away with greater simplicity.\(^{199}\) Scenes of the garden can be composed in clustered arrangements to enhance depth as well. For instance, manicured shrubs often are placed in a series, one behind the other, to create a receding procession, visually diminishing into the distance.\(^{200}\)

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\(^{197}\) Kaplan and Kaplan, *Humanscape*, 171.

\(^{198}\) Kaplan and Kaplan, *Humanscape*, 171.


One last measure frequently used in Japanese gardens to enhance depth is to divide the entire garden into portions. Often this is handled through imperceptive changes in ground cover texture, intermittent outcroppings of rocks that string together to form a curving boundary, or by streams that pass through the garden.

Given the ability to have visual access, exploration is enhanced by environments that are high in complexity, and high in coherence. In this way, we are not overwhelmed by the volume of information our eyes have to process because it is also well-ordered. Japanese gardens are an excellent example of this environmental feature as well. Every plant, every path, every structure, every stone, every last inch of the garden has been meticulously placed and groomed with the express purpose of appearing as though it all has just occurred naturally. Ft. Worth, Texas has a particularly good Japanese garden. When I visited, every direction I looked, my eye was compelled to something new, yet never did I become anxious, confused, or frustrated in that visually complex environment.

While coherence can be achieved with similar materials being used in a variety of elements, borders between areas play a central role helping the viewer to grasp complex environments. Unlike Japanese gardens, changes in ground cover textures can also make clear purposeful distinctions of areas. Groups of freestanding elements within a large space create an area procession through the space. And edgings to pathways create distinct zones.

The coherence helps to build our confidence to explore. The complexity increases our interest to explore. When combined, this helps to create a sense of mystery which arouses our curiosity. Mystery is actually very specific, in that our minds are not blank or wandering, but are completely focused by the environment, on the possibilities of what is next.

Now here comes the complicated part of mystery. It took me awhile to comprehend this part of the concept, and I hope I’m able to clearly explain it here. For

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203 Kaplan, Kaplan, and Ryan, *With People in Mind*, 40.
mystery to be successfully employed, there also has to be a high degree of continuity to the environment. This is not the same as coherence. Coherence relates to our ability to understand the entire composition. Continuity relates to the characteristics of successive elements within the environment.

So if an environment is to maintain our sense of mystery, there needs to be a connection between what we currently see, and what we anticipate to see as we move forward. The novelty of each new experience needs to be controlled.205

Using the Japanese garden as an example, rounding a bend we come across a zen garden. This is decidedly a unique feature to see a bed of small stones immaculately raked around larger stones, but it doesn't come as a shock since we have been walking on stepping stones the whole way. Rounding another bend is a tea house. It is novel in that it holds features of a dwelling but is much smaller than a house. We aren't surprised by its presence though, as it is made of wood and nestles in a grove of trees. Coming to a stream we expect to find a small wooden bridge, and we do; only it is a high arched moon bridge. If we were to round another bend to discover a fourteen foot high sculpture of abstracted modern art made out of highly polished metal, ...our sense of mystery is lost and we are left disappointed. This is an element disrupting our expectation and imposing itself on the scene. We were startled to find it, and it has tapped into our fear of the unknown.

Notice in the previous passage, we continually were rounding a bend on the garden path. Mystery was maintained by an horizontal arrangement of the environment’s features that made it possible to withhold information from us. The pathway must continually change direction so that we are able to move around objects to discover new objects. Mystery is extremely difficult to accomplish on a straight path, as too much of what to come is revealed to us while we are still experiencing the element(s) currently next to us. In order to hide what is to come on a straight path, we must employ dense features between elements of interest that come up to the edge of the path, which can destroy the sense of mystery by invoking to many fearful expectations, or the next element of interest has to be held further back from the path, which creates the possibility that we might pass by without noticing it at all.

205 Hildebrand, Origins of Architectural Pleasure, 53.
When dealing with a winding path though, we increase the risk of encouraging our other major environmental fear, getting lost. Orientation becomes a significant factor to mitigate our fear.

One way is the map. Now for the purposes of our resort, I do not believe that it will be practical for people to carry maps with them. It may be practical though to include a diagrammatical map in the form of sculptural wall art at the entrance of the resort, and perhaps even incorporate this into the logo of the resort. But this will be of course highly abstracted information.

We will need to responsibly design way finding elements into the resort itself. One manner is to create distinct regions within the resort. This can be accomplished by leaving bands of undeveloped parts of the site interspaced with clusters of built elements.

Another way to orient the visitor is with landmarks, as we discussed as part of the design attributes of our discussion of artistic predispositions.

Pathway material, texture, and or color can be changed to differentiate between primary and secondary paths. Often times fixed signs and maps along the various paths accompany this concept. I anticipate that this will be an excellent means of accomplishing orientation for the resort, given the proposed scope and area needed. My personal preference will be to employ path distinctions without the aid of signs as I feel that taking time to orient with a sign every so often will detract from the intensity and purpose of the exploratory experience that the resort will be seeking to create. The goal of pathway distinction and orientation as it applies to this resort is to relieve guest’s fear of getting lost, not to give them an answer to where they are going and what they are going to see.

Amusement parks are some of the absolute best examples of creating environments that invite exploration while maintaining a coherence of understanding for visitors. By far, Disney, Universal Studios, and Busch Gardens are the cream of the crop, but most all amusement parks do well in this aspect. What sets Disney, Universal, and Busch Gardens apart is the attention to the theme of absolutely every last detail. Such care, just like that of a Japanese garden, creates an immersive environment. All aspects of routine life and environments have been examined and have been altered at these company’s parks. Visitors are transported to a different world with as many distractions of everyday life as possible removed.

Kaplan, Kaplan, and Ryan, *With People in Mind*, 51.

Kaplan, Kaplan, and Ryan, *With People in Mind*, 55.

Christopher Alexander, Sara Ishikawa, and Murray Silverstein, *A Pattern Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) 482. Passage questions the reward of a place, if the users are consciously thinking about a map and their destination.

Kaplan, Kaplan, and Ryan, *With People in Mind*, 49.
So, put down this thesis and go now to the nearest amusement park. Take note of your emotions as you stroll through the park. Notice how the pathways wind around corners and how buildings along the way sometimes are not rectilinear in plan, but contain odd angles to make smoother transitions as you walk around them. Second floors of buildings often are reduced in scale, so as not to “loom over visitors.” And especially take note of the difference in sensations created between the flowing nature of the main path, and the tight, blind turns of the queue lines of major thrill rides. Have fun.

I hope that while you were at the amusement park you noticed how you felt as you experienced different lighting effects around the park. The play of light and shadow is the other major means of creating incentive to explore or not explore.

Keeping the path somewhat dark is important, so that major spaces are comparatively brighter. This is like the clearings in the forest where the light beckons us to explore while the shade of the trail gives us protection in the form of seeing without being seen.

Combining the winding path with an interplay of light and shadow can create a powerful effect when applied on the interior of a building as well as the exterior. This creates multiple opportunities for prospect within the refuge. Frank Lloyd Wright’s Hanna House is one of the best examples of this phenomenon.

“The plan is based on a grid of regular hexagons, each corner of which describes an angle of 120 degrees; the spaces of the house repeatedly interconnect at this obtuse angle. So the spaces deflect but do not terminate; interior vistas are sweeps of bending space; distant material continually promises and continually provides additional information. And we always move toward the light because on the flank there is continuous dappled light from the glazed, finely mullioned walls. The Hanna House thus includes both enticement conditions: the architectural space is a trail that repeatedly disappears around a bend, while the mullions of the windows are intervening.

210 Anne Whiston Spirn, The Language of Landscape (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) 236. The designers of Disneyland realized early on that with the comparatively reduced street width of their theme area Main St. U.S.A., they would need to reduce the height of the buildings on either side of the street to avoid creating a canyon effect for visitors. The ground floor is 90% normal height, second floor 80%, and third floor 60%.

211 Kaplan, Kaplan, and Ryan, With People in Mind, 43.

212 Hildebrand, Origins of Architectural Pleasure, 54.
foliage through which the sunlit natural material is seen beyond. The enticements combine with Wright’s usual multiple refuges and prospects to make spaces of magical interest and warmth.”

The problem that this arrangement does create is the transition from the light area of a major space back to the dark of the trail. What is to entice us to go back to the dark, if our environment has been designed to move us from dark to light?

One way is to ensure that the edges of at least two brightly lit destination spaces are in view of each other along the path. A rhythm of light and dark can be established as we move through the design; hence, we take the approach of adding graded complication to the environment. Another approach is to allow the path sufficient width, and eliminate dark alcoves, corners, or sharp bends along the route.

Specifically regarding the application of refuge and prospect in the interior, there are spatial details that must occur to be truly successful. Uniformity is the enemy. Spaces that are relatively equal in plan dimensions, ceiling heights, and have even lighting just don’t work. There has to be significant variation and complexity between interior spaces.

Interior areas of refuge need to have mostly opaque elements on roughly three sides. They need to be smaller in area compared to areas of prospect. The ceiling must be fairly close to our head level. Views from the refuge to the exterior need to be restricted in comparison to the vistas from areas of interior prospect to the exterior. The refuge must also have a view into adjacent interior prospects. Interior prospects are the opposite of interior refuges. They need much greater ceiling heights and expansive plan dimensions. Views of the exterior should be panoramic with opportunity for direct access to the exterior.

Light quality of interior prospect obviously needs to be bright, but more importantly, it also needs to have natural light. This is not necessarily a requirement for a successful area of interior refuge. Areas of prospect benefit because sunlight is so dynamic over the course of the day. Enticing areas of interior prospect thrive in the variance of sunlight’s brightness and tone. And sunlight does something that artificial light sources cannot, cast crisp shadows that change through the day.

Transitions are the key to the architectural success of refuge, prospect, and exploring as they apply to both the interior and exterior of our built world. Consideration must be given to the rate of change between refuge and prospect.

214 Hildebrand, Origins of Architectural Pleasure, 67.
215 Hildebrand, Origins of Architectural Pleasure, 47.
216 Hildebrand, Origins of Architectural Pleasure, 48.
217 Hildebrand, Origins of Architectural Pleasure, 49.
Changes need to occur gradually to mitigate our fear as well as peak our curiosity. Yet the change has to be distinct in order to have merit. The key to accomplishing all of this lies in how we treat edges of both forms and materials.
EDGES

Edges are boundaries, and it can be said that we live in the edge. Much of our day and our lives are spent crossing through edges between places, continually changing our relationship with the environment. ...Constantly changing our sense of ourselves. This phenomenon manifests itself in the simplest of instances, ...as we get in and out of our cars, driving to and from work, or walking around a corner on the way to lunch. The process of passing through the edge manifests itself psychologically as well, as our relationships with other people and ourselves continually change. ...As we agonize over the choices our children make, when we help friends through hard times, or when we decide to quit a job and start fresh. There is a transition and acclimation from one place to another.

Granted we typically attach more emotional significance to the changes we make with people in our lives rather than to changes of place. (In some respects our affinity to a place is happenstance. The place is meaningful and memorable not for itself, but because of what happened there and what we experienced.) The process of transitioning the edge, physically or psychologically is the same. A combination of feelings of fear, anxiety, and anticipation increase within us as we approach the edge, and then rapidly dissipate once we’ve crossed the edge. This can occur consciously or unconsciously, but it occurs nonetheless.

I am fascinated by the edge. In America, we live in an atmosphere dominated by a Western philosophical educational and social system rooted in binary relationships. We are either here or there. We do this or that. Right or wrong. Up or down. In or out. We can spend our entire lives trying to define who we are and what we’re doing by our position to opposites. Yet all the while we are neither here or there. We are someplace else. We are in a third, often unrecognized place, ...the edge.

"The life of a public square forms naturally around its edge. If the edge fails, then the space never becomes lively."219

The edge is its own entity. A dynamic entity that simultaneously unifies and divides two places. An entity that is both rigid and flexible. Rigid in that we know the instant that we’ve passed through it, and flexible in that we can define its size and scope in multiple ways and for multiple purposes. The edge can be any dimension we want it to be, whether a single wall between rooms, a vestibule or zone between interior and exterior, or an entire building between the street and an enclosed courtyard. We can spend enormous amounts of time traveling along these boundaries

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218 Altman and Chemers, Culture and Environment, 51. There actually have been efforts to clearly define the exact scope and composition of what constitutes an “edge”. Personally I find this kind of exercise akin to counting the grains of sand on a beach. Here, I am using the broadest definition and trusting the common sense of any one reading this text.

such as when we walk or drive between destinations, or when we procrastinate from making a decision or completing a task.\textsuperscript{220}

As we pass edges in our physical world, we can accumulate the various sensations of fear, anxiety, or anticipation, within us depending on the character of those edges. I believe this then can play a part in our interactions with other people without us even realizing it. So why do we design and build a predominance of edges of forms and materials that enhance our sensations of fear rather than our sensations of curiosity and anticipation?

**Around the Edge**

Consider how much of our built realm is composed of rectangles, squares, and triangles, and how little of it is made of curves, circles, and polygons. The result is a predominance of right and acute angles rather than obtuse angles. Each type of angle relates differently to the human form.

I believe that acute angles, through their very nature, give us a sense of repulsion. The human form can neither fit into the corner on the interior side of the angle, nor easily wrap around the exterior side. And the overall form of acute angles implies a direction of thrust. As a matter of preservation, people do better not to be pierced or penetrated by pointed and sharp edges such as spears and swords. Acute angles in our built world convey these threatening connotations.

Obtuse angles have the opposite effect. The human form can fit into the interior side of the angle, and can wrap around the exterior side. With the ability to increase the amount of contact with the obtuse angle’s surfaces, we can better understand and embrace this form.

Another way we relate to angles is the way we move around them. The majority of buildings form right angles at street corners. With each step we take as we approach the corner, more information is revealed to us on our street side, as we can see a bit more beyond the corner on the opposite side. But on our building side no appreciable amount of new information beyond the corner is revealed until we are near the building corner. And anything just around the corner including the next face of the building isn’t visible until we are at least even with the edge.

We naturally seek cognitive clarity, disliking a state of confusion.\textsuperscript{221} In the previous scenario, our need for clarity is not satisfied as new information is being

\textsuperscript{220} Such as this thesis for instance.

\textsuperscript{221} Kaplan and Kaplan, *Humanscape*, 84.
withheld by the corner. The situation is worsened if the building forms an acute angle at the corner. Now the adjacent face is not visible when we are even with the corner, and we must venture further in order to relieve our fear of the unknown. Obtuse angles reveal the adjacent face and relieve our fears before we reach the edge.

Our relationship with the edge largely depends on our focus. When we are focused on our confusion or lack of information as we approach the corner in the case of acute and right angles, we become fearful. In the case of obtuse angles which reveal information more readily, we are focused on the process of turning the corner and our sense of mystery is peaked. The key to the psychological phenomenon of turning the corner is the rate information is revealed. Thus round objects are the best for rousing our curiosity, as with each step more information is revealed no matter how close to the surface of the object we are.

"The layout of paths will seem right and comfortable only when it is compatible with the process of walking."222 In the case of the street corner, we would like to move out from the side of the building as we approach the corner in order to improve our angle of vision around the edge, but we are limited by the width of the sidewalk. This is an example where the layout clearly is not compatible.

As it turns out, the process is rather complicated, being composed of three complimentary processes. The first is that we scan the landscape for the furthest point we can see along our path. We then try to get there directly as possible, cutting corners as we go. The second process is that this furthest point keeps changing as we see more and more. The result is we move in shallow arcs rather than straight lines towards this intermediate destination. The third process takes hold as the second process becomes mentally cumbersome. We pick visual landmarks along the route as temporary goals. When reaching one of these goals, we then reassess our direction of travel to the next temporary goal. This allows our mind to process other thoughts between each landmark.223

The more winding the path, the more we are consciously aware of this process. "The proper arrangements of paths is one with enough intermediate goals, to make this

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process workable. If there aren’t enough intermediate goals, the process of walking becomes more difficult, and consumes unnecessary emotional energy.”

**Character of the Edge**

“An object or building (or person) with presence has a shine, a sensuousness, a symmetry to it. Well-constructed, though perhaps as temporary as a bird, clean, though its paint may be peeling, its presence is experienced not only visually, but also by coherent appeal to other senses: to touch, movement, sound, smell. Edges are distinct just as contours are distinctive. Articulated parts are not so much adjacent or linked as mutually poised, just as the whole does not shamble, fill, and butt, but stands precisely where it needs to be and ends there. Every material and texture is fully itself and revealed. From the flare of the eaves of a Chinese temple to the chain that drips pearls of rain, from the brilliant colors of the Parthenon to its subtly curved steps in the sun, enhancements of every kind have been devised to “bring out” a building’s shape and its harmonics. All in the service of presence.”

The quality of the edges of buildings best define the character of a building. Often times when viewing a building head-on, the façade can lose its depth, adopting a two-dimensional or plastic feel. Only when we gaze to the corners to judge the building relative to the space beyond do we regain our sense of the building’s form. Along the vertical edge, this is demonstrated through the texture and the composition of the edge.

The texture of the building edge is primarily a product of the materials of the building, although the texture of the edge is not dependent on the texture of the materials themselves, so much as the process of construction. For instance, a butt-glazed curtain wall makes a distinct, straight, vertical line at the corner. This is an abrupt change between the building and the space beyond. A brick building creates an edge with more texture, and the distinctiveness of the edge is dependent on the depth of the setback between the bricks and the mortar. Stone typically allows for more depth and variation than brick. It’s easy to imagine the edge character of other building materials such as wood siding or shingles.

Composition of the edge is developed from the convergence of multiple building materials and elements. Going back to the case of the curtain wall, a full height application creates a monolithic condition. Now supposing the brick building had a

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large overhanging cornice, bands of stone rustication, a stone base, and multiple projecting elements such as bay windows, balconies, and awnings, then we have a vibrant and varied edge condition with a multitude of form and material.

As we have a preference for natural settings, it stands to reason that we would prefer the edge condition of our brick building since it mimics naturally occurring compositions more readily than the stark contrast set by the curtain wall example.226

As we move around the corners of these two buildings, information is revealed in different manners. In the case of the shear curtain wall new information around the corner is evenly revealed from the top of the edge to the bottom. A clear cut division between what is seen and not seen is maintained. This is not the case with our brick building, as the projections serve to hide some information of the scene beyond while allowing other parts to be seen above and below each projection. Larger projections such as storefront awnings or marquees reveal new information at different rates as we walk around the corner since their outer edge is significantly extended from the primary edge of the building.

Also pertinent to any projecting or overhanging element is its angular nature. If the projection creates acute angles either within the object itself, or its silhouette against the sky, these projections can be seen as salient features protruding from the building. If the projections maintain a rounded quality they will more readily be associated as protective features of refuge, not unlike the branches of a tree.

**Touching the Edge**

“We are never really secure unless we can ‘hold on to’ something; nor do we really believe that we understand anything until we have ‘a firm grip on it’, or ‘grasp the point.’ We say of a riveting story that holds us in its ‘clasp’ that it is ‘gripping.’ We ‘clutch our loved ones to our bosom.’ In the dark we go ‘groping’ or searching blindly about in the hope that we may succeed in feeling our way to security.

‘Touchstone,’ the word for any test determining genuineness or value, reminds us that all the phrases listed above are metaphors for the security that comes with touch.”227

Edges aren’t just defined by visual access or geometrical changes of direction. Indeed, every square inch of surface of any object constitutes that object’s edge. The amount of skin surface that we can apply to a surface directly affects our ability to understand that material. I’ve identified three primary characteristics that greatly influence this concept; material form, malleability, and texture.

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227 Montagu, *Touching, the Human Significance of the Skin*, 11.
Issues of form can easily be demonstrated by the edges of countertops or handrails. In order to maximize skin surface as we grab the edge of a countertop with a sharp right angle transition between the top and front face, we have to awkwardly cup our hand to fit the form. Otherwise this sharp edge would begin to crease the palm of our hands as we lean against the counter. A bullnose edge to the counter is naturally more receptive to our grasp as the pressure we place on our hands is evenly distributed across the surface of the counter’s edge. It follows then that round handrails are easier to grasp than those made from bar stock.

Malleability is easily understood if we think of it in terms of hard or rigid, and soft or flexible. No matter how hard we press against a rigid surface, there will be gaps between our form and that material. As a result our focus is diverted from understanding our relationship to that form to the amount of effort we have to exert to understand it.

Closely related to malleability, is surface texture. Smooth surfaces enhance the difficulty in understanding we experience with rigid materials. Rougher surfaces, so long as they are not jagged or razor sharp, allow our skin surface to settle into the material’s surface undulations.

“Part of our appreciating the materiality of an object has to do with our appreciation of the natural origin of its substance and the manufacturing or forming processes that the latter has evidently undergone. New and very synthetic materials are confusing in this way: neither their origin nor their forming is readily perceivable.”

This brings us back to our natural predispositions, and the importance of carrying such references through the quality of a material regardless of the amount of refinement the material undergoes. This is different than taking the approach that since we have a preference for the natural character of materials, we should refine a material as little as possible. This second approach is problematic as we move from this approach to material quality, back to the built form of the building.

As we seek to define ourselves and our world in terms of binary relationships, our tendency has become to focus our thought to the extremes. I guess the logic being that once these two points are defined, we can simply extrapolate all other conditions on a string between the two. It is this manner of thought that perhaps best explains the purely cerebral approaches and outcomes in the work of modern architects.

Reacting to the highly refined and synthetic, merely leads us down the road to another extreme, composed of three-dimensionally curvilinear buildings resembling caves, biological organisms, or bubbles. This is just as unnatural as the modernist cerebrally pure rectilinear boxes. One approach ignores the curves of nature, and the

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228 Benedikt, *For an Architecture of Reality*, 44.
other ignores the geometric qualities of nature. After all, stone cracks and shears off, dried clay reveals its hexagonal structure, and most tree trunks (at least conifers) are pretty straight. By carrying the natural quality of a material through to its finished form, we can satisfy the need of our natural predisposition, without resorting to a complete redefinition of our built realm.

Juvenation will seek a balance between the organic and the machined. While the plan of the resort will be allowed to flow with the earth and the roofs will carry an organic flow as well, the walls will maintain a straight vertical. This sets up a design framework for the form of the building whereby horizontal planes are guided by nature, and vertical planes are expressing human endeavor. Thus the resort can explore a continuous curvilinear form of unfolding edges, create a unique array of forms and edge qualities, and allow for the refinement of materials to fit the human form. Guests will be able to interact with the edge psychologically, visually, and tactiley in a manner receptive to the human condition.
Each resort I’ve visited has set examples of what to do and not do in this thesis design. Most relevant to this process have been Paradise Lakes, and Caliente. Both are located in Land-o-Lakes Florida, and these large up-scale resorts are similar in program and scope to my project.

When I started my research on these two resorts, and met with the managers and designers of each, Caliente was still on the drawing boards. This afforded me the unique opportunity to critique the design with Caliente’s architect, Bill Baldwin, in comparison to his earlier design of Paradise Lakes, and subsequently follow the resort’s completion. Caliente was opened in 2003 and recently visiting it was enlightening to see my conclusions of the two designs come full circle.

The three aspects with the greatest impact for my design were the interface between the hotel lodgings and each resort’s amenities, the composition and circulation in the pool area, and the intrusiveness of service areas and activities.

In each design there was a direct view of both the pool and nightclub areas from the front desk in the lobby. In this manner, an air of energy exists day or night as guests check-in. My sense at both resorts was that this arrangement was instrumental in creating a relaxed, welcoming, and enticing atmosphere at the outset of one’s venture into a clothing-optional stay.

The rooms though had very different relationships with the rest of the resort. At Paradise Lakes, each room had access to the pool area, with those on the ground floor opening directly on the pool deck. This arrangement was delightfully convenient, especially by comparison with Caliente. Each room at Caliente does have a view of the volleyball courts and pool area, but each porch and balcony is fully screened in. The door to each room heads out to the parking lot and in order to gain access to the amenities, one has to walk around to the main entrance, passing the loading dock on the way. This is inconvenient to say the least, requiring one to plan ahead and pack a bag of everything you’ll need for the day. The drudgery of this routine is amplified when sitting on your hotel room porch watching the pool area, creating a so close and yet so far syndrome.
Despite being designed by the same architect, Caliente and Paradise Lakes take dramatically different design strategies for the swimming pool areas. This came about because Paradise Lakes had a constrained amount of site with which to work while Caliente’s property was acquired in an undeveloped area.

Paradise adopted a counter-intuitive approach by placing an octagonal shaped enclosed bar in the center of the space. Having the space wrap around this object creates a sense that the entire pool area is larger than it actually is since our minds identify the space as the one we are in and the other space on the other side of the bar. And indeed, walking around the bar gave me a sense of the space unfolding, showing me something new to discover, with each step.

Caliente, having more space, utilized a stadium approach, where the clubhouse combined with an elevated hot tub area, snack bar, and small shops loosely encircle the swimming, water volleyball, and conversation-jet pools. The original landscaping plan called for groups of palms and bushes to be placed between pools and other amenities such as nearby sand volleyball courts. This would act similarly to the object in the middle strategy, although while not opaque, still acting to define a series of spaces within a space. This plan was insufficient in another design aspect, providing adequate shade for guests from the Florida sun. The result was that the landscaping was changed to a grove of palm trees scattered throughout the entire pool area. While this change was successful for providing more shade it is more problematic for guest orientation and circulation, as the entire area becomes a sea of randomly placed trees and lounge chairs. There were no clearly defined paths between amenities. At Paradise, the placement of the bar and pools around it naturally indicated paths of travel and subsequent areas for lounge chairs.

I mentioned before that the loading dock/trash collection area was between the hotel rooms and the main entrance. This service area of the resort is large, highly visible, unsightly, and detracts from the luxury experience. With some effort, this could have been completely avoided. The clubhouse at Caliente is symmetrical, so by flipping the upper floor plan of the building about its axis, the loading dock would have been pulled from view, even for guests pulling up to the port cochere to check in. The
service area of Paradise is out of view, but it is problematic nonetheless as it is undersized for the resort’s need.

Related to this is the accessibility of the housekeeping staff to hotel rooms, without interfering with guest circulation. This isn’t an issue at Caliente, but at Paradise where the rooms open directly on the main activity area, housekeeping carts can add to the congestion throughout the day.

In light of these observations, I’ve developed some tactical goals for the design of my resort. One goal in my design will be to integrate the hotel rooms within the resort separated from the parking lot and allowing access both to the nearest activities area as well as a service corridor. Another will be to conceal loading dock, trash collection, and other service areas from view of the guests.

For the pool area, I will employ a combination of Paradise Lake’s and Caliente’s schemes. Since my resort will be further north than Florida, the need for extensive shade will be far less allowing me to utilize Caliente’s original plan to use landscaping to create organization and spaces within the larger space. Rather than create a stadium effect though, I will place structures towards the center of the space to capitalize on the sense of discovery that was so well enacted at Paradise Lakes.

And of course, I plan to replicate the spatial arrangement of activity areas that pushes a high energy level towards the main entrance. As guests enter, this arrangement makes a clear impression that they have embarked into another world.
PROGRAM

Based upon my research, personal experiences, the programs of similar sized resorts, and my interactions with other nudists, I developed the following program areas for my resort. The program is presented here to correspond with the design's final organization.

MAIN CLUBHOUSE
Entry:
- Lobby
- Reception Desk
- Membership Services Desk
- Grand Staircase
- Elevator
- Restrooms (3 sets, spaced throughout clubhouse)

Offices:
- Director
- Activities Director
- Marketing
- Accounting
- Open Office (6 workstations)
- Copy Room
- Storage (shared with Gift Shop)

Service Areas:
- Employee Entry
- Mechanical Rooms (3 total, 1 foe each wing of the clubhouse)
- Employee Lockers/Lounge
- Employee Restrooms
- Human Resources Office
- Laundry
- Housekeeping/Janitorial
- Freight Elevator
- Central Storage
- Loading Dock/Trash Collection
- Maintenance Area w/ Tool Crib
- Kitchen w/ Storage & Walk-in Freezer
- Wait Station
- Employee Lunchroom

Gift Shop
- Day Visit Lockers w/ Hot tub/Shower Room
- Club Room w/ Bar, Dance Floor, & Fireplace
- Recreation Hall w/ Solarium incl. Hot tub and Cooling pool, Games and Billiards Area & Sauna
- Restaurant w/ fireplace (15-20 tables)
**SWIMMING POOL AREA**

Pools:
- Zero-depth pool w/ dive well
- Childrens pool
- Conversation/Water Massage pool
- Water Volleyball pool

Filter Rooms (2)
Sun Decks
Restrooms
Showers (exterior)
Equipment Rental
Snack Bar w/ deck
Children’s Playground
Children’s Sandbox
Shuffleboard Courts (2)
Picnic Pavilion w/ grill
Sand Volleyball Court

**ATHLETIC AREA BUILDING**

Lobby:
- Staircase
- Elevator
- Restrooms

Spa Facilities:
- Reception
- Sauna w/ cool off pool ante room
- Massage Rooms (3 ea. w/ individual soaking baths)
- Waxing Service Room
- Staff Office
- Restrooms

Indoor Pool w/ hot tub, conversation/water massage pool, & dive well
Indoor Children’s Playground
 Locker Room w/ showers
Snack Bar
Workout Room w/ exercise equipment
Mechanical Room
Filter Room

**LODGINGS**

Studios (35 total, w/ 1 ADA accessible):
Bedroom
Sun Room
Bathroom
Entry/closet
Patio
Cabins (10 total, w/ 1 ADA accessible):
  Bedroom
  Loft w/ fireplace
  Living Room w/ fireplace
  Kitchen
  Bathroom
  Entry foyer w/ spiral staircase
  Closets (4)
  Decks (3, only 1 for ADA unit)
Campgrounds

**SITE**

Gatehouse
Parking:
  Guest (65 paved + overflow field)
  Employee (80 paved)
Gardens
Beach w/ Sand Volleyball Courts (3)
Tennis Courts (3)
Boathouse
Elevated Cabin Path w/ gathering nodes, some incl. hot tub
Nature Trails
PART III
JUVENATION
The third part of this literary thesis is a comprehensive account of significant design decisions that are grounded in the project’s research. These decisions sequentially follow my design process, and the first decision was to pick a name for the resort. This may seem superficial, but I feel that it is important for this project to have a name that relates the spirit and quality of the experience of nudism. One of the common sensations of many nudists at the end of the day is rejuvenation. The word rejuvenation though doesn’t have quite the right ring to it. So in Madison Avenue ad-man style, I chopped off the re and shortened the name to Juvenation.

Site

Finding a site became a much easier process than it appeared at the outset. For a long time, myself and my committee believed that an urban setting should be used as an additional challenge to the design. But this was in direct conflict with the needs of many nudists, (a retreat from the urban setting), and as it turns out, has already been done. Such resorts are characterized by high walls to ensure privacy from the public. While these places are more conveniently located, their typically constrained sites cause them to exhibit qualities similar to fortresses and prisons.

So the search expanded to the edges of the city, in areas not yet encroached by suburban sprawl. This actually presented a new problem to solve, ...how to design the resort to ensure privacy in anticipation that surrounding areas might be developed. But which city to pick? I had focused on Cincinnati and Chicago, but each already had small clubs located nearby. One of my committee members, Ann Cline, pointed out that the conservative nature of Cincinnati probably wouldn’t support a resort of the scale I was proposing. She suggested that I look to Indianapolis, particularly the west side, simply because as she put it, “...the city as an air of ‘why not’ about it”.

Going to the USGS topographic and satellite maps of the area I scanned the images hoping to find something, anything that would meet the aquatic needs of my vision. Suddenly, my eyes fixated on what looked to be a farmer’s retention pond just north of interstate 74, and west of the Eagle Creek Reservoir, named Penn Lake. This is an incredibly unique site. The unusually shaped lake is large, yet its watershed area is small, precluding serious concerns of flooding. This lead me to believe that the lake must be shallow, but the satellite photos show considerable gradation to the color of the water, indicating some rather deep spots. Stranger still, this lake sits in a gently sloping plateau, practically overlooking a steeply wooded valley of a tributary creek of the Eagle Creek Reservoir. This is the perfect site for my concept. There is both tranquil and flowing water, with the combination of the lake and the creek, and the shape of the lake provides a substantial amount of edge to build around. Topping it
off, the northwest corner of the site is a savanna-esque field dotted with stands of mature trees.

The site also had the desired limited access and significant distance from potential development. The east side of the site is heavily wooded and this abuts the western boundary of the land preserved around the reservoir. Far across the lake, the south and southwestern sides of the site are well defined by the interstate and a railroad. Access is gained only by crossing the railroad tracks at the far northwest corner. A short length of high wall and a gatehouse should be enough to establish a vehicular gateway to the resort. Only on the north side, currently a farmer’s field, is the site exposed. Building a high wall here though would be an austere measure compared to the other borders of the site. Instead I designed a large earth berm with a deep and dense thicket of locust trees, pines, junipers, and honeysuckle bushes planted over it. This should effectively deter intruders while giving guests a mottled green backdrop year round.

The site also slopes from north to south, and the long axis of the lake runs northwest to southeast, giving the resort excellent sun exposure and ample areas for sunbathing along the lakeshore. This also provides vistas across the entire site. A balance of refuge and prospect exists between the field and the woods. Finally, with their edges, the woods and the lake clearly define the readily buildable area of the site.

Circulation

Over the course of my design career I’ve come to the conclusion, at least for me, that conceiving a circulation strategy is the best place to start. The lake strongly influences circulation. The larger portion of the lake runs northwest-southeast, but there is another nearly detached crescent shaped piece of the lake that points to the northeast. This crescent bisects the field area, and nearly comes to the edge of the woods and the top of the valley, creating a pinch point for the design to address. The
uniqueness of this crescent lead me to the conclusion to build the resort around it, and rather than limit circulation to a “C” shape linking the field areas on either side. I decided early on to build a moon bridge over the link of the crescent and the main lake, forming a full loop giving visitors an ever-changing and unending view of the resort as it wraps around the crescent. The moon bridge shape was settled upon for a couple of reasons. Mainly because there is a change in grade elevation of the land on either side of the link of about eight feet and the moon shape allowed me to gracefully make this transition, but also because the arch of the bridge would allow clearance for mini sailboats and paddleboats to pass under.

All other circulations would either spur off of this main route or intertwine with it. Because of the size of the loop I needed to have a few twists and turns, and ups and downs along the way, otherwise, the continuous turn we would be making as we walked would become nearly as boring and predictable as a straight path. Thus was born the winding loop.

With the concept in place for the main circulation path it was now time to identify the primary people flows that would occur. The first is driving in, parking, and walking to the entrance.

“...the entrance needs to be the first thing that you come to. If you have to walk a long distance along the building before you can enter, the chances are high that you will have to turn back after entering, and walk back in the direction you came from. This is not only annoying, but you may even begin to wonder whether you are going the right way...”

Looking at the placement of the loop from the gate, this was quite a distance to cover, so the closest point on the loop quickly became a major circulation hub, the lobby. Before getting to the lobby though I had a problem as I had envisioned keeping parking near the frontgate and having a long walk on a winding path through an

elevated grove of trees, shrubs, and flowers, that would enhance the mystery and anticipation of the experience and shroud the resort buildings from view as long as possible. And rather than have a prominent entrance, I wanted one that receded into the building like a mountain pass between two masses of rock. More or less this was all to act as a funnel, intensifying until passing into the lobby and have a new world suddenly open up with a grand view through the lobby, across the pool, and the lake crescent.

There would also be a variety of guest types. Hotel guests would have luggage to carry, and those staying in a cabin would have even more items. Others seeking an outdoors stay would be bringing in camping equipment. Local club members and people coming for a day visit may only have a single bag, and might even decide to disrobe at their car before getting to the reception desk.

Maintaining my concept for both the walk and the entry, the problems were alleviated by redesigning the parking arrangement. A one-way drive now runs from the gatehouse to a drop off circle at the main entry and follows a parallel route back to the gate. Parking spaces are located as a spine along the inside of these two drives and the walkway winds its way between the two with periodic points of access to the parking spaces. This pedestrian path crosses the drive once, close to the main entrance.

The return route of the drive is actually two-way, as a means of access for employees, their parking, and deliveries is needed. The service wing of the resort as a matter of necessity will have to be placed to the north of the main entrance and lobby, to provide it with the most direct vehicular access possible while simultaneously limiting the obtrusiveness of such traffic. Landscaped berms help to isolate these paved areas from the return drive to the south, and the campgrounds to the north. An area for campers is also off of this route. While the service wing is built into the hillside, effectively disguising it from guest view inside the resort, this wing was fully visible to the turn around and main entrance. For this situation, the solid stone wall of the service wing near the entrance, spurred off an eight foot tall walled planter topped with flowering trees, bushes, and vines to block visual access of the two-story service wing as well as mitigate sounds and smells. The planter tapers into the earth as it borders the return drive.

Hotel and cabin guests once checked-in, will stay on the main loop to get to their lodgings. Day visit guests though will need a separate route once they’ve registered. They can either directly go to the pool area, or if so desired utilize lockers. This route becomes a disrobing procession, which carries with it a certain amount of ceremonial value as the stress of clothed society is relieved, removed and washed away. This passage starts past the gift shop, where fretting about a commonly forgotten item, suntan lotion for instance, can easily be remedied. Restrooms are located across from the gift shop, as a stop to refresh from the drive here, enabling guests to be fully focused
an appreciative of the actual process of disrobing. The entrance to the locker room is highlighted by a node with a skylight. After disrobing and storing their clothes, guests proceed down a ramp and into a circular, sky-lighted, half-open pavilion that transitions into the main pool area. Around the enclosed side of the pavilion are showers to wash off the grime, sweat, and oils that have accumulated on their skin under their clothes. The center of the pavilion is the pool area’s hot tub, becoming the focal point of the transition to the day’s activities.

To maximize use of the sun, and to minimize exposure to guests, the service and vertical circulation elements will be held to the north side of the loop. Due to the rectilinear nature of storage boxes and equipment, this area will need to remain rectilinear, straightforward, and production efficient as opposed to the flowing forms of the rest of the resort. The housekeeping staff will have to use the main loop to access the lodgings, but other maintenance personnel can use a series of passageways under the main loop in the clubhouse, to conduct the day’s work unnoticed, only using the main loop to access remote areas of the site. This approach freed up the entire interior of the loop around the crescent lake for guest recreational areas and lodgings.

The main loop passes through the lobby and out through the west end of the pool area. Stemming off of this though another half loop is needed to provide a main circulation route through the pool area, and connect to the campgrounds and gardens to the north side of the loop. I passed this route under the main loop. This bridge forms a gateway to the loop interior from the rest of the site, giving the loop significance as the edge between the social area of the resort and the natural area surrounding it.

The cabins though would have to be located on the outside of the loop, as there simply was not room on the interior. These would be built in the woods on the hillside. Connecting them is what I call the treehouse loop. Instead of following the contours of the hillside, the treehouse loop holds the same elevation as the main loop giving us the sense that we are ascending into the forest canopy as we move further over the hillside. The cabins can be accessed by steps off of the loop up or down to their entrances. The treehouse loop also has gathering nodes, some even with hot tubs, to pause and enjoy the sounds of the woods and its wildlife, as well as points of access to trails traversing the forest floor that travel to, across, and along the creek.

The east side of the main loop runs along the long smooth outside curve of the crescent and the edge of the woods, giving little leeway for the pathway to take a winding course. My fear was that as an enclosed space this would become a corridor. While this may be unavoidable in winter, it is possible to make this space an open air colonnade during summer, by making each wall segment as a door.

“A staircase is not just a way of getting from one floor to another. The stair is itself a space, a volume, a part of the building; and unless this space is made to live, it
will be a dead spot, and work to disconnect the building and to tear its processes apart." Vertical circulation in the main clubhouse had to be near the lobby, as part of the circulation hub of the resort. The ceremonial stair becomes doubly important as it transfers the main loop from the lobby up to the second floor where it departs on its way around the lake. Not to impede the flow of travel, the stair became a free standing single spiral that revolves around a cluster of ten vertical supports of the main roof and the free form glass dome of this stairwell. The organic arrangement of these structural pieces resembles the trunk and branches of a tree. Illuminating this area are strips of golden theatre isle lights that hang from these “branches” and in between the vertical supports. The ascension of the stairwell is carried through the dome by the vertical supports to form the highpoint of the resort, which will act as an orienting element for guests across the entire site.

**Adjacencies**

It was important to create two major gathering areas of the resort to accommodate the needs of guests seeking social recreation, and those wanting more in the way of competitive exercise. The lake forms a natural division. To maintain a high energy level at the main entrance, I kept the social area to the near side of the crescent, and put the athletic area further into the resort across the lake. Linking these two areas are the lodgings and a variety of out of the way spaces for those seeking quiet reflection within a natural setting.

The social area was subdivided into four distinct areas, with the clubhouse formed as three wings working off of the lobby and an outdoor activities area between the clubhouse and the lake.

The west wing, or visitor wing, is a one-story area housing the reception desk, resort’s offices, day visit lockers, and gift shop. To the east side of the clubhouse is the activity wing. This wing has the prime exposure to the sun and direct access to the pool area for the clubroom and recreation hall. The club’s restaurant is on the second floor and overlooks the lobby. The lodgings also flow off of the second floor. The two-

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story north wing houses the resort’s services, including housekeeping, maintenance, and major storage facilities. The upper floor, adjacent to the restaurant, is dedicated to food preparation.

The outdoor activities area is organized into an east half and west half. A concentric pattern defines the west half with a snack bar at the center. Surrounding this is a series of pools and water features. Sun decks fill the area between the clubhouse and the pools. The east half is a cluster of features, including children’s play areas, picnic areas, a sand volleyball court, and shuffleboard. The bar, the only source for alcohol in the resort, fits between the clubroom and the pool area, giving it access to both the interior and exterior social areas.

The athletic area is divided by the main loop, with the spa facilities to the north and the other activity features to the south, including an indoor pool and playground, and outdoor tennis and sand volleyball courts. The upper floor of the athletic building contains a snack bar overlooking the pool and playground, and a workout room with a commanding view scanning the resort.

The rest of the site has a string of studio hotel rooms facing the lake, and cabins in the woods. A beach runs along the lake to the southeast of the athletic area, and north of the clubhouse and having direct access to the pool area, are gardens and a campground.

**Massing**

I believe there is a universal flow in life. Everything is a fluid. What we define as a solid, whether it be a state of matter or an unwavering principle, are merely temporal definitions dependent on the length of our existence. Glass for instance we think of as solid but in truth it is a liquid as can be seen in the window of a 100 year old building where the thickness of the bottom of a pane is measurably thicker than the top. Molecules of glass from the top have flowed to the bottom. Wood grows, we cut it and refine it, but despite our best efforts it still warps, cracks, and rots. Stone, no matter how dense will eventually break apart, chip-off, and gradually erode to dust.

Consider the molecular level of the solid state of matter. The molecules are vibrating. There is movement. For it to be truly solid, the temperature would have to be absolute zero, the point when all movement stops. Our world does not operate at absolute zero. What we think of as solid is a fluid just like all of the other states of matter, plastics, plasmas, liquids, and gases. It is one end of the fluid spectrum. Pyroclastic flows, avalanches, and landslides are comprised mostly of solids but move as liquids. Only when they stop, do we stand on them and think we are on solid earth. Earthquakes clearly show us that our buildings are but boats, not just because the ground cracks and shakes them, but because on occasion liquefaction occurs and our
buildings literally sink into the earth to be frozen into the solid ground once the shaking subsides.

Societies continually evolve. Earlier in his thesis I showed how fluid modesty is. Money too is a fluid, as the value of the dollar is never static. Ask any economist, it’s worth changes with each creation of wealth.

Our world is one big fluid characterized by a single pattern. A wavelength really. In the physical realm it is recognized as uplift and erosion. In biological terms, growth and decay. The endeavors of humans and other animals are acts of creation and destruction. Everything rises and falls. We can design our buildings to either symbolically fight this inevitable process, adopting symmetrical and rigid massings, or resemble this process, culminating with the concentrations of our activities.

“For any collection of buildings, decide which building in the group houses the most essential function—which building is the soul of the group, as a human institution. Then form this building as the main building, with a central position, higher roof.”

My strategy in support of this concept is to allow vertical elements of the buildings to rise above the roof line. This includes stairs, elevators, and mechanical shafts. Primary and secondary spaces can then flow and taper into the site from between these vertical masses. The highest used spaces occupy the area under the highest roof. In the main clubhouse, this is the lobby, restaurant and clubroom and in the athletic area building this is the two-story volume over the pool. Other points of ceremonial significance have proportionally smaller uplifts to the roof. This strategy extends to the lodgings as well, where even the studio rooms are characterized by a conical dome over the bed with the other aspects of the space, bathroom, sunroom, and entry encircling it.

The main clubhouse was also allowed to cascade and grow into the hillside to the north. This both blended the growth of the building to the topographic flow of the land and ameliorated shadows, allowing sunlight closer to the base of the north side of the building.

Employing this strategy of flow is surprisingly simple. Design ergonomically from the bubble diagram of adjacencies. I started at the soul of each building and designed each consecutive space from this point to the farthest extents of each wing. This approach required very little rework of either the initial plan or elevations of the building, and it kept separated circulation space to a minimum as such was only added as absolutely needed, allowing most interior volumes to flow into one another.

Elements of Refuge and Prospect

A number of features are built into the building envelope as well as the interiors to enhance the transition between areas of refuge and prospect.

I mentioned before that the central structure of the clubhouse was designed to represent a tree. The rafters and beams branching from this tree form a flowing roof that mimics a tree’s canopy. This analogy is carried through the eave of the roof. Instead of a uniform depth, the eave of the roof is splayed between vertical elements of the facade where it is deep in the middle of these segments and tapers toward the ends. The beams extend beyond the edge of the eave, and are also braced back to the building envelope. Another feature contributing to this edge of the woods effect is that the upper floor extends beyond the lower floor, allowing the free standing support columns of the upper floor to act similar to an arcade.

Yet another feature contributing to this edge of the woods effect are quad columns. Instead of a single column, the center portion is left open by a bundle of four smaller columns connected with metal bands at their bottom and middle and wood cross pieces at the top. The quad column resembles a stand of small trees, and also mimics the structural tree at the center of the clubhouse.

The major interior spaces of the gift shop, lobby, clubroom, and rec hall all have direct access to the sun decks of the pool area. This is accomplished with multiple doors for entry and exit. In fact, each wall panel between the vertical supports of the façade are actually wood framed glass doors. When all the doors are held open, the entire south side of the clubhouse allows people to move between interior and exterior at any point, essentially blurring the distinction of interior and exterior.

Besides an open air interior, the blending of interior and exterior is also carried by the floor plane. All of the circulation spaces have a natural slope to the floor. In places where these sloped areas run past level floor areas, wood slat partitions form space dividers. Approaching from one direction these appear as solid walls, but from the opposite way, one can easily see to the primary space beyond. The slats are oriented towards the lobby so that the transparent view beckons people from the circulation hub through the building.

Also, rather than build walls, spaces are separated by objects, such as the large round fireplace between the rec hall and the clubroom. And the ceiling plane undergoes multiple changes in elevation, defining zones of interior prospect. All of
these attributes allow the interior space to flow into one large volume with plenty of changing perspectives enticing guests to explore.

One last design element specifically employed to enhance refuge and prospect, are the vistas from the second floor. The restaurant was placed atop the building to give it an expansive view. While dining, almost the entire resort can be observed as well as sunsets to the horizon. In addition to the indoor dining area, two exterior patios, one over the rec hall and another over top of the detached pool area service building, provide elevated outdoor dining spots.

All of these features are similarly employed in the athletic area building.

Program Area Details

Many features and arrangements of program areas were added to contribute to the immersive experience of the resort and to serve specific aspects of nudist life. LOBBY: “The experience of entering a building influences the way you feel inside the building. If the transition is too abrupt there is no feeling of arrival, and the inside of the building fails to be an inner sanctum.”

The doors of the main entrance pass under what I call the leaf, a large splay of vertical wood slats that straddle the exterior and the interior over the doors and under the roof enclosure of the lobby. This was designed with downlighting from the eave and interior above to create a zone with a rich interplay of light shade and shadow.

The upper windows of the lobby can be opened to allow summer breezes to naturally ventilate the clubhouse when the lower level doors are open. These openings are kept relatively small to the large expanse of open doors, to induce air flow even on calm days. This should alleviate a build up of humidity without needing to engage mechanical systems. This is also possible, because the service wing was designed with a separate air handler for its operational needs.

The reception desk, on a curve, sits prominently in the lobby at the entrance doors giving it an undeniable presence as a control point without forming a physically restrictive barrier to entry. Behind this, in the inter-space between the business offices, but in full view of the lobby is the membership services desk, where first-time visitors can be interviewed and fill-out paperwork.

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Rather than have man-made seating for the lobby, the center of the lobby is occupied by a large flat rock for sitting.

At most gift shops, towels occupy a back shelf while clothes get prominent placement. At a nudist resort though, the towel becomes the marquee item. At Juvenation, towels will be uniquely displayed as each type hangs from a towel mobile overhead of the shop’s sales floor at the gift shop entrance.

CLUBROOM/REC HALL: These two spaces blend together and have multiple forms and alcoves for a variety of activities. The most important feature is the circular fireplace that occurs at what I call the “hinge” between the two spaces, as the main axis of the rec hall changes direction to that of the clubroom. The mass of the fireplace creates a natural division of the total space allowing distinct activities to occur on either side. Two-thirds of the fireplace is visually open to the other side, and since the vertical structure of the fireplace is contained to the third furthest to the interior, rather than split equally across the circle, there isn’t a solid vertical visual barrier in the center of the connecting space of the rec hall and clubroom. With this spatial arrangement, the two areas can function as one.

The fireplace is also designed to act as its own activity space. Having a wide hearth of smooth rounded stones and a parallel arc of sitting wall, allow the fireplace to serve as a node of conversation. The form of the fireplace is completed with a conical bronze hood.

With the restaurant above, the clubroom would have to have free standing columns. The quad column though takes up more space than a single column and would inhibit circulation between the tables and the dance floor. Instead of being square, I decided to make these round wood pilotis, differentiating them from all other columns in the resort while maintaining slender young tree like proportions.

Unlike the restaurant above, which is a more formal environment where tables are generously spaced to provide distance between diners and others passing by, the clubroom has significantly less floor space for tables and chairs. Utilizing tall tables and chairs the need for wide spacing can be greatly reduced without compromising a respectful passing scenario.

The rec hall is a large open space, yet does not read as such on the exterior. The reason for this is I did not want the volume of this space to visually compete with the central focus of the clubroom/restaurant exterior volume. A number of moves were made to accomplish this effect. First, the space was organized into three strips, a flow of alcoves, an open floor space, and a solarium fronting the pool area. This arrangement spread the volume horizontally. A roof garden off of the restaurant was placed over top of the rec hall, restricting its available interior height. To give the center section of the rec hall prominence, an assortment of design moves were made.
The roof garden maintains a level floor elevation with the restaurant on the second floor, but the ground floor has been sloping with the natural terrain. This gives the rec hall five more feet of height than the floor to floor height at the west end of the restaurant and the lobby. In addition to this, the floor of the rec hall center section gently slopes another two feet along its length. The ceiling is a shallow vault that is uplit from cove lights along its structural ribs and from pendants, gaining this section brightness and a sense of lift. Helping this is a bulkhead between the solarium, and ceiling height over the alcoves, each set two feet lower than the bottom of the vault. The east wall of the room is a stone wall with a concave shape, allowing the volume of the room to seemingly push it out. Completing the disguise of the rec hall is the organic form of the solarium. It starts small nearest the center of the clubhouse and grows as it moves east, culminating in an ascending spiral. This draws people’s attention from the center mass of the clubhouse, to this secondary peak.

POOL AREA: A unifying design feature of the pool area was connecting the flow of water through the pools. The massage pool forms the headwaters and creates waterfall into the dive well of the main pool. From the other end of the massage pool, an ever widening stream crosses in front of the snack bar and flows into the water volleyball pool. Stepping stones provide entry to the snack bar. Supplemental water sources add to the stream or create additional waterfalls from under the snack bar’s outdoor deck. Conceptually this arrangement gives the impression that the snack bar was built on top of a spring, and the water is being forced out in all directions, forming the pools. Connecting from this adult pool complex to the children’s pool is a playful water element, a string of waterspouts each spaced six feet apart that every few seconds squirt a column of water five or so feet into the air. These spouts form a boundary of the main pool area circulation route, and could be programmed into a variety of timing patterns to create visual effects.

The main pool as well as the children’s pool is designed as zero-depth pools, meaning that at least some part of the pool does not have a hard edge, but simply slopes into the pool just as the beach slips into the sea. This feature combined with the shape of the pool, the waterfalls, stone walls of the dive well and water volleyball pools, and a segment of planting up to the edge of the pool were employed to reduce the amount of hard edge of the pool. The children’s pool, with a full circle zero-depth edge, acts more as a large, deep puddle. These moves were done because typically, the abruptness of traditional swimming pool edge conditions is psychologically disconcerting.\(^{233}\)

At a typical resort of this size with a wide variety of activities, a person could reserve a lounge chair with their towel and then go swim for awhile, then go have lunch, play volleyball, take a paddleboat out, etc., all without necessarily returning to their lounge chair, or “home base”, since they’re wearing a swim suit. To do this same

routine at a clothing-optional resort, this person would be going back and forth from their home base to get their towel for seated activities. This can become annoying and particularly frustrating to the spontaneity of the day. And if you don’t have a bag or any other belongings with you, you can’t hold the same home base throughout the day. This is another reason why many nudists carry two towels, one for the home base, and another to keep with you as you explore. This presents a new problem though when you want to swim at a pool far from home base or go play some volleyball, …what to do with your towel? Who wants to lay it on the ground or pool deck where it can get wet or dirty? And laying it on a nearby table or chair occupies furniture that others could need to use. So at Juvenation, towel posts will be built into the pool deck near primary places of pool entry, and near the courts. Essentially these will be fixed versions of the old-fashioned standing coat rack, with additional pegs along the post.

SPA: The entry to the spa at Caliente was simple and uneventful. I wanted the entry to Juvenation’s spa to symbolize that an experience awaits that is even more relaxing and self-realizing than what has been experienced in the guest’s visit thus far. The reception desk blooms from the floor, under a conical skylight. At the top of this dangles an inverted wood frame cone, and hanging from this is a large pendant light. Unlike the flowing nature of forms throughout the rest of the resort, this one spot employs symmetry to convey the holistic nature of the experience to come.

From the desk, guests are escorted to a sitting rock in the center of the massage room area. When ready, guests are then invited into a crescent shaped preparation room where they take a soaking bath in a sunken bowl fed from a waterfall spout. While soaking, the massage therapist readies the massage room for the guest’s atmospheric selections of music, aroma, temperature, and air flow. Once ready, the therapist will open the two full-height decorative curved panels that formed the convex wall of the crescent shaped soaking room, rolling them into curved wall pockets, revealing the circular massage room. This room grows into a conical dome with an oculus. The head of the massage table is directly beneath this, allowing the guest to gaze upon the passing sky during their massage session. Completing the tranquility of this setting is the smooth detailing of the cabinetry and shelves. There shall be no straight edges, sharp corners, or right angle turns. The ends of shelves and cabinets will make quarter round turns into the wall of the room.

The spa was placed on the north side of the athletic building to eliminate harsh glare from the sun while still allowing a ring of clerestory windows under the light cove of the dome to be opened, allowing warm breezes to pass through.

LODGINGS: The studio hotel rooms are modeled off of the massage rooms, as a personal area of refuge. The same shaped, cove-lit dome and oculus is kept, over the foot of the bed, with the bed on a raised platform. All furniture and shelves are also similarly rounded. The bathtub is similar in concept to the soaking bath, except the bottom is level, so that the tub can double as a shower. This space is lit with a skylight,
built with stone walls, and has a waterfall for the shower, replicating the novelty of happening upon a grotto of a stream while on a hike.

In addition to the bedroom and bathroom, each unit has an entry foyer, closet, sunroom with fireplace, and an outdoor patio. Another unique feature, with the exception of the ADA accessible unit, is that each unit has its own series of steps up and down between areas. This vertical movement changes the guest’s perspective of the space, helping to give them a sense of grandeur despite the small amount of area of each unit.

Each studio is also a compilation of three pieces, the full circle of the bedroom, a ¾ moon shaped piece containing the bathroom and entry, and an arc shaped piece with the sunroom, patio, and the studio’s heating/air conditioning unit. A variety of arrangements are created by rotating and flipping these three standard pieces. Combined with the variances of steps and the studio’s position to the sun and lake, no two units feel identical.

Wherever possible in this resort, I utilized pocket doors, even on curves. Eliminating door swings was one tactic used to minimize unused space. And it was essential to the flexibility of the studio units.

The cabins take a different form. These are two-story buildings with three levels on each floor. The entry actually is on the top floor. From the entry the floor steps up to an enclosed bedroom similar to the studio bedroom design, and down to a loft with a fireplace that overlooks the two-story volume of the main living space below. A spiral staircase connects the two floors. On the lower floor, the bathroom is on the center level, while the kitchen resides on the upper level, and the main living space including a fireplace on the lower level. Decks are located off of the private bedroom, kitchen, and living space. Essentially, this is an arrangement of three adjacent, staggered stacks, with the loft above the living space, the entry above the bathroom, and the private bedroom above the kitchen. This arrangement as unique and breathtaking as it is (entering to find the extent of the cabin and a two-story glass view unfold beneath you), though is not conducive to rearrangement.

Seasonal Use

Given Juvenation’s scope and northern location, it was clear from the start that the resort would need to accommodate guests year round. The athletic area building was designed with this in mind. One need that the resort does not have in winter that it does in summer is the need to keep social and athletic user groups separate, as potentially contentious activities such as volleyball and tennis are indeed seasonal.
The main roof of the athletic building is an upward spiral, maximizing the height of the glass around the swimming pool to the south and west. To promote sunbathing, the amount of glass relative to frame size was kept as large as possible.

A locker room and shower procession leading to the pool, identical in concept to the day visit procession at the main clubhouse is on the first floor. This feature was included specifically for winter time use, recognizing that guests would likely be wearing more clothes coming from their lodgings to the pool, but nothing precludes its use year round. This building also houses a playground for the kids, and an eating area on the second floor that overlooks the entire facility. As well, the workout room and the spa will remain open all year.

The main clubhouse will continue to operate all of its areas year round as well. The solarium was designed for winter use, in the same manner as the athletic building pool area, to take advantage of the low angle winter sun. the solarium also has a hot tub and room temperature cooling off pool to suit guest’s tastes. The hot tub/shower pavilion at the west end of the building can also be enclosed for winter use.

Connecting the clubhouse and the athletic building of course is the main loop. During warmer months, this covered path is left open like an arcade, but for winter use all the doors need to be closed. This alone probably will not be enough to make this long passage tolerable. Three design moves were made to acclimate this space for winter conditions.

The first was to build up the earth along the west side of the passage, and plant small trees and shrubs along it. These plantings and earth berms interspace with the access points to the studio lodgings. Another decision was to slope the roof of the passage towards the lake. These two moves combined with the positioning of the studio units should effectively shield this walkway from winter winds.

Recognizing that people aren’t likely to linger in this space during the winter, the passage won’t need to be heated to as high a temperature as the clubhouse or athletic building, but it will need to be above freezing, probably around 45° F or so. Crisp but not bitter.

How the passage is heated is probably more important than the temperature it holds. One of the things I’ve noticed over the years of informal conversations and observations with other nudists is how important it is to keep your feet warm. A lot of our body heat can be lost through our feet, as this is the part of our bodies most in contact with the earth. Invariably, when nudists complain about feeling chilled, it’s when they are standing inside on a cold floor. Hence, a radiant heating system in the floor is utilized throughout Juvenation.

Materials and Treatment
One aspect of protection that our clothes provide that largely goes unnoticed is prevention from scratches, bruises, and splinters to the soft skin along our flanks, midsection, and backside, from rubbing or leaning against corners and edges. Without clothes, I have come to realize just how often we brush past these surfaces. Of course much of this falls in the realm of carpenters and furniture makers, where less consideration is given to finish quality of surfaces like the backs of chairs. While most furniture might be outside the realm of architects influence, we can head off many such edges in the design of cabinetry and fixed furnishings.

Besides eliminating angular changes of direction of 90° or less in countertops and cabinetry, attention will need to be given to every exposed edge comprised from planar changes of face of the material. Counters and shelves will need to be bullnosed. Column corners, the ends of the wood slats, the tops of railings, etc., will all need to be rounded. And all the handrails should turn back in smooth half circles rather than just rounded corners.

One edge that commonly has splinters is the door stop of wood door frames. I have discovered this personally. The far edge of the stop strip typically is rounded, but the stop edge is crisp so that the door swings against a flat surface. Over time as the door slams against it, splinters can split off. Despite the extensive use of pocket doors, this promises to be a prolific occurrence at Juvenation, due to the preponderance of doors comprising the exterior of the buildings.

Most door stop strips are no more than ¼ to 3/8 inch thick. This is to minimize the profile of the stop in order to maximize the clear width of the door. Sacrificing clear width in favor of comfort, the stops at Juvenation will be ½ inch profile. This width will allow the stop edge to have 1/8 round rather than a crisp edge and still provide sufficient flat area for the door to swing against.

Perhaps the most important materials in the resort are those for the floors. Radiant heat by itself is not enough to ensure comfort for our feet. I am particularly disenchanted with the unforgiving nature of concrete on barefeet. I wanted walking surfaces, both interior and exterior to have a receptive nature and provide a variety of textures to experience.

Cork became the primary choice for the interiors of the clubhouse, athletic building, and the covered path between the two. Companies such as Expanko have made significant advancements in the durability and moisture resistance of cork as a flooring material, and given its cushioning ability, this seemed an ideal choice. To demark changes such as steps, a second material, wood will be used. For steps and the grand staircase, receiving high traffic, a hardwood such as oak will be needed. A softer wood such as maple or ash could be used for the clubroom dance floor and for use as a perimeter accent of spaces.
Tile will be used in areas commonly in contact with water such as shower rooms and immediately adjacent to interior pools and hot tubs. I prefer keeping tile sizes small and irregularly shaped for two reasons. One, it allows more artistic flexibility for creating flowing design patterns, and mostly because the smaller size creates a spacing with the grout that is easier for our toes to grip.

For the lodgings, I wanted to utilize a different palette of materials, if for no other reason, to differentiate with the resort’s public areas. Bedrooms will be familiarly carpeted, but the entries, sun rooms, bathrooms, and cabin kitchens will be made of slate. The house where I grew up had a slate floor that remained shaded during the summer and received sun during the winter. With its black color, this kept the stone refreshingly cool and invigoratingly warm as seasonally needed. An added bonus is the way slate breaks apart as it is quarried. It is a stone with a horizontal, layered structure that when split, leaves circular grooves and pockets for our feet to explore. The floor of the living spaces of the cabins, will be wood as is the adjacent exterior deck. This is done in the interest of creating a visual continuity between these two areas, as the glass wall here opens with a series of doors just like the clubhouse.

The moon bridge and the treehouse loop only made sense to be wood, but I was long troubled by the other exterior paths and areas, particularly the pool area. For a long time I convinced myself it would have to be, for its durability, concrete. I was afraid that stone, particularly in a sloped application, would be too slick for safety’s sake of the inevitable event of running children. So I took to searching for a combination of exposed aggregates and surface textures that would provide for safety yet alleviate the unforgiving hardness of the material.

In 2003, I volunteered to help build a large playground project, and the last step was to put in the playground surface. On a bed of course gravel was sprayed a thick rubber compound made from ground up tennis shoes. This stuff is amazing! It is soft and forgiving, as with each step you depress about a ½ inch. The material is resilient and elastically durable as even stiletto heels don’t rip or puncture the compound. And despite this elasticity, the compound has a granular character that allows water to percolate and drain through the gravel base. It can also be applied to gently sloping grades. The only major constraint is that the material must have a continuous fixed curb around its perimeter, and that all fixed structures must be in place prior to installation as the material can be sprayed immediately around posts and foundations. What had been an expanse of hard concrete would now be a sea of cushioned safety and comfort. Only the pools themselves would have to be concrete, and for the edge, natural stones can be inset in the concrete with the playground surface installed flush to these irregular forms.

More than the floors, more than the wood, probably the material that will require the best craftsmanship will be the natural stone walls of the resort. Not just because of
structural concerns, but because of the intricacies of the aesthetic concept. Following my flow of life philosophy, the stones at the bottom of the wall need to be rounded as though a river used to flow through the resort. As the walls rise through the building, the stones gradually roughen and become fractured and jagged at the top. This also resembles the flow of the human form, as our bodies are more rounded at our base, and become more angular as we move up our torso and out our limbs. The stones at the top are the sharpest, representing our cerebral speed.

The gradation from smooth stones to rough up the walls isn’t going to be an even distribution though. There is a horizontal flow to the walls as well. The visual result I’m looking for is similar to the effect Bart Prince created with wood shingles in his Seymour Residence Addition. In this way, bands of stones can rise, fall, grow out of, and tail into other bands of rougher and smoother stones.

Besides the vertical hierarchy and the horizontal flow, the colors also vary so that some bands are comprised of warm colors such as yellows, oranges, pinks, and tans and other bands have cooler gray tones. In general, I’d like to have the warmer colors correspond to the smoother stones, and the grays with the rougher cuts. In the interest of variety, this doesn’t need to be a hard and fast rule. Roughly 80% of the time will suffice.

Hopefully, people will have the inclination to lean against these walls and find the place where their form nestles with the stones’ current.

Continuity

Design continuity can be a difficult achievement when creating a resort that promises a new discovery around every corner. I learned that material choice and color alone are not enough. There also needs to be a consistency of form and ornamentation. Well, Juvenation grew into what can easily be perceived as a random collection of forms. The ornamentation is also episodic as each form adopted its own pattern of mullions, column rustication, and accent features such as light fixtures.

One thing that does lend a sense of continuity to the resort is a progression of forms. There are only a few instances where dissimilar forms abut. One grows into the next, sometimes so subtly that defining the boundary of the two forms can be deceptive. Partly, this is accomplished by creating a rhythm of alternating whole circular elements with free form curves as you move around and through the resort, but
this is accomplished largely by carrying level horizontal lines of sight across adjoining forms. Sometimes this was as simple as aligning mullions. Other times it was less obvious, such as aligning the top of one object with the header of a string of doors two forms away. The point is these lines connect our eyes around the curvilinear forms of the resort, just as the line of water and shore leads our eyes around the bend of a river. This focuses our attention on the elements of the forms that are shared, allowing our minds to “fill in the gaps” if you will, and expand the relationship between two adjacent forms.

It was important for the clubhouse and the athletic building to develop their own character yet it also is important for these two major focal points to relate some commonality between them. Given the distance between the two, simply carrying horizontals wouldn’t be a strong enough move. Two tactical design approaches were employed for this connection.

The first was a repetitious form linking the two, the conical dome of the studio lodgings. These hut-like elements march around the lake linking the two main buildings. These units intermingle and sit atop portions of the clubhouse, reinforcing the vertical move of the center mass of the building. At the other end of the lake, the domes of the massage rooms continue the procession and wrap around the north side of the athletic building.

The other move was to create a direct dialog between the two buildings. Each building has peaks of what I would call spiritual uplift. The tree of light and the solarium in the clubhouse, and the reception dome of the spa. These three are characterized by a series of independent vertical spines, but each of the three carry different arrangements, creating a random cluster, a spiral, and a crown.

Another aspect of the design that promoted continuity, particularly on the interior was lighting. With the exception of the cove lighting of the conical domes and a few other ceiling areas, light needs are accomplished from point sources of incandescent light. This will exude the warmth of the wood and earth-tone stones, and facilitate the interplay of interior refuge and prospect by concentrating at points of interest and allowing darker passages between.

In particular, this effect is exemplified in the dining room where the light for each table is a pendant hung from the ceiling structure. Having this over the center of the table provides light on everyone’s faces, a focal point, and allows the surroundings to remain darker. This enhances the intensity of this group experience.\(^{234}\)

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The last aspect of the design I want to point out that contributed to the continuity of interior refuge and prospect, was the use of ethereal lighting as a soothing influence and as an energizing effect.

Natural light and the straightforward approach of the oculus is intended to provide calming respite for the massage rooms, bedrooms, and baths of the resort. This gave a circle of light of ever-changing intensity for a person to focus on, and where a dimming yet well-defined column of light can cascade and dissipate around them.

Point sources coupled with nearby objects created the energetic effects where light, shade, and shadow play to throw patterns across a space. All of the pendants and wall sconces throughout the resort are designed to do this to some extent, but Juvenation utilizes theatrical effects on a grander scale than just creating an overall mood. Two of these locations, the “leaf” over the entrance and the tree of light stairwell I’ve previously described. Another is the use of the slat partitions where light from the pathway side filters through as lines of light and shadow cross the space beyond. This should be particularly dramatic at night in the clubroom and restaurant, where the brightly lit tree of light will cast distinct beams across two spaces meant to be dark.

The quad columns in the rec hall and the athletic building replicate this effect, as a custom built fixture is attached to the underside of the cross beam at the top of the column, and occupies roughly the top third of the center between the four posts. This radiates broad shadows from the posts across the space that criss cross with the same effect from the other columns. The outcome is meant to be akin to a string of lanterns hanging in the woods.

The ceiling of the athletic building has its own effect as well. The interior surface is a lightly stained wood. Normally this isn’t a material conducive for washing with light from coves built along the roof beams because the dark character of wood reduces the amount of light reflected below and because unevenness of installation and imperfections in the wood itself causes the light to spread unevenly across its surface, ...but this is exactly why I chose it. The roof spirals along its perimeter and rises to the central mass of the building. The beams thus form a radial pattern with the interior finish boards mounted, and tapered as necessary, on the roof’s substructure in a radial pattern with the beams. Since the intensity of light emanating from the coves will remain constant along the length of each beam, my intent is to concentrate brightness at the top, creating a starburst.
CONCLUSION

It takes courage to take off clothes, to allow one to be vulnerable for all to see. And there is great strength to be found in that act of independence and freedom.

I’d like to thank you for letting me share my journey with you.

I guess most thesis conclusions are supposed to summarize some big hypothesis that this document purportedly proves. Did I discover some brilliant new insight? I don’t know. More importantly, that wasn’t the point. ...Sure, it would be nice if that happened. All I set out to do was best apply my design skills to the needs and wants of a client. I learned much about this process, especially since I am one of those clients. And I have a deep appreciation now of the subtle power we as designers can impact on people’s lives.

This thesis isn’t just about a building, and that’s why I couldn’t contain my musings to only the built realm. This thesis is me. I am the proceeding conflict between symbolism and substance. I am the struggle to be relaxed and free. I am the search for a harmonious sense of place and purpose. And just as I allowed my design to flow where it wanted, I simply have to let go of the struggle, and let myself be those things I want.

I hope you enjoyed this journey.

Hmmm ...who would’ve thought that all of this would come from a two-word question on a hot September morning?

...Then again, ...

...Why Not?
DRAWINGS & MODEL

SITE PLAN

SITE SECTION

CLUBHOUSE SOUTH ELEVATION
CLUBHOUSE LOWER FLOOR PLAN

CLUBHOUSE UPPER FLOOR PLAN (PARTIAL)
CLUBHOUSE CROSS SECTION

CLUBHOUSE MODEL
CLUBHOUSE MODEL

ATHLETIC BUILDING WEST ELEVATION
ATHLETIC BUILDING UPPER FLOOR PLAN (PARTIAL)

LODGINGS TYPICAL FLOOR PLANS

LODGINGS SECTIONS/ELEVATION
BIBLIOGRAPHY


