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I, Bradley Joseph Beck, hereby submit as part of the requirements for the degree of:

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From Brand to Architecture

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Society has been slowly replacing all product importance with brand equity; this has caused a shift in thinking from the quality of a good to lifestyle assimilation. The effect on architecture is evident in the promotion of ‘signature architects’ who have branded themselves and their style, creating a market for those clients who wish to look at architecture as a product of brand bolstering. Whole communities have lost a sense of their own identity, lacking any real vernacular and hoping that an architect can repeat ‘the Bilbao effect’ to invigorate them. In order to restore an authenticity to this culture that defines itself by the designer label, architects can create buildings which not only are more honest in their detailing but allow a community to create for themselves an identity. This adds a flavor of the vernacular that has been lost and lets the architecture and the people determine identity, not the architect.
This thesis is dedicated to my family, who have kept me grounded even though I have been away from them for too long. It is also dedicated to all of my friends, without which I would’ve gone insane long ago, or at least done something stupid like drop out of architecture.
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Gabriel Brothers Inc.\textsuperscript{1} is a clothing store that deals in off price merchandise. Designer brand names can be found throughout the store, for up to 70 percent off of the retail price. The catch? \textit{Slightly Imperfect}. This means that there are small holes, stains, mis-stitchings, and any number of other defects that have caused the companies to keep them from going to major retail stores. With these defects the products cost much less, but what is important remains -- the brand name. Plato’s Closet\textsuperscript{2} is another off price retailer, costs reduced because the goods are “gently used.” Teenagers take their brand name clothes that are still well kept to this store, and get a small amount of money for them. The store then sells these clothes back to other teenagers at prices up to 50 percent off retail value. Again, the item may be in worse condition than a new one, but the brand name is still on the clothes, and this transcends the quality of the product.

The success of these and other stores like them are part of a growing realization that certain brands have reached the status of being a lifestyle, and no longer need a quality product. Their equity is in the experience and recognition of wearing their name. The products are not knockoffs or “designer imposters,” but actual pieces of the brand, and obviously the craftsmanship is secondary if society is willing to purchase their not so perfect goods. This brand loyalty is something that David Lewis and Darren Bridger talk about in their book \textit{The Soul of the New Consumer: Authenticity -- What we buy and Why in the New Economy}. Lewis and Bridger state “New Consumers are attracted by authenticity not just because it seems to offer superior quality, but because ownership of the authentic helps bridge a perceived gulf between their real and ideal selves.”\textsuperscript{3}

In a quest to reach authenticity for themselves, these “new consumers” tend to buy things which they perceive to be authentic. What is meant by authenticity is discussed later in the chapter of that name, but the fact remains that the new consumer seeks out authentic products.

How have these brand names reached their status of authenticity? Brands have historically begun by building equity through product quality, and then utilizing that equity to bolster the brand name. This timeline of products will be discussed in the chapter entitled “Branding,” which will expose the steps that not only the product, but advertising, take to reach that authenticity. It will be seen how abusing this timeline can lead to consumers sensing a lack of authenticity with a company. This has exposed the consumer to a mistrust, led these consumers to scrutinize every brand, and left those brands who are merely a lifestyle quite empty.

As the authenticity of products and brands is

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} http://www.gabrielbrothers.com
\item \textsuperscript{2} http://www.platoscloset.com
\item \textsuperscript{3} David Lewis & Darren Bridger. \textit{The Soul of the New Consumer: Authenticity} (Naperville, Ill.; Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2000), 43.
\end{itemize}
questioned, society creates a counterculture to combat the top-down configuration of the corporations setting them up. Hipsters counter the companies by using what they create and altering the meaning of it slightly, essentially co-opting it for themselves. However, companies have ways of dealing with this problem, as you’ll see in chapter three. The means that these companies use have effectively reduced counterculture to a fad, and turned the vernacular into a mass culture phenomenon. In the “melting pot” known as the U.S.A, the vernacular is eerily the same across the country. This chapter speaks of this and how individuality has disappeared in America, removing the community identity from buildings.

Following this discussion is “Branded Architecture,” a dialogue which highlights the current state of architecture in the beginning of the 21st century, and the success of the “signature architect.” A connection is made between the branding mindset that multinational corporations have embedded in our society, and how that has led to the interpretation of architecture as a brand and building as product. Frank Gehry is the prime example of an architect whose work is incredible, yet is thought of by the public as reproducible and fashionable. This relationship between Gehry and his signature style has pushed his clients to ask him to repeat the effects of his architecture in cities all over the globe.

The authenticity of his work and the communities in which he places these replicas can be compromised by this phenomenon.

How can we begin to deal with this loss of authenticity in architecture? Repetition of building has created a homogenized landscape that does not differentiate between place. What once was the main difference between communities (the vernacular) has since been usurped and left residents without representation. Architects can help to remedy the situation through design, but more importantly by offering a space in which a neighborhood can contribute a part of themselves to help create a community identity. In order to test this hypothesis, a project will be explored in a neighborhood known as Little Italy, in Cleveland, Ohio. The community is rich in their Italian customs and heritage, yet quite American in their architecture. The project takes on an edge of the community that is in disrepair, and attempts to create a solid buffer with a community winery supplanting several abandoned buildings. The program includes space for residents to make their own wine, two spaces to taste the wine of the community and cater events, and a vineyard which will be a venue for the users to create their collective persona.
“The astronomical growth in the wealth and cultural influence of multinational corporations over the last fifteen years can arguably be traced back to a single, seemingly innocuous idea developed by management theorists in the mid-1980’s: that successful corporations must primarily produce brands, as opposed to products.”

-Naomi Klein, *No Logo*

“Advertising has these people chasing cars and clothes they don’t need. Generations have been working in jobs they hate, just so they can buy what they really don’t need.”

-Chuck Palahniuk, *Fight Club*

“As for authenticity, design is a deliberate making, and insofar as we forget the designer we shall find ourselves confused about the authentic versus the fake - since all the stuff we are concerned about, including what we now take as nature, is a product of human design. We make those sacred structures and cities. We make knockoffs of them; namely we borrow from the tradition. And we, not those things, are in charge.”

-Martin Krieger, *What’s Wrong with Plastic Trees?*
It should come as no surprise that we live in a globally branded world. The products that many brands peddle are sold across many continents in the same form, and marketed to roughly the same target, causing homogeneity between some cultures. This is comforting in some ways as people travel to these cultures, and familiarity outside of cultural differences is embraced. However, the experience of the cultures in their essence can be diluted by the presence of such brands. The authenticity of both cultures can be stained by the crossing over of a product from one society to the next. Moreover, it is not the globalization occurring that is feared, it is this loss of authenticity. As Michael Benedikt has said, “We can find the world inescapably real and meaningful precisely because of, and not in spite of, its ‘obstinacy’; we must wind our lives around the real and live in its voids and opportunities.”

In order to “live in the real,” as Michael Benedikt suggests, we must define that which is authentic, or real. So what is authenticity? Well, looking through the dictionary will proffer this definition: the quality of being genuine or not corrupted from the original. Genuine, which has a few definitions, is viewed as: a. actually possessing the alleged or apparent attribute or character, b. honestly felt or experienced, or c. free from hypocrisy or dishonesty; sincere. So if being authentic has much to do with being original, original is: a. preceding all others in time (first), b. not derived from something else (fresh and unusual), c. showing a marked departure from previous practice (new), d. productive of new things or new ideas, and e. being the source from which a copy, reproduction, or translation is made. These all speak of a first, or of a starting point. In order to be authentic, one must look to something original, or be original in itself. However, if by doing so, they corrupt the meaning of the original, authenticity will escape. What is corruption, then? Things which are corrupt are marked by immorality and perversion; or contain errors or alterations, as a text.

As one can see, an error or alteration from the original can be seen as corruption, but in the end, what is gained or lost from the conversion is partly judgmental, ethical, and moral, and therefore is open to individual interpretation. So where does that leave authenticity? Either a brand new idea/concept/form/etc. (which is really quite difficult) can be considered authentic; more likely, though, in order to be original, one must utilize an existing idea/concept/form/etc. in a way that is new, genuine, and innovative yet does not corrupt the meaning of the initial idea; it may in fact reinforce those ideas in a positive way. It is this sort of responsible adaptive reuse that is the essence of authenticity. Paul Miller speaks of this in terms of sampling, mixing, and remixing high...
culture and low culture, and in his case it is for musical purposes. In one of his lectures, he takes a sample of one of America’s leading poets in the late nineteenth century, Yeats, and mixes it with a song by Killah Priest, one of the members of Wu Tang, a late twentieth century Hip Hop group. This juxtaposition reinforces the meanings of each sample, but is authentic in that it is re-appropriating the existing for another purpose, and this type of iteration occurs everywhere, not just in music. An architectural example would be the Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery in London, where Venturi took the forms of the existing building, mainly columns, and “remixed” them to create his addition.

The issue is less about the product and more about the way that the product is interpreted. “Genuine’ similarly implies that the phenomenon which looks like wood is not a plastic replication - that there is a connection between the surface and the depth of the material world.” The desk at which one writes a paper is a desk, and it exists. What takes away from its authenticity is the Formica with wood pattern that may encompass the particle board; that is the reality of the desk. At first glance, one would think that the desk was made out of the wood which is shown on the Formica, and they would be wrong. This is why the desk has lost some of its authenticity. Only some, because there is still a reason for the Formica to be there(it is more durable than the particle board), but it is not seen as Formica, and therefore is diluted. “In this sense, authenticity is a property of connectedness between the perceived world and the believed world.”

As part of his essay, The Quest for Authenticity and the Replication of Environmental Meaning, Kim Dovey speaks of the loss of authenticity through iteration and redesign. His example specifically has to do with shutters and fireplaces. Initially, both shutters and fireplaces were created as a purely function driven appliance, shutters for privacy and to keep out weather when windows did not have glass, and fireplaces for heat. Over time, changes in technology have eliminated the need for shutters and fireplaces, and therefore they have become purely aesthetic devices in today’s world. So much so that shutters on houses are now fixed and decorative, many being smaller than the window and detached from it visually; fireplaces are now made with fake logs, and a gas fueled flame which is used for atmosphere rather than for heat. Dovey proposes that “the original and the replica embody fundamentally different kinds of formative processes which converge upon the same formal result.”

Where along the way is authenticity lost? For shutters, a functionalist would say as soon as it no longer functioned as intended, when glass was put into the window frame. Someone who understands the decorative necessity of the shutter would say it

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3 Paul D. Miller, a.k.a. DJ Spooky That Subliminal Kid, College of DAAP: University of Cincinnati, 11.07.02.
5 Ibid., 47.
6 Ibid., 43.
is still authentic. It can be subjective.

In the end, authenticity itself must be achieved independently. There can be no question or doubt as to an object’s authenticness if one sees it, understands it, and it can be proven as the way in which it is seen. Again, let us look at the aforementioned desk. When it is seen as a desk made of wood which has the grain and color of the Formica, it is not authentic. However, if one realizes by looking at it, that the Formica is merely a protective layer which has been decorated to look like wood, then it is authentic. What becomes the most important part of this dialogue is the uniqueness with which we each find authenticity. That which is authentic may not present itself to everyone at once, but rather as each individual begins to see it in the correct light. “To conclude is to reach an end together, but the authentic posture as understood by the philosophers of authenticity, forbids me from presuming to conclude for you and for us. Each individual has to come to her own conclusions about authenticity.”

That being said, it can be thought that though we all make individual decisions about authenticity, there is a way to collectively agree on some broad idea about its importance. Where does authenticity fit into our society? If there is anything we are lacking in our current state, it is a conscious decision to embrace a real understanding of “authenticity.” Rather, America daily chooses to support businesses, services, and products which supply a stereotypical kind of authenticity, such as Don Pablo’s, a restaurant which boasts that it has been ‘voted America’s #1 authentic Mexican Restaurant.’ It can be understood by anyone whom has traveled to Mexico that this food isn’t authentic Mexican at all, rather a tex-mex style that uses some of the flavors of Mexico, but not the processes or dishes. It is through this form of acceptance and promotion that what is really authentic becomes background to things we want to believe are authentic, and the line blurs between what is authentic and what isn’t.

Advertising has latched onto the idea of stereotyping images, and promoting how using their product will result in achieving the status of that stereotype. Functionality has lost out to image creation, and this pushes authenticity out of the picture. Says Mark Gottdeiner in his book The Theming of America, “By the 1950s, advertising had progressed beyond the specifications of use-value to promote the image itself as a sign either of fashion or progress, or occasionally both.” “Appeals were made less about the use value of a new car than about the value of ‘newness’ itself.” This new direction was the beginning of the separation of product and brand that today has split to the point that the brand umbrella encompasses much more than just...
a product. Brand’s today promote an image that appeals no matter what the product, from sweaters to museums. In order to realize the importance advertising has had in this shift, we must look at how it evolved.
It is noteworthy to understand that there is a level of reality that every product has earned, and every consumer good has a timeline. In the grand scheme of things, there are essentially eight steps to the fruition of any successful product. In the beginning, there is an entity. Take, for example, cotton. It grows, and exists as an entity. As soon as a human intervenes, that cotton becomes a resource, entering step two. Humans use the raw good for their own purposes, and in the case of cotton possibly for clothes or blankets. It is at this point where the timeline makes a split. Selling the cotton as simply cotton makes it a commodity, which is the third step. However, this step may be bypassed by making a sweater from the cotton directly and then selling that sweater as a product, which is the fourth rung. This is the end of the physical timeline for any good, as the rest of its life it has entered the intangible world of advertising and marketing.

In the next phase, advertising takes over. This is the opportunity for a company to tell the world about its product. Informational flyers are distributed, word of mouth begins, and people are taught in a general sense about the product. The aforementioned sweater is shown to help keep you warm in winter, and allow you to leave your jacket at home in the spring and fall evenings. From here on out, everything narrows. Marketing is the next tier, where a company decides who the target audience is, and to whom the campaign will be directed. Logos are designed, advertisements are specialized, and the market is determined. To further the sweater analogy, teenagers and early twenties college students find the sweater most appealing, therefore the advertising can be specialized to their desires using pop culture references that attract their attention. The seventh stage in this timeline is branding, and this is where the equity built on the quality of the product is exposed. The users of the product have repeatedly bought and liked the value encompassed by the good, and show their appreciation for that value by staying loyal. The brand gains value because it is associated with this product, and becomes a status symbol of sorts. People begin to make judgments about clothes and other people by the brand on the tag. However, the name no longer needs to loom in the shadow of the product; now the company can stamp its name on the product and everyone will understand the implications of that brand name. The letters GAP appear on the front of the sweater and give it added value; the consumer now understands the status that name gives them, and feels justified paying a little extra for the sweater. Now that the brand is established by one product, it can release a whole line of products, either related or unrelated, and enjoy the success of the product based on the brand names reputation and quality. This is the ultimate goal and final step: this is the lifestyle.
These eight pieces (entity, resource, commodity, product, advertising, marketing, branding, and lifestyle) of the puzzle are not mutually inclusive. Several companies have enjoyed success hopping into the timeline solely in the advertising stage, and do not produce anything physically in terms of product. Tommy Hilfiger, for instance, does not produce any of its products. They purchase clothing, put their name on it, and sell it. It costs a little more than everyday clothing, but the status of wearing the Tommy Hilfiger name allows this inflation to occur, making it worth purchasing as a status symbol. This separation of brand and product has revolutionized not only the industries directly affected, but helped spur a change in our economy in general.

As Pine and Gilmore ponder in their book, *The Experience Economy*, the natural progression of any economic value is from commodity to good to service to experience. A *commodity* is a resource that is taken from the earth and merely bulk packaged before being sold as itself. This is the smallest economic value, and most uniform, because it is a raw material and must be refined or reconstituted to create a *good*. As a good, companies or manufacturers have used some sort of process to create the product, therefore based on that process and the quality of the good, prices begin to differ. Consumers buy these goods off of shelves, racks or marketing displays in all kinds of stores. *Services* are intangible, but they are activities in which a company provides the tasks which any good requires to be utilized, such as cooking food or cutting hair. Generally consumers see services as more valuable than goods, because they don’t have to do the task themselves. The final stage is the *experience*, which provides the customer with not only the service involved with the good, but a memorable experience, which lasts much longer than any normal service. Eating food in the middle of the amazon with storms occurring every ten minutes (The Rainforest Cafe) provides an experience which is worth more to many people than just eating in a regular restaurant. Even if the food is not as good, it is not the food they will remember. Essentially, this means that economic value lies not in the product that is offered, but within the experience and lifestyle of owning or consuming that product. The product has taken a backseat to the brand experience.

When the brand is what companies begin to bolster, effectively putting the product on the back burner, then a quandary arises out of the image promoters. No longer is brand equity built on the quality of the product, but on the social status of using the product. And in most recent history, some brands have become everyday words before they even have a product. In the commercials for Super

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Ibid., 5-8.
Bowl XXXVI, the brand bolstering of ‘mLife’ began, though there were no hints on how to achieve an ‘mLife.’ Nobody was sure of the strategy, except for the marketers, of course. Though it was tossed around that maybe it was life insurance (Met Life) or maybe even some form of utopian society, it turned out to be a brand campaign from AT&T wireless, and no products were advertised under the umbrella of mLife for almost a year. The confusion that ensued after the Super Bowl was indicative of how important the product really is and how much equity must be added to those whose products are of better quality, not just their marketing strategy. But this example shows the trend of advertisers creating their own “lifestyle.”

By looking at the history of advertising, the development of these notions can be seen. There have always been entities, resources, commodities, and products to some degree; but advertising, marketing, branding, and lifestyles are recent factions brought on through technology and globalization. In order to continue, we shall define advertising as “mass communication an advertiser pays for in order to convince a certain segment of the public to adopt ideas or take actions of benefit to the advertiser.”

Newspapers in the 1820’s and 30’s began to really push advertising, while at the same time advances in industrial technology were reducing costs for manufacturers and increasing outputs. This allowed for packaging to occur in the plants and not at the stores, allowing manufacturers to think more about advertising on both the package and in the society. The New York Herald and other papers were presenting these advertisements to the general public, and in 1841, Volney Palmer became the first “advertising agent.” In 1879, Ivory Soap was given its brand name, and by 1896, the birth of the magazine ad occurred when full color lithograph prints were sent from printers to magazine publishers and bound into the magazines. Other manufacturers quickly caught on to this media, but Ivory was the first “branded” product. In the 1920’s and 30’s, with the popularity of radio, Ivory soap was sponsoring many radio shows, dubbing them “soap operas,” a term still used today. Advertisements would be played at breaks in the stories, allowing a new medium for advertisers.

In 1954, The Marlboro Man campaign began, eventually becoming the longest running ad campaign in history. He offers to the world of advertising the first glimpse of lifestyle marketing, and how successful it can be. Marlboro Cigarettes before 1954 had less than 1 percent share of the U.S. market, and was known as the ‘filtered’ cigarette, mostly used by women; by 1972, Marlboro had become the best selling brand,
controlling a whopping 33 percent of the market, a powerhouse brand that still today holds the #1 spot by a large margin.\textsuperscript{13} Lifestyle advertising, marketing, and branding turned this company around completely. This image conscious mantra was not only in small consumer products, but also in major purchases such as cars and homes. “The ‘fin wars’ of the 1950s erupted because cars were being differentiated by advertising according to their appearance and not by virtue of advantages in technological innovations.”\textsuperscript{14} This idea of lifestyle even works in commodities, such as coffee. In 1971, Starbucks opened its first store in Seattle, Washington. By 1996, Starbucks boasted it’s opening of a store a day, with more than 1,000 stores nationwide doing fantastically well; presently they have expanded even faster, with more than 5,000 stores internationally.\textsuperscript{15} CEO Howard Schulz understood that his customers were there, not for the cup of coffee, but for “the romance of the coffee experience, the feeling of warmth and community people get in Starbuck’s stores.”\textsuperscript{16}

Those in the advertising industry who understood the relevance of lifestyle and brand were given a concrete example of exactly how pertinent it is in the 1980’s. The first brand to recognize its equity beyond the product was Kraft, which in 1988 sold for six times what it was worth on paper, $12.6 billion, to Philip Morris. “The price difference, apparently, was the cost of the word ‘Kraft’. Of course Wall Street was aware that decades of marketing and brand bolstering added value to a company over and above its assets and total annual sales. But with the Kraft purchase, a huge dollar value had been assigned to something that had previously been unquantifiable - a brand name.”\textsuperscript{17} It was now apparent to advertisers and consumers just what all of their work was worth, turning the face of advertising towards brand identity.

From Nike, to Budweiser, to Sprint, brands of all kinds are no longer in pursuit of the perfect product, because the product is secondary. According to Phil Knight, Nike C.E.O., they are a “sports company” with the mission of “enhancing people’s lives through sports and fitness” and keeping the “magic of sports alive,” not merely a shoe company.\textsuperscript{18} What happened to the companies that still promoted their product became evident in 1992 when, during the recession, the baby boomers were quick to ditch the everyday brands to purchase private label products, because the products were essentially the same. It was the brands that promoted lifestyle, like Apple, Nike, Calvin Klein, Disney, and Coke that were unaffected by the recession because they were more than just a product. “These companies didn’t wear their image like a cheap shirt – their image was so integrated with their business that other people wore it as their shirt.”\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{13} http://www.uchsc.edu/sm/cihl/history_of_cigarette_smoke.htm\textsuperscript{14} Gottdeiner, 66.\textsuperscript{15} http://www.starbucks.com/aboutus/timeline.asp\textsuperscript{16} Howard Schultz, Pour Your Heart Into it (New York: Hyperion, 1997), 5.\textsuperscript{17} Naomi Klein, No Logo (New York: Picador, 2000), 8\textsuperscript{18} Donald Katz, Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World (Holbrook: Adams Media Corporation, 1994), 25.\textsuperscript{19} Klein, 16.
The success of these brands led to many others following suit, and rather quickly. Another valuable lesson learned from the recession is that the baby boomers were the wrong target audience. In 1992, the teenage population in America rose for the first time since 1975, and the brands realized that while the older generations were bargain hunting, "the kids were still willing to pay up to fit in." This set off a branding extravaganza that is targeted to these kids, who they hope will remain loyal throughout their life. What is also happening is that people are beginning to see everything in terms of brand names and status symbols, not just everyday products. Cars, houses, jobs, malls, even certain cities are increasingly seen as fashionable or trendy, becoming very plastic. Because of this, the possibility for a brand to separate itself completely from any product has become reality, as in mLife. As long as a brand holds the status that a consumer desires, it can sell whatever it wants.

No longer do these brands even have to explain what they are selling, because the lifestyle concept is understood. A recent Nike commercial has five teenagers dribbling a basketball to a beat, passing it to each other, the squeak of their shoes on the floor is set to a rhythm, and the last scene shows one of them dunking. The final scene has the swoosh at the bottom right hand corner of the screen. No company name, no product, just the lifestyle that these kids are living in, and a subtle hint as to what the logo means. The brand has become so powerful that it transcends all of its products.
With branding taking control, and “lifestyle” being the new commodity, there exists a type of emptiness that is beginning to be understood. The loss of product importance leaves the lifestyle lacking a certain ‘je ne sais quoi.’ Some would say substance, others meaning. One could say the product that is a result of the brand and not the distinction of the brand lacks the authenticity aforementioned. Nike’s brand equity was defined by the quality and comfort of its shoes. Now, they are not always comfortable and well made, and it doesn’t matter because so long as there is a swoosh on the side, they are accepted. It is a very abstract concept that loses its power and meaning as these companies separate further and further from their product.

As our lives become more branded, the lifestyles begin to dictate us. This idea is not new; in fact it has been the subject of a lot of contemporary literature. Chuck Palahniuk spoke of it in his novel *Fight Club*, which offered us a look at a possible solution, albeit unfeasible. His novel shows the reader the dissatisfaction of the generation that was brought up in the life of luxury. Chuck Palahniuk spoke of it in his novel *Fight Club*, which offered us a look at a possible solution, albeit unfeasible. His novel shows the reader the dissatisfaction of the generation that was brought up in the midst of this lifestyle craze. “The people I know who used to sit in the bathroom with pornography, now they sit in the bathroom with their IKEA furniture catalogue.” Advertising has these people chasing cars and clothes they don’t need. Generations have been working in jobs they hate, just so they can buy what they really don’t need.”

The “revolution against culture” or counterculture that Palahniuk speaks of in his novel has dissolved quite a bit, especially in our current mass culture. There are those who would argue that there is no counterculture anymore, and Naomi Klein would agree. It seems, as she points out, that there are many companies who pay people to be “cool hunters,” agents that are a part of the ‘in-crowd,’ that report back to the companies and let them know what the latest fashions and ideas are. As quick as the general public is to react to something, the big brands are just as quick in responding by popularizing the counterculture. For example, the “alternative” music boom in the late 80′s that began with the Seattle grunge band, Nirvana. It wasn’t long before “alternative” needed an alternative, because of its overnight success throughout America. This counterculture, though, has become more of a ‘cool thing to do’ than the movement that it once was. As Thomas Frank notes in his book, *The Conquest of Cool*, “the counterculture has long since outlived the enthusiasm of its original participants and become a more or less permanent part of the American scene, a symbolic and musical language for the endless cycles of rebellion and transgression that make up so much of our mass culture.”

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22 Ibid., 149.
As rebellion has become popular, or rather, the brands have been able to effectively steal rebellion and give it popularity through the use of their cool hunters; society is lacking the same authenticity that many of the brands themselves are lacking. More frequently, things that were once in the hands of the people are now those of the establishment. Such is the case of the vernacular. Currently, it is a struggle to find a good example in contemporary times of any real vernacular, be it in housing, as is the norm, or anywhere else. In America, the housing is no longer efficient or cost effective if done by the people, whom have become so specialized that building would be an enormous venture. It is interesting that in a country so culturally diverse that it is known as the “melting pot,” housing across the contiguous 48 states is remarkably similar. Builders have perfected the cost efficiency of kit houses, and because of this the only way to truly see an American vernacular is to compare these builders houses to housing in other countries. This embodies the idea that since it is no longer necessary or economical, with globalization and the industrial revolution, for these people to create their own housing, a very important aspect of expression and choice has been removed from America today.

In an attempt to understand the vernacular, here is a broad based definition. “Of or being an indigenous building style using local materials and traditional methods of construction and ornament, especially as distinguished from academic or historical architectural styles.”

24 Given that definition, we must also define indigenous: “originating and living or occurring naturally in an area or environment.”

25 Being much more of an empirical process, a building must be created out of usefulness and necessity, with any ornament accenting and emphasizing the diversity of the area in which the building has been erected. A prime example of this in the United States must be the cliff dwellings of the Mesa Verde, the home of Native Americans in the southwest from the 600’s through the mid 13th century. The adobe style is very appropriate for that particular climate, location, and culture.

In a sense, as Henry Glassie admits in his book entitled *Vernacular Architecture*, “in their mixing of the old and the new, all buildings are vernacular, the products of real people in real situations.”

26 The magnitude is what makes the difference. In the example of the cliff dwellings of the Mesa Verde, the buildings are much more so vernacular than, say, an American Home built in the 1800’s. The purity with which the Native Americans built their dwellings is directly related to a trial and error process with material and location that culminated in the inherent beauty of the settlement. In a nineteenth century Greek revival home, for example, the symbolism of the parts are taken from another culture, and used as rebellion has become popular, or rather, the brands have been able to effectively steal rebellion and give it popularity through the use of their cool hunters; society is lacking the same authenticity that many of the brands themselves are lacking. More frequently, things that were once in the hands of the people are now those of the establishment. Such is the case of the vernacular. Currently, it is a struggle to find a good example in contemporary times of any real vernacular, be it in housing, as is the norm, or anywhere else. In America, the housing is no longer efficient or cost effective if done by the people, whom have become so specialized that building would be an enormous venture. It is interesting that in a country so culturally diverse that it is known as the “melting pot,” housing across the contiguous 48 states is remarkably similar. Builders have perfected the cost efficiency of kit houses, and because of this the only way to truly see an American vernacular is to compare these builders houses to housing in other countries. This embodies the idea that since it is no longer necessary or economical, with globalization and the industrial revolution, for these people to create their own housing, a very important aspect of expression and choice has been removed from America today.

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to create familiarity and fashion. This reassertion and slight alteration of a previous typology has a "remix" feel, as Paul Miller would say, and still holds its authenticity.

Taking another step in the process, let's look at the tract home of the 1950's. After the war, there was an unprecedented boom in housing, which has profound effects even into today. Suburbs across the nation ballooned as the baby boomers were born and families looked to own their house. To accommodate the demand for single family housing, and adapting the production economy from wartime to peacetime, the housing industry streamlined its processes. Subdivisions became the new fashion, and each subdivision had its own "architecturally designed and built, soundly constructed, imaginative and beautiful" homes. A model home would open up in a subdivision, and it had the typical amenities of most of the homes. Inside each home was a book, with five or six other possible plans, depending on what the buyer might want or need.

Essentially, the consumer believed that by deciding between a limited choice of plans, their house was unique. However, with subdivisions of between twenty and forty houses, in a neighborhood of other subdivisions, the unique quality of the house was limited as well. This time the dilution of the vernacular came not from the consumer choosing pieces of another culture and assigning his own meaning to the typology; the consumer wasn’t given the chance to input any of the variables in the equation, only to choose which ones to include. The vernacular was left to the developer, and they decided to symbolize as they saw fit. There is no doubt of the connection between these houses and the popularity of the Usonian homes begun by Frank Lloyd Wright in the early twentieth century. Many of the same principles of these houses were utilized in the ranch style standardized homes of the ’50’s. However, the filter of the developer gives a different spin on these houses, to the point that the intentions of Wright could be misconstrued. Wright’s Usonian homes were each meant to be unique and affordable. The developer made these houses affordable, but at the cost of the individuality which graced each of Wright’s designs.

Out of the hands of the people, the vernacular has reached its most diluted stage in America yet. In the 1950’s, the tract housing was in its developmental stage, and thus still held to many local construction methods and materials, as those were still known as the best way to do things. However, as many developments showed success or failure, the developers began to understand the construction processes which made them the most profit, and the materials which came to them at the lowest cost. A new pattern was forming, where the
builders began to think of the building in terms of a life cycle; they started to design the homes for the length of the mortgage rather than for durability or the homeowner’s life. Drywall became the universal wall board; cheaper in terms of labor, material cost, and construction process, yet less durable, less indigenous, more universal than typical wall materials such as plaster, brick, or mud. Plywood roof sheathing with asphalt shingles typifies the roofing systems presently, eliminating slate, clay roof tiles, cedar shakes, and a host of other materials that were too costly but more efficient, permanent, and available.

There are a few of the aspects of these developments that are beginning to deal with the issue of customization on an individual level. Prefab homes nowadays have become so widespread that they are affordable and can be changed to fit the functions and forms of each individual. This technology will allow for a bit of the design to enter back into the hands of the people. This is encouraging, but more can be done without the aid of technology. Within a lot of these communities, which lack a specific character, some forum upon which the people can stamp their identity would give them a collective conscious. Differentiation could occur, and the neighborhoods wouldn’t be such a neverending sprawl of the same landscape. Architects can help to provide this forum by designing it into their projects.
In the realm of architecture, it is not only through vernacular building that the authenticity has been diminishing. The emergence of the “signature architect” has been compared to branding, in the sense that people pay to have a building because of the meaning associated with the architect’s name, and not necessarily because of the building which he produces. In that sense, Peter Eisenman, Michael Graves, Frank Gehry, and select others have built a sort of “brand equity” that awards them more suitable contracts (with much larger budgets and more artistic liberty) than the average architect. This in many ways show the respect that those clients have for the mastery of the craft that these select individuals possess.

In America, the first real signature architect could be considered H. H. Richardson. Others have followed since, but rarely are they known outside of the realm of architecture. Frank Lloyd Wright could very well have been the first “household name” American architect, and remains to this day well known by most citizens in the U.S.

Today, this equity that is given to an architect has less to do with the architectural implications or rigorousness of his study, and more to do with the aesthetic achieved in the building commanding the fame. Take, for instance, Frank Gehry’s work. The architect was well respected before his completion of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, but this project catapulted him to international acclaim as his building helped to revive the city of Bilbao and create a destination which accounts for an estimated 80 percent of the visitors to the city. This masterpiece works hard to become a “a silver magnet drawing a gray city together.” It strives to be contextual in its plan, and the volumes do keep the overall scale of the building seemingly in conjunction with the rest of the city. The material selection makes a gesture to locality when using the Granada limestone, though a small gesture as the main feature of the project is the glimmering panels of titanium covering most of the building like fish scales. The titanium was unique, as it was light enough to bring the cost of structure down significantly, yet is still more durable and stronger than stainless steel, and does not rust. What made it practical, however, was that the cost of titanium at the time of material selection had dropped dramatically because Russia added a large amount of it into the market when the Soviet Union dissolved, making it affordable and desirable over stainless steel. The building truly is a monument to the city, art, the future, and its own time.

Unfortunately, this has spawned the idea that the building was the sole factor in the Bilbao museum’s success, placing architecture into the realm of branding, where buildings are seen as products.
Says Frank Gehry himself, “Since the Guggenheim opened, we’ve had tons of calls asking us to create “the Bilbao Effect” in other cities.” Gehry essentially branded himself with the building, and it is his product that represents a certain image that they are all seeking. This commoditization of architecture is something that no self respecting architect would like to see, because it strips the meaning from the buildings and displays them as mere status symbols, placing much of the emphasis on aesthetics, and ignoring the cultural and contextual significance. Since Bilbao, Gehry has undertaken a few commissions which have employed a very similar aesthetic, complete with titanium and fluid curves. In Washington D.C., an addition to the Corcoran Gallery “exudes great joy and whimsy,” similar to that of the Guggenheim Bilbao. Free flowing curves with a titanium skin are the most prominent feature of the addition. The newest completed work to incorporate the same aesthetic is the Peter B. Lewis Building on the Case Western Reserve University Campus in Cleveland, Ohio. The forms are wrapped in stainless steel, which for the time being bear a strong resemblance to titanium, and the curving forms have created a liability for the school in terms of the weather. In its first Cleveland winter, sheets of ice have slid off of the sloping stainless steel roof, creating a dangerous condition for those walking on the sidewalk below. The sidewalk will be redirected, but the fact remains that the form and material doesn’t necessarily fit with the climate. Other works to include the forms and materials include the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, California; the Marques De Riscal winery in El Ciego, Spain; the Bard College Performing Arts Center in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; and a new Guggenheim Museum in New York, New York.

Gehry’s scheme for the Guggenheim Museum in New York may be the most similar in design to that of Bilbao, incorporating the riverfront, sculptural tower, water gardens, abstract volumes, titanium exterior, and even the name. The project will be the headquarters of the Guggenheim Foundation, and therefore is much larger than the museum in Bilbao, soaring to a height of 40 stories, with scale being the only major difference aside from specific location. What has happened is that Gehry has become a brand, and the image cultivated by his building is what the public would like to believe is the product. Though Gehry still attempts to push the real meaning behind his projects onto the public and expose that it is the architecture that matters, the public seems to have latched onto the idea that the brand is more powerful than the building, and this is frustrating.

33 http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/Midwest/03/01/offbeat.school.building.ap/
Architecture is at a crossroads. With the brand recognition that the signature architects have created for themselves, a disservice is being done to their integrity through the image conscious public. Their buildings can become status symbols for cities, not because of the architectural ingenuity (though this is obviously involved) but so others can see the “brand name” on the city. If this is an anomaly, then the building bows in respect to the context and creates an interesting dialogue between the existing and the new. Such is the case in Bilbao, Spain. However, when people think the effect can be replicated, the attempts to connect to the place and time are overshadowed by the duplication. In this way, as it is in marketing and advertising, the individual buildings begin to dictate the neighborhood (much like the brands dictate the lifestyle of the people), and the community identity is lost when these buildings are replications or copies of other buildings. Furthermore, the original building loses its aura of freshness because now one can travel elsewhere to get a similar experience.

Brands or buildings, or both? With Frank Gehry getting commissions across the globe, and his clients demanding the same type of design as in Bilbao, the Gehry brand is thriving. The problem with this is two fold. For one, the public’s interest in Gehry as a status symbol is a result of fashion and style, eclipsing, or perhaps defining, his architectural language. Because of the fashion atmosphere, Gehry is required to match the public expectation for his brand in order to remain successful. But with the international projects which he has undertaken, his global influence has spread and added to the mass culture, such that now his product has lost the initial sheen and will patina as all fashions do. The second problem lies in what Kunstler describes as “the geography of nowhere.”

There are a number of examples in America of buildings that are the same no matter where they are located. Gas stations, convenience stores, fast food restaurants, car dealerships, strip malls, and even houses look the same from New York to California. If the buildings are the same, what does that say about the communities in which they stand? America is known for its diversity in ethnicity, politics, and lifestyle, so it would be perverse to think that the communities are the same as well. This is not to say that there is not a place in society for similarity. The issue lies in the fact that so many places have buildings which are inconsequential or mindless of their place that it could be anywhere. What these buildings and spaces lack are places for the people to present themselves and express physically their uniqueness. Architects can help by acting as facilitators, interpreters, and critical designers.

Brand Identity ::

Every community has an identity. Some are more present than others, and some might have an identity simply because they lack cohesion, but some identity exists. The opportunity for architects to influence the emergence of this identity lies in the ways of design and the connection of the building to its locale. There are several ways for architects to do this, including forms and materials, community participation, and critical interpretation of context (both site and societal).

Forms and materials in any community are the first layer in determining any architectural contiguousness. Materials are indicative of the local resources, trades, and level of technology, among other things. Forms also help to identify with climatic conditions, cultural symbolism, and aesthetic desires. It is these issues that an architect must look at to begin a design that brings out the community. The evaluation of importance for each may be different per location, space, and time. In some instances, like the Guggenheim in Bilbao, the contrast of form and materials says more than blending in could have said. Other times, mimicry or at least remote connection to the vernacular is appropriate, as in the Salisbury Wing by Robert Venturi mentioned earlier.

Community participation is variable; there are neighborhoods where people are tightly knit and are eager to input, and there are groups of people who are disparate and enjoy arguing for the sake of arguing. Without any participation, the community gets a building which they don’t necessarily connect with and which they may feel is intruding on their life. This adds to a feeling of placelessness for the building, and further degrades the context. However, if an architect can allow some room in the program for community involvement, a structure can begin to symbolize the will of the community, and in that sense become their ‘brand.’ If a district is unwilling to work together, it is the job of the architect to expose this weakness through his building, pointing out the lack of unity within the context. In all cases, without adding a sense of the surrounding, the building can be placed anywhere at any time and be replicated ad-infinatum, effectively eliminating the need for an architect.

The concept of “branding a community” sounds intimidating, especially if it is branded in the way that Liberty Orchards chose to brand its native town - by force. Liberty Orchards is a candy maker based in Cashmere, Washington, since 1918 and is famous for its applets and cotlets. “It was all very quaint until Liberty Orchard announced in September 1997 that it would leave for greener pastures if the town did not transform itself into a 3-d tourist attraction for the Aplets and Cotlets all-American brand, complete with signs along the highway and

The connection to the context is sometimes shown through contrast.
The lines of the drawing show how they are not seen as parallel but our mind interprets them correctly.

This is one way of branding a city, but it is without regard for the citizens, which makes it even worse. This is corporate takeover defined.

But let’s not dwell on a corporate sense of branding; rather rely on using the community identity to create a brand. The “brand identity” that is so important to conglomerations could be derived directly from the community identity. In such a case it would be a brand of the people, and therefore connected with them and them only. What types of buildings can this principle influence? Community centers, public buildings, schools, almost any type of building used by the community at large can be part of the brand. The catch is that these can’t be plastic or fake buildings, but authentic and specific to the area. Evaluating and interpreting the context and surrounding buildings, determining how to relate those to a built project, and employing these ideas in the details, materials and forms will produce a project of, by, and for the residents of the community.

The complete product in architecture is impossible to perceive in its totality, and so the idea of authenticity is looked at a much closer and detailed scale. Materials are used, construction methods are practiced, and spaces are created that fool us, but our minds make adjustments which at once explain the distortion and allow for its interpretation. Martin Krieger shows us in his book *What's Wrong with Plastic Trees?* that what we really see when we look at the lines of a building are lines that grow closer together, and are not parallel. “Of course, you actually see the same thing that the camera does, the converging verticals, for example, although we usually move our eyes and our head to scan the scene. You may well process that information in such a way that you observe the verticals to be parallel, and we are taught to know the world with vertical parallels. So we learn to see it right.” Krieger speaks of the paradox that “we are educated to make sure that our imaginations are right, and we see the right things.” This is not to say that because we have learned to see things “correctly” that they are any less authentic; on the contrary, it is precisely this interpretation that can and should be used to distinguish the authentic from the fake. When there is a correlation between what we are seeing, the way our mind interprets what we see, and the way the object really is, this is when authenticity arises.

Within the realm of vernacular architecture, this idea is easy to understand, because the process works from the bottom up. People understand the spaces and their meanings more thoroughly, more simply because they are heavily involved in the creation of those spaces. In the leap from vernacular building...
to architecture, the process is much different, and the end user has less to do with the creation of the space and the decisions made regarding material, form, and spatial significance. The architect is the director of meaning, deciding why things are built in a particular way, which materials best fit his intentions, what form most elegantly states his objective. Often times, the interpretation of such buildings is quite difficult, because the meanings are more subliminal, leaving the general public with the impression that the building “looks different,” but not really knowing why. This trickle down process tends to be seen only from the surface, which is frustrating for many architects and many users as well.

If a building was much more obvious in its statements, it would be more widely understood and accepted, as well as hint to this aforementioned authenticity. If we take authenticity to be characterized by the ability to see something, interpret it in your own way, and have that interpretation be in alignment with the intended evaluation, then architects have a tough job ahead. For a vernacular building, the interpretation is in a direct relation to function, based on years of trial and error; it is a much more “what you see is what you get” type of building, and therefore can be understood fairly easily. Architects add to the equation some artistic or creative aspect which also attempts to rethink and redefine those spaces, which in turn adds meaning and importance that was previously not in existence. It is the meaning and importance that is sometimes misunderstood by the user or misconstrued by the architect. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the architect to represent his ideas in the clearest and most concise of ways; indeed it is vital that these ideas are pared down and simplified into a language which can be accessed by the users and the public realm in general. This does not mean that the greater scheme is lost or diluted, but focused and all the more powerful because of its simplicity and purity.

The architect’s responsibility to the neighborhood does not end with the building. For any building to fit into a context there must be opportunity for that context to respond. In determining a community identity, there are ways to allow for a community to add a piece of themselves to the project, therefore making it more meaningful to them. This can be through direct meetings with an entire group (if the group is able to work together towards some end) or to give each individual a stake in the project. Ideally, bringing the community in to aid in the design process would give them a connection to the project as a whole, consequently creating a scheme which represents the community or brand identity. However, rarely is there a budget or time to allow for this to happen. In most cases, the architect must
design into the project opportunities for the people to make their own contribution after completion without compromising the project itself. This way, whether embraced or ignored, the proposition can stand as an integral piece of a larger puzzle.
As discussed earlier, using the forms and materials of the context allows the buildings to create the community. But what is a community? A community is a group of people who have chosen to live within a locale that share common interests, culture, and identity. The community is not only defined by the people, but also the way in which those people have decided to settle in the neighborhood they have created. Many communities have a distinctive flavor in their architecture, streetscape, traffic patterns, and public events. The sum of all of these aspects is what makes a community complete, and tells the story of that place.

In order for architecture to respond to this story, it must look critically at the existing landscape, and respond to what has been created previously. To make a building authentic, it must have some valid connection to the region, and some interpretation. The architecture must also remain honest, and not deceive the viewer. Recently, because of the standardization of building materials and processes, architecture has grown to be very ‘plastic.’ Plastic in the sense that it is marked by artificiality or superficiality. To explain a bit more about what is meant by superficial, a brief history of a brick wall would be helpful.

The Romans introduced brickwork to the English thousands of years ago, as a way of building walls and arches as well as streets. For many years, the traditional brick wall construction was not changed, only the size and type of bricks. The walls were built with anywhere from two to seven or eight wythes, depending upon the height of the wall. Wythes were added if the wall was to be taller. These walls also carried the weight and loads of the horizontal structure aside from their own weight. The bricks were relatively easy to manufacture and allowed for a standardized unit which was simple to work with. The connotation of a brick wall after several thousands of years of bearing weight became a solid and sturdy foundation, something that is permanent. In the mid 1800’s, two technological innovations changed the bearing wall forever. The first was the introduction of the elevator, before which buildings could only really work at a height of ten stories, a combination of both the limits of masonry construction and the limits of the human body climbing stairs; following the invention buildings were pushed ever higher. In the late 1800’s, following Joseph Paxton’s Crystal Palace at the 1850-51 World’s Fair, architects increasingly allowed the iron in their frames to take on the loads. Says William Curtis, "What really changed was the nature of the relationship between load and support, cladding and frame, especially when much taller buildings like skyscrapers were needed towards the end of the century."
This relationship changed, and what was once a direct correlation between function and form in the brick wall became obsolete. However, the implication of the brick wall remains to this day. Seen on the exterior of many contemporary buildings as a façade, the brick provides a symbolic level of stability. That which was once functional physically has now become functional symbolically. Much like Dovey’s interpretation of the shutter and the fireplace spoken of earlier, the two different processes converge upon the same formal result. What the issue really becomes is one of truth.

Looking at any wall with an unbroken brick façade implies that the wall is made solely of that brick. When the brick is appliqué, then the interpretation is not in line with the reality. As discussed before, authenticity arises when something is interpreted in accordance with the reality. Therefore, the wall is not authentic. However, if the wall begins to express the load bearing pieces, or if the brick is shown to be an application rather than a solid element, the authenticity creeps back into the design. Furthermore, if the wall really is built with the brick as the load bearing element, it is again achieving this connectedness between perception and reality. Through the detailing of the building, an architect can critique the society and create a building which stresses the importance of understanding the realities of the world we live in.

"Authenticity suggests genuineness and probity—the opposite of the fake. It implies forms based on principle, forms which avoid arbitrariness, and which are appropriate on a number of levels. Whether it uses pilotes or piers, rectangles or curves, the authentic building transcends the convention in which it was conceived. It possesses a sublime unity subsuming part and whole, revealing different aspects of a dominating image, and suggesting a character of almost natural inevitability. Through a marvelous abstraction, its materials, details, spaces and forms reveal the hierarchy of intentions. It is never merely an elegant play with shapes, but an embodiment of a social vision, an intuitive interpretation of a human institution, an idealization of a kind. Its forms may conform to the regulations of a period, a style, or a building type, but the authentic work will cut through the customary to reach new levels of significance." [38]

For many communities, even one building that strives toward authenticity would be helpful in determining a collective identity. Not an identity of the building, but of the community at large. A building which exposes materials through details does more than just show the truth of the structure. It leaves a sort of canvas for the people of the community to adapt to themselves. The identity grows out of the community, rather than being imposed upon them by an outside source. A building which allows for the community to come together in this manner is more connected to that community, and the people will feel like they are more a part of it.
In order to test the idea of creating a canvas for a community, there must be a community that needs it. One such community is in Cleveland, Ohio, and is known as Little Italy. In 1879, the Italian sculptor Giuseppe Carabelli moved to Cleveland, Ohio to begin the Carabelli and BrogGINI Stoneworks, a granite and marble working company with his then friend and colleague, James BrogGINI. In 1883, it became the Lakeview Stoneworks, and by 1886 it was solely owned by Carabelli. It was also in this year that Carabelli moved to Coltman Road, around the corner from his business, where he lived the remaining years of his life. By the mid 1880’s, many Italian immigrants had come to Cleveland to work for either Carabelli or the railroad, which was also located nearby. They settled in an area now known as Little Italy, and that community has thrived for almost 110 years.

Although this community is rich in Italian heritage, the buildings and spaces which have been created are minimally expressive of this. A majority of the houses in Little Italy are wholly American, based on the formal characteristics and spatial layout of the farmhouse in rural areas of the US at the time. The housing is almost solely A-frame two and three family houses, distinguished from the countryside mainly because of the density with which they are placed. The buildings that front the main street, Mayfield Road, have a bit more flavor, mainly because of the signage and the restaurant names. The Holy Rosary Church is really the only telltale building, and it is done in the Italian baroque style. This church was a project begun by and carried through because of founder Giuseppe Carabelli’s realization that the community needed a parish. In 1892 a new church was dedicated and by 1900 the need for a larger church was at hand. By 1908, the current Holy Rosary Church was erected. Carabelli was not only helpful in the politics of creating the church, but his sculpting skills were put to use in the construction and display of many statues surrounding the church. The style is Baroque, and does not really show an American flavor, which sets it quite far apart from the surrounding buildings.

Aside from the church, the buildings themselves are very American. However, the spaces created between the buildings are used in a very Italian way, and this is shown in the cafes, restaurants, even the homes. Behind many of the houses are grapevines, under which picnics and gatherings are held; the grapes are used by the people to create their own wine. On the street, every house has a porch, and on summer nights it is likely you will see many of the residents cooling off and listening to the gossip of the town on their veranda.

Mayfield Road is the main street, as was hinted earlier, and it is here where you will find many
different bakeries and restaurants, as well as local shops and some of the 30+ art galleries in this district. Most of the retail is located along this strip, however Holy Rosary and the Alta House both front Mayfield Rd. It is on this thoroughfare that the Feast of the Assumption takes place every year on August 15th, complete with a parade which marches through most of the streets of Little Italy, and ends at the church. Other notable places are some of the galleries on Murray Hill Road, and scattered throughout Little Italy are corner stores and small bars. The Little Italy Historic Museum is located across from Holy Rosary on Mayfield Road, diagonal from Presti’s Bakery. Most of Murray Hill, though, is residential, and fairly dense. Many of the houses are two or three family structures, and some of them have one or two bedroom suites in their backyards, next to their grapevines.

Little Italy is bounded by the RTA (public transportation) of Cleveland and Euclid Avenue on the west side, Lakeview and East Cleveland Cemetery to the north, Case Western Reserve University to the South, and Murray hill to the east. Mayfield Road is the main street, and this bisects the community running east-west. Murray Hill Road runs perpendicular to Mayfield, and this road is the only remaining brick paved street, which also houses many offices and art galleries. This area has been a Historic District on the National Registry since 1985.

Little Italy marks the eastern most border of the city of Cleveland.

Within these borders lies some very important buildings, one of which was already mentioned, Holy Rosary Church. Along with this community parish, the Alta House is an integral part of the community. Hosting many cultural events, including art walks, exercise programs for the seniors, bingo, youth bocce tournaments, and other activities has given the center roots in the neighborhood. The House was initially created in 1895 to help arriving immigrants find jobs in the Cleveland area. Later, additions including a nursery, a kindergarten, library and youth campus were constructed which helped the community tremendously. Another building with some importance is the Murray Hill School, Which was built in 1895 as well. It consisted of only four rooms, and eventually grew to a size of 36 rooms in 1946.

Talking to the residents today, a sense of pride in their community is a common thread. Little Italy thrives on its customs, and makes do with the buildings they have inherited. One of the hobbies that many of the people still uphold is the making of their own wine from the grapes that grow in their backyard. A majority of these wines are red, as it allows more room for error than white. Their basements are their workshops, and it is here that
many of them store their aging gallons of wine. The process is primitive, and when the wine is tested it is shown. There is a good percentage of the wine that goes bad or turns to vinegar, and this has much to do with the conditions in which it is made.

The community is ripe for a building which will allow them to make their own wine, use better and newer tools, provide a sterile environment to minimize the spoilage, and help to express their heritage. It could also include some room for testing the wines, and throwing parties. There is also an edge of the neighborhood that could really become an entrance to Little Italy rather than a dilapidated boundary. The building itself can display an authenticity through the design and detailing of the materials, and become a canvas for the neighborhood to showcase their own identity. Its use can be derived from the people, the simplicity of the building design can be done with respect for the people, and the vineyard can be designed by the people. It has the potential to truly be a brand of their community, heritage, and identity.

The site where this can be implemented sits on Euclid Avenue between Coltman Road and East 123 Street. It is the northern most boundary of the neighborhood, and contains three abandoned buildings. This site is very close to the entrance for the Rapid Transit Authority of Cleveland, the public transportation system and connection to the downtown area. Also on the site is the 5th district police station (feeding the entire University Circle area) and a storage space for the utilities and services of Cleveland. Immediately east of the site is the Lakeview Cemetery, the largest cemetery in Cleveland which holds the tombs of the city’s most famous people. Former president James A. Garfield is buried here, and Carabelli’s sculptures can be seen on many of the mausoleums and monuments.

The site is fairly flat, with a drop of only nine feet across the entire 700’ length. The abandoned buildings were once part of a wrought iron factory, but this factory has been decommissioned since the late 1950’s. They had been used for storage by other companies until Woodhill Supply Company took them over. Currently they are vacant once again, and have been for at least twelve years. The area acts more like an exit from the area, when the opportunity exists for it to become an exciting entrance. The RTA stop directs people out onto East 123, facing this land. The police station and abandoned buildings make the area seem much less interesting and more dangerous than it is in reality. A well placed building with the identity of the neighborhood could make this area much more dynamic and desirable for the tenants.

This community winery proposal will provide for the neighborhood in two ways. First, it supplies a sterile
space with better equipment than most residents have in their basements. The processes of the wine making can be enhanced, therefore making the quality of the wine increase. Secondly, the space allows for individual and community representation in the form of the vineyard, which will be discussed in more depth later.

Wine making is a very complex process. There are several steps to producing all types of wine, and making it at home is all the more difficult. The process does not allow for direct sunlight, as that can spoil the wine. The temperature, humidity, and air must be very specifically controlled in order to assure the best quality of wine. The area in which the wine is made must be kept clean and free of dust particles or other such contaminants. All of these together make home wine production difficult, and wine quality would improve if there were a facility for the residents of the community to go in order to brew their own wine.

The first step in production is growing the grapes. With a site in Ohio, it seems to some people that the climate is not conducive to grape production; however, in the 1860’s Ohio was the nations leading wine producer. The Catawba grape, strong enough to withstand the harsh winters, but much lighter and semi sweet compared with other wines of the time was very successful, and still is. The civil war and prohibition degraded the states wineries for some time, and until recently there was not much wine made in Ohio. Currently there are over 40 wineries in the state, with some of them winning awards over the last few years, so Ohio wine is on the upswing. In Little Italy, the residents who make wine mostly utilize their backyards to grow Catawba grapes.

The next step for both red and white wines, after the grapes are ripe and have been picked, is crushing and stemming. When this is done at home, there are many different ways of doing this. However, this winery will provide a mechanical crusher that can produce up to a ton of crushed grapes in one hour. This is a fairly small piece of equipment, but is very expensive. It is also very useful in separating the ‘must’ from the stems and skins, which is the ultimate purpose in crushing. The must is the juice that is harvested when the grapes are crushed, and any skins or stems will make this juice bitter. A space will be provided in both the red wine and the white wine production buildings for this step to occur.

In making red wine, there are two fermentation stages, one preceding pressing of the must and one afterwards. The first one is alcoholic fermentation. This step can take anywhere from one to two weeks, and must follow a temperature timeline. Therefore, space for this to occur shall be conditioned and
timed, such that it can be done correctly. In house made wines, all stages are essentially done in the cellar with a constant temperature, and therefore the quality suffers. Having this space available for temperature control is essential within this community winery. All fermentation in white wine is done at the same time, therefore only one fermentation space is needed for that production, and it does not occur until step three.

The second step for white wine and the third step for red is the pressing of the must. This is where the must is pushed through a screen to separate the ‘free-run’ from other contaminants. When done at home, most people use cloth as a filter, but this winery shall provide a basket press, which is much cleaner, more efficient, and provides more free-run than methods by hand.

The rest of the processes follow similar paths, so the discussion will talk about them in general.

The final or malolactic fermentation is next, where the free-run is again allowed to ferment on a temperature timeline. Space must be provided in each of the production processes for this to occur. With the white wine, all of the fermentation occurs after the crushing and pressing, so only one conditioned space is necessary for the alcoholic and malolactic fermentations. There must also be space which allows for sulfur dioxide additives which increase the quality of the wine. This can be provided as part of the crushing or stemming areas.

Racking comes next, and this step is essential for clarifying wine. This step entails siphoning the clear wine from one barrel or gallon to thereby leaving sediment and contaminants out of the wine. An area for this to occur will be provided, as will a place to clean out containers for reuse.

Aging and topping follow, and these steps go hand in hand because some of the wine evaporates during the aging process. The topping is required to make sure that no vinegar or bacterial growth occurs. The aging process must take place in an area that is no more than 60 degrees Fahrenheit, and is best at 52-55 degrees. Thus a space for aging must be conditioned. Also, a separate space for topping must be provided. Topping wine can be purchased or can be wine that someone has made, but it must be a similar color and flavor. The aging process can take up to a year or more for red wines, and 6 months to a year for white wines.

The last space required for the winemaking process will be a bottling station. It is here where the correctly aged wine is transferred from barrels or gallon jugs into the appropriate bottles. After bottling, the bottles should be stored on their side until drinking, but this winery will not provide
Storage for bottled wine. Bottled wine can age for 1-3 years or more, but is ready to drink upon bottling. The added aging allows for the flavors in the wine to become even more distinct, but is not necessary.

This design of this winery has separated the red and white wine processes completely, in order for purity within the wine type as well as logically distributing mass across the urban site. Other spaces that will be provided within each building include bathrooms, a mechanical room, an office for a manager, and two wine tasting/party rooms. The bathrooms will be provided as per code for the occupancy of the building. The mechanical rooms provided will act as both mechanical rooms and janitorial spaces, which will be required for the residents to make sure the cleanliness of the winery remains. There will be a manager who will keep track of the vineyard plots, and will also schedule times for the use of the equipment. Other responsibilities will include equipment maintenance, security, party room reservations, and tours.

The party rooms are not solely for the winery, as there will need to be some form of income aside from the cost per month issued to each resident. Wine tastings will take place, as well as other dinner parties or engagements. The facilities provided do not include catering, but will have a kitchen, complete with stove, refrigerator and cooking utensils. A dining room with a dining table and dinnerware, and a living room with a fireplace and seating. This area will also include a bathroom for the users, and a mechanical room.

The final piece of this winery is the vineyard. This part is very important, as the connection with the community is made here. The area for the vineyard is roughly an acre, which can produce about 4,000 bottles of wine per year. Each family will rent an area for the growing of grapes, but only the area is provided. It is essential for each family interested in growing grapes on site to build their own vines. Each family will have an area dedicated for them, and the entrance to their plot will be the area for their expression. In this way, one could walk through the winery and distinguish between each family’s grapes, or look from afar and see the way that they all work together. By providing this forum for the people of the area to express themselves with a structure, the community can really feel a part of the project. These entrances which are designed by the families will become the ornament of the entire project, giving the entire work a connection to the neighborhood, and therefore a level of authenticity.
Authenticity is a difficult concept to grasp, requiring both generalities and specificities which are both subjective and objective. As has been explained before, it is realized when there is a direct relation between what one sees and interprets, and what that object is in reality. Time also comes into play, because if one never finds out that their interpretation was incorrect, then it will never matter to them. As slippery as the concept is, it can be understood that nobody likes to be fooled; they would rather recognize the falsities and except them for what they are. But as the saying goes, "you can't fool everyone all of the time"; in the same sense, it may be impossible for everyone to agree on a specific case of authenticity. The recent push to realize authenticity may be a reaction to and a resultant of the current branding atmosphere in the global environment. Teenagers in countries everywhere have begun to wear the same clothes, listen to the same music, eat the same food, and even quote the same movie lines. There are times when these similarities only stress the differences, but those times are becoming fewer and further between. The quest for authenticity can be understood as a fight to be an individual in a world of conformity. What can be seen in the last few years is a push for mass customization, which has allowed for the individual to authenticate the common to themselves.

In architecture, the loss of authenticity may also be a function of the loss of vernacular and the homogeneity of neighborhoods across cities, states, countries, and eventually the world. The cities and communities within them have begun to request 'signature' buildings as a way of defining themselves and a way of achieving an 'authentic' architecture. Though these buildings are of the star architects, they are not authentic to the context necessarily, and this is frustrating for the architects and the communities down the line. Architecture is only just beginning to address the issue of mass customization, and with much hesitation. There is an expertise in space visualization and understanding that architects have which is not present in the general public, and customization must occur with this in mind. That being said, there are cultural symbols and ideas which can never be understood by an architect that is not from a particular place but is expected to create a building for it.

Whatever the case, architects cannot and should not let the sameness perpetuate, if they can help to restore a certain individualism or identity to a place. One way to allow for customization and still retain an architectural presence is to design into the program a space or area for customization to occur, both on the community level as well as individually. In this way, the decisions regarding that space...
are made by the people, and therefore a deeper connection is made to them. At the same time, it is only a part of the whole, a whole which ultimately determines the identity of that place, yet another piece of the greater community identity. In this way the architecture allows for the customization of both the community and the architect, which will result in a higher level of authenticity.


5. Groth, Paul and Bressi, Todd W. Understanding Ordinary Landscapes. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1997. In this book there is an essay by J.B. Jackson entitled "The Future of the Vernacular," which he discusses the automobile and its emergence as the people's fixer upper, and how that is where the next vernacular will emerge.


11. http://www.dictionary.com -- an online dictionary


17. http://www.starbucks.com/aboutus/timeline.asp -- Their website provides a concise history of the company and its growth over the past 32 years of its existence.


in the Corporate World. Holbrook: Adams Media Corporation, 1994. -- A history of the practices of Nike throughout the 80's and 90's. It speaks a lot about their marketing strategies, brand policies, and other topics. --

20. Klein, Naomi. No Logo. New York: Picador, 2000. -- Naomi Klein offers a insight to the unethical business practices of the major label brands such as Nike, Gap, and Levi's. The industry history is fairly important, and so she gives a well documented history of branding in America. --


24. Weiss, Michael J. The Clustered World. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2000. -- A look at America in terms of consumer profiles and clusters, this book explains the cluster system, and it's relation to the marketing and advertising world. It also explains the 62 different clusters, and shows the consumers that reside in these clusters. --

17. Newspaper advertisement for suburban development in Tempe, Arizona. December 9, 1955. -- Shows the popularity of tract homes in the 50's. --


19. Pine II, B. Joseph & Gilmore, James H. The Experience Economy. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999. -- This book has changed a lot of the business practices of companies in America. The main idea of the book is that our economy has changed from commodity-based to product-based to service-based, and we are in the middle of the change from service to experience-based. Eventually, the final step results in a transformation-based economy. --

20. Rasmussen, Steen Eiler. Experiencing Architecture. Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1959. -- A phenomenological look at architectural space, and this allows us to look at how all of our senses react and deal with space. Rasmussen urges us to create architecture that evokes human experience. --


22. Schultz, Howard. Pour Your Heart Into it. New York: Hyperion, 1997. -- Howard Schultz is the founder of Starbucks, and this is his story of how the company began in 1971, and the successes and failures, and how to create your own success story. --

23. Seamon, David and Mugerauer, Robert. Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World. Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985. -- This collection of essays includes one by Kim Dovey, an Australian architect who wrote "The Quest for Authenticity and the Replication of Environmental Meaning." This exploration into the meaning of authenticity is quite good." --

24. Wolf, Michael J. The Entertainment Economy. New York: Times Books, 1999. -- Wolf shows us here the importance of the entertainment industry in our economy, and a lot of what he says has to do with what Pine and Gilmore talk about in "The Experience Economy." Also, Naomi Klein cites him for parts of her book as well. Wolf discusses the big three, cable, and the importance of brands, among other things.
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Appendix A - Project ::

Civic Vision Land Use
Existing Land Use
Historic District
LITTLE ITALY COMMUNITY WINERY
Cleveland, Ohio
LITTLE ITALY COMMUNITY WINERY
Cleveland, Ohio