I, Ellen Crawford, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture in Architecture.

It is entitled:
The Teahouse / A Cup of Tea

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The Teahouse / A Cup of Tea

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by

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Our daily environments are filled with technology and noise due to our cultural preference toward spaces for collaboration and connection. Contributing to this bias are shifts caused by the Industrial Revolution. As the need to sell new products and goods rose, so did the need for Americans to improve their marketing and sales techniques. Americans moved towards valuing a Culture of Personality over a Culture of Character. This led to the rise of ocular-centric, open spaces reflecting our cultural bias towards extroverted personality and its characteristics.

In order to understand the basic architectural inclination of humans at their prehistoric, primordial level, absent of contemporary culture’s influence, investigation into the foundational understanding of inside and outside, nature and man is discussed through our earliest notions of shelter and the hut. Themes such as nostalgia, daydreaming, and wandering are explored as methods facilitating retreat, a repeated human desire seen throughout time. Primitive architectural elements such as threshold, orientation, enclosure, boundary, and opening reveal architectural meaning and purpose in terms of differentiating interior from exterior.

The Teahouse offers an alternative solution to the extrovert-prolific spaces seen so frequently today by providing a quiet, intimate experience where moments of introversion are celebrated. Through the process of making, receiving, and drinking a cup of tea, retreat from daily environments is encouraged, highlighted, and made to be of primary importance. This thesis challenges our cultural bias towards extroversion and offers an opportunity to unite experience with memory, ritual, and retreat.
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Please contact ellenmargaret29@gmail.com for fully illustrated thesis book including additional project work
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/ A CUP OF TEA
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PROLOGUE

There is a type of recurring architecture. It is unbound by movement. Though the style of it throughout time might differ, its embodied meaning derives from the same set of principles and desires. It was present from the onset. Perhaps varied, but always of concern. Once it came, it did not leave. Once it was known, it was, and is, and always was.

I understood it first through the leaves of a great tree. The truck was hardly recognizable. The roots were unknown. The rain had not begun. Yet, the breeze brought gentleness and drew my eye to its story. My interest was held like the nagging of something not yet realized but intently held, only fuzzy still and not pronounced.

Soon I was to discover the branch. The branch which held the cup. The cup which held the tea. In the holding came the ritual. And in the ritual came the retreat.
what remained important from the past in our present relationships. What actually happened differs from what we take away from the happening.

For example, the Industrial Revolution brought new methods of mechanized production and technologies into modern mainstream society. This influx undoubtedly laid the foundation for our modern economic and societal relationships. It shaped the way we live and the value we place on the things we live with. In this past-present relationship, we recognize the formative events which, like dominos, fell into sequential place and lead us to today. Based on our modern interpretation of the Industrial Revolution and its effect on today, this is what happened, which leaves us with this question: what is the happening?

The happening exists in the fundamental changes that took place through the Industrial Revolution as a result of how we started to value people and more specifically how we started to value the personality of people. As we became increasingly less of a rural, agrarian culture and started to populate our modern American cities, a shift in the way we valued each other resulted. Susan Cain writes of this shift in her best-selling book, *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*:

> America has shifted from what the influential cultural historian Warren Susman called a Culture of Character to a Culture of Personality – and opened up a Pandora’s Box of
personal anxieties from which we would never quite recover.

In the Culture of Character, the ideal self was serious, disciplined, and honorable. What counted was not so much the impression one made in public as how one behaved in private. The word personality didn’t exist in English until the eighteenth century, and the idea of “having a good personality” was not widespread until the twentieth.¹

The shift to a Culture of Personality effectively changed how we viewed people and the personality they possessed. The personality traits associated more with extroversion became increasingly desirable over the personality traits typical of introversion. Of course, the concept of extroversion and introversion was not popularized until the mid-20th century when Carl Jung introduced the terminology into psychology, but the term personality had long standing history.

In 1425, the main use of the Anglo-Norman term, personalité, was used to indicate the fact of being a person. In 1678, the definition of personality did not solely rely on this fact. It also included some understanding of a person with individual characteristics or qualities.² It was not until around 1710 that personality became more about the individual traits or characteristics comprising the person over the factual nature of being. What started as a word that described an individual as a factual person, became a word to be used in conjunction with a descriptor. A person could simultaneously possess a personality by nature of being and have a soft or outgoing personality based on the characteristics of the person’s individual self. This demonstrates that approximately a hundred years prior to the start of the Industrial Revolution, the framework for being able to assess a person based on personality as a reflection of individual characteristics of self had been set up.

Cain continues to summarize Susman’s work, “The social role demanded of all in the new Culture of Personality was that of a performer... Every American was to become a performing self.”³ Cain claims that when we embraced the Culture of Personality, Americans started to focus on how others perceived them.

Characteristics such as:

**GROUP 1**
- Loud
- Dominant
- Gregarious
- Outgoing
- Extroverted

became of higher value than personality traits such as:
GROUP 2

Reserved
Quiet
Contemplative
Thoughtful
Slow-to-speak

The value placed on GROUP 1 characteristics, those typical of extroversion, gradually became more important as selling and marketing the goods and services of the 19th and early 20th centuries became the basis of our economy. The value of a person capable of contributing to society based on a given or trained personality became the primary means of assessing the ability of that person to successfully sell, market, and, ultimately, perform. As a result, we became captivated by people who were bold, entertaining, and could sell products through selling themselves, a captivation which continued through the late 20th century to our present technological age.

But here lies the major thesis. The current technological age does not benefit from such a compartmentalized understanding of people where an overvalued perspective on the capabilities of some reduces the ability to discern the capabilities of all. We no longer live in a time based exclusively on sales. We live in a time based on digital information and cyber security.

Yet, we see things being sold in almost every facet of our daily lives, from ads on Facebook to YouTube commercials to street-side billboards to even ideas such as one like, collaboration and connection lead to the most productive methods of working. We have been overcome by the marketing of images and culturally acceptable thought. We have let our skewed understanding of extroversion and personality merge into a culture of seeing and unformed, photogenic open space where proximity is used as a design tool to relate people to each other even though individual tasks might not require or benefit from the added noise, activity, and subsequent distractions.

Furthermore, favor in architecture has been given to the eye through the act of two dimensionally capturing, selling, and marketing. The value placed on our increasingly digitally-interconnected and ocular-centric culture directly contributes to an overproliferation of the eye and what we see rather than what we interpret through sensual seeing. This results in a perpetuation of our cultural obsession with always being seen, connected, and instantly gratified by spaces which are highly visible and quickly presented.

How do we remedy the bias of our culture for the betterment of all? How do we allow moments of introversion where three dimensionally sensing, perceiving, and interpreting are of primary importance?
INTRODUCTION

3.01 Rene Magritte, The Familiar Objects, 1928
3.02 Henry Callahan, Chicago, 1950
THE RAIN
WHEN DROPS FELL

Contributing to the rise of a personality-driven culture are drops which have been effected by our cultural bias towards the eye, connection, and entertainment. Vision, technology, and noise have all become overpoweringly prolific. They have led us to lives full of processing information, but not full of meaningful and memorable experience. Severance between living and the more poetic dwelling has been made. As Luis Barragan comments, “We have lost our sense of intimate life, and have become forced to live public lives, essentially away from home.”

VISION

“The ocular bias has never been more apparent in the art of architecture than in the past 30 years, as a type of architecture, aimed at a striking and memorable visual image, has predominated. Instead of an existentially grounded plastic and spatial experience, architecture has adopted the psychological strategy of advertising and instant persuasion; buildings have turned into image products detached from existential depth and sincerity.”

Juhani Pallasmaa, The Eyes of the Skin, 1996

My vision was too sharp. You see when we became as we are, we lost some of what we were. With unsatisfied hunger we ate, perpetuated by unsatisfied seeing. The eye became the primary means of understanding. In it we created our world, unhinged by the bias we placed on the things we created.

Consider the following observations and their interpreted meanings:

1. “The gradually growing hegemony of the eye seems to be parallel with the development of Western ego-consciousness and the gradually increasing separation of the self and the world; vision separates us from the world whereas the other senses united us with it.” Juhani Pallasmaa, The Eyes of the Skin, 1996

Interpretation: Vision objectifies and is self-serving whereas being in the world with all senses unifies.

2. “Postmodern life could be described as a state in which everything beyond our own personal biography seems vague, blurred, and somehow unreal. The world is full of signs and information, which stand for things that no one fully understands because they, too, turn out to be mere signs for other things.” Peter Zumthor, Thinking Architecture, 2006

Interpretation: Transcendent understanding is limited by the current nature of the things we encounter. These things are so layered that their meaning is covered and hidden.
3. “The architecture of our time is turning into the retinal art of the eye. Architecture at large has become an art of the printed image fixed by the hurried eye of the camera. The gaze itself tends to flatten into a picture and lose its plasticity; instead of experiencing our being in the world, we behold it from outside as spectators of images projected on the surface of the retina.”⁸ Steven Holl, Juhani Pallasmaa, and Alberto Perez-Gomez, *Questions of Perception: Phenomenology of Architecture*, 2007

Interpretation: We are so consumed by the image of our works that we have lost the experiential value of architecture. Or, we have lost the experiential value of architecture because we are so consumed by the image of our works.

4. “Martin Heidegger, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida have all argued that the thought and culture of modernity have not only continued the historical privileging of sight, but furthered its negative tendencies. Each, in their own separate ways, has regarded the sight-dominance of the modern era as distinctly different from that of earlier times. The hegemony of vision has been reinforced in our time by a multitude of technological inventions and the endless multiplication and production of images…”⁹

Interpretation: Thought, culture, and technology have contributed to the privileging of sight.

Effectively, it started to rain. We became our world. We saw. We consumed. We ate. But what we ate did not satiate. Our very being in the world remained incomplete by the bias we placed on the sharpness of our vision.

**TECHNOLOGY**

“*The incredible acceleration of speed during the last century has collapsed into the flat screen of the present, upon which the simultaneity of the world is projected. As time loses its duration, and its echo in the primordial past, man loses his sense of self as a historical being, and is threatened by the ‘terror of time.’ Architecture emancipates us from the embrace of the present and allows us to experience the slow, healing flow of time.*”⁰

*Juhani Pallasmaa, The Eyes of the Skin, 1996*

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I was now accustomed to the cobbles under my feet. I had even bought new boots to match the footwear of the Italians. From shin down, I might have even passed as local. Maybe.

Just outside my apartment, the park was my first landmark as I swiftly walked the
4.01 Paris Street, 1938
4.02 Rene Magritte, The Lovers, 1928
familiar route to school. Not much happened in the park I had noticed. Within three minutes of my walk, I was in the stretch where I felt least comfortable. However, in the waning daylight the men hanging out of their storefront doors no longer alarmed me. Only at night did I still feel the presence of their eyes.

Ten minutes in, I had learned to avoid the streets which flanked the Central Market and the street in front of San Lorenzo. It was always full of tourists and stall-keepers eager to get business.

At fourteen minutes, I passed the Duomo. The sight still profoundly intrigued me. The massiveness of the building, the compression of the green and pink façade against the nearby Baptistery, people walking without notice, people seeing it for the first time, all these things were an observant passerby’s delight in the 150 foot stretch of walk through the Piazza. By this particular landmark, I had noticed how lovely of an evening it was. Though a coat was still needed, winter had lifted enough to bring the comfort and intrigue of warmer temperatures.

As I came upon seventeen minutes in my walk, the seduction of the evening light was creeping in as it shifted from brightness into darkness. New colors intensified in the sky. The thought had come upon me that I must see the river with this light upon its water. Weighing my impending lateness as less important than arrival at my 6:00 pm meeting, I walked past where I had intended to go. My enchantment with the journey urged me past promptness.

Minutes later, a stillness of sound rose as I passed through the narrow lane outside the Uffizi. I could smell the crispness of the night through the silence of no chattering tourists.

It was only upon walking under the Gallery to the sight and sound of the river I knew my decision had been correct. For the senses ruled, time ceased, the metaphorical rain stopped, and the light gave new value to my temporary home.

Reflection #1: This moment did not exist outside of today’s technology. In fact, I am certain someone was taking a photo with their camera in front of the Duomo while others busily chatted on their cell phones as I passed them in the street. Do I not remember these sightings because I lazily took no notice or because they were too commonplace to be worth the imprint? When the clock on my cell phone crossed 6:00 pm, did I feel shame for disregarding the punctuality my culture teaches? Was it selfishness that propelled me forward? Or innocent curiosity?

Reflection #2: This moment existed outside of today’s technology even though today’s technology still existed. Perhaps knowing engagement of all senses cannot be captured in still image, or more likely, not realizing how ingrained this memory
would become, I took no photos. I did not text my friends to tell them I would be late or not coming at all. I assumed they would start without hesitation in my absence and liberated myself from the ties of my phone. I experienced, without conviction of capture or time. The light became my only earthly reminder of progression, though I did not watch it with the eye of a dial but felt it with the sense of a jumping fly fish.

Reflection #3: I had encountered what Anne Cline called a confection-less world. She writes of it in *A Hut of One’s Own*:

I asked my students how much of their lives they spent in what has been called “confections.” How much did media-driven experiences divert them from themselves and how much did these divertissements and spectacles cover over the most basic human aspiration—to know what it is to have a human life, as opposed to, say, the life of a dog or a cat.

Then I asked them to imagine an experience that would draw them out of their confectionary world. As they puzzled over my question, a student reframed the task: “You mean, I must use the only world I know—to live the only human life I can be sure I will ever have.”

“I couldn’t have said it better,” I replied.11

Like the realization of the student, I had discovered the value of a life lived *in the world* instead of *of the world*. The challenge now became how to re-enter an *in the world* mindset among the persistent *of the world* things, for when I entered an *in the world* mindset, experience became primary and the technological distractions of the world were overshadowed. “In barely one generation we’ve moved from exulting in the time-saving devices that have so expanded our lives to trying to get away from them—often in order to make more time. The more ways we have to connect, the more many of us seem desperate to unplug,” writes Pico Iyer, a New York Times essayist.12 The title of Iyer’s essay, “The Joy of Quiet,” suggests that if we can “unplug” and “make more time” we might be able to achieve the type of joy that comes from a singular existence full of self-understanding.

Does this existence also “cover the most basic human aspiration—to know what it is to have a human life?” At what point does the noise of technology or as Cline calls them “media-driven experiences” drown out the quietness of self and the knowing that comes with the understanding of having human life?
4.03 Ellen Crawford, Looking Up, 2012
4.04 Ellen Crawford, Venice Sunset, 2011
NOISE

“This year I had great trouble making up my mind where to go for the autumn moon-viewing. Finally, after much perplexed head-scratching, I decided on the Ishiyama Temple. The day before the full moon, however, I read in the paper that there would be loudspeakers in the woods at Ishiyama to regale the moon-viewing guests with phonograph records of the Moon-light Sonata. I canceled my plans immediately. Loudspeakers were bad enough, but if it could be assumed that they would set the tone, then there would surely be floodlights too strung all over the mountain. I remembered another ruined moon-viewing, the year we took a boat on the night of the harvest full moon and sailed out over the lake of the Ōsumi Temple. We put together a party, we had our refreshments in lacquered boxes, we set bravely out. But the margin of the lake was decorated brilliantly with electric lights in five colors. There was indeed a moon if one stained one’s eyes for it.”

Jun’ichiro Tanizaki, In Praise of Shadows, 1977

My grandmother had a grandfather clock. It chimed every fifteen minutes without hesitation. In the first period, the song was rather short and stopped in anticipation of the next movement. The second fifteen minute period was greeted by the compilation of the previous quarter plus the continuation of the half. In the third period, the compilation was even more complete, yet clearly not concluded. It was only at the hour that the full song and its end could be heard. It was always followed by the slow, ordered count of the next hour. Noticing they needed to be countered again, my grandfather would open the glass-paned door to the clock’s weights. He pulled gently at their chains until they sat in proper opposition to each other again.

When I was a child and would stay with my grandparents this clock would pleasantly fascinate me. The call of time rung through their first-floor and reminded me of the placeness of their house. Time, sound, and ritual folded together in a type of communication only recognized when its information was needed or its melody enjoyed.

I can also remember the sound of time fondly through another experience. As I walked through the Italian town of Pisa, I had not expected well over a dozen bell towers to start ringing when the clock reached the hour. When this unsuspecting moment came I suddenly could hear the hills, heights, and distance of the city. Child-like awe sprung forth.

These moments are not often encountered. The quietness required to allow a particular noise to reach importance seems distant when occupying the busyness and movement of today’s city. When I sit in the lecture hall later today, I will hear the tap-tap-tap of students typing, facebooking,
4.05 Office Design from Early 1900s

4.06 Where's Waldo
chatting, and emailing while the professor teaches. The girl behind me eats chips and does so loudly. Michael Kimmelman makes this statement in his article, “Dear Architects: Sound Matters,” “During the Middle Ages, smell was the unspoken plague of cities. Today it is sound. Streets, public spaces, bars, offices, even apartments and private houses can be painfully noisy, grim, and enervating.”

Susan Cain, lawyer and author, recently partnered with American furniture manufacturer Steelcase to produce a series of office workspaces termed “Quiet Spaces.” These single room spaces offer employees a small-sized, private space from which they can retreat into during the course of a normal workday. Cain and Steelcase found these spaces necessary after observing the shift in privacy available in today’s typical work environment, many of which now employ open office plans with ample opportunity for noise transmittance from neighbors.

Daniel Levitin notes every time we switch tasks, we are not multitasking. The phenomena is a myth. “Although we think we’re doing several things at once, multitasking has been shown to be a powerful and diabolical illusion,” he writes in his book, The Organized Mind: Thinking Straight in the Age of Information Overload. When your coworker picks up a ringing call and you take notice because he speaks hello loudly, you might lose your train of thought, perhaps not enough to halt your work, but enough for your brain to momentarily switch to processing the new sound, effectively reducing the amount of time you have spent on accomplishing your own work. When these moments routinely happen, whether acknowledged or not, they affect one’s ability to stay on task. Levitin describes multitasking in these terms, “you are frequently stopping what you’re doing, fragmenting concentration, balkanizing the vast resources of your prefrontal cortex, which has been honed over tens of thousands of years of evolution to stay on task.” The noise of interruption also goes beyond sound. Some companies actively impose rules which encourage interruption through constant connectivity. “Many managers impose rules such as ‘You must answer e-mail within fifteen minutes’ or ‘You must keep a chat window open.’”

An article published by The Atlantic notes and criticizes a similar trend currently happening in the profession of education. As schools increasing implement activities which require social interaction, teachers have less of an opportunity to recharge in their down time between classes. Some have even left the profession, “Engaging in a classroom was ‘so demanding in terms of social interaction’ that it made it difficult for him to find quiet space to decompress and reflect. The endless barrage of ‘professional learning community’ meetings left [him] little energy for meaningful interaction with [his] kids.”

These points suggest that noise, so
overwhelmingly present in the landscapes of today’s culture and constructed space, has become homogenized to the point that no one sound has any significant value over the next other than as a interruption of distraction.

Therefore, we have limited an entire sense to the trends of modernity, instead of allowing it to have significance and value.

In the trends of our present, we have out-valued the prospect of quite.
THE LEAVES
THE INSIDE

Man sought the regaining of the inside under the protection of the leaves. The inside which protects. The inside which provides safety. The inside which provides rest. The inside he sought and the inside he found. It might have been stylized by the designs of the time or varied in shape and size. At first, it may have been a cave or the hallow of a large tree. It could have been an animal skin stretched between two poles, but at some point it was, and is, and always was.

THE HUT

One of our basic primordial instincts is to seek shelter or an inside to the elements present on the outside. We seek a dwelling in which to gain intimacy and familiarity with our surroundings. This is a repeated human behavior. It undisputedly typifies a major aspect of our existence and has been a discussion of architectural theorists throughout time. Christian Norberg-Schulz describes “dwelling” when he writes, “The word “dwelling” here means something more than having a roof over our head and a certain number of square meters at our disposal. First, it means to meet others for exchange of products, ideas and feelings, that is, to experience life as a multitude of possibilities. Second, it means to come to an agreement with others, that is, to accept a set of common values. Finally, it means to be oneself, in the sense of having a small chosen world of our own.”

“A small chosen world of our own,” brings to mind “the hut” or what 18th century theorist, Marc-Antoine Laugier calls the “primitive hut.” Laugier cites the primitive hut as man’s first dwelling place. It provides shelter and shade on its sides and overhead and satisfies all basic human needs. In the opening passage of his “An Essay on Architecture,” Laugier creates the evidence needed to support his theory of architecture:

“Let us look at man in his primitive state without any aid or guidance other than his natural instincts. He is in need of a place to rest… Some fallen branches in the forest are the right material for his purpose; he chooses four of the strongest, raises them upright and arranges them in a square; across their top he lays four other branches; on these he hoists from two sides yet another row of branches which, inclining towards each other, meet at their highest point. He then covers this kind of roof with leaves so closely packed that neither sun nor rain can penetrate. Thus, man is housed. Admittedly, the cold and heat will make him feel uncomfortable in this house which is open on all sides but soon he will fill in the space between two posts and feel secure.”
From this description, Laugier presents the elements from which, he believes, all architecture is based: column, entablature (beam), and pediment (roof). In 1851, Gottfried Semper offers a different theory. He divides his “primordial dwelling into four basic elements: (1) the earthwork, (2) the hearth, (3) the framework roof, and (4) the lightweight enclosing membrane.”

Neither Laugier nor Semper can definitively prove their theories. Their suggestions offer thoughts into the origins of architecture and recognize that man sought shelter first with the architecture and its built visualization deriving after.

From the architecture of the initial hut, others stemmed, leading to the gradual accumulation of the breadth of architectural work credited to man. Huts became villages. Villages became cities and self-governing areas. Nations were formed. Boundaries drawn. We started to align ourselves with particular notions of built place. Paolo Portoghesi makes this remark in his writing, “observing the huts of others, using those improvements or creatively making their own, they began to build better and better dwellings. And since the nature of man is to imitate and learn, rejoicing daily in his own inventions, they showed each other their constructions...”

From the hut, we expanded, critiqued, improved, and built. In effect, the hut spurred discourse on what is fundamentally appropriate and valid in architecture.

A repeated hut nostalgia can be observed through numerous projects throughout history. Ann Cline presents several of them in her book, A Hut of One’s Own. She cites a tiny temple built by Japanese shogun Yoshimasa Ashikaga and Le bateau on the grounds of Versailles funded by French Queen Marie Antoinette. Cline writes of Japanese tea houses, Chinese mountain hut dwellers, and urban shanties saying, “Huts are always fascinating but the huts of sophisticated cultures are especially so: from the huts of ancient recluse poets to those of ornamental hermits, from the casitas of the Bronx to the huts of seventeenth-century tea masters, from the shacks of the homeless to the follies of postmodern architects.” She uses case-studies, examples, theory, and experiences to weave together the story of the hut and its meaning eventually saying, “All these huts deconstruct the optimistic sophistication of their age. Then they rearrange it.”

Cline, so fascinated by the hut even builds her own. She customizes it through every detail and waits years to install the ideal window.

Others have done the same. Henry David Thoreau spends two years two months and two days living in his hut on Walden Pond saying, “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.” Martin Heidegger writes in a small hut located on
5.01 Charles-Dominique-Joseph Eisen, Frontispiece, 1755
5.02 Ellen Crawford, Squatter’s House, 2012
5.03 ECE Architecture, Worthing Beach Hut, 2015
5.04 Viollet-le-Duc, The First Building, c. 1870
a hillside in Germany’s Black Forest away from the university in which he taught. He was dutifully protective of the small space, sometimes even renting a nearby hotel room to continue his work when his wife and children came to stay. Writer Michael Pollen refers to his hut as a place of solitude a few steps off the beaten track of everyday life and as a wish for a slightly different angle on things. Mies van der Rohe’s Farnsworth House was commissioned as a weekend retreat away from Chicago. It is essentially a glass walled hut.

While these huts suggest the concept of “a small chosen world of our own” is both fundamental and timeless, the goal of each builder’s hut derive from different personal meanings or “common values” beholden by personal intentions. For Thoreau, his hut was a place of adventure and intentionality. Adam Sharr writes this of Heidegger’s hut, “The small building was the philosopher’s datum, its particularities delineating the particularities of his life and work.” Dr. Farnsworth’s hut was a place of retreat and unity with nature. Pollen’s hut was a place of solitude. He writes, “Is there anybody who hasn’t at one time or another wished for such a place, hasn’t turned those soft words over until they’d assumed a habitable shape? What they propose, to anyone who admits them into the space of a daydream, is a place of solitude a few steps off the beaten track of everyday life.”

Like the ability of the hut to be flexible to the desires of its user, the hut remains unique in that it is not bound by status, culture, or time. In effect, the hut is accessible to all if the proper resources, motivation, and place can be located. Joseph Rykwert offers this summary, “The return to origins is a constant of human development and in this matter architecture conforms to all other human activities. The primitive hut—the home of the first man—is therefore no incidental concern of theorists, no casual ingredient of myth or ritual. The return to origins always implies a rethinking of what you do customarily, an attempt to renew the validity of your everyday actions, or simply a recall of the natural (or divine) sanction for your repeating them for a season.”

Whatever the individual intention for or global location of the hut, the ultimate reason and architectural structure remains similar. The hut is a work of architecture providing inside shelter and retreat related to our foundational interest in regaining a lost place. The hut provides deeply personal relief from the world and an enclosure over and around us. It makes us feel safe, secure, and in control.
PRECEDE\textsc{ENTS}

HEIDEGGER’S HUT
EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Martin Heidegger, an early 20th century German philosopher, spend most of his time writing in a small cabin away from his main home. This cabin is where Heidegger seemed to be able to think and write intently and philosophically the best. On the Heidegger’s Hut, Adam Sharr writes “He seems to have enjoyed the belief that his work was a kind of acknowledgment: language taking place through him, in association with the landscape and the hut’s meditation of it, demarcated by changefulness experienced in the constancy of solitude. Indeed, the hut and its circumstances seem to have held the possibility of almost hypnotic presence for Heidegger, their particular immediate legitimacy rendering other concerns mundane and, it seems, offering him exemption from implications of life “below”.”

THERME VALS
PETER ZUMTHOR, 1996

The plan of the Therme Vals is a strong example of positive and negative space, where the smaller private rooms stand out as volumes against the bigger, more public meandering pools and pathways. However, while the plan of the Therme Vals is artfully appealing, the project has deeper meanings than what can be communicated through drawings.

Experience and movement throughout dominate. The entry sequence to the baths takes you through a series of corridors and prepares you for the mood of the baths. Overhead lighting, reflective materials, and natural stone are introduced in the corridors and continue into the baths as the ceiling gives way to corner reveals where natural light shines through. The floor becomes a mix of solid stone and wading water, while the horizontal grain of the walls is reminiscent of the drive through the Swiss hillside preceding entry to the site. Once in the baths, views to other spaces are always visible as if to invite you to explore onward and discover what is next. Small rooms located between baths provide even more places to intimately explore and discover. Temperature changes happen from space to space as the bath water increased or decreases temperature.

The Therme Vals transcend how man has previously has treated water. Here water is more than a substance of survival or necessity. Here water is privileged, celebrated, and made the primary thing facilitating experience.

FARNSWORTH HOUSE
MIES VAN DER ROHE, 1951

Upon approach, the Farnsworth House appears as an object set in the clearing of a loosely forested riverbank. Its stark white
5.05  Adam Sharr, Heidegger's Hut Plan
5.06  Ellen Crawford, Heidegger's Hut Precedent Rendering
5.07  Peter Zumthor, Therme Vals Interior, Switzerland

5.08  Ellen Crawford, Therme Vals Precedent Rendering
color stands out against the surrounding greenery. The entire scene presents as a composition of horizontals, verticals, lawn, and a landscape composed of large trees with expanding branches filtering the beyond sky. Clear visual elevations of the house are interrupted by the branches of adjacent trees. The trees give the house a vertical foreground and move it closer to being part of the landscape instead of leaving it to be the thing that exists within the landscape. The trees start to pull it away from pure objectification.

A platform expands in front of the house. It is large and somewhat overwhelming. Its proportion to the house behind is understood as some sort of horizontal slippage, extension, and offset, though the absence of any verticals or things on top of the platform prevent it from being contextualized. Only the stairs give the platform scale and linkage to the house. The platform begins to remove one from the landscape in which the entire structure sits by signaling the physical beginning of man's built intervention.

Behind the platform, skinny vertical columns and the expanding floor on which the house sits leave room for shadow underneath and an understanding of the expanding horizontal ground beneath and beyond. The distance between ground and the bottom of the volume separates further the house from the landscape.

From interior looking out, the surroundings are perceived as a type of living, immersive nature, visually accessible by the transparency of glass walls, yet separated by a clear barrier preventing physical movement and buffering sound transmission. Any objective understanding of the house succumbs to setting and the easily accessible, unified relationship the interior provides to the surrounding outside. Such a unified understanding of the surrounding landscape from the interior prevents the interior from becoming a true inside. Inside remains an illusion, made only somewhat understandable due to solid floor and overhead ceiling.

The work takes no effort to become the center upon entering as it does upon approaching. Instead, it gives the whole work back to the surroundings. From the outside looking in the house demands attention. It is only upon occupying the platform and house and looking out that the landscape takes back its priority as the most important aspect of the architectural work.

**BUTTERFLY HUTS THAILAND, 2009**

Six small prefab living structures for refugee orphans were constructed in 2009 by a group of five Norwegian students. Of foremost consideration appears to be scale. These huts cater to their user, the child, in a uniquely personal way. While the doorway may prove rather small for an adult, it suits the height of the child quite well and
5.09 Mies van der Rohe, Farnsworth House, Plano, Illinois, 1951

5.10 Ellen Crawford, Farnsworth House Precedent Rendering
communicates that this is a space reserved for a child. On the interior an array of natural materials playfully line different areas of the walls and floors allowing for natural ventilation and daylighting. Brightly painted operable openings in the facades of the huts add to their character and reinforce their child centered focus.

Termed the “butterfly” huts due to the up and outward projection of the hut’s roofs, this project is commendable for both its ability to be user-specific and place-specific. It maintains a connection with nature and changing natural elements and only supersedes this connection to communicate the character of a child.

ROLLING HUTS
OSKA, 2008

Built in the Okanogan National Forest east of the Cascades in Washington State are a series of six huts designed by architect Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects (OSKA). Termed the “rolling huts,” the huts sit lightly on the ground with only four wheeled posts and a set of stairs engaging the meadow beneath. Their elevation off the ground provides both protection from the natural flood plain on which the huts sit and communicates the goal expressed by the client, to let the landscape return to its natural state. A steel platform and structure provide the framework for the walls of the huts and support a butterfly pitched roof overhead. Limited finish materials employ a simple pallet through use of exposed plywood walls and furniture, glass, and cork floors.

Though the huts sit in close proximity to one another, each hut faces the same direction, towards the surrounding mountains, allowing for them to have directional privacy. The materials used to clad and finish the huts complement the natural colors present in the surrounding landscape. Their elevation above grade and the detail of the wheels on which the huts sit suggest that the huts have a degree of movability and impermanence. All these design decisions contribute to a language that says the huts are politely visiting the landscape but do not seek to take over or change it.

The huts are advertised as a “modern alternative to camping.” The huts accommodate two people, though photos suggest that a small family could fit. The rolling huts are more aligned with destinations of retreat characterized by vacation rather than destinations of retreat characterized by a quiet environment in which work and creativity can happen. They seem to be a home base in the beauty and adventure of the surrounding nature rather than a place of comfortable relaxation themselves.
5.11 Butterfly Huts, Thailand, 2008

5.12 Ellen Crawford, Butterfly Huts Precedent Rendering
5.13 OSKA, Rolling Huts, Kazama, Washington, 2008

5.14 OSKA, Rolling Huts, Kazama, Washington,
5.15 Luis Barragan, Las Arboledas, Mexico City, Mexico 1962

5.16 Kengo Kuma, Naturescape, Milan, Italy, 2013

5.17 K2S Architects, Kamppi Chapel of Silence, Helsinki, Finland, 2012

5.18 RAAAF, The End of Sitting, Amsterdam, Netherlands, 2014
5.19  Eskew+Dumez+Ripple, Bathing Pavilion, New Orleans, LA, 2000

5.20  Imbue Design, Buddist Retreat, Torrey, Utah, 2012
5.21 You / Me Installation, La Gaite Lyrique, Paris, 2011

5.22 Penda, The Soundwave, China, 2015, Photo by Xia Zhi

5.23 Varient Studio, Moscow Metro Proposal
5.24 GAAGA, Tea House, Netherlands, 2015, Photo by Marcel

5.25 Terunobu Fujimori, Beetle’s House, V&A Museum, London

5.26 Mesarchitecture, Sky is the Limit, Yang Yang, South Korea
INTRODUCTION

In the breeze we experience the passage of time as it occupies our senses and unites us with the world. We become actively engaged with the movement of our surroundings and become part of the world instead of objects merely inhabiting. A return to introversion is manifested as each person interprets their experience in a uniquely personally way. These are the moments of relief we have lost sight of and must reconsider in order to enrich and reinvigorate.

CONSIDERATIONS

DAYDREAMING

“Have you ever sat in an airplane or train, just staring out the window with nothing to read, looking at nothing in particular? You might have found that the time passed very pleasantly, with no real memory of what exactly you were looking at, what you were thinking, or for that matter, how much time actually elapsed… Thoughts turn inward—loosely connected, stream-of-consciousness thoughts so much like the nighttime dream state that we call them daydreams,” Daniel Levitin writes.

Can you relate? Why is it that “daydreaming and mind-wandering… are a natural state of the brain,” when so much of our time is actively spend trying to rationalize and critically think through daily problems? Perhaps, the daydream offers the needed alternative.

From our primordial nostalgia for dwelling and experiencing, we see a return to the primitive hut as a precedent for renewing our basic desires for meaningful shelter. When Michael Pollen builds his own hut, he was seeking a space that allowed for daydreaming by first offering solitude and a view providing a slightly different angle on things. Pollen’s wish was that his hut would encourage daydreaming by removing him from his typical day-to-day. Similarly in The Poetics of Space, Gaston Bachelard cites the house as providing the ultimate protection and comfort for daydreaming, imagination, and comfort to occur. He says the chief benefit of the house is that, “the house shelters daydreaming, the house protects the dreamer, and the house allows one to dream in peace.” Bachelard expands the phenomenology of the hut to the house and one’s recalled experiences of knowing a place so intimately that daydreaming can comfortably occur.

NOSTALGIA

“The older we get the more we seem to think that everything was better in the past. Old people a century ago wanted to go back two centuries, and two centuries ago they
wished it were three centuries earlier. Never has there been an age that people have been satisfied with,” Jun’ichiro Tanizaki writes in *In Praise of Shadows*.38 Tanizaki’s observations point out a continual nostalgia man has for things of the past. Interestingly, nostalgia also accounts for why we see a return the hut as a precedent for experiencing. Nostalgia provides the motivation for a mental return to our past a source if inspiration for our future. It makes our present rich with historical memory and evocative experience.

**WANDERING**

“If we think of the verb to dwell in a wide and essential sense, then it denotes the way in which humans fulfill their wandering from birth to death on earth under the sky. Everywhere the wandering remains the essence of dwelling, as the staying between earth and sky, between birth and death, between joy and pain, between work and world.”39 Heidegger is pointing out that wandering allows us to dwell in the world, rather than objectively positioning oneself in an either-or situation. The ability to move fluidly between extremes provides the experience of dwelling. It moves one beyond the linearity of the typical to the cloud or circuity of the unknown. Here, existence is full of discovery and thoughts moving in and out of focus.
6.02 Ellen Crawford, Diagram Model Side View, 2015
6.03 Ellen Crawford, Diagram Model Top View, 2015
THE TRUNK & THE ROOTS
THE JOURNEY

From the ground looking up, the journey might seem rather unknown. A choice of paths make unclear which exit or entrance is most desired. Undulations pull towards changing outcomes controlled by the steadfast aspiration of the journeyer, yet confused by a plethora of outside influences. Moving forward to the inside under the leaves may seem to simultaneously occupy a multitude of times as if climbing the trunk of a great tree with undulating bark that appeals to feelings of déjà vu as you move. Have you been there before or is this new territory? Is that stop familiar or does it just remind you of something known in your past?

The journey and its ability to locate us in the world remains rooted in our interpretation of our surroundings and the elements of architecture shaping human experience.

CONSIDERATIONS

THRESHOLD

Moving from one place to another, you cross a threshold. Rather, you experience a change which comes through the threshold. For crossing only comes when the experience is brief enough to be rudimentarily defined. In this case, the threshold is signified by door casing or a front step. However, the threshold can also be elongated and made more ambiguous, whether purposefully or serendipitously. Christian Norberg-Schulz speaks of the threshold as being the place where “the problem of dwelling comes to the fore,” for it is here that man experiences a transition of outside to inside. In the threshold, through the threshold, dwelling is experienced and made meaningful as dwelling.

ORIENTATION

It is difficult to talk about orientation without mentioning site and its significance. Kenneth Frampton even claims that the site and earthworks constitute the first architecture as opposed to the primitive hut saying, “The origin of architecture is not in the primitive hut, or the cave or the mythical “Adam’s House in Paradise. Before transforming a support into a column, a roof into a tympanum, before placing stone on stone, man placed the stone on the ground to recognize a site in the midst of an unknown universe: in order to take account of it and modify it.” In this context, the site serves as more than a setting or platform for the architecture. The modification of or addition to the site becomes the basis for man’s acknowledgment of himself in relationship to the world. The hut moves man into an inside-outside relationship with the world and allows the concept of dwelling to come forth.

Orientation adds ideas of location,
placement, and direction to man’s relationship with the world. It begins to clarify our navigation within the world to provide a clearer, more communicable experience of moving throughout. While the obvious thoughts when thinking of orientation and architecture are how the building sits on site, which direction windows face in relationship to the sun, and how the user accesses the building in terms of navigating the surrounding topography and views, a more poetic meaning is actually at work. Orientation provides man with the tools needed to remember their location, return to it, and communicate with others the memory of once being there.

ENCLOSURE & BOUNDARY

When Marc-Antonie Laugier and Gottfried Semper evaluate man’s first habitable self-produced structure, the primitive hut, they are investigating man’s first attempts at producing enclosure. They recognize we sought an inside from the outside and began building things like walls and roofs in our attempt to find shelter. As the built world expanded and culture influenced form and detailing, languages of architecture were created and enclosure was implemented with different meanings.

For example, in consideration of the roof, Jun’ichi Tanizaki writes, “If the roof of a Japanese house is a parasol, the roof of a Western house is no more than a cap, with as small a visor as possible so as to allow the sunlight to penetrate directly beneath the eaves.” The roof of the Japanese house differs from the roof of the Western house highlighting the role of architecture to create site-, climate-, and culture-appropriate enclosures.

Enclosure can also be seen or sensed in the natural landscape. Nature provides boundaries and barriers which can give a feeling of enclosure or can quite literally, as in the case of a cave or crevasse, enclose. Maybe our primitive huts where constructed in imitation of these natural boundaries, as if the earth itself suggested we move to the inside where enclosure limits exposure and vulnerability.

Lastly, it is beneficial to recognize that while the boundary of enclosure, made-made or natural, can be seen as a separation of two sides or the place where outside stops and inside begins, a boundary does not always need to be considered as such a harsh transition. The Greeks recognized the boundary as something much less objective saying, “A boundary is not that at which something stops but… the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing.”

OPENING

“Even before man became the builder of artificial spaces, it was the door that
7.01 Ellen Crawford, Garden Path, 2012
7.02 Roman Obelisk
7.03 Ellen Crawford, Maltese Window, 2011
7.04 Michael Heizer, Double Negative, 1970
demolished barriers,” Paolo Portoghesi writes of the door, an opening giving physical access.45 “It has however a window, an opening which makes us experience the inside as a complement to the outside,” Christian Norberg-Schulz writes of the window.46 In the opening, we experience relationship with the other side. Perhaps the other side even begins to merges with the one we occupy and the opening becomes a quiet threshold blurring the two.

But what about when the opening loses poetic relationship with the other side? In this scenario, are we settled to live as creatures in our world instead of humans dwelling in the world? Have we commoditized the opening to gratify our own desires? Consider this observation given by Juhani Pallasmaa, “… light has turned into a mere quantitative matter and the window had lost its significance as a mediator between two worlds, between enclosed and open, interiority and exteriority, private and public, shadow and light. Having its ontological meaning, the window has turned into a mere absence of the wall.”47

When we lose consideration of the opening, our ability to reconcile and understand the sides with any sort of poetry is compromised. The opening as a companion of architecture turns its back towards a thoughtful relationship with the other side. Our prospect of dwelling are replaced by mere living, made greedy by a senseless desire to have the world.

SITE

The following pages are a series of site analysis diagrams for this thesis project. The site is located in Mt. Auburn, an area of Cincinnati, Ohio just north of Prospect Hill, Over-The-Rhine, and the downtown central business district.
SITE LOCATION - NEIGHBORHOOD SCALE

NEIGHBORHOOD

POSSIBLE SITE ENTRY LOCATIONS
EAST-WEST SITE SECTION

NORTH-SOUTH SITE SECTION

EXISTING SITE INFRASTRUCTURE
POSSIBLE BUILDING AREA

ILLUMINATION HOURS

CLOUD COVER
Along Hillside:
- Close to playground & baseball field
- Wooded buffer between building and city
- Steep grade to build on

TEMPERATURE

WIND SPEED/ DIRECTION

POSSIBLE BUILDING LOCATION ALONG HILLSIDE
POSSIBLE BUILDING LOCATION
AT FLAT AREAS

Desired Building Site: At Flat Area
- Location allows for walkable entry and parking
- Vegetation can be cleared to allow for select views downtown

Desired Entry to Building: At North
- Allows for parking and accessible walking to building
- Balances downtown views from entry sequence

IDEAL BUILDING LOCATION
AT FLAT AREAS

IDEAL BUILDING ENTRY
THE BRANCH
There is a type of recurring architecture. It is unbound by movement. Though the style of it throughout time might differ, its embodied meaning derives from the same set of principles and desires. It was present from the onset. Perhaps varied, but always of concern. Once it came, it did not leave. Once it was known, it was, and is, and always was an inside.

I understood it first through the leaves of a great tree. The truck was hardly recognizable. The roots were unknown. The rain had not begun. Yet, the breeze brought gentleness and drew my eye to its story. My interest was held like the nagging of something not yet realized but intently held, only fuzzy still and not pronounced the hut. The hut was a type of teahouse. Not a teahouse of the past, but an experience looking towards the future.

Soon I was to discover(ed) the branch. The branch which held the cup. The cup which held the tea. In the holding came the ritual. And in the ritual came the retreat.

The retreat came in the choosing, the making, and the drinking.
CITATIONS
**FOOTNOTES**

**INTRODUCTION**


**THE RAIN**


6. Ibid. 25.


10. Ibid. 52.


16. Ibid. 307.

17. Ibid. 307.


**THE LEAVES**


24. Ibid.


27. Sharr, Adam. *Heidegger’s Hut*.


29. Time can literally be considered null in the case of a hut. Andrew Benjamin writes the following in his introduction of *Heidegger’s Hut*. “Embodied and lived temporalities bring specific conceptions of place into play. Place defined by urban and thus the city carry and are carried by a conception of time. Moreover, they allow for the possibility that with the urban the body, as a locus of time and place, is central. Counterposed to this possibility is the hut.” Sharr, Adam. *Heidegger’s Hut*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006. Pxivii.


33. “Rolling Huts: The Ultimate Camping

THE BREEZE  
35. Ibid. 38.  

THE TRUNK & THE ROOTS  

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THE TEAHOUSE
/ A CUP OF TEA