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ABSTRACT

Speed in relation to traveling leads to the loss of a direct engagement with the physical environment. Tourists travel as quickly as possible to see as much as they can, and after arriving at a station or airport they will leave the terminal in the travel mindset and still be focused on efficiency and speed, preventing them from connecting with the character of their destination on a deeper level.

It is my goal to create a transition space for travelers that mediates between the intimate character of place and the ubiquitous nature of high speed travel.

By designing for a traveler’s inertia I believe that architecture has the potential to better transition people between speed space and the experiential realm. Slowing down the tourist can allow for more meaningful experiences of place and let the traveler engage more deeply with one’s physical environment.
INTRODUCTION

The Increase in Travel

The word travel today conjures up images of reclined passengers sipping beverages, perhaps drifting in and out of sleep until reaching their destination. The use of the word travel here is much different than it once was. Tracing the etymology of the word itself, travel describes a strenuous search of adventure and experience; travel literally translates from travail meaning trouble, work and even torment.\(^1\) To travel in a pre-industrialized society meant risking life and limb traversing roads that became covered in snow in winter, became mud when it rained and whose bumpy surface could be felt in the traveler’s spine. Aside from these difficulties the traveler also had to defend against robbers and disease.\(^2\) This changed drastically with the invention of the railroad. No longer did animals determine the speed of life. Now new technologies allowed for people to travel as fast as engineering would allow. But speed was not the only change.

With the addition of cast iron rails the railroad now provided constant conditions that enabled people to travel on a regular basis, even allowing people to commute to and from work everyday. Suddenly the railroad had provided a means of transport that was not only fast and dependable, but comfortable and affordable. Whereas travel used to be only for those with sufficient funds, now travel had become accessible and early agencies began to shift their attention to the masses. Travel to foreign lands was sold as packaged

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\(^1\) Boorstin, \textit{The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America}, pg. 85
\(^2\) Boorstin, \textit{The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America}, pg. 83
tours that promised ease without risk.\textsuperscript{3} As Daniel Boorstin describes it these tours were, “…depriving travelers of initiative and adventure and cluttering the continental landscape with the Philistine middle classes.”\textsuperscript{4} Advances such as the railroad and the passenger steamship, and later with the automobile and airplane, had transformed the art of travel from an undertaking to a commodity. This new market was quickly saturated, bringing people to new parts of the world and creating a new industry dedicated exclusively to serving the tourist.

“Going by railroad I do not consider as travelling at all; it is merely being ‘sent’ to a place, and very little different from becoming a parcel.”\textsuperscript{5}

The Homogenization of the Landscape

It now happens, all too often, that the city is designed around the tourist. Speaking mostly from the automobile’s perspective, cities have now devoted special areas to the traveler. Hotels and restaurants are incessantly materializing on the outskirts of cities providing familiar eating and lodging locations along major highways. These ‘islands’ within cities are born from an architecture inspired by extensive travel, both domestic and international, and the ever-increasing number of tourists. Businesses survive here because they are housed in symbols of convenience and familiarity. This self-defining architecture shouts at passing motorists, asking for attention amid a sea of other competing signs.\textsuperscript{6} “Communication dominates space as an element in the

\textsuperscript{3} Boorstin The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America pg. 87
\textsuperscript{4} Boorstin The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America pg 87
\textsuperscript{5} Boorstin The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America pg. 87
\textsuperscript{6} Jackson Landscapes pg. 149
architecture and in the landscape.”7 These conditions are so prevalent that it is possible, and one is very likely, to travel great distances while only seeing those places intended for tourists. Unless the tourist becomes active and goes searching for those moments of cultural experience and understanding, he or she will completely miss the flaws and oddities that make the place locally distinctive.

This homogenization is further demonstrated by the way we travel. The Interstate Highway System by necessity placed a system of identical roadways passing through most major cities into the American landscape. Although it was intended for emergency mobility it is now the means by which most people experience the country. It was designed to be uniform whether one is driving through Dallas or Detroit. These asphalt gashes recognizable anywhere, along with their supporting gas stations, restaurants and hotels have created a new landscape so placeless that they keep the motor passenger comfortably out of touch with the landscape.8 In order to navigate one must only know the number of the road needed. No local knowledge of the place is necessary.9 Today landscapes and even modes of travel have become so universal that there has been a loss of engagement with the very land being traveled upon. Marc Auge discusses this new realm in his book Non-Places. Auge describes this new landscape composed of supermarkets, ATMs and other means of wordless communication as, “a world thus surrendered to solitary individuality, to the fleeting, the temporary and

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7 Venturi, Robert, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour. Learning from Las Vegas. Pg. 8
8 Boorstin The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America pg 112
9 Boorstin The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America pg 112
ephemeral.”¹⁰ People can get further than ever before and yet much of the experience of travel itself is lost. “The tourist gets there without the experience of having gone.”¹¹

“There people can eat without having to look out on an individualized, localized landscape. The disposable paper mat on which they are served shows no local scenes, but a map of numbered super-highways with the location of other ‘oases.’ They feel most at home above the highway itself, soothed by the auto stream to which they belong.”¹²

**Travel Becomes Passive**

As discussed earlier the historical notion of a traveler has to some degree been replaced by the modern presence of the tourist. The defining characteristic of this shift is the transition from travel being active to passive. This change occurred because technology allowed for travel to become easy, comfortable and accessible. As travel grew to an event unmarked after daily repetition the landscape adapted to allow for this new phenomenon. Travel today is fast and easy. Easy travel requires less attention, and as methods of travel continue to become more passive, so too will the drivers using them. Travelers will engage less with the landscape, both natural and built, as it becomes dispensable to them. Modern modes of travel and the passengers that use them have entered the realm of speed space.

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¹⁰ Auge. Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity. Pg. 63
¹¹ Boorstin The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America pg 94
¹² McCannell. The Tourist. pg. 107
SPEED SPACE

Speed space is defined by quickness and movement through space. The term applies to the tourist while he or she is en route to a destination. Means of travel have greatly improved and will continue to get faster, further separating passengers from the landscapes they traverse, and bringing them into speed space. Within this realm people often focus upon efficiency and speed. The travel environment is one that forces the tourist to become passive. Spatial awareness is severely diminished as the tourist’s attention shifts from the journey to the destination. The tourist’s engagements are shallow, fleeting, and lack the potential for a deeper level of attachment.

Space

In its most basic form space is the realm in which all life and events occur. In a physical sense it is the ground beneath us upon which we walk and live. It can be compared to a landscape in that it is only experienced with the sense of sight. A landscape is simply the portion of our physical environment visible from one point. It is a material topography that we look upon, but do not inhabit. Space as a concept implies distance both physically and emotionally. People do not have attachment to space. This is not to say that people are not able to feel attached to large expanses of land, however once this attachment is connected to a space it then becomes place. Space, as the word

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14 Cresswell. Place: A Short Introduction. Pg. 8
will apply to this thesis, is the physical environment in which humans live, providing the potential for emotional connections and the development of place.

**Speed and its Effects on Modern Culture**

The adjectives fast and slow are relative in that they must have a comparison in order to hold any meaning. As such, the act of walking could not be considered slow until improvements such as the horse and carriage and to a further degree the invention of the steam powered train.\(^{15}\) Suddenly technology had introduced a faster way to get around and a new pace for life. As technology increased so did the speeds at which people could travel, opening up the world. Speed was beginning to be associated with words like ‘progress’ and ‘prosperity’.\(^{16}\) To travel fast was suddenly not only desirable, but expected, and to move ‘slowly’ was deemed a nuisance. These qualities were solidified and further linked to progress and the future at the New York World’s Fair in 1939-1940.

Here speed was presented as a ‘societal value’.\(^{17}\) The fair showed an optimistic view of the future and all that was possible in the World of Tomorrow. Displayed were drawings and models of a ‘utopia of fast travel’ in which people would be able to determine where they wanted to be and have the ability to get there.\(^{18}\) General Motors featured an expansive model in its Futurama exhibit which showed Fair visitors, “3000

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\(^{15}\) Peters. *Time, Innovation and Mobilities: Travel in Technological Cultures*. Pg. 31
\(^{16}\) Ibid. Pg. 38
\(^{17}\) Ibid.
\(^{18}\) Ibid.
square miles of American progress and prosperity; the virtual wonderland of the future." Within this wonderland were skyscrapers a quarter of a mile high, and connecting areas of the city was a “highly developed modern traffic system. Highway engineering at its most spectacular…cars may make right and left turns at rates of speed up to 50 mph” the narrator of the exhibit explained. Speed and the desire for speed had been brought into every facet of American life. Streamlined designs, based on fluid forms and the expressed horizontal line, penetrated the public on a level far beyond the realm of transportation. Although initially applied to automobiles as a conventional symbol of speed, the style became associated with the image of the future and crept into daily life in various forms. In the kitchen, toasters looked more like futuristic travel pods than cooking accessories. American culture had reached the point where speed was a fact of life.

**Speed and the Experience of Space**

The future showed a world in which technology allowed people to move faster and with more convenience, but these abilities would prove to separate the passenger from the landscape he or she was crossing. Speed changes the way a person experiences space. Under normal circumstances man is able to designate his location in space by demarcating zones such as front-back and left-right. While this is still possible under the

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21 Jormakka. *Flying Dutchmen: Motion in Architecture*. Pg. 13
control of speed, man loses the ability to experience all of these zones. While walking, all four zones are for the most part equal. The front is favored over the back because it is presented before the body and is visible, but man is still able to turn around and understand his position in space in all four directions. When driving a car at 75 miles per hour however, man’s perception of space narrows and the frontal zone dominates.\textsuperscript{22} Space now has become limited to a superficial understanding of where man is going, while where he \textit{is} slips by in out-of-focus snippets. Man’s focus on the view has led to the loss of his other senses as tools for understanding his environment.

In his book \textit{The Eyes of the Skin} Juhani Pallasmaa says that, “Quality of space, matter and scale are measured equally by the eye, ear, nose, skin, tongue, skeleton and muscle.”\textsuperscript{23} The French phenomenological philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty likewise stated that, “[The] experience of space is dependent on movement and actions of the body, rather than on vision.”\textsuperscript{24} Clearly space was once experienced through the heat of a harsh sun beating down upon a weary traveler, or through the smell of a storm approaching in the distance. Although there are instances where this is still true, space today is mostly described through visual indicators. Color, the perception of space and texture are all that the traveler has to identify a landscape. This means that interactions with a space while controlled by speed will be fleeting and necessarily shallow. By excluding all other senses the domination of the sense of sight has isolated man from his environment and prevented him from understanding that environment on a far deeper level.

\textsuperscript{22} Jormakka. \textit{Flying Dutchmen: Motion in Architecture}. Pg. 76
\textsuperscript{23} Pallasmaa. \textit{The Eyes of the Skin}. Pg. 41
\textsuperscript{24} Jormakka. \textit{Flying Dutchmen: Motion in Architecture}. Pg. 70
The Vehicle as Insulator from Landscape

In large part this isolation from the environment began with the invention of the vehicle. Even the early carriage brought controversy and discussions about removal from an environment. Jean-Jacques Rousseau discusses the difference between traveling by vehicle and being exposed to the world by saying, “When all you want to do is to arrive, you dash in a [carriage]; but when you want to travel, you must go on foot.”25 Here he begins to differentiate between a landscape that is viewed and a landscape that is experienced. Vision separates us from the world26, and vehicles command solely the use of vision to traverse a landscape. The depth of the experience is lost.

Vehicles today are more than ever simply tools for crossing a landscape. They are increasingly becoming insulators from the landscape and robbing the tourist of the experience. This is because they have developed beyond being a vehicle and into an inclusive, artificial environment from which the passenger may look out upon the land from the comfort of familiar surroundings. The tourist expects that trains will be similar no matter the location. They expect it will be maintained at a comfortable temperature, will have appropriate noise levels, and will overall be comfortable: they expect an artificial environment. This artificial environment, besides accommodating the previously mentioned needs, surrounds the passenger with a windshield and steel body to mentally and physically separate the passenger from exterior conditions. Weather itself has almost become irrelevant as vehicles have largely been able to conquer the conditions

25 Peters. Time, Innovation and Mobilities: Travel in Technological Cultures. Pg. 34
26 Juhani Pallasmaa. The Eyes of the Skin. Pg. 25
that once made travel impossible. The exterior is relating less and less to the interior as technology increases and tourists come to expect these conditions.

The Travel Landscape

Allowing for the existence of speed space is an infrastructure whose intrusive presence is felt in most parts of the world. This infrastructure consists of highways, networks of iron rails and airports connecting distant locations. The travel landscape’s homogenous character removes place from the travel experience. The traveler is left with a fleeting experience of space; a temporary existence along an enduring path.

The Automobile

“Speed was of the essence, the joy of sitting in the car and hurtling himself through space. That became a goal beyond all others, a hunger fed at any price. Nothing around him lasted for more than a moment, and as one moment followed another, it was as though he alone continued to exist. He was a fixed point in a whirl of changes; a body poised in utter stillness as the world rushed through him and disappeared.”

The automobile requires the most extensive infrastructure of any mode of transportation. Roadways must provide the driver with any possibility of directions and destinations. The car offers freedom, and the highway delivers access. The automobile changes the perspective of the urban environment. While the city has traditionally been a vertical agglomeration of buildings, the car has transformed it into an endless horizontal expanse.

27 Schwarzer. Zoomscape: Architecture in Motion and Media. Pg. 116
of buildings structured around a grid.\textsuperscript{28} The car allows access to unprecedented amounts of space, broadening the stage of daily life.

The 1982 film Koyaanisqatsi by director Godfrey Reggio examines the fast pace of modern life.\textsuperscript{29} The title of the film is a Hopi word which means ‘life out of balance’. The director uses clips of everyday situations to express how society’s dependence on technology has created a monotonous and machine-like quality of daily human operation. One of the more powerful shots in the film shows a highway cutting through a city at night, the path of the road only discernible through the red and white streaks of the cars’ headlights and taillights. The speed of the shot is increased to reveal the sheer amount of traffic that occupies the road, creating an incessant stream of cars all driven by people on their way home. The contrast between the dark, steady city and the bright, darting cars further illustrates the isolation between the driver and the surrounding environment. The speeds and very nature of the highway requires that the driver be mentally disconnected from the landscape. The highway moves through a landscape, it is not a part of it. As Marc Auge states in Non-Places, “Motorway travel is thus doubly remarkable: it avoids, for functional reasons, all the principal places to which it takes us.”\textsuperscript{30}

The Railroad

“The landscape built by railroads and seen from them is a place fleeting and linear, an environment in the throes of movement and change, a corridor of new and old, of invention succeeded by obsolescence.” \textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{28} Schwarzer. Zoomscape: Architecture in Motion and Media. Pg. 77
\textsuperscript{30} Auge. Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity. Pg.
\textsuperscript{31} Schwarzer. Zoomscape: Architecture in Motion and Media. Pg. 39
The train is the most restricted mode of transportation. While a myriad of rails connects cities and countries, the path is predetermined. Each trip will pass the same buildings and take the same amount of time. The view from the train is also unique. Unlike the automobile where the view is frontal through a windshield, the train view is perpendicular to the direction of travel. The passenger, instead of looking toward the future, is forced to look at the present which is constantly slipping by in blurred images. The train replaces a multidimensional pedestrian with a linear encounter of the landscape.\(^{32}\)

The rails that allow for the train’s constant movement also exist independently of the train. Because of the solidity required for this mode of transportation, train tracks are always present, even when trains are not. The rails cut through dense urban areas and open countryside alike, often splitting the landscape. The juxtaposition between the permanence of the train tracks and the speed and constancy of the train cars demonstrates the transient nature of the railroad experience.

The Airplane

The airplane requires the least amount of infrastructure, in the least it is the most contained. Airports act as portals to cities; gates to places. And yet the airports themselves rarely demonstrate place in their design. To their credit some airports respond to their region’s identity through form or materiality, such as Denver International Airports peaked roof structure resembling the Rocky Mountains. However

\(^{32}\) Schwarzer. Zoomscape: Architecture in Motion and Media. Pg. 58
on the inside, all airports function the same, and the organization and design is in response more to efficiency and speed than to character and quality of experience.

Daniel Boorstin describes the airline industry’s image of the stewardess as a resource offering standardized, impersonal charm. Similar to this I believe that the airport has become an extension of the stewardess, becoming a ‘symbol of the new homogenized blandness of the tourist’s world.’

Beyond the terminals used for the arrivals and departures of travelers, the flightpath also removes the passenger from the landscape. Whereas the automobile places a window between the driver and the landscape, the airplane separates the passenger from the land below with a window and 30,000 miles. The singular perspective from the airplane offers passengers a new experience of space. From above the physical environment in which he or she lives is hardly recognizable to the passenger. Distance removes the human presence in the built environment; the streets appear empty and cars creep along freeways. Only buildings and the landscape are discernible, but the views are often of rooftops and other areas that were not meant to be seen. The airplane can offer a new understanding of the environment in which the passenger lives, but it rarely strengthens his place within that environment. I can remember on one of my first airplane experiences departing an overcast and rainy Orlando, only to burst through the clouds and into the eternal blue sky above. Before this point my mind had not made connections between passing clouds and the space that they occupy. The flight put the world in a new perspective for me. Even though the airplane can allow for new

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33 Boorstin. The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America. Pg. 95
34 Ibid.
discoveries, the expanding space that these flights occupy will often disconnect the passenger from the land. The distances traveled on flights are too large to comprehend and instead of gaining an appreciation for space, space becomes diminished to the traveler.

The Tourist

Described thus far is the realm of the tourist. It is characterized by speed and movement through undifferentiated space. Travel is easy, and although this is no fault of the tourist, it is the tourist that suffers. Speed and convenience have turned what was once an arduous experience into a lackadaisical vacation. Many factors have brought the tourist’s experience into this form, and all of them separate man from his environment. These factors include technology making transport easy, fast speeds disconnecting the passenger from the landscape, and firm vehicles separating man from his environment. All of these describe a similar shift; the shift from active to passive.

Perhaps the largest influence on travel becoming passive was the beginning of travel becoming a commodity through the introduction of travel packages by Cook. His success depended on the ability to fill a vehicle, be it train or steam ship in order to transport enough people to turn a profit. This forced the passenger to become passive and forfeit control of the journey. The vehicle was outside of the passenger’s skin and he was left to watch the shifting horizon until arriving at his destination. This caused the focus of travel to move from the journey to the destination. Even though travel as an act was
still new and exciting, the increasing frequency of long distance travel led to a dissolve of interest, and it became simply a means to an end. When the journey lost its value, the passenger’s desire for speed increased, and as travel speeds grew accordingly the tourist became more separated from the landscape. Today tourists circle the globe while understanding very little about the places they visit. Frustrated by these occurrences, some tourists today strive for a new kind of experience; one that returns to a slower, more engaging approach to travel. They are calling for the active creation of experience and place; a return to the experiential realm.
THE EXPERIENTIAL REALM

Characterized by a slower pace and deeper relationships with the physical environment, the experiential realm is the setting for day-to-day life. Observations within the experiential realm are acute and humans experience spatial qualities with all of their senses. As the domain of the traveler, it is within this field that designations of place are created and maintained.

Place

Space has been defined as the physical environment in which humans live, providing the potential for emotional connections. As such place is simply space with emotional connections. The important difference here is the addition of human involvement. Space is usually gazed upon, while place is interacted with, perhaps creating attachment for various reasons. As Yi-Fu Tuan states, “Undifferentiated space becomes place as we endow it with value.”

People most easily begin to identify place through a physical recognition of significance.

Because space is usually non-descript and expansive, place is usually identified as a result of its physical characteristics. The genius loci, or spirit of a place, begins to explain how every site is distinct. There are characteristics of every space which make it unlike any other space. A place should have its own physical identity, something that

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35 Tuan. Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience. Pg. 129
sets it apart from any other location. To use Vail, Colorado as an example, the town is situated within a long, narrow valley. Vail has several distinctive physical features. To begin with the most obvious is Vail Mountain itself. The mountain is situated to the south of town and creates one half of the valley in which the town sits. Running directly through town is the Gore Creek which drains from the Gore Range, a prominent mountain range visible to the east of town. All of these features distinguish Vail from even the nearest town, and all of them provide a means in which people may anchor themselves in space.

Aside from the natural physical environment, place is dependent upon the built environment to create a physical coherence. This physical coherence can be attained through an architectural similarity or compatibility. Architectural similarity helps to understand the environment by grouping similar areas of towns and cities. These groupings may be dependent on geography, such as LoDo, the lower downtown area, in Denver or SoMa, the neighborhood south of Market St. in San Francisco. Groupings may also happen as a result of developments in which all of the buildings look very similar to one another. Examples of this are all too familiar in a country choked by urban sprawl and the rise of the suburbs. Regardless, these examples of physical coherence allow for these areas to operate as a whole and create a local identity.

The physical environment alone provides the framework for which place may exist. In order for there to be place there must be people. According to Arnold Berleant,

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36 Menin. Constructing Place. Pg. 43
37 Menin. Constructing Place. Pg. 43
place is simply the location of experience. The change from space to place requires a physical location and a willing participant. The physical surroundings create nothing more than the opportunity for a conscious body to assign meaning. A space must be truly experienced in order to become place.

**Slow Speed**

Even within a world built by speed, people are beginning to realize the value of a slower pace. Frustrated by a growing knowledge of space, movements have begun which work to slow down the way people live their lives. Movements such as Slow Food, Slow Home, and various slow tourism groups seek more intimate relationships with the world they inhabit. Slow Food was founded with the goal of preserving local culture and foods, believing food, as a life source, to be an important part of life, and one that is often taken for granted. Slow Home is a similar movement that aims to combat the often ‘shallow relationships with food and home due to the speed of life.’ As a Canadian architect and the founder of Slow Home, John Brown believes that if people take a more active role in the food they eat and the homes in which they dwell, more direct relationships with the home and physical environment will be created.

The tourism industry is one that has always been about speed. People travel to exotic places with the goal of seeing as much as possible. Of course while trying to see everything one rarely ‘sees’ anything. The goal of groups such as the Slow Tourism Club

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38 Ibid. pg 42  
39 Ibid. pg 43  
and Off the Beaten Path is to create a traveler’s experience, not the tourist’s. By reducing the volume of a trip, one can focus more solely upon the quality of the experience. Trips like these are for tourists looking for a new kind of travel experience; one that encourages slow travel, allowing people to live the places they visit, not consume them.

The values of slow have been realized but slowly forgotten as societies increasingly embraced technology and all that it could offer. In history, many notable writers expressed their love of walking. By not going by carriage, walkers are able to engage with their entire environment. Zones of space are equal and the walker is able to change direction rapidly, allowing for new and unexpected paths. Authors such as Thoreau, Robert Louis Stephenson, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau believed that ‘the physical act of walking restores the natural and primitive quality of observation, through which one can re-establish contact with both the physical world and their moral order underlying it.’ Rousseau describes in his book, Reveries of the Solitary Walker, how much he enjoyed the act of walking and the different possibilities that it presented. By being able to choose any number of paths to arrive at the same destination Rousseau created the possibility for unexpected interactions. On some walks he would choose a particular path because it passed by a beggar boy with whom he would engage in conversation.

Walking creates a relation with the landscape.

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41 www.offthebeatenpath.com
42 http://www.buzzle.com/articles/slow-tourism-the-concept-of-away-resorts.html
43 Peters. Time, Innovation and Mobilities. Pg. 35
44 Rousseau. Reveries of the Solitary Walker. Pg.
45 Peters. Time, Innovation and Mobilities. Pg. 35
Slow speeds most importantly allow more easily for the creation of place. Place, as mentioned before, is a space endowed with emotional value. Humans must interact with a space in order to understand its qualities. By experiencing a site slowly, one is able to engage with it more directly and through more than solely a visual sense. By walking one is not removed from the environment as in a vehicle. Therefore one can share the environment of the site. By slowing down, people can assign significance to spaces and enjoy them for their imperfections and subtleties.

The Traveler, A New Kind of Experience

“A man on foot, on horseback or on a bicycle will see more, feel more, enjoy more in one mile than the motorized tourists can in a hundred miles.”

Clubs such as Off the Beaten Path strive to provide tourists with the experience of the traveler. The traveler in an historical understanding of the word was one who arduously strove for experiences. The traveler is active and goes in search of adventure. He or she is directly responsible for reaching a destination. There is a shift in focus for the traveler. Whereas the tourist looks forward to the destination, for the traveler the journey is the destination. Getting to the destination is a meaningful activity in itself.

46 Abbey. Desert Solitaire. Pg. 67
47 Off the Beaten Path is a travel agency operating in Bozeman, MT that offers group vacations in carefully chosen locations. The agency can also create personalized vacations for individuals. Off the Beaten Path strives for quality over quantity concerning experiences.
The traveler engages on a deeper level with the places he or she experiences, creating stronger attachments.
TRANSITIONING BETWEEN THE TWO REALMS

Modern life depends on speed. As a critical need for effective business or simply an easier way to stay in touch, speed has become a thing the world depends on in order to continue functioning. Science and technology will continue to increase the speed of life in all areas. This paper is not proposing that this is prevented. Instead, the goal of this is to stress the importance of always grounding people when they come into the experiential realm. Travel will only get faster and people will go even farther, but the experience will not be lost if architecture can bring the tourist into the mindset of the traveler. While all areas of design are tending to go towards the expression of movement and speed, I believe that stations and terminals stand as the portals between speed space and the experiential realm; between fast and slow. As such they must respect yet separate these two domains.

Experiential Inertia

On the morning of January 12, 2007 the busy commuters in Washington D.C.’s L’Enfant Plaza metro station started their days with a little classical music in the form of a street performer. However this street performer was unlike any that they had heard before or would ever hear again. The performer, donning a Stradivarius violin worth $3.5 million, was Joshua Bell. Bell is arguably the best violinist in the world.\(^{48}\) Having recently performed for a sold out concert, whose ticket prices averaged $100, Bell was playing as part of a social experiment conducted by The Washington Post. They were

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\(^{48}\) Weingarten. Pearls Before Breakfast. The Washington Post. April 8, 2007. Bell’s musical talents can command $1,000 a minute in his performances, according to The Washington Post.
interested to see if beauty could be recognized in incongruous places. Having gone through every possible scenario, preparing for mobs that would surround and engulf Bell, the experiment began with Bell playing some of the most difficult yet beautiful songs ever composed. After playing for forty five minutes Bell had earned only $32, but more surprisingly, nobody had stopped.

John Lane describes the loss of appreciation of beauty and the events of that morning by saying people didn’t stop ‘not because [they] didn’t have the capacity to understand beauty, but because it was irrelevant to them.’\textsuperscript{49} "‘The people scurry by in comical little hops and starts, cups of coffee in their hands, cellphones at their ears, ID tags slapping at their bellies, a grim \textit{danse macabre} to indifference, inertia and the dingy, gray rush of modernity.’\textsuperscript{50} Modern times are fast. People are busy. One can go to farther places faster than ever before, but what have they gained? If not one of the 1,097 people that morning truly appreciated Bell for his talents, what else are people missing? Architecture has the potential to move away from the current trends and bring travelers and commuters back into the slower pace of the experiential realm, allowing for deeper engagements with the physical environment.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
Vail, Colorado sits along Interstate 70 in the mountain corridor. This section of roadway is the main route for travelers moving east-west without taking considerably longer alternatives going north or south. The interstate through here is used for commuting, traveling and for moving freight. As it exists today the road functions smoothly during the week, but on weekends there are usually delays due to Denver traffic moving into or out of the mountains. The normal two hour drive can easily be doubled during one of these events. Projections for the future use of this road say that the number of users will double in the next 20 years. This would create gridlock and city driving conditions would exist throughout the mountain corridor. Alternatives are being explored currently and the leading options are adding additional lanes and the implementation of a high speed train link from Denver International Airport to the Eagle County Regional Airport 40 miles west of Vail. While adding lanes is more feasible the costs will compare to a rail system and by the time construction is completed the road will again be seeing more congestion due to an increasing number of drivers. Clearly the solution must work to not only get cars off of this section of road, but also to raise awareness for alternative methods of transportation.

The most plausible rail system employs magnetic levitation technology which uses magnets to float the train cars over a track, reducing friction and eliminating sound. The system is able to handle grades up to 10 percent which is adequate for its proposed route following the interstate. The system would act as a continuation of the tourist’s
flights into Denver International Airport. Users would board the train as their connecting ‘flight’ to reach their mountain destination. The system also has several proposed stops within the Denver area as well as at other ski areas and towns along Interstate 70. The goal is for this rail system to allow an alternative means of transportation into the mountains at a higher speed, independent of weather conditions, that could connect to a station in Vail which would provide access to the town and other means of transport.

Qualitative Program

Through the placement of an intermodal transportation center in Vail, my goal is to transition travelers between the ubiquity of high speed travel and the experiential qualities of the town of Vail. This center will become an entrance into Vail Village and will assist in transforming the tourist into the traveler, allowing visitors to engage more deeply with the environment. In terms of transportation this center will include a high speed train station, bus terminals for both regional and local bus services, a taxi pick-up and drop-off area, covered car parking, and bike storage. Supporting these functions of transit will be restaurants and convenience shops providing the traveler with basic necessities.

In addition the center will provide room for the Colorado Ski Museum which is currently situated on the site, but which may be moved if needed. Also the center will feature condos available for year-round residents. The contrast between the speeds of the resident and the tourist will provide excellent opportunities for architectural moments of
comparison and understanding. The lifestyle and speed of a person within his or her daily routine is much different than the speed of a person in a foreign place with a limited knowledge and who is distanced from any solid notion of home. The local may enjoy slow cooked meals from within the confines of their home, perhaps read a book and sleep in a familiar bed. The traveler on the other hand will find home in the form of a hotel room which another traveler called home the night before and which yet another will call home the night following. Meals for the traveler will for the most part be eaten in restaurants and other transient spaces. To further demonstrate these differences the transportation center will contain hotel accommodations as well as short term sleeping pods within the station. The ability to compare and contrast these traits between the local and the traveler, in three different conditions, will create a richer interaction within the transportation center, generating an awareness of fast and slow.

Besides providing these basic needs, the goal of this project is to slow the tourist so that he or she may become more aware of his or her environment, becoming a traveler and creating meaningful experiences of a place.

Quantitative Program

Transportation Functions
High Speed Rail Station
- **Passenger Waiting Area for 1,000 passengers, 25,000 sf**
  Two Platforms for Mag-Lev Trains
  - One Eastbound for Other Ski Resorts, Denver, and DIA
  - One Westbound for Eagle County Regional Airport and Other Resorts
-Platforms will be approximately 600 ft. long, depending upon the number of segments on each train
-Ticket Counter/offices 600 sf

Baggage Claim for Train and Perhaps Bus Use
Must accommodate up to 500 passengers, approximately 5,000 sf

Bus Terminal
-Waiting area for buses approximately 5,200 sf
National Service
  Greyhound Service to all Parts of Country
Regional Service
  Connecting Vail to Lower Portion of Valley, Airport
Local Service
  Connecting Village to Other parts of Vail, East Vail and West Vail
-Must allow for 6 existing bus stalls 60 ft. long
-one station for local bus service
  -600 sf for waiting area
  -must be adjacent to E. Meadow Dr.
-Ticketing Counter w/offices 450 sf

Taxi Stalls
Vans To Vail
Service connecting Vail to DIA
Local Taxis
Service Throughout Valley
A minimum of 250 feet of curb space

Parking Garage
Covered and Some Uncovered Spaces
Must provide equal or greater than current number of spaces

Bike Storage
Adequate Space to allow for visitors and locals alike to leave bikes safely and enter village on foot
Approximately 100 spaces

Restaurant/Retail/Housing
Restaurants
  Expansion of Existing Restaurant in Bus Terminal 5,000 sf
  New Restaurant for Increase in Users due to Train Station 5,000 sf
Retail
  Travel Convenience Shop 1,000 sf

Lodging
Sleeping Pods-most transient spaces
  -30 pods, 20 sf each, 600 sf total
Hotel-transient spaces
  -50 rooms, 600 sf each, 30,000 sf total
Condos for permanent residents
  -25 regular units, 1,000 sf each, 25,000 sf total
-5 suites, 2,000 sf each, 10,000 sf total
PRECEDEENTS

St. Pancras Station  London, England

When designers set out to create St. Pancras Station they were facing a challenge that few had ever faced before. That is because the train station as a typology was new. The invention of the steam powered train created a circumstance that had never been seen before; they had to create a building that would connect the new, mysterious mode of train travel to the existing, slower urban fabric. In response to this the project is composed of two primary components including a train shed to house all the functional needs of a train station, and a hotel/façade that responded to the surrounding environment while transitioning passengers between the two very different realms.

Architecture played a very secondary role in the design of the earliest train stations. Trains were engineering marvels and so were their shelters. Because of the expansive spans required stations became some of the largest enclosed spaces in the world. St. Pancras for instance, with an undivided span of 243 feet was at its time the largest space to ever be enclosed.\textsuperscript{51} Engineers were brought on to a project long before the architect was hired. Stations were seen as feats of engineering, and architects were brought on to ‘decorate them.’\textsuperscript{52} The train shed by the engineer was used for the functional aspects of train travel such as arranging passage, getting rid of luggage, and

\textsuperscript{51} Trachtenberg. Architecture: From Prehistory to Postmodernity. Pg. 454
\textsuperscript{52} Dethier. All Stations: A Journey Through 150 Years of Railroad History. Pg. 25
awaiting departure. By necessity it had a very tall roof in order to dissipate steam.

Whereas the station is a symbol of functional achievement, St. Pancras was one of the first to address the difference this progress created between the rails and the city.

Connecting St. Pancras to the surrounding city is what is referred to as the passenger building. While the train shed is dedicated to the functions of the train, the passenger building provides for any needs the passenger may have. It contained ticketing, seating, and even hotel accommodations. More importantly however, it provided the traveler with an entrance to London. Here the psychological separation of the train shed and the passenger building created a threshold and informed the traveler that he or she was crossing a threshold. The distinction between these two forms allowed the visitor to, what Trachtenberg describes as, “Make the jolting transition between the familiar urban world and the realm of steam and speed.”

The train no longer possesses such a sense of wonder, but today more than ever architecture must connect the experiential realm with the faster speed space of the train while respecting their differences.

Liege Guillemins TGV Station  Liege, Belgium

Contrasting with St. Pancras Station is Guillemins TGV Station in Liege, which strives for a seamless connection between the station’s interior and exterior. In large part this is because the station is situated so as to connect two very different parts of Liege.

53 Trachtenberg.  Pg. 454
54 Trachtenberg.  Pg. 454
Colline de Cointe is a tranquil residential area of the city, while Guillemins is a very urban, busy area consisting mostly of retail services. Calatrava’s goal was to connect these two formerly disparate places by creating a transparent station that could link them both physically and visually. While the project is successful in these terms, it displays the shift in the public’s attitude toward technology.

St. Pancras is known for addressing both modern technology and the existing urban fabric. Guillemins TGV Station combines these two areas into a singular understanding of speed and existence. Whereas St. Pancras recognized both realms, Calatrava’s new design emphasizes a ‘seamless interaction between the city and the station.’ The design removes any form of a façade from the building. Even though this may provide for more efficient maneuvering, the design brings the train deeper into people’s everyday experiences of life. This is not to suggest that the train is not an important part of people’s lives, but I believe that trains should be viewed more as a means to an end. Trains transport people. They connect places that were previously disconnected. The speed and efficiency of the train should not impact every aspect of our daily lives. The station has the responsibility to keep the realms of speed and experience separated.

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55 Thorne. Modern Trains and Splendid Stations. Pg. 59
56 http://www.arcspace.com/architects/calatrava/liege/
Nordpark Railway Station, Innsbruck, Austria

This last case study is relevant because first it deals with the loss of a separation between the urban fabric and the realm of the train, and second because of its context; it is a medium sized alpine town that is introducing new technology in the form of a train station. Zaha Hadid uses this project to explore further her concepts of seamless fluidity. The designs of her stations in Innsbruck focus on the play between the ‘shell and shadow.’ The idea is similar to traditional Japanese architecture in that a massive roof hovers over the ground plane creating a shadow in which the moments of life occur. Through the fluid shapes of the shells Hadid tries to express the movement and circulation that happens within the shadow. This shifts the train typology from an attempt to transition the passenger into the realm of speed to simply presenting speed to the traveler from the outset. The building itself becomes a symbol for speed. The conditions on the exterior of the station are more similar to those on the interior than they have ever been before. Speed is a necessity in life today, and the train is just one of many ways to obtain it. Travelers entering stations are no longer halted by the wonder of the train. It no longer maintains a level of mysticism. The designs of Hadid’s stations in Innsbruck reflect this change. Similar to Calatrava’s station in Belgium, the Nordpark Cable Railway shows the prevalence of speed in all aspects of life.

57 http://www.e-architect.co.uk/austria/nordpark_zaha_hadid.htm
SITE ANALYSIS

The region that Vail is situated within was first inhabited by Ute Indians who used it as summer hunting and fishing grounds. The area saw the first introduction of white settlers when miners came into the valley searching for lead carbonate, silver, and gold. These settlers ranched on the land and the region remained largely undiscovered until the 1950’s. It was around this time that Pete Seibert and Earl Eaton began to consider the possibility of opening a ski resort within the valley.

Pete Seibert had been a member of the 10th Mountain Division, a highly skilled military unit trained during World War II. The Division was created in order to prepare soldiers for fighting in harsh terrains, which in some cases required the use of skis in order to traverse the land. To train soldiers to ski, a base was created named Camp Hale in the Rocky Mountains a short distance from Vail. The Division was critical in battles fought in the Italian mountains. Following the end of the war many soldiers, now well trained skiers, returned to Colorado and had a large impact on the North American ski industry. Pete Seibert, one of these soldiers, realized the potential of the Vail Valley. In 1957 he and Earl Eaton began soliciting investors. On December 15, 1962 Vail Resort officially opened with two chairlifts and nine ski runs. After expanding and eventually hosting several World Cup events Vail received international attention, attracting more

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58 http://www.coloradoskihistory.com/areahistory/vail.html
visitors. The mountain today has 31 chairlifts and an unmatched 5,289 skiable acres, the most in North America. Vail sees an average of 1.4 million visitors annually.

**Geography/ Climate**

Vail is situated 100 miles west of Denver, in the heart of the Rocky Mountains. The town sits within a long, narrow valley that is seven miles long and two miles wide. The ski area is south of the town, creating one half of the valley. To the east is the prominent Gore Range, and running through the town is the Gore Creek. Interstate 70 also runs directly through the slender valley, making it one of the most prominent features. This portion of the roadway is frequently closed in the winter months due to poor weather conditions. The land surrounding Vail is rugged and very beautiful. Vail’s forests are a fairly even split between evergreens and aspens, giving Vail a very green appearance in the spring and summer, and a somewhat gray appearance in the winter.

Vail is located at 39 degrees North latitude, giving the area fairly mild summer and winter temperatures. The town has around 300 blue sky days a year. Temperatures average 75 degrees F for the summer months, and 25 degrees F for winter months. Lows during the summer reach an average of 38 degrees F and in the winter around 2 degrees F. The average total precipitation for Vail is 21.97 inches, while the average

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60 [http://www.vailgov.com/docs/Overview1.PDF](http://www.vailgov.com/docs/Overview1.PDF)
61 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
annual amount of snowfall is 184.3 inches. The winter sun angle for noon in January is 29 degrees, and for noon in July it is 71.6 degrees.

The Town

The town’s shape is a direct result of the valley that it sits within. Vail is a very linear community with four notable town centers. Providing most of the residential neighborhoods are East and West Vail. These flank the central portion of town and are the first parts of Vail to be seen as one drives through the valley in either the eastbound or westbound direction. Forming the ‘downtown’ part of Vail are Lionshead Village and Vail Village. These villages are the tourist destinations and contain a multitude of shops, restaurants and lodging options. Both of these are accessed from Vail’s central exit off of Interstate 70. The villages sit adjacent to the ski mountain, providing access for skiers. At its creation the town of Vail wanted to create an alpine escape that was reminiscent of a European village. The town became sister cities with St. Moritz, Switzerland and the villages took on a strong Bavarian influence. While this influence is slowly fading there are still many existing buildings from Vail’s first village. Today the small collection of buildings is giving way to larger complexes with more ‘modern resort’ traits.

The epicenter of the Vail experience is Vail Village. Vail Village contains some of Vail’s most iconic landmarks such as the covered bridge that crosses the Gore Creek, and the clock tower whose familiar face is usually photographed before the majestic Gore

[^64]: [http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/cgi-bin/cliMAIN.pl?covail](http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/cgi-bin/cliMAIN.pl?covail)
Results from the Western Regional Climate Center. Period of Record: 2/1/1985 to 10/31/2005
Range. Vail Village provides two points of access to the mountain and is consistently the busiest part of Vail.

Besides the obvious draw of skiers and snowboarders, the area’s natural beauty brings summer visitors who like to take advantage of outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, rafting and rock climbing. The abundance of locations for these activities makes Vail a home for outdoor enthusiasts. The town overall is very young, active and healthy. In fact Vail hosts the Teva Mountain Games, a series of outdoor competitions that attracts some of the best athletes in the world.

The town itself has a year-round population of 4,500 residents. Vail has many more male residents than female, with a 58.4% population. As stated earlier the town sees an average of 1.4 million visitors. For the summer guests the most commonly stated reason for visiting was for a mountain getaway, and for winter guests it was for skiing/snowboarding.

The Site

The site for the project is the current Vail Village parking structure which sits along the frontage road. The parking structure provides free summer parking and paid parking for winter visitors. The structure contains four levels of parking with portions of the top deck offering a fifth level that occupies half of one side. On the fourth level is a transportation center that is used for national, regional and local bus services. Greyhound

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65 http://www.vailgov.com/docs/Overview1.PDF
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
buses come through on the bus company’s east-west route. This station is the only station that still exists within the valley. A regional bus service uses the transportation center as one of its stops. The service connects the towns within the valley. Local buses run throughout Vail, connecting East and West Vail with Lionshead and Vail Villages. The local service is free and is widely used by tourists and locals alike. The transportation center currently provides limited indoor seating and a ticket counter for Greyhound. On the lower level is a restaurant offering travelers a convenient accessibility. Directly adjacent to the center is the Colorado Ski Museum. The museum contains a modest display of some of the earliest artifacts and pictures from Colorado’s ski industry. The location is currently within a very transient space.

The site sits between two very different parts of town. To the north is the frontage road and Interstate 70, introducing a lot of noise and fast paces. To the south is East Meadow Drive, the majority of which is closed to the public. The local bus service runs along this road. The south is also a very busy pedestrian area. The parking structure acts as an entrance to Vail Village and it sits right on the boundary of the village. Tourists will park their vehicles in the parking structure and enter the village on foot, heading south from the structure. Directly across the street are some shops, but mostly hotels and condos. The covered bridge is in this vicinity, connecting the transportation center to the rest of Vail Village. Immediately to the south of the site is a public square that is most often used as a waiting area for the local buses. Within this plaza is a statue honoring the service of the 10th Mountain Division, and during the holidays a large Christmas tree is placed here.
CODE REVIEW

Transportation Facilities

Occupancy (302-General Classifications): A-3
  Train Waiting Area
  Bus Terminal

Required Occupancy Separations (Table 302.3.2): 2 hour
Type of Construction (Table 601): Type II-A
Height/Area Limitations (Section 503):
  Height: 3 Stories
  Area: 15,500 sf

Fire Resistive Requirements (Table 601):
  Structural Frame-1 hour
  Bearing Walls (Interior/Exterior)-1 hour
  Nonbearing Walls/Partitions (Exterior)-1 hour
  Nonbearing Walls/Partitions (Interior)-0 hour
  Floor Construction-1 hour
  Roof Construction-1 hour

Occupant Load (Table 1004.1.2): 100 gross per occupant
Egress Width (Table 1005.1): If Sprinklered, allow 0.2 inches per occupant.
Minimum Number of Exits (Table 1018.1): 500-1000 Occupants, 3 Exits per Floor. If more than 1,000, 4 Exits.
Vertical Exit Enclosures (Section 1019): Shall be enclosed and fire rated to no less than 2 hours.

Required Number of Plumbing Fixtures (Table 2902.1):
  Toilets-1 per 500, Male and Female
  Lavatories-1 per 750, Male and Female
  Drinking Fountains-1 per 1,000

Restaurant/Retail

Occupancy: A-2
  Two Restaurants
Convenience Store

Required Occupancy Separations: 2 hour
Building Type: Type II-B
Height/Area Limitations:
  Height: 2 Stories
  Area: 9,500 sf
Fire Resistive Requirements (Table 601):
  Structural Frame-1 hour
  Bearing Walls (Interior/Exterior)-1 hour
  Nonbearing Walls/Partitions (Exterior)-1 hour
  Nonbearing Walls/Partitions (Interior)-0 hour
  Floor Construction-1 hour
  Roof Construction-1 hour

Occupant Load: 15sf net per occupant
Egress Width: If Sprinklered, allow 0.2 inches per occupant.
Minimum # of Exits: 1-500 Occupants, 2 Exits per Floor
Vertical Exit Enclosures: Shall be enclosed and fire rated to no less than 2 hours.
Required Number of Plumbing Fixtures:
  Toilet-1 per 75, Male and Female
  Lavatories-1 per 200, Male and Female
  Drinking Fountains-1 per 500

Condos

Occupancy: R-2

Required Occupancy Separations: 2 hour
Building Type: Type II-B
Height/Area Limitations:
  Height: 4 Stories
  Area: 16,000 sf
Fire Resistive Requirements (Table 601):
  Structural Frame-2 hour
  Bearing Walls (Interior/Exterior)-2 hour
  Nonbearing Walls/Partitions (Exterior)-1 hour
  Nonbearing Walls/Partitions (Interior)-0 hour
  Floor Construction-2 hour
  Roof Construction-1 hour
Occupant Load: 200 gross per occupant
Egress Width: If Sprinklered, allow 0.2 inches per occupant.
Minimum # of Exits: 1-500 Occupants, 2 Exits per Floor
Vertical Exit Enclosures: Shall be enclosed and fire rated to no less than 2 hours.
Required Number of Plumbing Fixtures:
  Toilets-1 per Dwelling unit
  Lavatories-1 per Dwelling unit

Hotel

Occupancy: R-1

Required Occupancy Separations: 2 hour
Building Type: Type V-A
Height/Area Limitations:
  Height: 3 Stories
  Area: 12,000 sf
Fire Resistive Requirements (Table 601):
  Structural Frame-2 hour
  Bearing Walls (Interior/Exterior)-2 hour
  Nonbearing Walls/Partitions (Exterior)-1 hour
  Nonbearing Walls/Partitions (Interior)-0 hour
  Floor Construction-2 hour
  Roof Construction-1 hour
Occupant Load: 50 gross per occupant
Egress Width: If Sprinklered, allow 0.2 inches per occupant.
Minimum # of Exits: 1-500 Occupants, 2 Exits per Floor
Vertical Exit Enclosures: Shall be enclosed and fire rated to no less than 2 hours.
Required Number of Plumbing Fixtures:
  Toilets-1 per Hotel Room
  Lavatories-1 per Hotel Room


