QUESTIONing THE EXPERIENCE of architecture
"I AM NOT IN THIS WORLD TO LIVE UP TO OTHER PEOPLE'S EXPECTATIONS, NOR DO I FEEL THAT THE WORLD MUST LIVE UP TO MINE."
- FritZ Perls -

"WHY IS THIS THUS? WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THIS THUSNESS?"
- Artemus Ward -
Harry Eggink...for teaching me to see.
Carol Tiernan...for teaching me to think.
Sonny Palmer...for asking, "what does it want to be?"
Michele Chiuini...for questioning the questions.
Fiona Aldous...for helping me sort out the mess.

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QUESTIONING THE EXPERIENCE OF ARCHITECTURE

P. Richard Henry

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Advisor: Enna Aldous

Major Professor: Michele Chiuini
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What stimulates the traveler as they move through and around our constructions? How do we design for the mental and emotion aspects of space and not just the function of utility and the outward aesthetics? Do architects take responsibility for their actions towards the mind of man? How do people experience architecture? Can we induce interaction of user and structure?
THE HUMANITY OF ARCHITECTURE

"Design is a complex and intricate task. It is the integration of technological, social and economical, biological necessities, and the psychological effects of materials, shape, color, volume, and space: thinking in relationships."
Moholy-Nagy
Much of contemporary architecture is designed either by function or form. Designers often create structures that are lifeless machines with economy and utility, and thus function, as the driving force. On the other side of the spectrum are designers who create architecture by the analysis of form, as if the building was nothing but a sculptural element to be admired. The debate of whether form follows function or function follows form is simply one example of how architects focus on very relevant ideas while completely ignoring the most vital purpose of architecture. Architecture is more than a machine and still more than a piece of art, it is a place to live life. What is utility and aesthetics to the user of architecture if the space is void of human experience. Design solely with form and one feels like they are in a museum. They do not interact with the environment, they are an observer, nothing else. The user walks around glancing at the shining new building expecting to see signs on every wall that say “do not touch the exhibit”. Design solely with function and one feels like they are just one of the many parts in a lifeless machine. Lifeless, without emotion. Many designers lack attention to the psychological and emotional experience. Humans
are more than bodies, we are minds as well. A space must be physically functional, it must be created with genuine attention to form, and yet it must also address the psychological effect that space has on its users. Architecture without experience is like food without taste. It looks good, it functions well in fulfilling our physical needs, but without taste it has no life, no experience.

With all this to say, it makes no difference why most designers don't think about the psychological aspects of their designs. The fact is that they don't. They don't even consider the humanity of architecture. They simply don't know how. They are ignorant of the effect that their spaces have on the people who use them. It's our responsibility as creators of the human environment to know the consequences of our actions, not only how hard or soft a seat is, but how hard or soft a space is. The majority of the profession simply doesn't care. It's a problem that exists within architectural society as a whole, and it needs to be solved.

"The problem of our generation is to bring the intellectual and emotional, the social and the technological components into balanced play; to learn to see and feel them in relationship. Without this interrelatedness there remains only the disjoint technical skill of handling human affairs, a rigidity stifling biological and social impulses: a memorized, not a lived life."

L. Moholy-Nagy
"...introduce architecture from the standpoint of how buildings are experienced, before worrying about how they are built."  
C. Moore
If a building is to be architecture it must meet the general standards of the mind, and therefore it must be conceived as a whole. Such unity requires integration along all relevant dimensions. When one is moving through a passage, they are not only aware of the place in which they stand, but all the places they’ve gone and will go. The need for orientation in one’s surroundings is a basic human need. When the individual goes from one place to another the view changes. One view leads to another in a set of continuous connected sequences. Over time, as the individual moves about the house, the street, the town, and the country, the sequences come to be perceived as a scene, the fact that the transformations all make a group becomes evident. The individual is now able to find the way from place to place, but more than that, he is able to see one place behind another on a larger scale. He is then geographically oriented. Even when he is shut into a room he is able to comprehend the house, the street, the town, and the countryside in relation to the room.

"A building in which nothing is designed for sequence is a depressing experience.
Anthropos.

When the man in the room walks up to and through the door the edge of the door frame expands in various layers of the mind.
Gibson."
"One of the principle ways we virtually measure and judge our environment is through comparison, a process that occurs in two steps. First we place ourselves in relation to the space, determining the size, proportion, and interrelationship of its constituent elements, and their relationship to ourselves. This in essence sets up a base measure. When we then move from the first space to the next we compare what we know with what we don't know, measuring the objects in the second space based on the measure of the first." Barrie

Spatial sequencing is an interplay of path and place. J.G. Davies states that "most buildings belong to either the category of path or that of place, the one suggesting journey and movement, the other a center and stillness". Architectural must not be one or the other, but contain a sequence of both path and place in order to create an experience of movement and transition. Movement comprises of a time series or a sequence of events along a path. These events give the traveler a sense of accomplishment or fulfillment.
"Landmarks, big and small, subdivide the endless road and provide short-term goals: one sees the tall willow tree approaching and one reaches it. A stretch of the journey has been completed."
Arnheim

Path and place must come together to form a sequence of spaces and events so that the traveler acknowledges, interacts with, and experiences his environment, not just passes through it. Emotion and psychological response within space relies on the movement through it.

The circumambulating path suggests unity because of how the path and place simultaneously create each other. The sacred place and the path to it form an integral whole.
Arnheim
"I find, by experience, that the mind and the body are more than married, for they are most intimately united; and when one suffers, the other sympathizes."

Lord Chesterfield
People can only experience space when they interact with it, either physically or psychologically. The point at which we are interacting with our environment the most, is when in motion. Motion is a sequence of transitions from one space to another. It is through transition, and thus interaction, that creates our experience of the built environment. Certain architectural elements induce movement and emotion through conscious & subconscious reactions of visual and tactile stimuli.

The materials used within an environment have texture, form, and color. All of these things effect some part of the mind seperatly, but it is the combination of them all that brings forth past memories and preconcieved experiences. These preconception take the form of connotations. Connotations being hidden subconscious meanings that effect people on an unconscious level. Viewing and touching concrete, for example, reminds of us past experiences and induces an unconscious state of mind based on those experiences. These experiences eventually become background within the mind and take the form of connotations. Unconscious reminders of past experiences.
When moving through space our total experience is created through a sequence of smaller experiences. These smaller experiences are connected through a system of stimuli & response, and though one is the catalyst for another, it is not a linear system. It is a sea of floating entities that are between one another, creating a constant web of interaction.

"Shared elements and organizations in architecture, though they may be reduced to component parts, can only be fully understood when viewed as a result of a combination of elements, spatial mass and experience..."

Bartie
Upon opening your eyes, a chain reaction of experiences started and will continue until death. Experience is a cyclical cycle, but one could say that we experience the movement through our environment first through sight. The first split second of visual stimulus creates an unconscious response, which then induces a response through motion & emotion. This motion/emotion response leads to an interaction of the environment through our visual or tactile senses. These senses, in turn, create either a conscious or unconscious response, or both. Within a second, the cycle has repeated itself a million times over. These instantaneous experiences come together to create an experience of moment. An experience that can be measured as a specific instance within time. These moments make up a sequence of events that create the experience of time, and through time is the experience of existence.
MOTION AND
(e) MOTION

"Allow motion to equal emotion."
Elbert Hubbard

"Places allow experience... the power of experience destroys the illusions of progress and gathers the past and the future into the present."
R. McCarter
In order to design a comprehensive experience of space, there must be a unity of body and mind. That is to say, that the architecture must allow the body to experience through motion what the mind experiences through emotion. There must be an integration of the physical and the psychological, conscious and subconscious.

"It is not enough to see architecture; you must experience it.
...You must dwell in the rooms, feel how they close about you, observe how you are naturally led from one to the other."
Rasmussen

Humans perceive space through motion. Without motion experience, the world is two-dimensional. As we move through space we see and interact with objects from all sides and views to create a whole entity within our mindscape.
"No three-dimensional object can be completely recorded as an optical image by the eye at any one time from one fixed point”

Arnheim

Passage combines the physical act of a body moving through space and the psychological experience of that movement. In order for architecture to be a passage it must go beyond the bounds of mere utilitarian ideas. The ease of walking along a path and its surface and texture, the scale and distance of the entrance, the shifting views as we move along the route, all form part of the experience of approaching and passing through architecture. This interaction between the human and his environment is what is so vital about the experience of architecture. One must experience the movement, feel the space, and acknowledge the emotion of the place in which they exist.
Motion causes interaction with the environment. This interaction induces a reaction, of both body and mind. This action/reaction will always exist, but there are ways in which we can enhance and induce both motion and emotion. Elements of transition, such as doorways, windows, stairs, and walls force an interaction of the body and the environment and induce the motion emotion reaction.
"We must realize that the subconscious mind is the law of action and always expresses what the conscious mind has impressed on it. ...What we conceive ourselves to be, we become."
Grace Spears
We experience elements of transition on both a conscious and subconscious level. They affect us consciously by inducing a reaction of body movement; a pause or a change in direction for example. This reaction forces an awareness of our body within space. Subconsciously, the connotations of individual elements create a variety of reactions from motion to emotion.

The implementation of transitional elements effect whether or not passage through architecture is a rich experience or a monotonous lingering one. The introduction of a stairway causes the traveler to move up through space instead of a monotonous straightforward path. A doorway causes a suspension of movement. These elements force a person to become aware of their body, pay attention to their actions, and acknowledge their environment. Implementation of physical elements into the passage such as material variation, directional change, variation in the volume of spaces, change in floor and ceiling planes, repetition and rhythm of windows, doors, or columns along
the pathway can all be used to provide a varied environment. Transition allows the traveler to become aware of his surroundings and thus experience a variety of sensations along the passage. These changes along the create a spatial sequence of landmarks and goals. Without these goals, one has nothing to gauge the progress of the journey.

The tools that are used to create the psychological sequencing of path and place are no different than those used to create any other aspect of architecture. Transitional elements such as doors, windows, stairs, and walls are all common aspects of architecture. It is not the act of using these elements, however, but how they are used and implemented into the spaces of architecture that is important. Every element brings with it both visual and tactile connotations. When designing, it is not always the door or window itself that one is using as a tool, but the psychological connotations that the elements induce.
"Haptic experiences which include the entire body give fundamental meanings to visual experiences, while visual experiences serve to communicate those meanings back to the body."

C. Moore
Humankind first experiences the environment psychologically. In other words, we psychologically ascend a stair or duck through a low opening before we physically do so. In addition, the instant we come into physical contact with the environment a second psychological effect takes place. The "coldness" of steel or the "warmth" of wood, for example. Psychological experience of the environment is an interplay of visual and tactile stimulation.

The principle means through which we experience architecture is through sight and movement. Movement, spatial sequence, and time create the fourth dimension of our perceptual realm, and are an essential component of the experience of architecture. Visual axis is one tool that can be employed by a designer to induce movement. Enabling the traveler to see his destination minutes before he arrives enables him to gauge the time and distance of his path. Architecture often guides not by channels but by the magnetism of a target. In some cases a simple strong color on the end wall of a corridor suffices to transform the static passage into a goal-directed track. Physical elements such as a door are also goal inducing targets. Once the
traveler has seen the doorway, he focuses on that target until he reaches that landmark and obtains his goal. The same is true of walls, portals, or any other physical element that the traveler is able to see and interact with. By manipulating the visual axis one can structure the path so that small glimpses of the destination are revealed, but only at select points along the path. The destination emerges after passing around a corner, but then disappears after going into a tunnel. One example of this idea is the Daisen-in Temple located within the Zen Buddhist Monastery in Kyoto. Along the path incomplete glimpses of the temple and its gardens are afforded, underlining the experience of passage and anticipating the attainment of the spiritual place.

Vision deals with shapes and distances; it extends the body to lengths the limbs can not reach. Seeing is touching with the eyes, and, like touch, the eyes reach only to the surface of things. Glances of the surrounding environment make up one part of his or her surroundings. It is in part a visual grasping of the world which brings us closer to things. Vision is also the key

“...and passage from a corridor to the sudden exposure of a room...”
—Anon

“Optical scanning more than any other sense allows one to move through the world and find meaning...”
—Hill
mechanism for which humans base their progression of space. A path should reinforce motion awareness and offer a degree of visual scope to enhance the observer’s sense of passage, distance, rhythm, and time.

“Our peripheral field of vision is an important component of judging how fast we are moving through a space. Narrow corridors or colonnades make us feel like we are traveling faster. Also, the rhythm of flanking elements that comprise the space can either reinforce or complement our movement through it.”

Barrie

The anticipation of ascending a stairway comes into being with the first glimpse. By the time the traveler has reached the stair, he already has a preconceived notion of what the experience is going to be based on the physical characteristics of the staircase. If the staircase is made of dirt then one will visualize how the act of ascension will be experienced. This visualization would be different, however, if the stairway was made of stone.
"Impressions of hardness and softness, of heaviness and lightness, are connected with the surface character of materials."
Rasmussen

Past physical interaction of man with his environment is what causes this subconscious preconception of materials. This preconception begins in childhood when man first starts to take note of his environment. It only take one burn to forever realize that a fire is hot. The viewer may not be able to feel the heat, but past experience subconsciously and automatically informs the brain. Before throwing a stone, a boy first gets the feel of it, turning it over and over until he has the right grip on it, and then weighing it in his hand. After doing this enough, he is able to tell what a stone is like without touching it at all; a mere glance is sufficient. The color, weight, and texture of a material can psychologically effect anyone who may be viewing, touching, or interacting with it in any way.
"Materials can give an impression of heaviness or lightness. A wall built of large stones, which we realize must have required great effort to bring to the site and put in place, appears heavy to us. A smooth wall seems light, even though it may have necessitated much harder work and actually weighs more than the stone wall. We intuitively feel that granite walls are heavier than brick ones..." Rasmussen

Not only can the material of a passage have a psychological effect, but the massing and form of those materials can too. Tall thin corridors seem tight even though they may be easy to move through. Likewise, wide squat corridors seem oppressive and suffocating even if the traveler has enough headroom. Our reactions also have to do with our natural empathy with our environment. Just as we might experience freedom when we view a grand landscape painting or feel grief when we look at a tragic painting, so do uplifting or subdued spaces affect us. Similarly, we feel the strain and weight of squat, short columns. Short columns are the relatively passive recipients of the pressures ex-
erted from above by the load of the roof and from below by the resistance and upward push of the base. Such columns seem squeezed between the two principle powers, and as such they are not perceived as static cylinders of stone but as conduits for antagonistic forces issuing from above and below. Longer columns have enough visual weight to establish a center of their own. This active challenging of the superior powers gives the tall column an elating sense of freedom, of victory over oppressors.
"We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we're curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths."

Walt Disney
Stairways, planes, and windows are some examples of specific physical elements that can be manipulated to create physical and psychological experience. The most recognizable element of transition, however, is the doorway, the threshold. Doorways have always signified so much within the daily actions of man.

“Doors close to signify rejection or another’s isolation, they swing wide open like a broad smile welcoming the traveler’s approach, or doors sternly bar the way, imprisoning by becoming impenetrable walls.”

Lang

Passage through a doorway can be defined through the physical act of penetrating and moving though a barrier along a path. This penetration is an intermediate goal or landmark that the traveler registers psychologically. The landmark reinforces the fact that the traveler is in motion and places a specific location along the passage in which the traveler can orient himself. The first interaction that the traveler has with the door is the initial visual connection. As the traveler sees the doorway for the first time, he begins to anticipate and psychologically
move through the portal before actually doing so. The size and scale of the threshold effects the emotion of the travelers as he approaches from a distance. Large monumental thresholds, such as those used in cathedrals, make the individual feel small and insubstantial to the total whole of his environment. As the traveler proceeds towards the doorway, this humbling effect becomes even greater.

Once the individual is able to see the detail of the door more clearly, and not just the massing and form, another psychological element comes into play. The material of door can give an impression of heaviness or lightness. A steel or solid wooden door gives the feeling of barrier. This psychological reaction to the material causes the mind to subconsciously hesitate and consider the implications of moving such a "heavy" object. The reverse of this experience would be a transparent door. A threshold in which almost no door exists at all.
"Standing before a glass door, I am struck by an undeniable, paradoxical impression of being in two places at once. While bodily being outside the building I am, simultaneously, visibly present inside. In contrast, at the cathedral doorway there is a suggestion of what is inside, but I envision this in my imagination and await in anticipation."

Lang

The solid door hides what is beyond. This barrier to visual perception causes the traveler to rely on psychological constructs to know what may be encountered on the other side. This unknown of the passage reinforces the subconscious hesitation before an intimidating threshold. The glass door, on the other hand, gives the impression that it is always open. This glass transition lulls the individual into the illusion that the door is always speaking in the affirmative. It appears to be always accessible and open almost completely eliminating the psychological transition of the doorway. The traveler's interaction with the doorway, visually and then physically, concretizes the psychological experience of passage.

Lang

The door is the incarnation of experience of transition, animating in a visible manner the dialectic of inside and outside, fundamentally presenting either a welcoming or rejecting face.

Lang

The threshold proclaims and embodies a reflective pause between two worlds. The portal beckons me to a movement in depth both in the spatial and psychological senses.

Lang
"We are born to action; and whatever is capable of suggesting and guiding action has power over us from the first."

Charles Cooley
axis exists in all things. axis is a mental construct created through visual stimulus. windows and doors, bridges and stairs all come together to form a sequence of visual and mental axis. sometimes this axis is created at the beginning of the journey. the eye moves from element to element and connects the transitions of movement in order to create a mental construct of orientation. other times it is after the journey has progressed & the memory of elements experienced fit together within the mindscape, each element possessing a beginning and an end but together forge a continuous passage of existence.
path is what we walk upon, crawl upon, move upon. It is where we trod. path is the prime material connector. it inhabits every point of existence. where the axis is the orientation of the mind, path is the orientation of the body. paths are where your tactile sense sends constant reverberations of stone wood & steel up through your limbs, into your bones and echos in the mind. hard, soft, slippery when wet. glide across the path and feel your body collide with gravity.
walls push and pull without touching. boundary, limits, defiance. they stake claim to space, to place. if they are high they challenge and intimidate. if they are low they passively invite us to climb over. walls disintegrate to become columns. they channel, influence movement. simple walls show us the way, complex ones tell us to get lost. they protect and they imprison. induce motion and force us to stop. walls can provide choice, change, discovery of what is around the corner, down the hall. where does this corridor lead? what is on the other side?
the door is a man who asks for your ticket. the door of a stranger, a strange door, causes us to pause, to contemplate our actions. what is beyond? knock. hard. soft. never mind. a door can reassure or intimidate. we must pause and notice. notice the handle, no handle. push! pull? an open door speaks in the tongue of a friend. a closed one keeps us out, cages us within. glass door = no door. wood steel. A concrete door is hard to move, action reaction. penetrate the fabric of the barrier wall. delve into another realm, cross the threshold of existence. step through & find it. stay out, get in. fly wide the many doors of your mind and expose that which is beyond the boundary.
a window is that which moves us without motion. bodily, the window is a place of static existence, but mentally it is a catalyst for exploration & imagination. "billy! stop staring out the window and get back to work!" our vision connects with the paradoxical window and sends our curiosity wandering. what is inside? who? the eye looks out at the world and observes the motion of people, the wind, a stain of rain upon the window pane. the window is the king of free association. visual stimulus sending our minds careening down passageways of randomosity. the hat leads to hair leads to blades to grass to smoking to speed to motion. 

\[ H \ a t = m o t i o n \]
bridges connect that which is divided. They are at once a joining of two into a unified one and a compromise of unyielding neutrality. They are a call to motion & a place to rest. Bridges span not only the material world, but time itself. They express a cross dimensional travel of great lengths in a compressed minute experience of existence. Once traversed, the bridge leaves us with a feeling of a journey complete. Of victory over the oppressor. We leap a chasm, fly across space, hang suspended defying gravity and claim freedom from the chains that bind us to the earth.
stairs move us to highs & lows. they are the conquerable barrier. we are forced to change, forced to become conscious of our bodies & minds, if for only a second, for some stairs must truly be conquered and others blend with our movement into out natural rhythms and force a transition to verticality. we feel the work of moving up and the freedom of flying down. once we’re up we are on high, able to see life around us and command our vision. down is an easy path to journey but it brings us into the unknown; our vision is not so wide, not so great. we place ourselves below others.
SEARCHING FOR A CONDUIT
A project needed to be chosen that would best express the ideas and concepts that I had developed. I first chose a monastery for its spiritual and mental pursuits. I thought I could create a place that sent the mind turning inward, into contemplation. I barely got this project to the design phase before I decided to switch projects. From the monastery I went to a prison, then a sanctum (retreat), to an installation, and then finally a building of bureaucracy ... a police headquarters.

The search for the perfect project was a difficult one. I believe that I was afraid that some portion of my ideas would not come across in each of the projects I went through. I never called them projects as I went along, however, I called them conduits. My thesis was about a way of thinking about architecture, not a building type. I often told myself that the building that I chose to use was irrelevant because my ideas were universal. This was not the case. So I went on...and on...and on, searching for the perfect conduit for my ideas. By the time I moved to my final decision, it was 7 weeks before the end of the semester.

Going through all these projects meant that I was always starting over, doing research on a new building, coming up with new concepts for the new building type, and always working in studio. Even though changing projects so much increased my work tenfold, I never regretted doing it. I learned more about my ideas and about architecture because I was able to see them from many different angles and situations.
A Prison

I chose a prison for the strong emotion that one experiences when placed within such a place. A prison carries with it so many tangible and intangible connotations that I thought it would of been an interesting exploration. After spending about a week sketching and researching, however, I found that it was the journey to prison (the processing) that I was interested in and not the actual static existence within prison. I wanted to do a complete design, so I decided a prison was not the conduit.
A Sanctum

After developing my ideas for the Sanctum for some time, I was not so sure that I could express my ideas through paper at all. Maybe I was not going to be satisfied with ANY project on paper. I believed I needed to build something so that people could truly EXPERIENCE what I was talking about.

Sanctum

.a private room where someone can be undisturbed. a place of removal.
a place to remove oneself from the world, to escape the world of the external and enter into the internal. a place of release.
Release all the collected and unwanted energy from the body, mind, and soul. a place of submersion.
Submerge the mind into liberation, submerge the body into meditation, submerge one's self into an isolated place free from the taint that society places upon the souls of mankind.

the idea
through the implementation of transitional elements within the sequence of path and place, the sanctum will attempt to be an external environment conducive to the stimulation of the internal environment. as one moves through the paths of the sanctum and exists in the places, the external will spark physical and psychological responses. each individual will translate these stimuli in their own way. every soul has a unique space that melds harmoniously with it. what is conducive to one is not always conducive to another. through movement, one will experience the sanctum and come to find the spaces that are right for them or continue to discover new ones depending on the state of existence in which they exist.
An Installation

An installation would of provided the opportunity for people to actually touch and see what I was talking about. I secured a building for the installation and began doing sketches. One night after much contemplation, however, I figured it out. An installation would be searching for answers. It would be looking for the definitive of my ideas. What I was interested in was not the answers, but the questions. Answers often destroy much of the mystery. So an installation was not to be.
A Building for Bureaucracy: Police Headquarters

I finally choose a police headquarters as my conduit. This came about through a discussion with my thesis advisor. The entire year I had been looking for a building that could express the ideas of transition. The question was asked, "What in life deals with transition? Moving from one place to another?" Bureaucracy: waiting in lines, going here only to go there. The project started out as a courthouse/police headquarters/prison, but I soon found that a police headquarters would be challenge enough.

A Muncie site was chosen because of the limited time frame I had placed myself within. This made the development of the project easier because the site was easily accessible. It made the project harder, however, because trying to blend a design into the context of downtown Muncie means blending a design in with a sea of ugly and wrong. I eventually decided to turn my back on the context (for the most part) because ugly and wrong was not my intention, and my thesis was not about context anyway. All this to say, however, the project was resolved completely, from the number of parking spots needed to the number of toilets installed.
The First Try: Midterm Reviews

From the point of choosing the final project to the point of first presentation, I had three weeks. I felt right from the beginning that I needed to have something concrete worked out for that midterm review. The design that was presented became more of a spatial organization design, then a design expressing my ideas. One could call it a very accurate bubble diagram.
Final Design

The ideas of thesis were able to be developed much more in the final design. I was able to take certain parts of the building (such as the prisoner entrance) and begin to work at a higher level of detail. In retrospect, and after all of those different projects, I believe I would of been more successful with a smaller project that could of developed my ideas at a more finite level.
LOWER LEVEL
The officer opens the car door, beckoning you to get out. Leading you to a set of stairs ascending into a massive wall of stone and steel...
you are dwarfed by the size of twin towers that flank you on either side. Looking down you notice the earth drops away and you stand upon a precarious sliver of stone.
The doors open and reveal a tight chamber. You enter and find yourself already within a cell. The walls hold no doors, the floor descends below through the holes of a metal grate. You wonder if this is indeed the cell... and the floor begins to drop... you are in an elevator.
...the elevator stops and the doors open. Turning around you are faced with a shaft that plummets into the earth. A light filters down as you witness the shadows of others above you. You step out and cross to the other side.
You move from the dark expanse into a compact room...brightly lit with walls of stainless steel. Your reflection is everywhere as your life is examined by the law.
You enter a corridor, for the first time alone. The walls are drab and lifeless. The monotony of the long hall causes your mind to wander...and wonder.
Reaching the end of the corridor, the portal opens. You are thrust into a towering shaft six stories tall. The door closes as you peer up at the window of light far above you. You are home.
"We live as we dream...alone."

Joseph Conrad
Heart of Darkness
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