

## Written Sketch of Presentation - Wallis + Nielsen

Each of us has our own distinct path throughout our life. We all experience and live our lives in different ways and through different circumstances. Every interaction, every mishap, every occurrence and choice shapes us into what we are.

Tao roughly translated into English means path or way. It is hard to explain what Tao really means. It is something that has to be experienced. You must engage it.

Tao refers to a power which envelops, surrounds, and flows through all things, living and nonliving. The Yin Yang is a well know Taoist symbol. It represents the balance of opposites in the universe. When they are equally present, all is calm. When one is outweighed by the other, there is confusion and disarray.

Our lives are often knocked out of balance when we focus our attention on consumerism and economic gain. Our society has been driven towards this frenzied lifestyle of purchasing that which we don't need, using more than we should, and not thinking of the consequences of our actions. Taoism is a universe driven system of check and balances which regulates our lives whether we are aware of it or not. It has its way of awakening us through global warming, economic downturn, or other methods. It has a way of making us aware of our own path through this life.

At the beginning of the semester the thirteen individuals in our studio devoted ourselves to a manifesto, which we each created. Our Manifesto was titled "The pursuit of Happiness" in which we discussed the importance of self evaluation and a process of purging excesses. By going through these stages, one can focus energy on the things that have a lasting impact. A more lasting happiness can be reached. As our lives and paths shift and intertwine, we are shaped. If we have removed the excesses our path will guide us to a state of lasting happiness, a state of balance in our lives in all things, a state of Taoist harmony. This stripping away of excess leaving only the balance focused elements in spatially expressed in VAS architecture.

As we live up to our Manifesto, we are both looking to find this harmony in our lives. One reading on Taoism described it as the path that exists between civilization and nature. The site for the Tao Metaversity embodies this idea of existing between the two opposite forces of natural or spiritual and the man made. The site is sandwiched between the busy Sugar House Central Business District and the sacred Hidden Hollow. Creating a filter between these two worlds, the transition is smoother and less abrupt.

Early in the design process we strove to express this idea of the merging of these two forces on the site and the interaction and experience of the two. We produced this diagram (individual path diagram) expressing the individuals interaction and path between the natural and the urban. We used these lines as opportunities to divide our program and they also influenced the creation of a circulation scheme, which allowed for a continuous flow in between the

major programmatic elements. The circulation also created a connection with the community and extends beyond the immediate area.

The circulation has three major arms that connect the three major programmatic elements of the Good, the Beautiful, and the True. There is not a hard line which divides these elements, but rather a flow of spaces between each one. This flow is not just a flow of space, but also a flow of individuals, a flow of ideas, a flow of learning. Our paths in life or education are not fixed. There needs to be a sense of freedom and discovery. By maintaining open floor plans and multifunction spaces, the metaversity will be able to adapt the spaces to specific needs to allow the education experience to be continually evolving. With strong connections to the natural environment of the hollow and also large atrium spaces, there is conversation between the built environment and nature. The line of opposition is blurred and new interactions are facilitated. Day lighting, cross ventilation and air quality control are just some of the benefits from these intimate connections.

The forms of the build are directly related to the fluid movement through each space. The multiple paths in our lives are represented in the façade banding. The bands diverge and cross upon one another. They smoothly flow through art centers, education nodes and community areas. As with each of us, they must adapt to each circumstance. As we interact with those around us, as we are inspired by people of any capacity, and as we explore personal expression through artistic mediums we grow and develop. Our paths adapt and flow through each activity allowing us to move towards a balanced harmonious state.

As we look at different experiences through the building and the site, we see movement and flow all around us. At no time is there a set pace. It allows for quick movement while also invites calm reflection. The spaces and enclosures change and adapt around us. We are allowed to find our own individual path. We are in our personal pursuit of happiness. We create our own future, our own present experience, our own distinct path. The Tao Metaversity becomes a tool to guide our path to new levels of harmony, exploration and balance.