

North Dakota State University Graduate School

Title

CHRYSOPOEIA: A TRANCENDENTAL METAMORPHOSIS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

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CHRYSOPOEIA: A TRANCENDENTAL METAMORPHOSIS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

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ABSTRACT

As of 2024 the world is in a mental health crisis. Now more than ever mental health is an incredibly important topic, especially after the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the situation as dire as it is, places like Oregon have started to turn to using psychedelics in treating mental illnesses due to their proven effectiveness in healing the mind. As of January of 2023, Oregon passed legislation that allows for the use of a psychedelic compound known as psilocybin at licensed service centers. With psilocybin still being classified as a schedule one drug under federal law, its use is limited to the grounds of licensed service centers. Since patients are only allowed to engage in this type of therapy at these service centers, it is crucially important that the design of these service centers creates an environment that significantly aids in a patient's mental healing journey.

The goal of this project is to propose a design and typology of architecture that can assist in the transformation of a person's consciousness for the sake of better mental health and ultimately attaining a more fulfilling life. We have long distanced ourselves from our inner being due to the lives we live today with modern technology and due to the way that we are used to thinking in society. By better understanding our minds through the work of Carl Jung and tapping into our consciousness and unconsciousness, we can vastly change the way that we think and become whole with ourselves through the practice of individuation. The practice of the use of psychedelics and other forms of wellness and therapy such as cold exposure therapy, nature immersion, community building, and exercise can help people navigate the inner depths of their mind to work past the mental barriers that hold them back from becoming mentally healthy.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my brother, Logan Robert Wold, the one who kept my torch lit during my darkest times and motivated me to never quit by always believing in me and my potential. I

love and miss you brother.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, people's mental health has become increasingly important. There have been growing concerns about mental health in recent years due to the rise in cases of mental illnesses and suicide throughout the world that were exacerbated to an even worse degree due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As better mental health has become more important to achieve for people and mental illness has become less stigmatized, pursuits of mental health care have grown significantly and so has the research. But despite the growing mental health care system in various parts of the world, some areas still struggle and are progressively getting worse each year, and so much so that the World Health Organization (Referred to as WHO) has officially stated that the entire world is facing a mental health crisis (2022). The traditional methods used to treat mental illnesses have cracks that continue to grow and the number of people who fall through these cracks grows even quicker. The standard in treating mental illnesses needs to be reevaluated and reworked for the sake of the future. The standard must be updated to fit the needs of mental health in the world today.

1.1. The Problem

Fortunately, the world of mental healthcare has already begun to change for the better. In efforts to shift the way we go about treating mental illnesses, the use of psychedelic substances as therapeutic tools has begun to emerge. Psychedelic substances, commonly referred to as "hallucinogens" or just psychedelics "are a group of substances that change or enhance sensory perceptions, thought processes, and energy levels," (Hartney, 2023). They are powerful mind-altering substances that are banned in most places across the world due to a treaty between the United Nations called the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 (George et al., 2022). This led to most psychedelics being categorized as a schedule one drug in the United States

meaning that they are recognized as having no acceptable medical use and have a high potential for abuse (Robotti, 2024).

Ironically enough, these same substances that are said to have no potential for medical use have recently been found to have profound medical benefits. More specifically, they have been found to be some of the most effective medicines for treating mental disorders that we have ever seen to date (Beiner, 2023; Hartney, 2023; Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2024; Ziff et al., 2022). Although psychedelic therapies are still under trials and research, they have shown promise in effectively treating mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, PTSD, and addiction to name a few (Beiner, 2023; Hartney, 2023; Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2024; Ziff et al., 2022). Due to their surprisingly positive impact in mental health treatment, psychedelics have started to earn a new reputation in modern Western culture and are no longer being demonized as they once were in years past. This new reputation and revitalization of the understanding of psychedelic substances has ushered in the beginning of what Alexander Beiner (2023) refers to as a “psychedelic renaissance” in his book *The Bigger Picture*.

With this psychedelic renaissance currently in its early stages today, we are continuing to see these psychedelic therapies emerge in mainstream culture and being practiced as legitimate forms of therapy. Proper legalization for their medical use is beginning to happen in different states in the United States (Fleming & Nelson, 2022; Oregon Health Authority, 2024). The leading state for this legalization is Oregon, which legalized the use of psilocybin, the psychoactive compound found in psychedelic mushrooms, for use within licensed “psilocybin service centers” (Oregon Health Authority, 2024). These service centers were legally allowed to open during 2023, as a result of Oregon’s Ballot Measure 109, also known as The Oregon Psilocybin Services Act (Oregon Health Authority, 2024). This measure came to be because

Oregon has struggled with its own mental health crisis for many years and has even been ranked towards the bottom of the nation for mental health statistics for about the past decade (Mental Health America, 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016b, 2015, 2014).

The passing of this measure allows for the use and consumption of psilocybin within the confines of a licensed psilocybin service center, so that the psilocybin products are not to be taken and used outside of a center. This is a significant ground rule that affects the experience users could have when undergoing this type of treatment. As I will discuss in my research behind psychedelics and the experience people can have when using them, the environments in which people have these psychedelic experiences is incredibly important in affecting the overall outcome of someone's experience. Additionally, these licensed service centers may offer psilocybin services that are not the same as psilocybin-assisted therapies, meaning that these service centers are allowed to run like a business selling an experience rather than being a real mental healthcare facility with trained professionals (Oregon Health Authority, 2024).

If users are limited to the confines of a service center, and these centers are not designated mental healthcare facilities, then how can we expect them to effectively help alleviate the mental health crisis? If the goal of passing this measure was to help with people's mental health, would it not make sense to have the first legalized use of these substances be in a proper setting with the right health care professionals? With the condition of mental healthcare's supply being in a dire situation, it can be understandable why this type of method was done to expand the options for people to seemingly take their mental healthcare into their own hands. Yet with a groundbreaking and controversial treatment of this magnitude, which is barely beginning to take root in attempt to prove its worthiness to a nation and the world, the first examples of its legalized uses should be done with much more scrutiny and regulation in mind if there are true

hopes to have this as a legitimate form of therapy for people in the future. If the practice and use of these substances is done too carelessly, it could ruin the potential growth of this type of therapy throughout the world. With psychedelic assisted therapies and the psychedelic renaissance still in states of infancy, it is important that psychedelic substances are brought into the world in a way that respects the use of them and fosters knowledge and understanding towards their usage.

1.2. The Goal

The goal of this thesis is to address the growing mental health crisis by proposing a new building typology in the state of Oregon. I am proposing this new building typology to be called a psychedelic-assisted mental wellness center. This typology will be similar to Oregon's psilocybin service centers in that the focus of its program revolves around the use of psilocybin, but instead of just *any* use of psilocybin it is focusing on the therapeutic and healing uses of psilocybin. The program of the building will include aspects that will assist in rehabilitating one's mental health with psilocybin-assisted therapies in combination with an engagement of the multifaceted realms of holistic wellness that play a significant part in mental health. This includes having places for exercise, meditation, socializing, and other various forms of therapy rather than just psychotherapy. The hope of this typology is that it will help facilitate a transformation of a user's consciousness by making them more consciously aware in their lives which can largely benefit their mental health.

Mental healing is the main goal of this typology, but what lies at the core of achieving that goal is bringing about conscious awareness in the lives of the users. It is this key concept that sets the stage for meaningful and lasting mental healing. Due to the subjectivity of mental health, true mental healing must come from the inner psychiatric work an individual undertakes

upon themselves. Forms of therapy and medicine are crucial tools that help assist in this process, but the use of psychedelic substances seems to have a profound effect on a person's consciousness, allowing them to attain a higher sense of conscious awareness which allows them to open mental pathways that were previously closed off and rather inaccessible.

What is important to note is that the experience people have on psychedelic substances can vary significantly. The environment where a person has one of these experiences plays an important role in how a person's whole experience can go. So, if Oregon's laws and regulations state that a person can only have psychedelic experiences with psilocybin within the confines of a psilocybin service center, then it then becomes crucially important to recognize that a service center's design can affect the psychedelic experience someone can have.

My goal and overall thesis proposal is to find out how to design an environment that helps people attain better mental health and greater conscious awareness, and ultimately establish a new typology that could become a standard in the architectural realm of mental healthcare.

2. RESEARCH

The research portion of this document dives deeper into the topics discussed in the first chapter to add supporting evidence and to show the full breadth of research that went into exploring the goals and questions of this project to produce an architectural proposal. The research begins by digging into the various realms, information, and ideas of mental health and consciousness that need to be further understood for the sake of this project. It then shifts into an analysis of psychedelics and how they play a role in the overall realm of mental health and consciousness. This is followed up by a deep analysis of architecture and how it also plays a role in the overall realm of mental health and consciousness. In addition, other recognized practices of wellness that contribute to good mental health will be examined. Finally, the research I did on Oregon will be examined to explain why I decided to design my architecture in the location that I did. Throughout my research, I hope to explore and answer some of the following questions in an effort to support the main goal of this thesis:

- How and why are we facing a mental health crisis?
- How are we understanding mental health?
- How does our understanding of mental health affect mental healthcare?
- What can we learn about mental health from understanding more about consciousness?
- Is psychedelic-assisted therapy truly a promising solution in addressing the mental health crisis?
- Should there be a standard that can be set for how a psilocybin service center should be and operate?

- How can a therapy-based psilocybin service center be designed to curate better psilocybin assisted therapeutic experiences?
- Can a created standard for psilocybin service centers help introduce and integrate psilocybin-assisted and other psychedelic-assisted therapies into other states?

2.1. Mental Health

When we hear the words “mental health” what exactly comes to mind? Is it ideas of happiness, joy, and wellbeing? Or on the contrary, is it ideas of anxiety, depression, and sadness? Mental health can at times be vague or simply just an umbrella term for more specific aspects of mental health, but the WHO (2022) refers to mental health as “a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. Mental health is a basic human right.”

I bring this up because the way we define mental health is critically important as it sets the tone for how we understand it, research it, go about mental healthcare treatments, and how we view it in society. Fortunately, due to understandings and definitions about mental like the one stated by the WHO, the topic of mental health is taken much more seriously today than it has been in the past. Of course, this should be of no surprise with recent world events causing the term to become a sort of buzz word we often hear nowadays through conversation or on various forms of media. This shift in the way we perceive mental health and talk about it so openly is a monumental feat for our society as, up until relatively recent times, it has long since been a topic of taboo that was seldom discussed which perpetuated mental health issues.

Especially now more than ever, it is important we have taken increased interest in the topic due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic which pushed many people's mental health to all-time lows across the globe (Ducharme, 2023; Reinert et al., 2022; Saunders & Panchal, 2023; World Health Organization, 2022). The pandemic had such monumental effects on people's mental health across the world that as of the time of writing this paper, the world is experiencing a mental health crisis that was first declared by the WHO in 2022 publication titled *World mental health report: Transforming mental health for all*. The distressing part of this crisis is that it was not simply fueled by the effects of the pandemic but rather exacerbated by it, meaning that many different parts of the world were already struggling with issues surrounding mental health for quite some time and the pandemic worsened many of the existing issues (Ducharme, 2023; Reinert et al., 2022; Saunders & Panchal, 2023; World Health Organization, 2022). This raises some serious concerns as to how we are going to address this crisis. If mental health issues have been persisting and mental health has been an ongoing topic of interest for years, even before the pandemic, then there are serious issues that need to be addressed in hopes of alleviating the crisis.

2.1.1. The Crisis

In hearing that the world is in a mental health crisis, many questions might come to mind as to how we ended up in this crisis, how bad this crisis really is, and how we can get out of it. In the WHO's *World mental health report (2022)* the reality of the crisis is broken down to be better understood by the some of the following global statistics it provides:

- 1 in 8 people are diagnosed with a mental illness (1 billion people worldwide)

- 1 in 5 children and adolescents have a diagnosable mental illness or experience a mental disorder in a given year.
- Rates of mental illness and substance abuse have increased by 13% since 2017
- Suicide is one of the leading causes of death worldwide for people aged 15-29
- The median amount of government funding for healthcare that goes towards mental health is less than 2%

This last static on the amount of funding that goes towards mental health is a significantly alarming issue. The WHO (2022) states that “mental health needs are high, but responses are inefficient and inadequate,” and this statistic is evidence as to why. The statistics indicate that the prevalence of mental health issues is increasing, and without adequate resources to address this, it becomes clear why a crisis has been declared. The supply for mental healthcare resources is not and has not been keeping up with the demand. To make matters increasingly concerning, certain places, such as the United States in specific, have experienced a decrease in the amount of mental healthcare professionals available at the same time the demand for mental healthcare resources has spiked due to the effects of the pandemic (Counts, 2023).

This offers just a glimpse into the overall problem, but what is more important now is attempting to understand what has contributed to the problem in an effort to address it. This of course is not a simple task, as the overall problem is vastly multifaceted with countless factors contributing to it across the globe. However, what can be observed through this analysis is that this is a global phenomenon which brings up a question of how this came to be. As we know, mental health is highly subjective, so it can be assumed that the mental health issues being experienced in different parts of the world have different sets of underlying causes. So why is it

that the entire world is facing this mental health crisis all at the same time? The answer to this should be apparently obvious; it was caused by the pandemic. Although this is a feasible answer and certainly part of the reason, it does not account for the amount of growing mental health concerns that have been building up across the world before the pandemic ever hit.

In our modern age, one would assume that our advanced technologies would make it easier for us to have a happier and more fulfilling life. Technology has given us conveniences and opportunities in lifetimes that our ancestors could never dream of. Treasures of times past are mere simple commodities to us today. However, the same technologically saturated world that makes all our lives so much easier and more convenient could also be the key culprit to our global society's crumbling mental health.

Martin Heidegger, renowned German philosopher of the 20th century, seemingly foresaw our future in his essay *The Question Concerning Technology*. In this essay Heidegger (1977) warns how our own technology is ultimately our greatest threat to our existence. In explaining this, Heidegger (1977) does not claim technology to be inherently bad, but he instead claims that our modern technology and its uses has developed in a concerning way because of the way it seems to be driven to control nature rather than to understand it, ultimately seeing the natural world and its many beautiful aspects as simply resources to be gathered and used. Heidegger (1977) notes how the minds of society have been shifted due to this modern technology and how if we are not cognizant of our use and purpose of technology and human development, it will continue to lead us down an aimless path of our own detriment. To put it simply, it begs the question if we are using technology or if technology is using us at this point.

Two of the most significant technological advancements in human society is the invention of the internet and smartphones. Never before in recorded human history have we been able to have such immediate and easy access to the amount of information, processing power, and connectivity we have now thanks to the widespread use of smartphones and the internet. It is also worth noting that about one third of the world's population owns a smartphone, and about two thirds of the world's population owns a mobile device of some kind (M, 2023). With so many of us having this kind of accessibility, it has certainly created many positive benefits to the lives we live today, but because these technologies are so powerful, they can be a double-edged sword.

There is some evidence to signify that the regular use of smartphones and social media apps have contributed to declines in mental health as well as increases in suicide and self-harm rates in most notably adolescents and young adults with evidence of this being significantly noticeable in the United States (Levitz, 2024; The Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research, 2020; Wacks & Weinstein, 2021). Social media apps have also been found to be designed to keep users engaged as much as possible, leading to significantly increased rates of screen time and smartphone addiction (Orlowski, 2020). This increase in use of smart devices and the internet poses significant overall health risks as a study has found evidence that “excessive smartphone use is associated with difficulties in cognitive-emotion regulation, impulsivity, impaired cognitive function, addiction to social networking, shyness and low self-esteem,” as well as possibilities of “sleep problems, reduced physical fitness, unhealthy eating habits, pain and migraines, reduced cognitive control and changes in the brain's gray matter volume,” (Wacks & Weinstein, 2021). It must be noted that smartphones and the internet are not directly causing issues, but it is how they are used that leads to the noticeable aforementioned

issues. This correlates to Heidegger's (1977) essay in which he emphasizes that technology itself is not to blame, but our use of it is.

It is technologies like these that have played a role in the global mental health crisis, as they are both technologies that are accessible to most of the world and have changed the way people's lives are lived in the areas in which they are accessible. Of course they are not solely to blame, they are just pieces to a greater puzzle. The number of technological advancements that have possibly contributed to the overall mental health crisis are beyond measuring. Along with this it is important to note that there are numerous variables that go into what affects the overall mental health of a certain area such as political factors, climatic conditions, societal disruptions and so on, but recognizing some of these major examples gives some significant insight into how and why this crisis came to be as these examples affect the whole world.

With the much of the world works today with our modern technologies, there is no going back or eliminating the use of them. So, it begs the question of how we can begin to address the crisis if we are currently at a deficit of mental healthcare resources and our world cannot function without the very technologies that worsen our mental health if used too carelessly and often are. A possible angle to do so is by reexamining how we understand mental health on a deeper level in hopes that one day we can evoke a new intellectual movement, such as the European enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries, that can aid society in using our technologies in a more sustainable way that does not impair our mental health as significantly as well as aid us in having better mental health treatments and mental healthcare resources.

2.1.2. Understanding Mental Health

The way we understand mental health and its totality determines how we gauge someone's mental health, diagnose mental disorders, treat mental disorders, view mental health and disorders in society, and so much more. This illustrates why it is crucially important that we maintain the best possible understanding of mental health that we can, as it sets the stage for everything related to it.

To begin our deeper dive into this understanding, we can turn to the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1996) in his book *The Enigma of Health*. In this book Gadamer (1996) addresses some of the major concerns with the overall practice of medicine and healing present at the time of its writing and makes the thematic claim that Western culture has abandoned the art that goes into healing which once made healing a holistic practice. Instead, modern healthcare has become overly objective and tunnel visioned, becoming primarily concerned with isolating the problems of health in an attempt to fix just the problems rather than seeing the problem as part of an integrated whole that affects and is affected many other aspects of health (Gadamer, 1996). Although this critique of modern healthcare comes from almost three decades ago, evidence shows that this critique still rings true today, especially in the world of mental healthcare.

With mental health being subjective in nature, issues arise when is analyzed and treated in an objective manner. This can lead to mental disorders going unrecognized, misdiagnosed, over-diagnosed, and/or mistreated which surprisingly are all fairly common occurrences in psychiatry today (Ducharme, 2023; Kvarnstrom, 2017). This misunderstanding of a person's mental health disorder can lead to a patient going years without proper treatment due to a misdiagnosis which does not only severely affect the patient in a negative way but it can also negatively affect the families, relationships, and communities that these patients are a part of,

ultimately creating a ripple effect that can affect the mental health of everyone involved (Kvarnstrom, 2017).

Even with the right diagnosis, research shows that mental-health care resources in America are failing to meet the needs of the many people seeking psychiatric help. The main treatments such as prescription medications and psychotherapy are not as effective as they are often perceived to be as they often tend to just skim the surface of mental health issues and pass that off as adequate treatment leaving many patients unsatisfied and still facing the same issues (Ducharme, 2023). To add to this, pharmaceutical treatments address mental disorders as a simply a chemical imbalance, which significantly overlooks the grander cause of a mental disorder and can, ironically enough, even lead to a chemical imbalance in the brain (Ducharme, 2023). That is not to say that these treatments cannot be effective, but the effectiveness of these treatments are ultimately relying on a therapists or clinician's level of care and/or understanding which opens the door for numerous cases of malpractice when their level of care and/or understanding is not sufficient (Ducharme, 2023). Unfortunately this lack of quality in care and understanding is what has perpetuated improper mental health treatment for significant amounts of people across the country for years (Ducharme, 2023; Kvarnstrom, 2017). Similar to what Gadamer (1996) observed in the broader world of healthcare in the past, Ducharme (2023) observed that the psychiatric system today “seems more focused on getting people diagnosed, medicated, and out the door,” than actually trying to help people with their problems.

This reality about the modern world of mental healthcare is rather sobering, given that we as a society have come very far in recognizing the importance of mental health and have been putting a large emphasis on improving our understanding of it for the past few decades. Although we have come leaps and bounds from what mental-health care used to be throughout history, as

the past of mental healthcare is plagued by countless tragedies due to grievous misunderstandings about mental health. People with mental disorders throughout history were often treated as lesser people, and were more often compared to wild animals or unholy beings (Farreras, 2024). This was especially true during the 15th-17th centuries when people were still accused of being witches and the first asylums and mental institutions came to exist in Europe (Farreras, 2024). During this era, people with mental disorders were often the victims of witch burnings, and the first mental institutions that came to be functioned more as prisons and torture chambers that were used to keep people with mental disorders and other “undesirables” out of the public realm (Farreras, 2024). Unfortunately, the treatment of people with mental disorders only improved incrementally over the years, experiencing a back and forth series of improvements and deterioration in treatment throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries (Farreras, 2024). Our most significant advancements in treating mental disorders and understanding mental health came about throughout the early 20th century up to today, but many stigmas and outdated treatments, such as purely pharmaceutical treatments, that held up during the 20th century still persist today (Ducharne, 2023; Farreras, 2024). Because of this, our understanding and advancing of treatments for mental health slowed down as these outdated treatments have been just effective enough to get by without needing further reworking, simply sweeping the underlying issues under the rug until today when that system has failed us and left us in a mental health crisis.

To figure out ways we may attempt to rework our systems, treatments, and understanding in regard to mental health, we need a paradigm shift in the way that we think. Objective thinking has limited us in mental healthcare goals, so instead we might want to consider trying a more subjective approach more fit for the subjective nature of the mind. To do this we can turn back to

Heidegger with the help of Barbara Delle Pezze (2006) and her insightful writings about some of Heidegger's ideas in her work titled *Heidegger on Gelassenheit* where we can learn about meditative thinking, the key to this paradigm shift we are looking for. The idea of Gelassenheit is, to put in simple terms, a releasement from a willingness to do, to act, and is a state of being that is associated with accepting truth, being open, and allowing us to attain "a different understanding of man's innermost being," (Pezze, 2006). Heidegger believed that Gelassenheit was the essence of what he referred to as meditative thinking, a type of thinking that is focused on the truth of existence and listens to our inner most sense of consciousness (Pezze, 2006). Meditative thinking "means to notice, to observe, to ponder, to awaken an awareness of what is actually taking place around us and in us," and is something that "requires effort, commitment, determination, care, practice," but most importantly patience as it needs time to come to fruition (Pezze, 2006). This mode of thinking "keeps us extremely focused on our reality," which allows us to be in the moment of existence and be more aware of what is inside and outside of ourselves (Pezze, 2006). According to Pezze (2006) meditative thinking invites us think much deeper and further into ideas and given circumstances or situations, and allows us to become much more thoughtful and consciously aware.

According to Heidegger (as cited in Pezze, 2006) there has been a "growing thoughtlessness" that needs to be addressed because people have become more inclined to be "in flight from thinking." Heidegger is referring to calculative thinking and how it has become the main mode of thinking in modern society (Pezze, 2006). This calculative thinking is the same type of thinking that has plagued healthcare and prompted Gadamer to write *The Enigma of Health*. Calculative thinking is a mode of thinking that is crucial to our technological development and achievement as it is concerned with objective matters, planning, investigating,

completing tasks, finding new ways to develop, and constantly pursuing what is next to accomplish (Pezze, 2006).

Although this type of thinking is important because it helps us with our everyday lives and advances society technologically, its oversaturated uses in society have led to meditative being used less often in the world which is what is meant by a “flight from thinking,” (Pezze, 2006). Heidegger observes that there is a less ‘practical’ need for meditative thought in the modern era due to technology, making society lean too heavily on calculative thought, and has led society to slowly become more blind to the truth of reality and lack deeper thought and meaning in everyday life (Pezze, 2006). Heidegger (as cited by Pezze, 2006) claimed that this neglect for meditative thought would lead to people becoming a “defenseless and perplexed victim at the mercy of the irresistible superior power of technology,” because technology has allowed us to “take in everything in the quickest and cheapest way, only to forget it just as quickly, instantly,” until “suddenly and unaware we find ourselves so firmly shackled to these technical devices that we fall into bondage to them.”

This obsession our modern world has with developing technology and ‘advancing the human race’ has become tunnel visioned and has lost sight of a crucially important part of what it means to be human and be well. Heidegger (as cited by Pezze, 2006) stating that we can end up “shackled to these technical devices,” can be used as an observation of today’s culture, especially with devices like our smart phones, because we can no longer function without the use of these technological advancements in modern society, making anyone who participates in it succumb to them and become vulnerable to their enticing power.

It is through meditative thinking that we can begin a new understanding of mental health and the mind as a whole. It is through meditative thinking that we can get back in touch with our

inner being, our consciousness, to become more aware of ourselves and this vast reality we often attempt to objectively reduce down to a mere means of resources and reason. By diving into the depths of our consciousness, we can spur a shift in thinking that can guide us in a better direction for mental health and overall better living in the modern world.

2.1.3. Understanding Consciousness

“Consciousness is one of the fundamental facts of human existence... But at the same time, it’s the most mysterious phenomenon in the universe” said David Chalmers during his TED talk titled *How do you explain consciousness?* back in 2014. Chalmers (2014) continued to make the point the following point:

“Some people say a science of consciousness is impossible. Science, by its nature, is objective. Consciousness, by its nature, is subjective. So, there can never be a science of consciousness. For much of the 20th century, that view held sway. Psychologists studied behavior objectively, neuroscientists studied the brain objectively, and nobody even mentioned consciousness.”

Chalmers (2014), as well as many other researchers and scientists, felt that it was time for a science of consciousness to officially be undertaken so that consciousness could be understood in a scientific and more concrete way, and because of people like them, there has “been a real explosion, a flowering of scientific work on consciousness,” over about the past thirty years. Through this undertaking, Chalmers (2014) states that there have been scientific limits in research due to consciousness not being able to fit into our current scientific framework of how we currently understand all of reality. Despite all the correlations that can be made between what

people feel and what fires off in the brain, there is currently no scientific way to explain why we have a unique and subjective experience that causes us to feel the way we do in any given situation (Chalmers, 2014).

In an attempt to further the science of consciousness, Chalmers (2014) brings up two ideas of consciousness that should be considered in order to rework our scientific view of the world so that we may attempt to fit consciousness into our overall understanding of perceived reality. According to Chalmers (2014), the first idea is that “consciousness is fundamental,” just like space time and mass which serve as the fundamental building blocks of the universe. He continues to reason that if consciousness is indeed fundamental, then it leads to the second idea is that “consciousness might be universal,” meaning that “every system might have some degree of consciousness,” an idea referred to as panpsychism (Chalmers, 2014). For further explanation, this theory of panpsychism supposes that every particle of matter, even particles such as photons, electrons, and quarks, have “some degree of consciousness,” not nearly to the degree of living beings, but enough to where it is never zero (Chalmers, 2014). Although panpsychism may seem radical and perceivably impossible, it has introduced a possible way consciousness could be integrated into our physical reality, led to the current leading theories on consciousness, and is more likely possible than it is not through what we have observed and know about consciousness and reality thus far (Chalmers, 2014). To add to this notion, the idea that consciousness, life, or something of similar nature flows throughout everything in the world is an idea that is found throughout many different philosophies and religions across the world and time, but is one that is now possibly being backed up by scientific evidence being observed in quantum mechanics (Beiner, 2023).

Quantum mechanics “is the physics of atoms and subatomic particles,” and what has been revealed through studying this field is that “the very act of observing subatomic particles change[s] them,” meaning that these particles “exist in a field of possibility, or what’s called ‘superposition,’” (Beiner, 2023, p. 197). When a particle is observed up close, “the field of possibility collapses and the particle falls into it’s final ‘state,’” ultimately deciding it’s possibility, but it is still uncertain if it is just humans’ observations of this particle up close which collapse the possibility field or if it can be collapsed by the observations of other conscious beings or entities (Beiner, 2023, p. 198). Regardless of this uncertainty, what is being learned from quantum mechanics is leading physicists to believe that “reality is fundamentally mental rather than physical,” and not in the sense that the world is just a single person’s mental construct, but instead that reality is more like consciousness in movement like how a whirlpool in a sense is not generating the water in which it swirls but is instead just the movement of the water (Beiner, 2023, pp. 198-199). With these strange observations of quantum mechanics, it is creating new frameworks for what our reality is and the theory that all forms of matter are just different phases of consciousness, like how ice and steam are different phases of water, which means it is possible that “every part of the universe contains consciousness,” (Beiner, 2023, p. 202).

The idea that consciousness is not just within us and in fact makes up the world around us as an embodied conscious construct creates a whole new possible understanding of the mind which ultimately changes our understanding of mental health. By viewing our minds as a higher state of consciousness taking place within a conscious world, we can begin to understand mental health in a much deeper and profound way, a way that arguably makes more sense for the subjective experiences and issues pertaining to mental health. Just as mental health is a complex

amalgamation of one person's lived experiences, the universe is an amalgamation of all our conscious experiences, including all the physical elements of matter that make up our universe. With this kind of understanding, it makes one wonder how much our conscious minds are affected by our surroundings and the environments in which we live. For the world of design and the built environment this becomes a highly intriguing concept and brings forth the notion that the way we design and build our environments around us is of greater importance than we may realize, but we will return to this role architecture has on consciousness and mental health later in this chapter.

Understanding consciousness is not a simple task that may not be possible to be done in this paper alone, or even in any written or spoken way. It is highly complex and is something that must simply be experienced to continue our understanding of it. However, to further develop this understanding, we must acknowledge the other side of conscious experience, the side that fuels our dreams, fears, desires, traumas, passions, memories, and so much more. We must explore the *unconscious* side of the mind.

2.1.4. The Unconscious Mind

We may know some things that make us happy, sad, motivated, or angry and why, but we may not know all of the reasons why some things or circumstances make us feel the way we that we do or why we may react in certain ways. Although having an understanding of our waking conscious mind through acts such as meditation is highly beneficial to ourselves and our mental wellbeing, that understanding is merely the beginning of understanding our consciousness. To dive deeper into consciousness and what drives and affects us subliminally, what influences

much of our behaviors and thoughts, we must explore the realms of the unconscious mind, the parts of consciousness we are seldom aware of.

Towards the beginning of the 20th century, many interesting developments in psychology took place which further helped us understand the mind in the way we do today. One of these developments was

the realization that much of the mind, or consciousness, lied below the surface of our awareness, as if in a dormant state, which was an idea made popular by Sigmund Freud and his iceberg theory of the mind (Mcleod, 2024b). This theory provided an early diagram of how the mind might work as an entity with most of itself and its processing below the surface of our conscious awareness, much like how an iceberg only has a fraction of itself visible above water while most of the iceberg lies below the surface of the water (Mcleod,

2024b). Although the specific details of Freud's iceberg theory do not quite hold up today, the idea that most of our mental processing lies in an unconscious state, out of our awareness, was one of

the most influential contributions he made to psychology that would forever change how we understand the mind and develop psychology in the future (Mcleod, 2024b).



Figure 1. Ice Berg
(Retrieved from
<https://www.pinterest.ph/pin/479985272789075393/>)

To expand further upon this idea of the underlying unconscious mind, we can turn to a former colleague and friend of Freud, renowned Swiss psychologist and father of analytical psychiatry, Carl Jung. Freud was once a teacher and mentor to Jung, becoming very good friends with one another because they shared very similar ideologies on psychology, but as Jung developed his career and studies of psychology further, they came to an impasse on some of the fundamental ideologies of psychology which ultimately ended their friendship and association with one another (Pursuit of Wonder, 2021). The fundamental differences in their work on psychology stemmed from Freud's more "scientific and reductionist approach" which contrasted from Jung's more mythopoetic approach to understanding the human mind which used the aspects of myth to explore and explain reoccurring elements of the human psyche in which science and reductionism could not seem to explain (Pursuit of Wonder, 2021). In a sense, Jung attempted to dive into the subjective side of consciousnesses which was rejected by the standard objective views and methods of psychology at the time. Although, despite this backlash towards Jung's work, it created a path in psychology that has allowed us to understand the mind and consciousness in ways that are much more profound and seemingly truer thanks to what research has been revealing today. Jung was debatably ahead of his time as his work could not be fully comprehended in with the commonly held views and frameworks of the past.

What compelled Jung to explore this more subjective and mythopoetic approach to psychology was what he was observing through his patient's experiences, his own experiences, and what he found in researching the past of many different myths, philosophies, literatures, and religions from across the world (Pursuit of Wonder, 2021; Rise from Eden, 2020; THIRD EYE DROPS, 2023). Jung noticed "recurring similarities in the unconscious of a vast number of his patients" in his professional psychiatric work, and in his "historical and mythological research...

he noticed that similar motifs, symbols, and themes that appeared in his patient’s unconscious also were prevalent and consistent across art, myths, and literature within different cultures of different times even though these cultures never encountered one another,” (Pursuit of Wonder, 2021, 8:21). These common symbols, images, themes, and motifs he kept discovering in the minds of people and in his historical research led him to deduce that they were, “expressions of the various psychic structures consistent across humanity,” which Jung called “archetypes,” (Pursuit of Wonder, 2023, 8:45). Jung realized that archetypes were seemingly universal because they kept appearing throughout human culture, often in the forms of gods and goddesses in ancient cultures, and even in people’s dreams, which defied scientific explanation and led him to create a model of the human psyche to help understand these phenomena and the whole of human consciousness (After Skool, 2023; Mcleod, 2024a; Pearson, n.d.; Pursuit of Wonder, 2021).

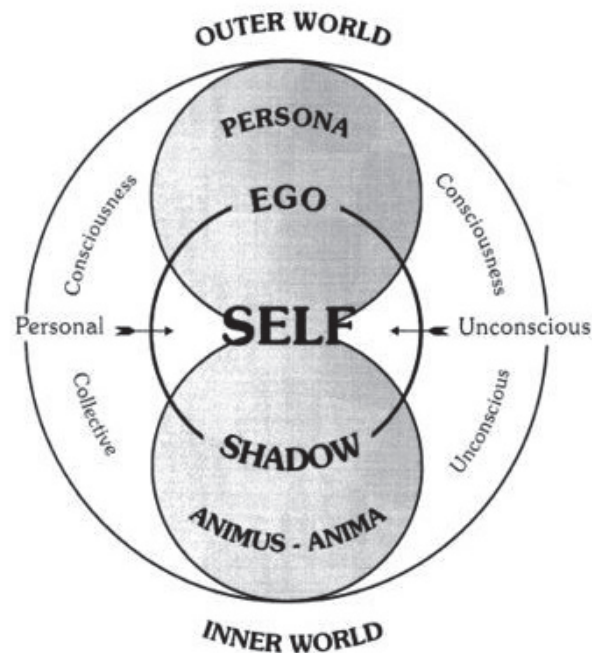


Figure 2. Carl Jung’s Model of the Human Psyche
 (Retrieved from:
<https://www.carolspearson.com/about/about-archetypes-c-g-jung-and-depth-psychology>)

Jung's model of the human psyche allegedly contains the primary elements or archetypes of the psyche that are present within everyone: the persona, the self, the ego, the shadow, and the anima/animus (Mcleod, 2024a; Pursuit of Wonder, 2021). These archetypes exist within the different realms of consciousness which interact with the external world and the inner world deep within us. Consciousness is the realm of our minds in which we are aware of and actively know, and within this realm consists of the ego and the persona. The ego is the narrative we give to ourselves about ourselves for a sense of identity and serves as a conscious filter of the true self in order to output the persona, the outward mask, or façade, we present to the outside world in order to conceal who we truly are for the sake of social conformity (Mcleod, 2024a; Pursuit of Wonder, 2021). What the ego represses from the true self ends up becoming a part of the personal unconscious, out of our basic awareness yet still interacts with the conscious and influences thoughts and behaviors (Mcleod, 2024a; Pursuit of Wonder, 2021). The collective unconscious is the part of the human psyche that evolved from the beginning of humanity through imitating the previous generations of humans creating "a sort of reservoir of psychological predispositions, structures, and memories," and "is automatically inherited by each human being," which ultimately fuels the reoccurring archetypes that appear throughout human existence. (Pursuit of Wonder, 2021). The collective unconscious contains ancestral memories that drive certain instincts such as natural fears and desires, which has seemingly been observed in scientific studies with mice where the offspring showed the same fears as their parents without ever encountering the same circumstances that created the parents' fear to begin with (Callaway, 2013; Mcleod, 2024a). Within the collective unconscious is the shadow, the parts of our true selves that we do not know, wish to repress, neglect, or avoid identifying with (Mcleod, 2024a; Pursuit of Wonder, 2021). Connected to the shadow is the anima, "the suppressed feminine

qualities in a male,” and the animus, “the suppressed masculine qualities in a female,” (Pursuit of Wonder, 2021).

At the core of the human psyche and what all the elements of the psyche interact with and help form is the “self,” which is the true and authentic versions of ourselves that are a combination of our conscious and unconscious sides as well as opposite sides of ourselves (After Skool, 2023; Pursuit of Wonder, 2021; Rise from Eden, 2020). In order to understand the “self,” one must integrate all these parts of the psyche into a balanced living experience, which is the ultimate goal of psychological development and what Jung refers to as individuation, also referred to as self-actualization, and pursuing it is said to be the key to a fulfilling and meaningful life (After Skool, 2023; Mcleod, 2024a; Pursuit of Wonder, 2021; Rise from Eden, 2020).

In order to achieve individuation and fully accept and understand ourselves, we must do what Jung refers to as “shadow work,” which is the difficult process of revealing, addressing, and accepting the sides of ourselves we have repressed in the unconscious, the anima/animus and the shadow (After Skool, 2023; Mcleod, 2024a; Pursuit of Wonder, 2021; Rise from Eden, 2020). By avoiding our psychological shadow, we only make it increasingly work against us, causing the negative and destructive behaviors repressed in the shadow to come out more often, be projected onto others, and dominate aspects of our behavior without control (Eternalised, 2021; Mayer, 2021). These negative behaviors that ensue when the shadow is ignored over time are simply signs to the consciousness that something deep down needs to be addressed and integrated into the self, and by doing so a person can pursue and come closer to individuation (Eternalised, 2021; Mayer, 2021).

The achievement of complete individuation is debatably impossible and is one of life's most difficult challenges, yet pursuing it allows us to become who we are truly meant to be, live the lives we actually want to live, and to become whole (Pursuit of Wonder, 2021). Thus, it is critically important that one must do their own shadow work in order to pursue better mental health and live a better life. To do shadow work, one must acknowledge that their psychological shadow is not an enemy to the self and must be treated fairly, as an equal, because the shadow contains qualities that can be used for good, such as using your anger and frustration to speak up against an injustice being done upon you in a respectful way (Eternalised, 2021). The shadow does not necessarily contain bad or evil sides of ourselves, but instead just what we suppress which become suppressed because we view them as bad or evil, but if understood and integrated into ourselves the traits of the shadow can be used for good and positively benefit our lives (Beiner, 2023, pp. 135-141; Eternalised, 2021). To summarize the importance of embracing the shadow, we can turn to the words of Carl Jung himself from his 1951 book titled *Aion*:

Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self:

“No tree, it is said, can grow to heaven unless its roots reach down to hell.”

What inspired and grew much of Jung's ideas in psychiatry such as the model of the psyche, shadow work, and individuation was his study of ancient alchemy (Eternalised, 2022b; THIRD EYE DROPS, 2023). Jung stated in his 1962 book titled *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*:

“Only by discovering alchemy have I clearly understood that the Unconscious is a process and that ego's rapport with the Unconscious and its contents initiate an evolution, more precisely, a real metamorphosis of the psyche.”

By studying alchemy, Jung discovered its metaphorical meanings behind the transformation of one's inner consciousness and realized that he needed to bring alchemy into a modern translation as a transformation of self (Eternalised, 2022b). In traditional ancient alchemy, one of the main goals of an alchemist was achieving **chrysopoeia**, or the act of turning lead into gold, and to do this, alchemists would pursue their *magnum opus*, or great work as it translates, in order to create the seemingly impossible philosophers stone which was rumored to turn lead into gold and even grant eternal life (Eternalised, 2022b). The steps involved in pursuing the great work and the many various symbols associated with alchemy all contained a sort of mysticism that had indirectly pointed to this transformation of consciousness, and Jung realized that this was the true meaning of alchemy the whole time as the ideas associated with this type of transformation were viewed as absurd and not acceptable throughout history due to the existing ideals and religious frameworks that held sway throughout history (Eternalised, 2022b; THIRD EYE DROPS, 2023). Thus, this act of **chrysopoeia** and of pursuing the great work was in actuality the impossible task of individuation and a coming together of opposites which is exemplified throughout alchemical symbolism (Eternalised, 2022b; THIRD EYE DROPS, 2023).

The key to individuation is doing shadow work and merging the opposites of oneself into a balanced and true sense of self. To attain this metaphorical key, one must tap into the realms of their unconsciousness to reveal, accept and integrate that which they neglect or are unaware of. There are various methods of tapping into the unconscious mind and two methods Carl Jung

often used to tap into his own and his patient's unconscious minds were dream interpretation and active imagination (Academy of Ideas, 2023; Eternalised, 2022a).

Jung (as cited by Academy of Ideas, 2023, 1:18) saw dreams as a messenger “whose task it is to reveal the secrets that are hidden from the conscious mind, and this it does with astounding completeness.” To Jung, dreams were essentially the natural bridge between the conscious and unconscious minds, allowing the unconscious to finally communicate to the conscious, but only if the conscious pays close enough attention and stays aware of it (Academy of Ideas, 2023). By paying closer attention to our dreams, we can begin to understand ourselves on a deeper level as our dreams are mere natural products of the unconscious, not influenced by will, so when they appear to us, there is usually something trying to be conveyed to our conscious from our unconscious (Academy of Ideas, 2023). Ancient cultures held much more reverence towards dreams than we do today as some dreams were seemingly prophetic, capable of warning us about certain ailments of ourselves or events to come in the world before they take place, and some dreams were completely otherworldly that seem completely alien in nature which were seen as messages from the gods (Academy of Ideas, 2023).

Jung claims that his dreams and his inner most experiences are that which are most worth sharing because they gave him the initial ideas that would develop into most of his scientific works and various writings, and Jung also notes how many great minds throughout history developed many of their revolutionary ideas through ideas that initially came to them through dreaming (Academy of Ideas, 2023). Jung is not the only one to proclaim the importance of dreams in psychology. Maurice Merleau-Ponty has also noted that dreams should be recognized as a “primary experience” just as we treat our waking, conscious experience because the lived experiences our body perceives and experiences are relived in various constructs through our

dreams which can feel just as real as waking reality (Morley, 1999). Even though dreams have been recognized as just as important to reality as waking experience in ancient cultures, different cultures across the world today, and esteemed psychologists much of today's modern culture ignores the real significance of dreams while modern science is still struggling to objectively understand the 'role' of dreaming (Academy of Ideas, 2023; Roland, 2023).

The other method Jung used, and one he referred to as his most powerful tool in tapping into the unconscious mind was active imagination (Eternalised, 2022a). Active imagination is somewhat similar to dreaming except it is done completely awake and conscious, making it very similar to lucid dreaming in a way (Eternalised, 2022a). Active imagination is something Jung developed and practiced in an effort to heal his mind after his split with Sigmund Freud in 1913 when he experienced a rather traumatic mental breakdown that affected him until 1916 (Eternalised, 2022a; Pursuit of Wonder, 2021). It was during this period that Jung wrote *The Red Book* which was an account of his multiple experiences he had while undergoing active imagination (Eternalised, 2022a; Pursuit of Wonder, 2021).

The experiences he had were otherworldly and rather unexplainable in any forms of objective science or reason, as he ended up deep within the realms of his unconsciousness where he wandered strange lands and had full conversations with different entities he encountered, entities he believed to be the different sides of his unconscious ultimately meaning he believed to be communicating with himself (Eternalised, 2022a). Because of the strangeness of his experiences he had while practicing active imagination, Jung never published *The Red Book* in his life time due to the criticism he would receive and reputation he still needed to maintain for the sake of his career (Eternalised, 2022a). What is interesting is that Jung's experiences with the entities he encountered while undergoing active imagination are eerily similar to many people's

experiences they had while on the powerful psychedelic substance known commonly as DMT. Beiner (2023) explains this phenomenon of seeing entities while using DMT in his book *The Bigger Picture* and tells of his own experiences he had while undergoing a clinical study of the effects of DMT throughout the book in which he encounters entities and some of them seemed to be sides of his own unconscious mind. Jung not only wrote down the encounters he had, but he included numerous pieces of art he created that were based off his experiences of active imagination which were strongly similar to the archetypal motifs and symbols found throughout human history and alchemical symbolism (Eternalised, 2022a).

These experiences of uncovering and interacting with the unconscious are absolutely profound in the transformative act of pursuing individuation. What is significantly fascinating about all of this research about the unconscious mind, the role it plays in our mental health, and the experiences had in tapping into it, is that the research shares strong similarities to the research behind and experiences people have had with psychedelic substances. Jung knew that the active imagination was not an easy practice for everyone to do, and that interpreting dreams can sometimes be difficult as well as they can be elusive and hard to remember (Academy of Ideas, 2023; Eternalised, 2022a). What I am willing to argue is that psychedelic substances can serve as a more effective alternative to tapping into and working with the unconscious side of the mind, making them a crucial aid in guiding us towards conscious enlightenment and mitigating the mental health crisis.

2.2. The Psychedelic Renaissance

Due to the recent research that has been coming out about psychedelic substances and the positively transformative experiences people have had on them, these substances are beginning to become mainstream and re-enter into societal norms whether we want it to or not. Since psychedelic substances have played a role in different human civilizations for thousands of years but have been shunned from modern global society since the 1970s, this re-emergence of their usage is what began the coining of the term “psychedelic renaissance” throughout the circles of psychedelic research (Beiner, 2023; George et al., 2022). For the sake of understanding psychedelic substances, their importance to human civilization, and why this renaissance is important, we must look at some of their history.

2.2.1. History of Psychedelics

Different cultures from all over the world throughout much of human history, such as the Incas, the Bwiti of Gabon, the Tungusic peoples of Siberia, the Shipibo-Conibo peoples of Peru, and even the ancient Romans and Greeks, have been on record for using psychedelic substances for acts of ritual, healing, spiritual enlightenment, creating deeper connections between communities and nature, and various other purposes (Beiner, 2023; George et al., 2022). The practice and use of these substances are often attributed to shamanism, especially in ancient cultures and certain tribes across the world, but with how often they were used and associated with human culture for thousands of years, their use could be considered a normal and almost instinctual practice of the human species (Beiner, 2023; George et al., 2022). The only truly unusual aspect of psychedelic use throughout human history is their ultimate banning across the world that occurred in the 1970s and still persists today (George et al., 2022). In the early 20th

century, the use of psychedelic substances started to become popular throughout modern Western culture, leading to fascinating scientific research being done on them for the first time, but also, thanks to technological advancement, the widespread production and recreational use of them as well (Beiner, 2023; George et al., 2022). This led to the abuse of these substances throughout the 1960s causing the US government to intervene and ban their use in the late 60s which was led by Richard Nixon and his war on drugs (Beiner, 2023). Although there was still a lot of good coming about in society with the widespread use of these substances in the 1960s, there was also just as much bad going on because Western civilization was not ready for the magnitude of these substances, as they were not being treated with the respect that other human civilizations who were acclimated to them did (Beiner, 2023). Due to the many severe issues that came about with their careless use, U.S. political tensions rose significantly and caused the U.S. government to force its hand to control its people, which ultimately led to the United Nation's Convention on Psychotropic Substances in 1971 that caused the banning and societal shunning of the use of psychedelic substances around the world.

It was not until the 1990s when psychedelic substances started to build back their reputation after people kept researching them in secret, and the products of the research led to clinical sanctions that gradually allowed for them to be used strictly for the purposes of clinical research (Beiner, 2023; George et al., 2022). Johns Hopkins Medicine was one of the first institutions to attain rights to use psychedelic substances for research from the U.S. government in 2006, and ever since, their research has revitalized the reputation of these substances and has paved the way for more psychedelic research across the globe and ultimately the beginning of the psychedelic renaissance (Beiner, 2023).

2.2.2. Clinical Use & Research on Psychedelics

Now, we are seeing the positive results of the use of psychedelic substance thanks to psychedelic-assisted therapies involving psychedelic substances such as psilocybin, MDMA, ketamine, DMT, LSD, peyote, and more (Beiner, 2023; George et al., 2022; TEDMED, 2016). The use of psychedelics in therapy have shown significant promise in substance use disorders, PTSD, end-of-life distress, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, early dementia, and more (Beiner, 2023; George et al., 2022; TEDMED, 2016). What is even more profound is that psychedelic assisted therapies have powerful and lasting effect on patients to the point that after just one or two large-dose psychedelic-assisted therapy sessions, many patients no longer suffer from their mental disorders and do not need regular medicine or additional use of psychedelics to maintain the positive effects experienced after using them (Beiner, 2023; George et al., 2022; TEDMED, 2016).

In a TEDMED (2016) talk by the late Roland Griffiths, one of Johns Hopkins' leading and pioneering researchers on psychedelics, revealed that in a study on psilocybin-assisted therapy, about 80% of participants of the study reported that their experience on psilocybin was one of the top five most meaningful and spiritual experiences of their lives, about 50% of participants reported that it was the single most meaningful and spiritual experiences they have ever had in their lives, and about 90% "reported increased life satisfaction and positive behavioral change." Griffiths continued to explain that the effects these participants reported about their experience were long lasting were sustained for at least a year and most likely longer, and the family, friends, and coworkers of these participants backed up and validated these positive changes the participants were reporting (TEDMED, 2016). In the conclusion of his 2016 TEDMED talk, Griffiths makes the following statements:

“Well, I think there’s something about the mystical (psychedelic) experience that relates intimately to the very nature of consciousness. Just reflect on the mysterious truth, that if you direct your attention inward, you become aware that you’re aware, an indisputable and profound inner knowing arises that we can all access individually, and perhaps, collectively. I think this inner knowing is at the core of our humanity, we recognize that at some deep level, we are all in this together... I further believe that investigation of this inner knowing... can give rise to profound world-view shifts of an uplifting kind, an awakening to a sense of freedom, peace, joy, and gratitude that most people simply find unimaginable... further research may ultimately prove to be crucial to the very survival of our species.”

2.2.3. Concerns for the Reintroduction of Psychedelics

The significance of psychedelic experiences and why they have been proven to be healing and transformative is the fact that they open up the inner depths of our consciousness and unconsciousness and reveal them to us in ways we could never before imagine (Beiner, 2023). These substances make us more consciously aware of ourselves and of this reality, and they make it easier for us to access our unconscious minds and do our inner shadow work (Beiner, 2023). Research has revealed that psychedelic substances are capable of promoting neural plasticity meaning that people’s brains literally change and rewire themselves through psychedelic experiences, allowing people to rewrite neural pathways that currently hold them to negative habits or behaviors (Beiner, 2023; George et al., 2022). What must be understood is that these substances are no wonder cure, and that the simple act of taking them does not elicit positive transformation. What does elicit positive transformation is how powerful they are at making us consciously aware and allowing us to confront the sides of ourselves which need to be

confronted, much like Jung's dream interpretation or active imagination, and use these confrontations to understand ourselves better and integrate the lessons we learn from the confrontations into our way of life (Beiner, 2023).

Because these substances are so powerful, they can also lead to bad experiences, causing people to not be able to handle what their consciousness is attempting to reveal to them, and sometimes rarely leading to people entering prolonged schizophrenic states and have negatively altered senses of perception (Beiner, 2023; George et al., 2022; Ziff et al., 2022). This is why these substances must be used with great respect and why cultures accustomed to these substance revered them and viewed them as divine substances, because they are not like other drugs or forms of treatment that exist, they are potent substances that alter our very state of consciousness and inner being (Beiner, 2023). The use of these substance requires purpose and respect, they must be done with intention and not on a whim, for they can bring your psyche through great turbulence and can suffer deep consequences if ill-prepared (Beiner, 2023)

This is why the practice of psychedelic-assisted therapy usually involves a series of preparation, typically with the help of psychedelic guides and/or therapists, that can be anywhere from a few days to a month in advance of the actual undertaking of the psychedelic substance, although the longer the preparation the better (Beiner, 2023; Levich, 2020). There are various methods used in preparing for a psychedelic experience that have been discussed, practiced, and evaluated throughout different circles of facilitators and research of the psychedelic experience, although there is no actual standard procedure that exists (Beiner, 2023; Levich, 2020).

According to Levich (2020), there are several key steps that are recommended for anyone preparing themselves for their psychedelic experience which are listed but limited to the following:

- Ask yourself why you are taking these psychedelic substances and what you hope to get out of the experience. One must set their intentions for their experience.
- Decide what kind of experience you would like to have, whether it be alone or with others, in the comfort of home or embraced by nature, in a more ceremonial setting or something more casual, etc.
- Choose the right support for your experience. Decide who you want with you there during your experience and ideally choose someone you have a positive connection with.
- Choose the right substance for you and what type of experience you are hoping to have.
- Prepare mentally, physically and emotionally. Start eating healthier, reduce intake of alcohol and other drugs, get proper sleep, practice meditation and/or breathing exercises,
- Understand set and setting. Set refers to one's mindset and mental state. Setting refers to physical environment in which one undergoes the experience in. Both of these are crucially important in influencing the quality and trajectory of the experience.
- Start a journaling practice to journal your thoughts and feelings before, during, and after the experience.
- Prioritize safety.
- Speak with a professional.
- Integrate the experience. "Following the experience, it's likely that you'll be left with significant insights, knowledge, and awareness, but without any active participation in the integration that follows, they may fade over time," (Levich, 2020)

Because there was a lack of understanding and respect for the use of psychedelic substances, their emergence in the mid-20th century flopped and led to a complete ban on them for a decade which is why we need to move forward in this new age of psychedelics with the utmost care and attention (Beiner, 2023). In his book *The Bigger Picture: How Psychedelics Can Help Us Make Sense of the World*, Beiner (2023) warns that the emergence of psychedelics in mainstream society can be completely ruined due to a lack of respect for the substances that is already starting to occur over the commercialization of them for financial and capitalistic gain. I am already seeing numerous ads on social media platforms for people selling psychedelic

compounds online illegally yet getting away with it through internet loopholes and lack of traceability. If these substances are to be reintroduced to mainstream public, it must be in a guided and safely practiced manner, just as shamans and our ancestors have in the past. They should not be introduced by means of selling them as a simple commodity that are freely accessible to anyone who simply has money to pay for them because the potential for negative effects could ruin the proper growth and positive direction of the psychedelic renaissance.

2.3. The Role of Architecture

With the fragile state that the psychedelic renaissance is currently in, it must be given a place to grow, or incubate if you will. This is where architecture and design can come into play in facilitating the betterment of psychedelic-assisted therapies and the mental health crisis. Architecture being the design of the built environment means that it can play a significant role in the effects of psychedelic experiences and mental healing as both psychedelic experiences and mental healing are significantly affected by their setting or environment (Beiner, 2023; Farreras, 2024; Gattupalli, 2022).

A significant part of the history of mental health treatment was the change of architectural design of mental institutions to provide places of better healing for the mentally ill. In the early days of mental institutions in Europe, protests arose over the conditions the people kept there were living in, which led to people in the mental institutions to be placed in well-lit and well-ventilated rooms as well as giving them overall better environments to be in while they stayed there (Farreras, 2024).

When American mental institutions started becoming popular and state run institutions began to spring up in the 19th century, they mostly followed the Kirkbride building plan which

was part of a treatise of asylum function and design brought forth by Dr. Thomas Story Kirkbride (McElroy, 2024). Dr. Kirkbride believed that the environment in which patients were being held in played an important role in their recovery and advocated for a more humanitarian design of asylums that focused on aspects such as exposure to natural light, fresh air, physical movement, socialization, and hierarchal organization (McElroy, 2024). Although Dr. Kirkbride's designs were influential, they unfortunately faltered going into the 20th century and they stopped being used because of factors such as a lack evidence behind their effectiveness in curing patients, lack of funding, increased rates of mental illness in the country, and overcrowding in mental institutions (McElroy, 2024). Regardless of the failure of Dr. Kirkbride's building designs, they still made a monumental impact on influencing the design of mental institutions and hospitals throughout the country and ultimately paved the way for better design of healthcare facilities and for better treatment of patients in mental healthcare (McElroy, 2024).

Even though Dr. Kirkbride's significance efforts may not have been fully recognized at the time, he was on the right track as today there is numerous amounts of evidence that support his ideals and overall, the effect architecture and the environment have on people and the mind. Today there exists a type of architectural design known as salutogenic design which takes its roots from the idea of salutogenesis which "views health on a spectrum of 'ease and disease' and pinpoints aspects that shift an individual from one state to the other," (Gattupalli, 2022). Basically what salutogenic design is, is a way of designing that helps mitigate stressors and aids in mental well-being and is specifically used more and more today in the design of healthcare facilities to help with the treatments and recovery of patients (Gattupalli, 2022). Some core aspects of the design theory are proper orientation and wayfinding, exposure to nature, exposure to natural light, access to recreational and social spaces, as well as manageable and user-friendly

spaces (Gattupalli, 2022). Elements of design such as the ones incorporated in salutogenic design have shown evidence in significantly helping patients recover from their ailments faster and have a much better recovery experience (Gattupalli, 2022).

The evidence supporting salutogenic design is important for the world of architecture, but it should come as no surprise. For many years, if not, since the origins of architecture, architecture itself and the intentional design of our surrounding environments has been to create spaces that positively interact with the conscious person for the sake of bettering life and human society according to architectural historian and theorist, Alberto Pérez-Gómez. In the introduction of his book *Attunement: Architectural Meaning After the Crisis of Modern Science*, Pérez-Gómez (2016) claims that the traditional role of the architect is to contribute to the psychosomatic health of society, in which he means that the architect has an important role in influencing the emotions and feeling of people which end up affecting their physical health. He claims that our surrounding environment “is nothing less than a constituent part of our consciousness,” (Pérez-Gómez, 2016, pp. 2-3). This claim has roots from the ideas of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, specifically ideas that can be found within his lectures in his book *The World of Perception*. The lectures in his book discuss and explain the ideas that the environment shapes our psyche, specifically because everything we perceive and understand are always within a context of something else or in a relation to another, meaning that our perception and mental understanding of something can never be completely isolated from its environments and context (Merleau-Ponty, 2004). Since everything we physically perceive is in relation to something else, and this relation is understood in the mind, Pérez-Gómez (2016) argues that human consciousness is not merely in the brain, but instead it is fully embodied in our physical environment that we interact with. This profound philosophical idea that consciousness is

embodied throughout the world around us is incredibly interesting given what science is finding out through quantum mechanics which brought forth the scientific idea that even the smallest particles of matter contain some amount of consciousness (Beiner, 2023; Chalmers, 2014).

With this understanding of the world as an embodiment of consciousness, it brings forth a whole new understanding and critical importance to architecture, because if it is true that our environment is truly an embodiment of consciousness, then that would mean architecture can “offer the gift of psychosomatic completeness, true health and well-being for the social body, a space of appearance consonant with its actions and habits,” (Pérez-Gómez, 2016). In short, architecture can directly shape and affect our consciousness which means that it is critically important that architecture specifically for the mind such as mental healthcare facilities and mental institutions is treated with high regard.

2.4. Holistic Healing

Since, according to Merleau-Ponty (2004), the perceived objects of the world are always perceived and understood in context to something else, then it is important to recognize that everything is part of some greater whole. This should be inherently obvious, but we often as a society tend to isolate fragments of a whole for specific purposes. Our calculative means of thinking and pursuit for technological and scientific advancement has made it far too easy for us to focus on the fragments of things without fully realizing the causes and effects that are inherent within the whole in which the fragment originates from. This has led to a fragmentation of many different aspects of modern society, such healthcare and mental healthcare which I have mentioned before.

Dalibor Vesely also observes and addressed this issue about architecture and other aspects of society in his book *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation*. Vesely (2004) recognizes that architecture has become fragmented in a similar sense to the way that Gadamer (1996) has observed healthcare to become fragmented. Much of modern architecture is often out of touch with its surrounding context, and is more focused on functional and objective means rather than being focused on experiential, connected, and poetic means (Vesely, 2006). This has led to reductionist design in architecture that is ultimately fractured and forgetful of the power architecture has in shaping our experience and ultimately our consciousness (Vesely, 2006). In this analysis of fragmentation of architecture, Vesely (2004) addresses how we can rehabilitate this fragmentation in modern society and how fragments can come together to be rehabilitative by themselves. He examines how the artistic movement of surrealism is an act of rehabilitative fragments because the movement was an act of rebellion towards the complete rationalism and reductionism that dominated the times (Vesely, 2006). He notes how surrealism takes fragments from different aspects of cultures, ideas, movements, and dreams and puts them together in a tangible way that poetically makes us change our perspective and challenges our current way of thinking, ultimately giving the individual fragments of a surrealist art piece each a purpose (Vesely, 2006). Vesely argues that fragments are being misused in modern architecture, and that these fragments are “rarely based on a proper understanding of what is involved,” and that they are used “purely as formal devices or only as a source of experimental possibilities, which may produce interesting solutions but not meaningful work,” (Vesely, 2006, p. 344).

We can apply this critique of fragmentation in architecture and other pieces of modern culture to this proposal for a psychedelic-assisted mental wellness center as well as mental healthcare in general. As the research has revealed, consciousness and our conscious experience

are integral to mental health. Consciousness is embodied in the environment and world around us and plays a crucial role in shaping our psyche and thus overall mental health. Nothing truly acts as an isolated fragment and always acts in some relation to something else, meaning that our state of mental health is complex and highly integrated into the many different aspects of our lives and the environments around us. With this accumulated understanding of mental health, it would be improper to design any mental wellness center without a comprehensive program that can aid in bettering some of the multitude of factors that contribute to good mental health.

2.4.1. Aspects of Holistic Healing

In order to create a program that facilitates holistic mental healing, it is important to look at some key elements that contribute to better mental health and overall wellness. The key elements I plan to focus on for the proposal of this program outside of psychedelic-assisted therapies include but are not limited to socialization, exposure to nature, exercise, meditation, and thermal therapies. Various other types of therapies such as psychotherapy, behavioral therapy, cognitive therapy, sound therapy, art therapy, and so forth are also being considered for the program, however some of these various types of therapies are limited to the availability of mental health professionals and the program aims to create spaces where users can benefit their mental health on their own as much as possible without the continuous need of a professional for mental healing. This program will still incorporate spaces for mental healthcare professionals and their practices, they will just be used in addition to the other focuses mentioned.

In a book titled *Happy City* by Charles Montgomery (2013), a surprising connection between socialization and rate of happiness and well-being is revealed. The more social connections a person had, specifically close social connections such as close friends and family,

the better quality of life a person reportedly had with lower rates of poor mental health and physical health ailments as well (Montgomery, 2013). The effect friendship had on quality of life was actually significantly more beneficial than substantial increases in income up to three times a person's normal income (Montgomery, 2013). In places where neighborhoods underwent what was deemed an "intersection repair," which is a street intersection for cars that has been reclaimed as public space for the surrounding neighborhood, the people who lived in them experienced less rates of depression, better sleep, easier and more fun daily life, stronger communities, improved overall health, and significantly decreased crime rates (Montgomery, 2013, p. 312). Having spaces where people can socialize, bond, and build community proves to be critical in benefiting mental health and evidently overall quality of life.

Montgomery (2013) notes another strong factor in overall quality of life to be a connection with nature. In places where people lived with nearby courtyards, those who lived next to courtyards with vegetation were more likely to be happier, friendlier, and less prone to violence than those who lived next to courtyards that were barren concrete landscapes (Montgomery, 2013, p. 110). Evidence also showed that people who live around more greenery and vegetation also were much more socially connected, more helpful, more trusting, and had stronger feelings of belonging regardless of income or race. (Montgomery, 2013, pp. 110-111). What is surprising is that just simply having the view of natural environments, even if it is a painted mural of one, benefits people in numerous ways such as reducing stress, better cognition, and improved healing (Montgomery, 2013, p. 108). The effect nature has on people also works at all scales and at all levels, meaning that the more plants and natural elements that are present within an area the better it is for people's well-being to be in that environment, and the more

someone is involved and interacting with the natural elements in that given environment the benefits are even better (Montgomery, 2013).

Another strong component of maintaining good mental health and overall good quality of life is regular exercise (Mahindru et al., 2023; World Health Organization, 2022b). Although this should come as no surprise as it has become common knowledge. The effects regular exercise has on our minds and bodies is monumental in benefitting overall well-being and I argue that exercise of some fashion should always be incorporated into any aspect of mental healthcare if physically achievable. In fact, just the simple act of walking has proven to increase feelings of positivity and well-being, its effects being comparable to that of a drug (Montgomery, 2013, p. 183). Although general exercise is good for well-being, one type of exercise I plan to focus on for this proposal is yoga, as it is a type of exercise that involves the mind just as much as it involves the body, and it has been proven to be a good practice for both healthy mind and body.

The practice of yoga is holistic in nature as it is “a form of mind-body fitness that involves a combination of muscular activity and an internally directed mindful focus on awareness of the self, the breath, and energy,” (Woodyard, 2011). What makes yoga especially unique is that it combines practices of meditation and breathwork into fitness, making it an all encompassing practice of wellbeing and it is officially recognized as a form of ‘complementary and alternative medicine for mental health’ by Mental Health America (2016). Practices of yoga have shown evidence in lowering cortisol levels, decreasing blood pressure, increasing blood flow to vital organs, decreasing levels of anxiety, helping alleviate depression, increasing feelings of relaxation, increasing mindfulness and attentiveness, increasing feelings of over-all well-being and confidence, and decreasing negative feelings such as irritability, rage, fear and aggressiveness (Woodyard, 2011). These are just a handful of recorded positive benefits that

come from practicing yoga and there are very minimal adverse side effects from practicing it (Mental Health America, 2016a; Woodyard, 2011). What is important to recognize about yoga it is not just a way to improve physical and mental health, but it is also a way for people to improve balance in their overall lives and even help them grow in their spirituality. This is important because that is what makes yoga holistic in nature, it is not fragmenting wellness into certain accepts to be improved upon, it is bringing in all the different fragments of wellness together into one practice.

Going hand-in-hand with yoga is the practice of meditation, a practice that is also important and highly beneficial to mental health (Mental Health America, 2016a; Woodyard, 2011). Meditation is a significant part of yoga, but mediation can easily be practiced separately. As mentioned previously through *Heidegger on Gelassenheit*, meditation and meditative thinking are essential parts of understanding ourselves or our inner ‘being’ that is our consciousness. Meditation can help people be more aware of their feelings and emotions, be more mindful of their actions, reduce stress, sleep better, and decrease severity of depression to name a few benefits (Mental Health America, 2016a; Woodyard, 2011). There are different methods and levels of mediation as the term can loosely define a state of mind or being, but any amount or practice of mediation is notably beneficial for mental health and it has also been recognized as a form of ‘complementary and alternative medicine for mental health’ by Mental Health America (2016).

One of the last key elements of good mental health I will focus on for this proposal is thermal therapies. The intentional exposure to intensely cold temperatures such as an ice bath and intensely hot temperatures such as a sauna have evidence that they provide numerous benefits to the mind and the body (Andrew Huberman, 2023; Muzik et al., 2018; Muzik &

Diwadkar, 2019). Intentional exposure to high levels of heat for certain periods of time such as hot showers, hot baths, or saunas can improve overall cardiovascular health, reduce inflammation, relieve pain, promote relaxation, promote overall physical recovery, and reduce stress (Andrew Huberman, 2023; Heidi, 2024). What is more interesting is the benefits that come from intentional exposure to intensely cold temperatures does not only bring about physical and mental health benefits, but the mental health benefits are surprising and we have made groundbreaking discoveries about the human body through researching cold exposure on the human body (Andrew Huberman, 2023; Muzik et al., 2018; Muzik & Diwadkar, 2019). Some of the benefits of intentional exposure to intensely cold temperatures such as ice baths or cold showers include better sleep, improved immune system, increased metabolism, increased libido, reduced anxiety, reduced stress, better temperature regulation, reduced inflammation, improved mood, and overall decrease in symptoms of depression (Andrew Huberman, 2023; Muzik et al., 2018; Muzik & Diwadkar, 2019).

To take cold exposure a step further, there is a man known as Wim Hof, also known as the “Iceman” who has developed a method of forced breathing that is usually combined with meditation and intense cold exposure (referred to as the Wim Hof Method, or WHM for short) in which the benefits of cold exposure can reach new levels (Muzik et al., 2018; Muzik & Diwadkar, 2019). For a brief background behind the WHM and Wim Hof himself, Wim Hof holds multiple world records for stunts done in freezing cold temperatures, has climbed Mt. Everest with nothing but shorts on, has run marathons in freezing cold weather in nothing but shorts, and has accomplished numerous other feats that were thought to be impossible to do by any human in which he attributes to his method (Goalcast, 2021). By incorporating the WHM while undergoing cold exposure, studies have found that people have been able to influence the

function of their autonomic nervous system, the system in charge of the ‘fight-or-flight’ response, which was previously believed not to be possible (Muzik et al., 2018; Muzik & Diwadkar, 2019). The forced breathing technique increases the amount of adrenaline and hormones into the body which in turn causes numerous changes in the body such as significantly boosting your immune system, increasing and maintaining core body temperature, significantly reducing inflammation, and better regulation of mood (Muzik et al., 2018; Muzik & Diwadkar, 2019; What I’ve Learned, 2017).

For the purposes of mental health, the study by Muzik and Diwadkar (2019) made a significant steppingstone in showing evidence that practice of the WHM while undergoing cold exposure can help with symptoms of anhedonia, depression, and other possible mood disorders. The effects of the WHM combined with positive effects of meditation focused on mental well-being could possibly become another officially recognized method of alternative medicinal practice for mental health. Although science and research are still being done on the effectiveness of the WHM on mental health, Wim Hof himself holds a powerful testimony to its effectiveness. After Wim lost his wife to the tragedy of suicide he struggled immensely to continue on with his life and look after his kids, but after many different attempts at various practices and methods of wellbeing as well as various religions to no avail, he one day discovered the effects of plunging into ice cold water and what it did to his mind (Goalcast, 2021). Wim Hof says that the feeling and mental clarity that he received from doing his ice water plunges helped him get through each day to be there for his kids, and it allowed him to eventually challenge himself to accomplish the many amazing feats he has under his belt today as well as developing the WHM (Goalcast, 2021).

Through what research has revealed about mental health, it is apparent that mental health is just a fragment of the experience of life, and that to attain good mental health we must acknowledge that there are multifaceted layers that contribute to mental health and overall wellbeing. By examining various key elements that contribute to good mental health, we can use our knowledge of them to create environments that will benefit mental health significantly for those who need mental health care.

2.5. Oregon

In looking for the proper place for my thesis proposal, my research led me to choose the state of Oregon in the United States for the general location of my project. The reason for choosing Oregon is because the state has been facing a mental health crisis of its own for quite some time and the statistics for Oregon's overall mental health show that the state has been towards the bottom of mental health rankings for almost a decade according to the annual reports on the state of mental health in America that are released by Mental Health America. The following are rankings from reports released for the years 2015 through 2023:

- Oregon's Overall Mental Health Rankings:
 - 2015: 40th
 - 2016: 51st
 - 2017: 49th
 - 2018: 44th
 - 2019: 49th
 - 2020: 50th
 - 2021: 48th
 - 2022: 50th
 - 2023: 46th

- Oregon's Access to Mental Health Care Rankings:
 - 2015: 28th
 - 2016: 21st
 - 2017: 21st
 - 2018: 12th
 - 2019: 16th
 - 2020: 24th
 - 2021: 21st
 - 2022: 19th
 - 2023: 30th

These rankings show that Oregon has been struggling significantly with their mental health for about a decade, but what is even more interesting is that the state has ranked towards the middle for access to mental health care over the same period of time it has ranked towards the bottom for overall mental health. This indicates that the mental healthcare being offered in the state is not of good enough quality to alleviate the demand for its services and/or the supply is simply not enough for the overwhelming demand. Either way, Oregon is in desperate need of assistance for their crisis as their problems are deeply rooted and not so simple to solve.

Oregon attempted to deinstitutionalize mental healthcare in the past which has led to long standing issues in addressing their mental health problems today (Ramakrishnan, 2023). Due to funding cuts that were made towards mental healthcare in Oregon decades ago on top of the rise in rates of mental disorders, the mental healthcare services in Oregon have not been adequate enough to provide basic mental health care needs even for those who needed it most (Ramakrishnan, 2023). Many people, sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, neighbors, friends, and family members alike found themselves struggling to get the basic services they needed, but when they were finally given a chance, the system hardly did much to alleviate their issues with many people being rushed out of the system shortly after being put into it (Ramakrishnan, 2023). The state's psychiatric hospital, coincidentally one of the few Kirkbride Plan buildings still standing and operational, has reached a point where it is practically an overflow center for

criminals who are deemed unfit for trial, with many of the people sent there not getting enough time and proper treatment for their stay to be effective before they are sent back to jail or released onto the streets with no further help (Ramakrishnan, 2023).

Many people who were quickly ushered out of the system after waiting too long just to get in were also let down by the state's minimal effort towards community-based which hardly existed because there were no legal requirements for it to be necessary in communities (Ramakrishnan, 2023). According to Ramakrishnan (2023), Oregon has used significantly more money on putting people in jail, pushing people through the broken systems, and dealing with the after math of the inadequate mental health treatments than it would have used if it would have just used money in the past to invest in its mental healthcare resources.

Fortunately, Oregon has been taking the right steps to turn its path around and is investing more funds into its mental health care resources and is taking more action for mental health than ever before (Ramakrishnan, 2023). In part of this call to action, Oregon passed the Oregon Psilocybin Services Act in November of 2020 in an effort to access the benefits of psychedelic-assisted therapies to alleviate their mental health crisis (Oregon Health Authority, 2024). The Oregon Health Authority (2024) states that the legal use of psilocybin is limited to the confines of a psilocybin service center and in addition that a person undergoing a psilocybin session must be accompanied by a licensed facilitator during the entirety of the service which can last up to six to eight hours. Since this whole endeavor is rather new, Oregon is trail blazing this kind of use for psilocybin and psychedelics as a whole with no other former examples or framework to work off of. Because of this, it is important to recognize that problems will occur and that a lot will be learned and adjusted through this process of using psilocybin services, but it is also more important to try to foresee some of the issues that might arise and try to plan ahead.

What can be gathered from the information about these psilocybin service centers given to us by the Oregon Health Authority (2024) is that these service centers do not need to be recognized as official mental health care facilities and have any sort of mental health care resources or professionals available in order to operate. Although the ballot passed as mainly an effort to alleviate the mental health crisis, it is questionable that not more rigorous efforts were set in place to have these service centers better accommodate the issues they were originally meant to address. In addition to this, the requirements of the licensed facilitators of psilocybin are relatively low in comparison to the facilitator requirements already set in place at a more vetted organization known as Psychedelic Passage, an organization dedicated to facilitating therapeutic psychedelic experiences (Psychedelic Passage, 2024). As of right now, the current service centers of Oregon are more of a highly secured business that sells an exclusive experience with no real sort of standards in place for how the psilocybin services should be conducted or how the service centers themselves should function or be designed. This debatably leaves too much to the service centers and their facilitators to be responsible for as it leaves a lot of room for interpretation on how services should be conducted. This means that the ultimate success and potential growth of this type of therapy is in the hands of these businesses which, if done wrong by one too many of these businesses can ruin the opportunities of psychedelic-assisted therapy across the state, the nation, and possibly even further.

With the gravity Oregon holds in being a proving ground for getting psychedelic-assisted therapy off the ground in the United States, it is crucially important that better standards for psilocybin service centers and services are developed in the near future. This proposal cannot offer insight into how legislation should better handle the future of these service centers or how the service centers should operate. But since the use of psilocybin is limited to the confines of a

service center, what this proposal *can* do is aim to pursue and attempt to create a standard for the design and functionality of these service centers so that people can have the most beneficial psychedelic experience they could have for their mental health.

3. METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the goal of my proposal, my research delved into many different aspects of philosophical, historic, scientific, and statistical research in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of mental health and what is involved in attaining and perpetuation good mental health. The research ultimately paves a path for understanding how complex the issues of mental health can be and how addressing the issues is not a mere simple fix a few places but rather a complex reworking of systems that can hopefully turn our mental health crisis around one step at a time.

For the sake of design, comprehensive understandings of mental health, consciousness, psychedelics substances, the influences of architecture and environment, and holistic healing had to be undertaken to synthesize a possible design solution that encompasses most of the key elements needed to be incorporated into an architectural program fit for this typology. Throughout this process of research and understanding, it has cultivated ideas of architecture that not only hope to be highly functional and effective in the aims of this project, but also create a deeply poetic experience that speaks to the overarching and historical issues of mental health through a deep analysis of philosophy, culture, story, and lived experience.

The culmination of and synthesize of these ideas into a possible reality of architecture is nothing short of difficult yet is something that is more than worth pursuing. Although the architectural proposal may be limited in certain aspects of design and functionality for reasons such as limited time and resources, it still serves as a testament to what could be a standard for mental healthcare in the future.

3.1. Artwork by Alex Grey

As a precedent to my architectural process and overall thesis proposal, I explored and researched the artwork by Alex Grey, an artist who has been deemed as one of the most significant artists of our time due to his work illustrating the transcendental experiences of spirituality, psychedelics, and consciousness. His and his wife Allyson's work together have created pathways of understanding consciousness for people across the world, helping people connect and relate with one another as well as making sense of what we call life. The exploration and research behind the meaning and purpose of his art led to great revelations in the creation of my artifact and the philosophies behind my architectural design.

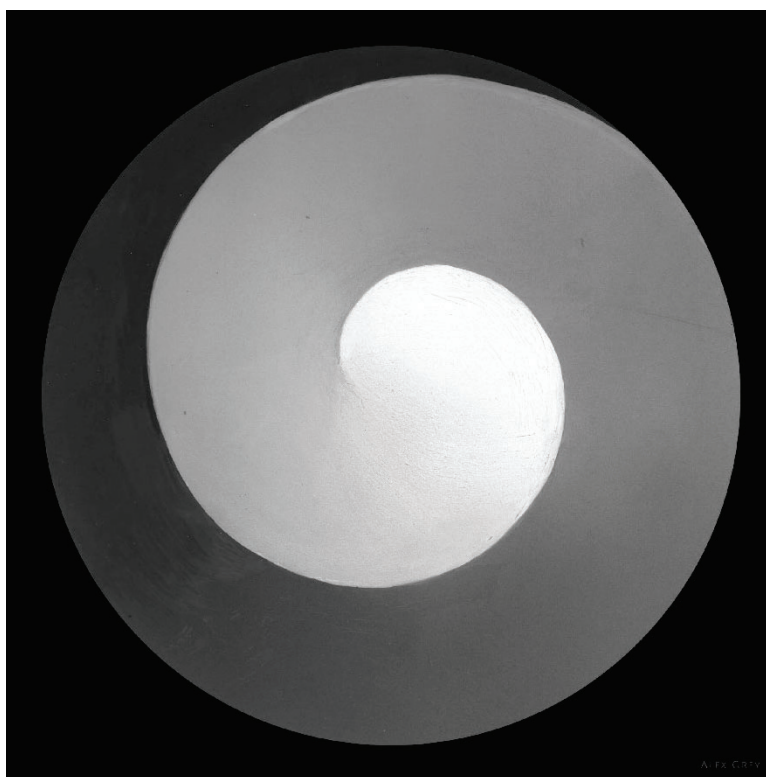


Figure 3. "Polar Unity Spiral" by Alex Grey, 1975
(Retrieved from:
<https://www.alexgrey.com/art/transcendental/polar-unity-spiral/>)

The image above (Figure 3) served as one of the most inspirational pieces of Grey's artwork for my project. The artwork is rather simple and is one of the most simple pieces of art Grey has arguably ever produced, but it is the meaning behind the painting that makes it so intriguing. Alex Grey tells of the meaning behind the painting in a TEDx Talk (2013) where he discusses how art evolves consciousness. Leading up to the creation of the piece, Grey was working as an upcoming artist who focused on portraying opposites together in his art, but was suffering from severe depression (TEDx Talks, 2013). In desperation, Grey says he prayed to a god he did not believe existed and within twenty-four hours he experienced one of the most transformative events of his life (TEDx Talks, 2013). Within the twenty-four hours he was invited to a house party where he experienced the psychedelic substance known as LSD for the first time and during this experience he had a vision that he was in a spiraling tunnel in which he was in the dark going toward the light in which he perceived to be God (TEDx Talks, 2013). Grey called what he saw in this vision a "spiritual rebirth canal" in which "every polarity and conflict was resolved" where he saw the grey areas between the light and dark bringing the opposites together (TEDx Talks, 2013). Grey saw this bringing of opposites together as his calling as an artist which led to change his last name to Grey and create the Polar Unity Spiral (TEDx Talks, 2013). In addition to having this transformative experience Grey ended up meeting his wife and studio partner, Allyson, who was the hostess of the party and also on LSD, leading Alex to believe that the god he previously did not believe in had answered his prayer in full (TEDx Talks, 2013).

The Polar Unity Spiral would go on to be the beginning of Alex Grey's successful career as an artist as well as the beginning of a new and positively transformed life. What intrigued me the most about the meaning behind this painting is that seemingly symbolizes Carl Jung's idea of

individuation in which a person merges the opposite sides of themselves, the ego and shadow, the conscious and unconscious, into a complete whole. It also symbolizes the end of the old life and the beginning of the new life, a motif that is often symbolized by the alchemical symbol of a snake or dragon eating its own tail known as Ouroboros.

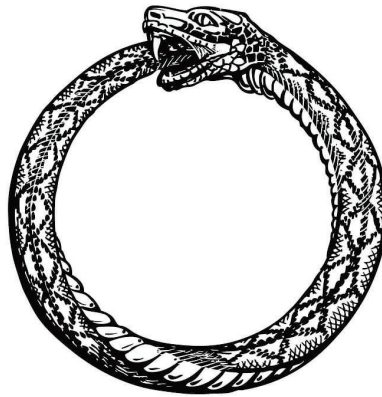


Figure 4. Illustration of the Ouroboros Symbol
(Retrieved from: <https://symbolsage.com/ouroboros-meaning-and-origins/>)

The artwork Alex Grey would go on to create after this experience would be nothing short of transcendental. His pieces were awe inspiring and spoke to feelings and emotions in ways that felt like they could not have been better expressed. In viewing some of his other works which were much more highly more detailed and artistic, it made me consider the possibility that my architecture could serve as the 'Polar Unity Spiral' of people's lives which influences them to go live positively transformed lives, symbolic to the beautiful works of art that originated out of Grey's transformative experience.



Figure 5. "Flesh of the Gods" by Alex Grey, 2021
(Retrieved from:
<https://www.alexgrey.com/art/nature-field/flesh-of-the-gods>)

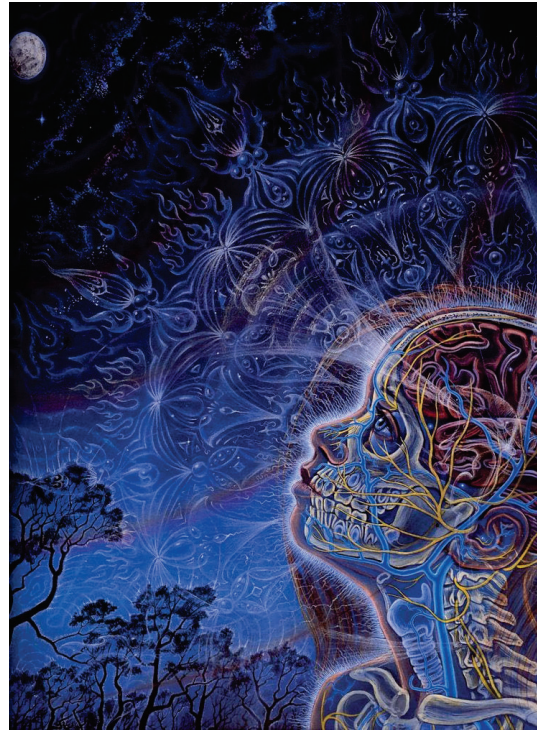


Figure 6. "Wonder" by Alex Grey, 1996
(Retrieved from:
<https://www.alexgrey.com/art/transcendental/wonder>)

The merging of opposites illustrated and symbolism embedded within “Polar Unity Spiral” seemed to strongly correlate with many ideas surrounding historical philosophy, Carl Jung’s ideas, and alchemy. This fascinating connection spurred the development of my artifact to become something that merges opposites itself, creating something uniquely whole that would symbolize this great effort of individuation, of chysopoeia.

3.2. The Artefact

The artefact served as an introductory design exploration phase that took what I learned through my research at the time to create a poetically manifested object to permeate the deeper meanings behind my project to the world and discover ideas of creation and design through the act of making it. For the creation of my artefact, I began with an idea to create something out of fallen logs to symbolize the destruction of the environment that has historically happened throughout Oregon due to logging and deforestation. The idea of the desecration of an environment connects back to the desecration of the environments dedicated to mental healing throughout history that has lingered and permeated into the poor mental health care environments we see today in places such as Oregon.



Figure 7. Logs used in the creation of the Artefact

Through working with one of the logs to cut and break down into separate components, the idea emerged to create two separate chests that would be created from the same log but serve different purposes. Inspired by Alex Grey's art, Carl Jung's ideas, ideas of alchemy, and the tools used in alchemy, I decided to have one chest represent light and order and to have the other chest represent darkness and chaos.

The furnace used in alchemical pursuits known as the athanor served as the inspiration to my first chest which would be charred and

symbolize the darkness and chaos of our lives and the shadow of our psyche. I carved out the interior of the chest using a grinding tool to make it rugged and disfigured, and afterwards I burnt a fire within one side of the shadow chest using cut off chunks of what used to be a complete log. The charcoals from that fire were kept in the chest for later use and I completed the top have by scorching the symbol of a phoenix onto it to symbolize the rebirth from the ashes, from the shadow, and to also pay an ode to its use the alchemical symbol for the completion in the making of the philosopher's stone.

For the second chest, the alchemical tools known as alembics which were used to distill liquids in order to purify them served as the chest's base inspiration to symbolize light and order. This chest was made to be more refined and hold clean water instead of dirty coals and ashes. I used a CNC machine to carve out a clean-cut bowl into both sides of the chest and gave it a stain and epoxy finish to complete its refined look and grant it the ability to hold water within its chamber.



Figure 9. Charcoal Chest Artefact



Figure 8. Water Chest Artefact

Although I had created my alchemically symbolic tools, I still was unsure how to use them properly. I only knew that I would somehow use the water and charcoal within each of the chests on pieces of paper to create artistic pieces of work that were to symbolize the union of opposites, of charcoal and water. In experimenting with the paper and water to create images by hand, I discovered that water that got on the pieces of paper made it easier for the charcoal to adhere to the paper. In a way, the water would prepare the paper to take on and confront the charcoal.



Figure 10. Polar Unity Spiral attempt using the Artefact

Through discussing my discoveries and ideas with my thesis instructor, he helped come to the final development in my artefact. I was attempting to create the pieces that were to come out of these chests with my own hands, but where I was mistaken is that I was not letting the chests do the work themselves to create the pieces. With this revelation, I discovered the true purpose of my artefact and developed my final process. I took ruined pieces of crumpled up, folded paper, put them into the refined water chest and shook the chest around. The shaking of the chest left a unique water mark on the piece of paper. I then placed the wet piece of paper into the ragged charcoal chest and shook it around.



Figure 11. First set of pieces created with the final method

Together, the chests turned the pieces of ruined paper into interestingly unique and abstract images that carried high resemblance to the Rorschach inkblots tests that have been famously used in psychiatry. It was quite an interesting coincidence given the surrounding theme of mental health, as this was not initially the intention. From there I made numerous pieces using this method and created a series of images that were fascinating to look at and decipher what could be seen through the abstractions, being very reminiscent of cloud watching.

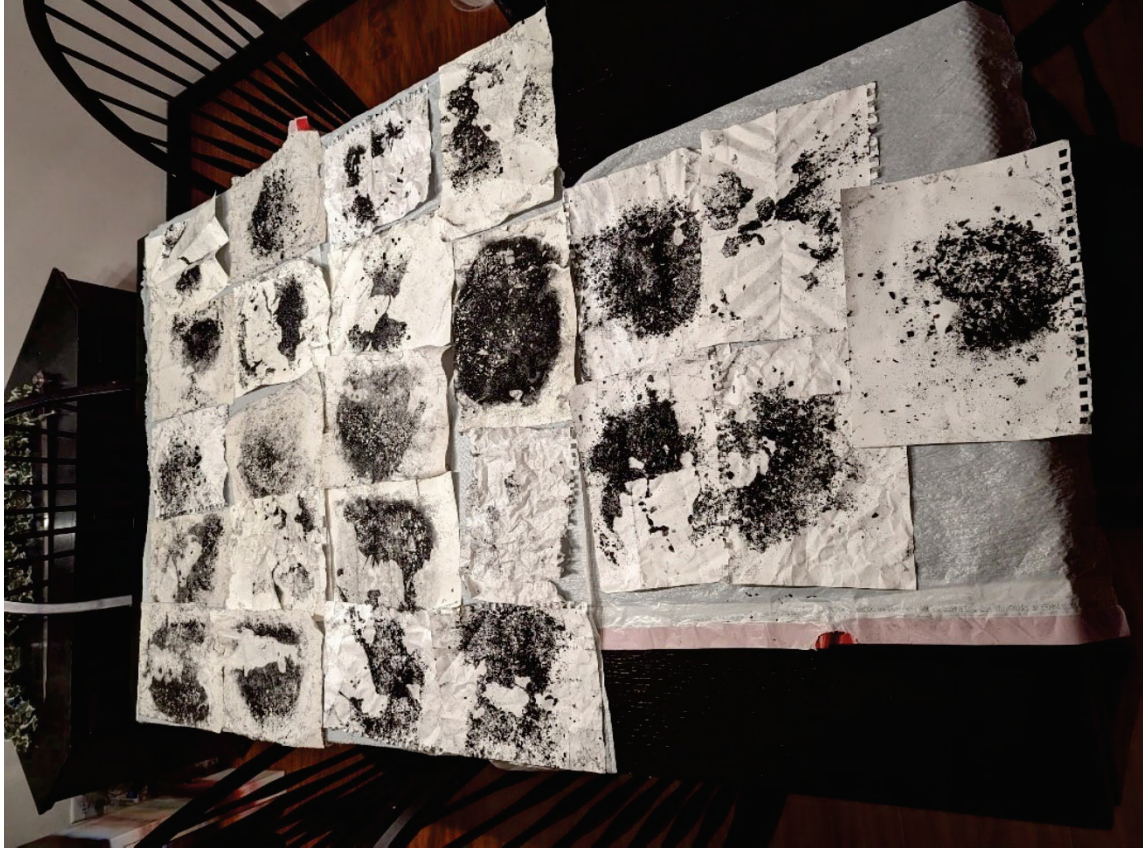


Figure 12. Spread of numerous pieces created with the Artefact

What the artefact ultimately led me to discover was that they served as sort of tools for mental health, and when they were put together, they created a workstation where different images of the psyche could be perceived and worked out through the pieces that were created. In a way, the pieces of ruined paper symbolized the ‘ruined’ people with poor mental health who were to come to experience my architecture. They would enter into the first site and undergo a preparation phase that would ready them for the second site where they would confront their shadow and integrate into themselves. By the end of it they would come out as transformed pieces of art and lived experience, with their experiences each being vastly unique and subjective, never to be replicated. Through working with my artefact in this way, I was creating small acts of chrysopeia, little transformative moments to be observed and studied.



Figure 13. The Artefact on Exhibition

Thanks to the design exploration I underwent in creating my artefact, I knew for certain that my architecture was to become two separate pieces of a whole, that when interacted with together through a process, would aid in the transcendental inner metamorphosis of consciousness that was essential in psychedelic-assisted therapy and mental healing. The individual pieces that came out could be viewed as the transformative, dream-like, psychedelic experiences each user had while interacting with my architecture and program. To add to this, the pieces could then be studied and interpreted after their conception to find further meaning and messages behind them, very similar to the post psychedelic experience in which users must integrate their experience into themselves to fully complete their inner transformation.

3.3. Case Studies

In addition to the poetic design takeaways from the artefact, I also looked at a few case studies that specifically touch on the realm of transformation promoting inner well-being. By doing so, I could examine specific architectural approaches to create spaces of well-being that would give aid and inspiration for my overall design.

3.3.1. Setouchi Retreat by Tadao Ando



Figure 14. Pool at Setouchi Retreat
(Retrieved from: <https://www.designboom.com/architecture/tadao-ando-setouchi-aonagi-hotel-matsuyama-japan-05-20-2016/>)

The Setouchi Retreat by Tadao Ando serves as a great example of creating a striking atmosphere out of minimalist luxury (Stevens, 2016). The retreat was once a art museum that was remodeled into a boutique luxury hotel in response to the growing popularity of the Setouchi International Art Festival (Stevens, 2016). It embodies the classic design philosophy of Tadao Ando that takes simplistic forms gestures that translate into profound movements and experiences of poetic architecture. This case study in particular shares resemblances to my

design approach as it serves as a retreat for users to recuperate themselves and replenish their well-being through strong views of the surrounding landscape, connecting one with the natural environment.

The major take aways from this case study is the way it poses itself into the landscape and creates the views that contribute to the architecture and the overall experience. By focusing on minimalistic luxury, Ando has allowed the users to create their own sense of luxury and experience the retreat for it what it is in all its raw and natural elements. The simple juxtaposition in style between the geometric concrete forms and natural landscape create a sense of awareness for the user which makes them more present within the architecture and allows them to notice more fully the intentions behind Ando's designs.

3.3.2. The Therme Vals by Peter Zumthor



Figure 15. Therme Vals in the landscape
(Retrieved From: <https://www.archdaily.com/13358/the-therme-vals>)

The Therme Vals by Peter Zumthor is a deeply poetic piece of wellness architecture. It is a hotel that entails a complete spa experience integrated into the natural landscape of the mountainous terrain where users can enjoy the different thermal pools that simulate a unique and relaxing experience accompanied by the play of light and dark and of air, water, and earth. The space was designed to allow for visitors to “rediscover the ancient benefits of bathing,” through a “highly sensuous and restorative experience,” (ArchDaily, 2009). Zumthor accomplishes this experience by changing the users views and perspectives through open and enclosed spaces that create a sort of labyrinth of discovery for the user, following the architectural intentions set forth by Zumthor to enhance the overall experience (ArchDaily, 2009).

This case study offers a good example in the use and play of the size and lighting of spaces to create architectural atmospheres. Similar to Tadao Ando’s Setouchi Retreat, it serves as a good example for architecture that juxtaposes yet integrates into the landscape at the same time, creating a sense of balanced duality. Additionally, each of the spaces were intentionally designed with the full experience of the user in mind, thus creating an environment that is creatively unique that provides a restorative experience like no other.

3.3.3. Halden Prison

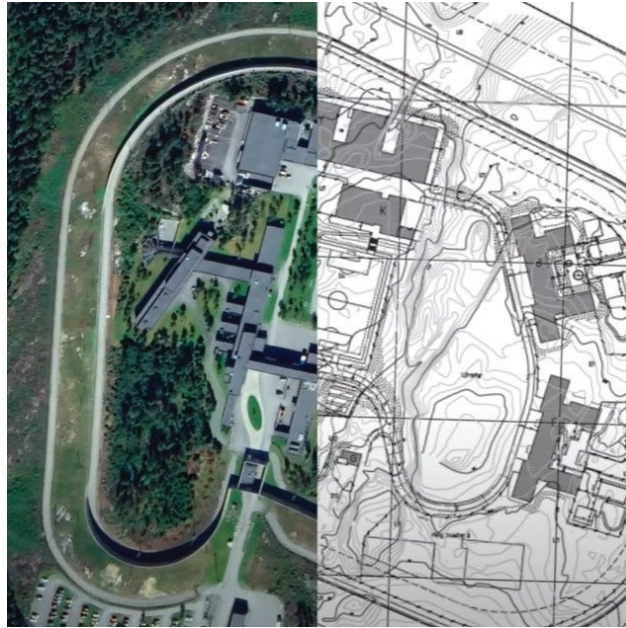


Figure 16. Dual site plan view of Halden Prison
(Retrieved from: <https://youtu.be/5v13wrVEQ2M?si=7sBnB4UZEM-6U1Si>)

The Halden Prison by HLM Arkitektur in Halden, Norway is regarded as one of the world's most human prisons in the world (Vox, 2019). Through strategic use of design principles, the prison has become a proper place for positively humane reformation and reintegration back into society. Although it is a prison, I decided to choose this as one of my case studies due to the design's effectiveness at transforming a prisoner's life for the better. To begin, the design was based off a campus design in order to create a better living environment that feels less restrictive and gives the prisoner's a daily commute and overall better sense of routine to simulate regular life (Vox, 2019). The design also incorporates natural vegetation and landscapes throughout its spaces that not only benefit well-being as we have discovered but also contribute to an "anti-authoritarian" feel (Vox, 2019). As well as an integration of nature, the architecture offers plenty of views outwards towards nature and the surrounding landscape for

the prisoners, helping them feel more connected to the outside world and sense the passage of time which eases the mind (Vox, 2019).

One of the main take aways I gathered from this case study was its design of the living spaces of the inmates in context to the guard station offices. The guard stations were designed to be smaller and minimalistic to encourage the guards to be out within the inmate's common living areas, thus cultivating more interactions between guards and inmates which leads to better relationships between the two parties. This simple design implementation can serve as a key element to building community in places where people may interact with each other often.

4. DESIGN

The aim of this design is to demonstrate the possible manifestation of the information gathered throughout this whole process into a new typology of mental health care architecture that can be referred to as a psychedelic-assisted mental wellness center. The proposed design of this mental wellness center will hopefully serve as a steppingstone towards establishing a standard in architectural design for psychedelic-assisted therapies that are beginning to emerge in today's world of mental healthcare. Since Oregon's psilocybin service centers are not completely dedicated to mental health and lack design and functionality standards, this project is to be a proposal fit specifically for the context of Oregon and its current situation with mental health and the legal use of psilocybin.

4.1. Process & Concept

Through the creation of my artefact, the main concept for my architecture was conceived. With the two halves working together to create something whole, I planned to do the same with my architecture. This would entail having two separate sites for my architecture which set up the program for my architecture. The program will entail about a month-long stay at this mental wellness center, two weeks being spent at the first location, and two weeks being spent at the second. The point of this prolonged stay is to enable the participants of the program to have time to fully undergo a transformative, healing experience. This shares similarities in philosophy as mental institutions where people would stay for extended periods of time in order to heal and have access to the resources they need to support them in their healing process. The narrative for the concept goes as follows:

“The participants in the program come to the first site in Portland, Oregon known as the Aether, a place of light, beyond, aboveness, and preparation. It is here where those who wish to undergo the metamorphosis of their inner being begin their month-long journey and stay at the centers. For two weeks, participants develop the purpose of their journey and prepare themselves for the issues they hope to address through their psychedelic therapies. They prepare by establishing routine acts of wellness and focus through meditation, exercise, community building, art, and psychotherapy as well as getting acclimated to the psychedelic experience through micro-dosing.

After the first two weeks, the participants then transition to the second site in Mt. Hood Village, Oregon known as the Nether, a place of shadow, confrontation, belowness, and revelation. This is where the participants dive deep into their minds and inner being to address their true selves and do the much needed ‘shadow work’ through the use of cold-exposure and thermal therapies as well as the power of psilocybin. Their preparation has made them ready to embark on the full therapeutic psychedelic experience in a comprehensive wellness facility carved into the earth of the mountains. Through their experiences here they come to realize a newly perceived reality about themselves and the world around them. There is a sense of enlightenment and peace within the being of the participants. As they shed the old skin of their past selves, they begin to look beyond into a world with a whole new outlook, eager to stretch their newly dawned wings of enlightened consciousness.”

Along with the artefact, much of the design's concept came from my research on alchemy. The overall forms of the pieces of architecture at both sites were to share a connection and be two halves of one whole, signifying that both places must be visited to complete the whole transformative experience. Due to the architecture's goal in attempting to help facilitate this transformative experience of consciousness, the forms would take inspiration from the symbol of Ouroboros to poetically connect to the end of a person's old form of consciousness and the beginning of their new form of consciousness. The Ouroboros symbol always contains a head of some sort, so this inspired me to put the spaces where most of the therapies and practices of wellness would occur into one architectural space for each site to serve as the head of their respective forms. These 'heads' would end up becoming the towers.

Due to the poetic nature of this project and raw experience of using psychedelics, I took inspiration from Tadao Ando's design style of creating simple yet very primal spaces that integrate themselves into the landscape, yet still stand out with a stunning presence. In the philosophy of Ando, the gestures of architectural design that are made in this project are simple in nature, but used in a way that makes them poetically and experientially significant. This relates back to the idea to focus on the basic core presence of life, consciousness, and to not inhibit or distract users from the purpose of their visit to the sites.

The names and intentions of design that came about for each specific site relate back to the artefact and overall research, taking strong influence from Carl Jung's ideas on the conscious and unconscious sides of the mind. The Aether, signifying the sky, the heavens, or simply the space above was named for its relation to the conscious side of the mind that we are aware of, the part of the iceberg that sits above the water. The Nether, signifying the lower parts of the Earth, hell, or simply the space below was named, as one might assume, for its relation to the

unconscious side of the mind that we are usually unaware of, the part of the iceberg we cannot see below the water. It is at the Aether where we take what we know and try to learn more about ourselves and the purpose of our journey in preparation to go to the Nether to face our shadow, the sides of ourselves we do not know, do not want to know, or struggle to face. Because it is at the Nether where participants will undergo full in-depth psychedelic-assisted therapies where the experience users will have on psychedelics will most likely reveal aspects of their shadow to them.

4.2. Project Location 1 (The Aether)

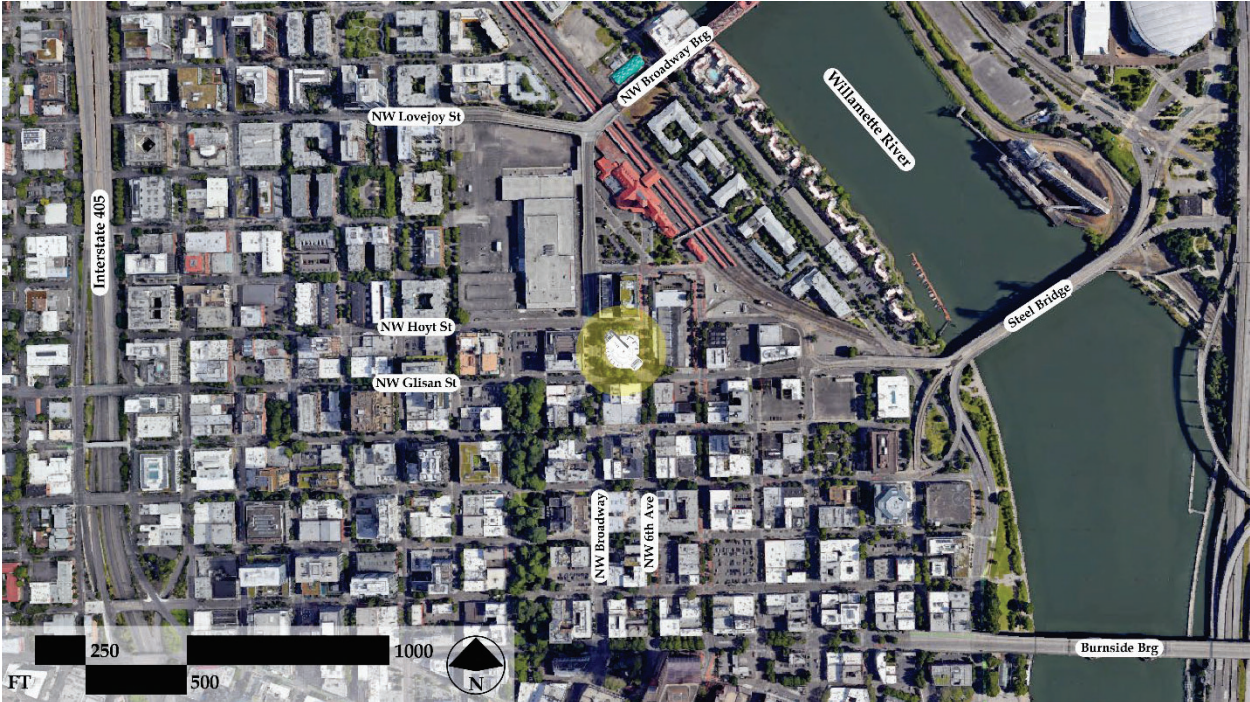


Figure 17. Aether Site Plan

The chosen location of the first site is in one of the epicenters for mental illness in Oregon, the Old Town district of downtown Portland. The area holds the potential to become a flourishing area of downtown Portland, but as of now it is home to high rates of homelessness, crime, drug addiction, and mental illness. What it needs is places that foster change in the community, places that offer resources for attaining a better quality of life. These reasons are what led to the decision to create the Aether on a block located at 500 NW Broadway. The block in which the Aether is located has been unused for over a year and used to be the location for a tiny house homeless community that was implemented to support the surrounding people. To the north of the block is a multi-use building complex that houses the organization known as Transition Projects which helps people get off the streets and into temporary housing and eventually into permanent housing. The block to the east contains a homeless shelter facility. The addition of the Aether to this location will help grow this area's community improvement resources.



The Aether's main entrance is accessed via the south-east corner of the site where visitors are greeted by the monumental stairs and entrance features which engage visitors to step down below and interact with the site and people present within it. This first interaction with the architecture is poetic interpretation of the term "as above, so below" which originates from the words said to be inscribed on the emerald tablet, a piece of writing that is said to be one of the beginning influences of ancient alchemy.

The monumental stairs and main entrance into the site serve as one of the first communal gathering spots integrated throughout the designs of both sites. In relation to my research on socialization and community building, these communal gathering spaces foster opportunities for social connections for not only the people currently staying at the mental wellness center, but also for the surrounding community to come interact with. The use of psilocybin at this facility will be contained within the secure levels of the main tower under close supervision, allowing for some of the connecting areas of the site to be open to the public for the sake of community building.

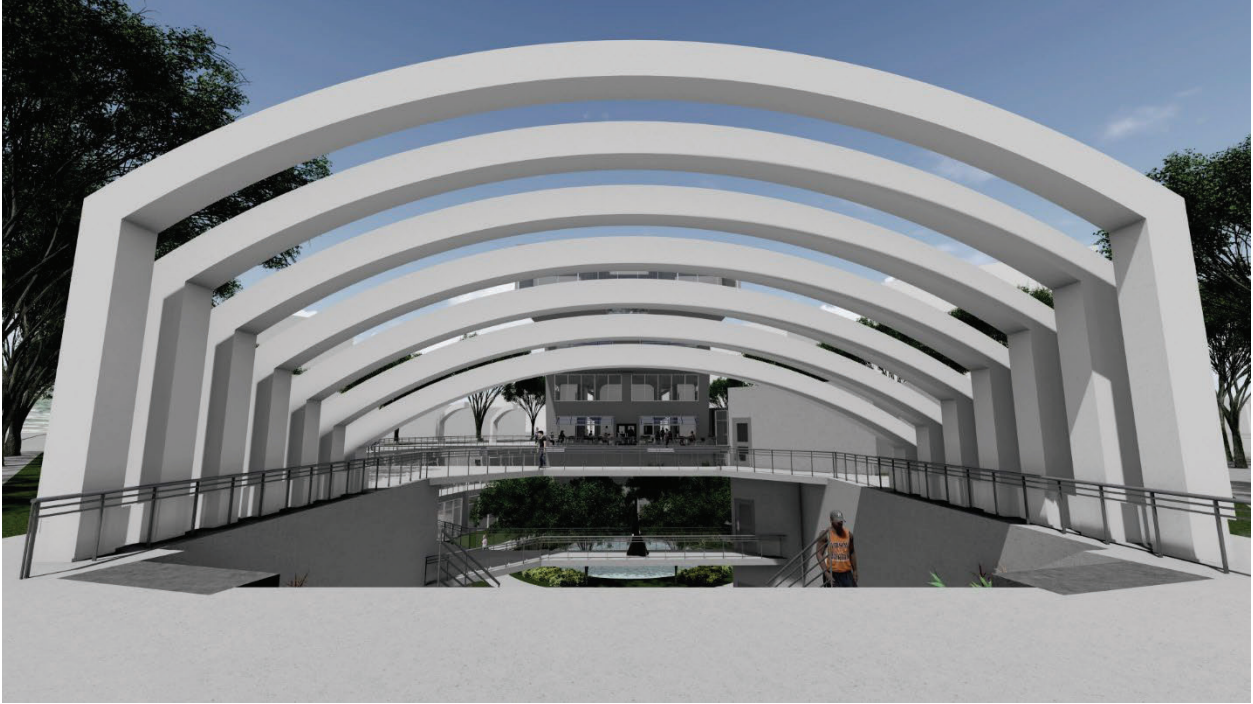


Figure 19. Aether SE Main Entrance

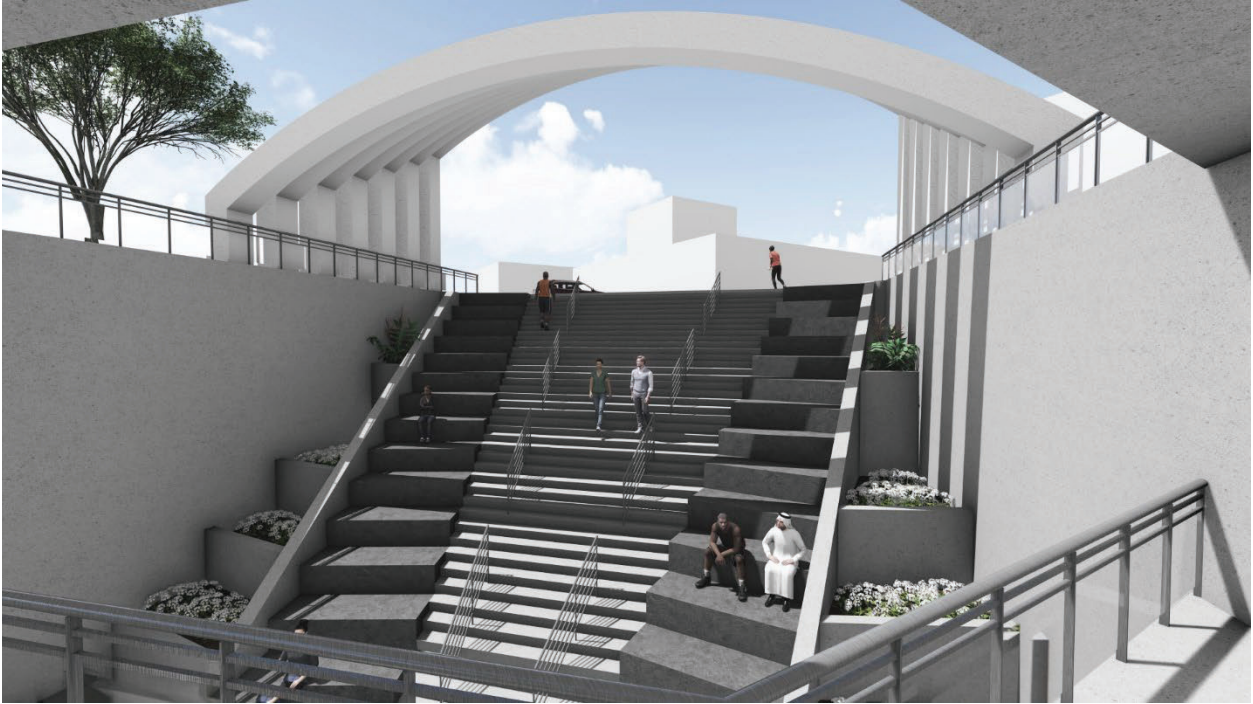


Figure 18. Aether Monumental Stairs

As you progress down the monumental stairs you encounter the core of the Aether known as the Oasis of Tranquility. Here is where a subtle integration with nature can be found, giving a scenic area for gatherings and views of contemplation that allow one to briefly escape the buzzing and chaotic city life that lies above and find a moment to reflect and relax. To the right are the living pods in which participants live in for the duration of their stay at the Aether, and to the left is communal amenities that offer them indoor event and recreational spaces, a dining hall, a small computer lab and library, a basic medical office, and laundry facilities available to the participants. Straight ahead, across from the pond is the Aether tower, the head and main structure of the first site which encompasses the main holistic healing spaces.



Figure 20. Aether Courtyard, the "Oasis of Tranquility"



Figure 21. Aether Tower Section Perspective

The Aether Tower consists of six levels with an additional semi-level located at the bottom for the building's mechanical components. The floors from the bottom up are labeled as B2, B1, L1 (Street Level), L2, L3, and L4. B2 serves as one of the main entrances into the Aether tower and consists of the administrative offices and staff that work at the facility. It is at B2 where someone can go in person to apply for the program and learn more about the whole process. B1 serves as additional office space for health care professionals as well as a designated research area and secure holding facility for psilocybin products. L1 is a café that serves as another communal gathering space for both outside and inside community members. The socialization that spurs from an environment such as a café can lead to healthy social bonds and increase sense of overall community which is why it is part of the tower. L2 serves as an art and writers studio where participants in the program can have a designated space to engage in journaling and artistic practices that help them express and understand what they are going

through as well as prepare them for the latter half of their journey. L3 serves as a gym with locker rooms to provide participants with a proper space for routine exercise that is exclusive to the use of the participants. L4 is the therapeutic and meditative level of the Aether tower which encompasses group and private therapy rooms, private mediation rooms, and procession to the Aether's sacred space where users undergo guided mediation and/or therapy and get acclimated to the use of psilocybin through micro-dosing.

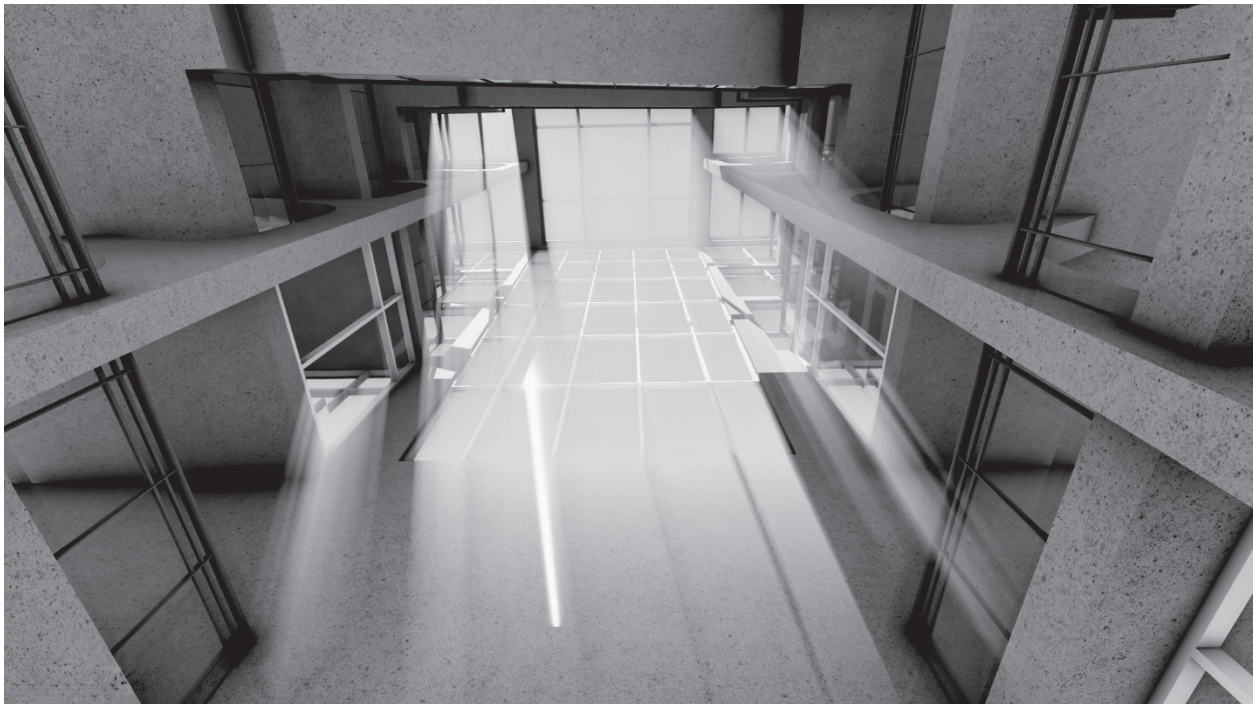


Figure 22. Aether Tower Atrium

One of the main architectural features of the Aether tower is its atrium. As participants enter the tower for the first time, they start at the bottom of the atrium in which the view widens with each ascending floor partially giving way in conjunction with the glass façade allowing for natural light to pierce down and throughout the whole tower to create an uplifting and inviting atmosphere. The two vertical structures supporting each of the floors in the atrium are designed

after trees growing upwards which serve as an ode to Carl Jung’s poetic metaphorical quote on trees: “No tree, it is said, can grow to heaven unless its roots reach down to hell.”



Figure 24. Aether NW Main Entrance



Figure 23. Aether Café

To the north-west is the other main entrance into the sight which uses a combination of glass façades and concrete framing to create an open and inviting feel from the street to encourage people walking by to step in for a drink at the café and interact with the participants inside. Once inside the café, one can see the integrated pathways and opening that connect the rest of the site to one of its main communal gathering spots. It is also here where the internal structure of the tower can be observed which was modeled after biophilic design and gothic cathedrals to create organized and lightly aesthetic spaces within larger spaces as well as serving as structural functionality.

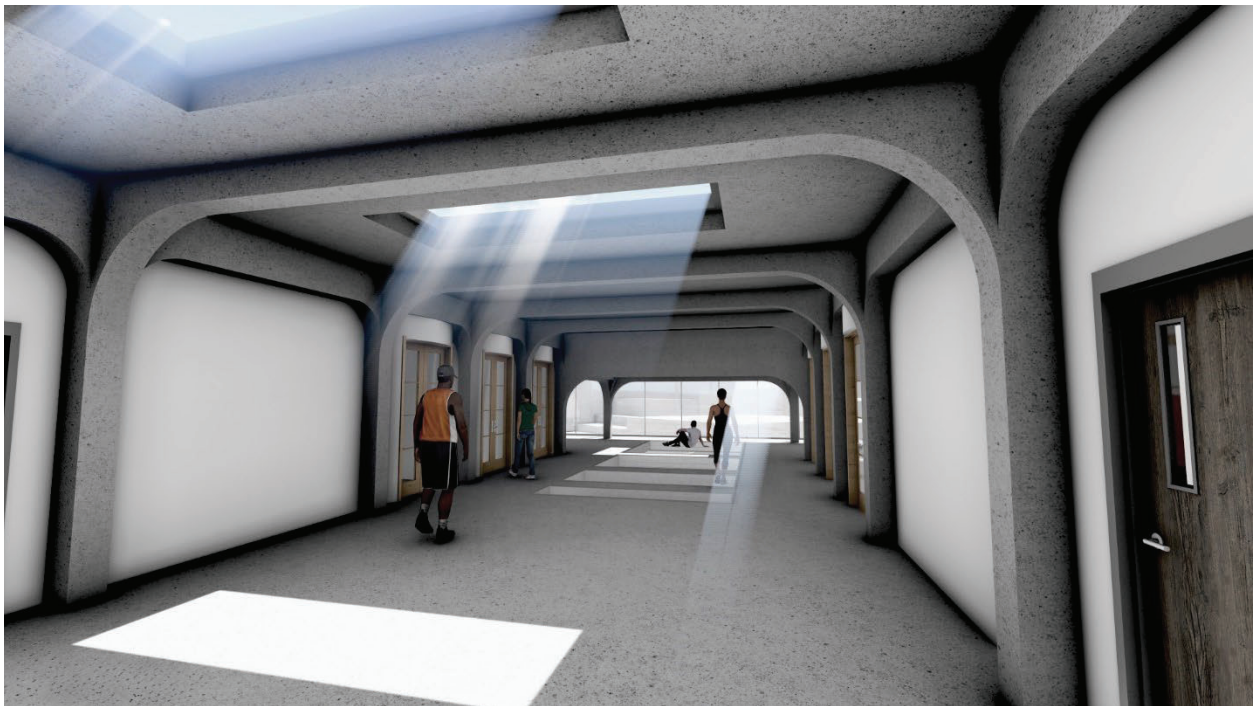


Figure 25. Aether Tower's Therapy and Meditation Floor

At the top level, L4, one can engage in deeper and more intimate forms of therapy such as psychotherapy, group therapy, micro-dosing therapeutic practices, and mediation. As a user walks across the top level, a series of skylights that are increasing in size guide them through a processional experience towards the Aether's sacred mediation space which is reminiscent of the

nave of a church. When approaching the sacred space, one can see six private mediation spaces with reflective outlooks lining the processional hall, until they are briefly interrupted by the floor seemingly give away as they step onto the suspended glass floors of the Aether's cantilevered edge.



Figure 26. The Aether's Sacred Space

Just like the skylights, there are multiple glass openings in the floor that increase in size with each following opening. This purposefully engages the user's sense of fear and trust as they walk into the Aether's sacred space, symbolic of the confrontation of their fear and building of trust towards the program and themselves as they undergo their journey to transform their consciousness. As the user walks towards the final glass opening, they are met with a lowered section of wall that almost encourages the user to bow before entering a simulated room within a room which is the Aether's most sacred space. This pocket of space holds you, but allows you to perceive outwards and beyond, just as the mind is encapsulated within the body, yet they body

allows the mind to perceive the world beyond it. Within this space, the user experiences a deep and profound sense of reflection as they gaze off into the surrounding city with the skylight from above piercing down to and through the open glass floor, penetrating the user just as the awakening of conscious awareness penetrates the mind's perception of reality. It is here where the user is poetically and literally held within suspension, as they meditate on the purpose of their stay at the Aether in which they chose to suspend their lives for a brief period of time to cast themselves upon a path that will forever change their way of thinking and ultimately their way of life.

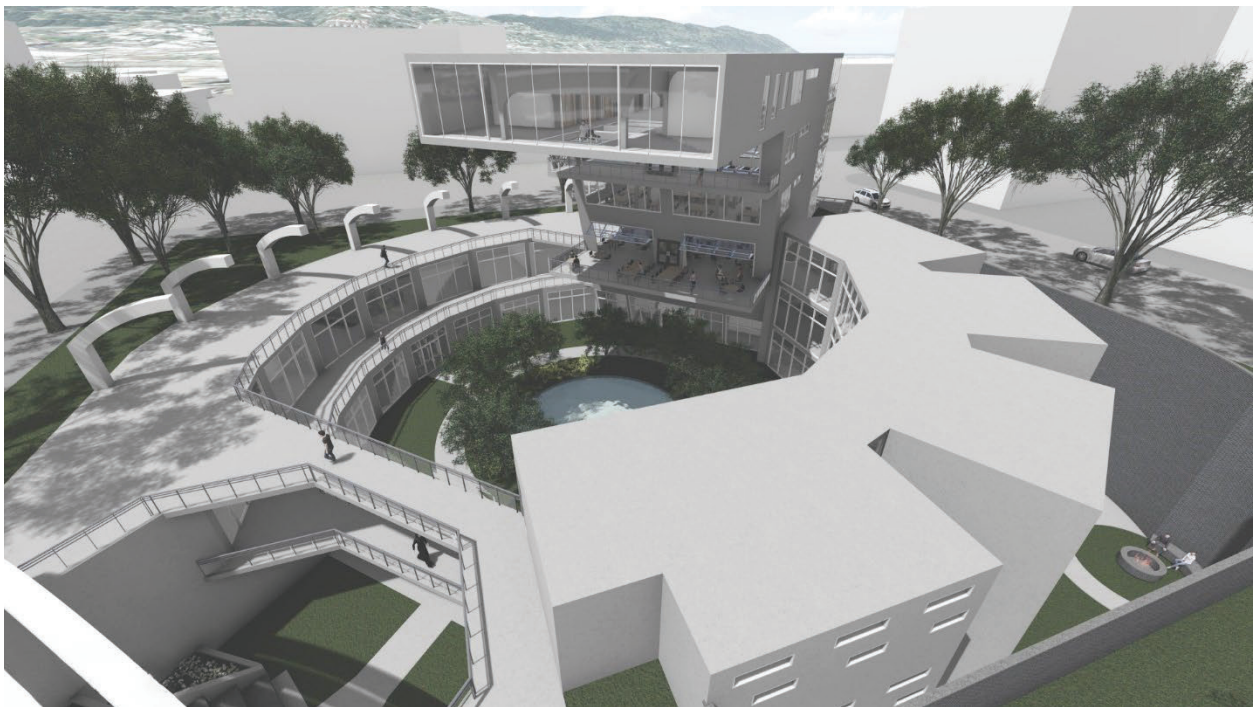


Figure 27. Aether Bird's Eye View

The Aether takes on a circular form, emulating that of the Ouroboros to signify the beginning of the end of a way of life for the participants of the program. The Aether tower intentionally faces inwards and hangs over a reflection pond as a nod to the sense of inner reflection preparation that participants must take on in order to complete the transformative cycle. The circular form of the site is not purely symbolic as it aids in the circulation and

campus-like feels of the mental wellness center which encourages users to walk around and dwell among the different spaces. Above the communal amenity spaces are overhanging structures that face inward and create a sense of pathfinding that leads users around and into the site. On the backside of the participants' living pods is a lowered private area for just their use to gather and connect with one another with the encouragement of a firepit to circle around to socialize and contemplate. The surrounding walls of this area extend high above the street level to give a secure and private sense of enclosure. This back area also allows for more natural light to come into the backside of the living pods.

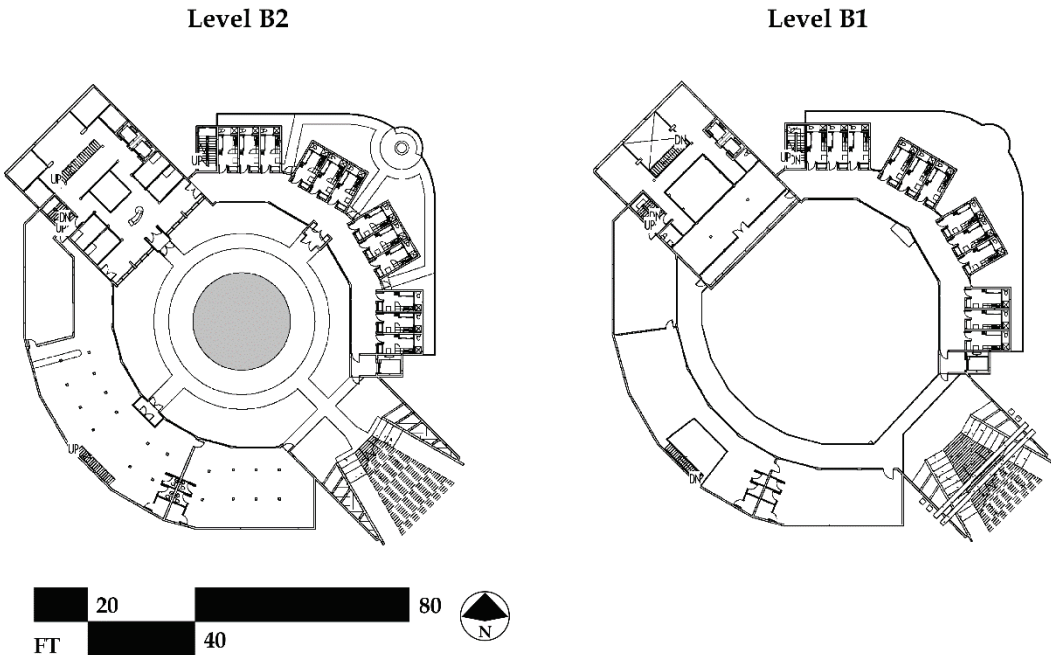


Figure 28. Aether Floor Plans for B2 & B1

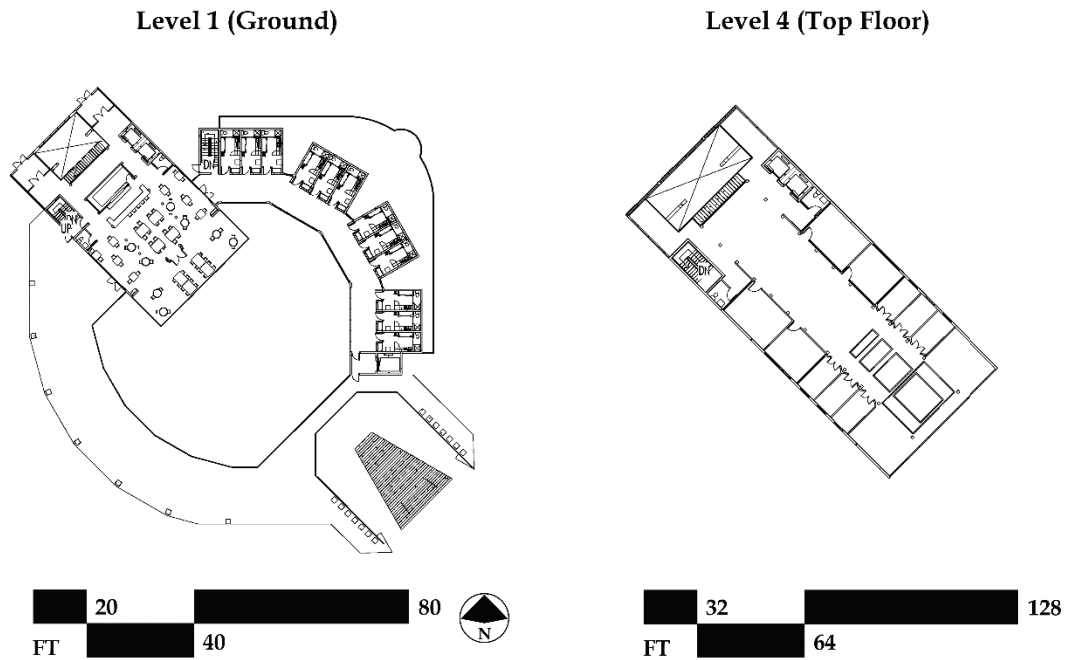


Figure 29. Aether Floor Plans for L1 & L4

Here are some of the main floor plans of the Aether tower to help gather a sense of space and program within the different levels that are connected through the various methods of circulation.

Axonometric View of Living Pods

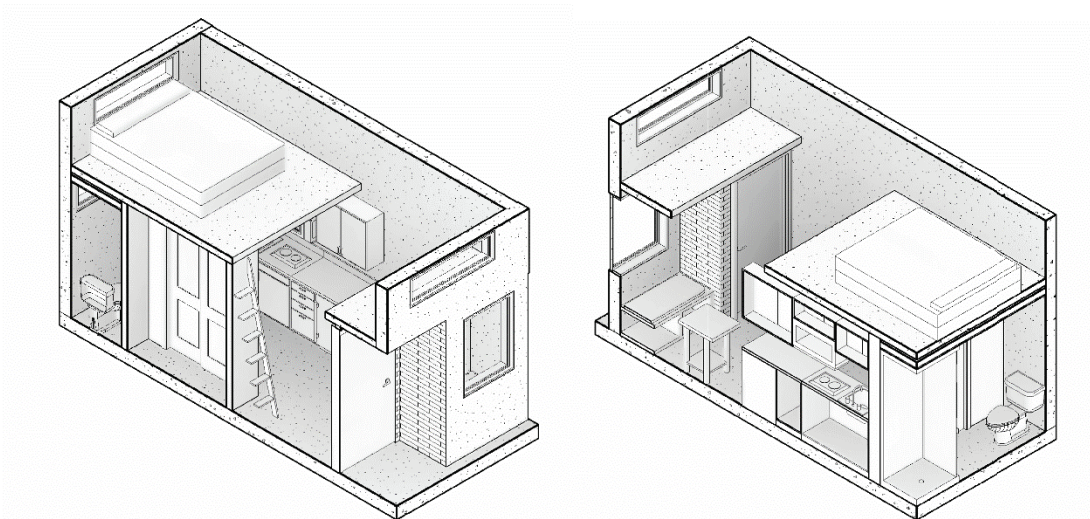


Figure 30. Axonometric View of Living Pods

The design of the living pods for the participants were based off of minimalistic tiny house design. It offers participants a safe and private space of their own with all necessary amenities for short-term living such as a kitchenette, a small seating/dinning area, a lofted bed with ample headspace, a private restroom with a shower, a closet and several windows for natural light exposure. Taking inspiration from Halden Prison, by designing these spaces to be smaller and minimalistic, it encourages participants to leave their pods more often to engage in the program and engage with others more often. In total there are 36 living pods available, but up to 6 of the pods are conserved for staff workers who assist participants in their journey and live side by side with the participants to foster better connections and trust for the participants.

4.3. Project Location 2 (The Nether)

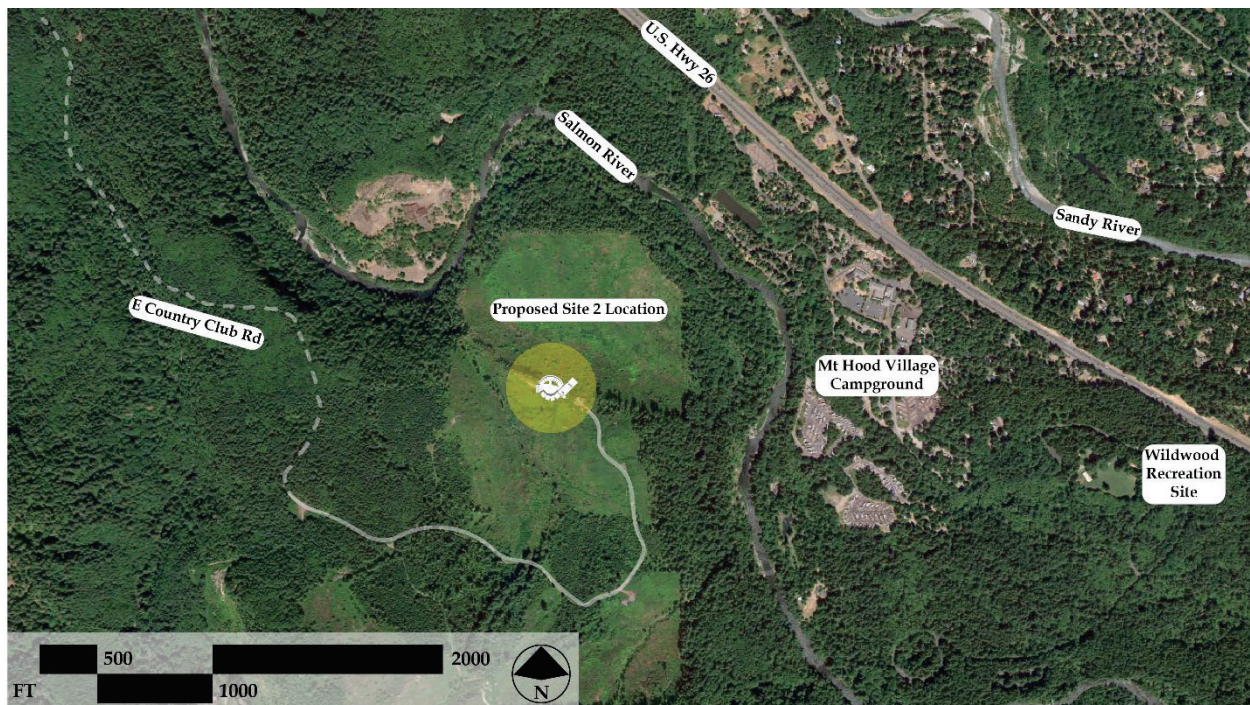


Figure 31. Nether Site Plan

The chosen location for site two, the Nether is located about an hour away from site one on the outskirts of Mt. Hood Village, Oregon. The specific site is located on an old patch of logging land that was never replanted which serves as an opportune place to create the Nether which serves to regrow the futures of its participants from the ground up symbolically and literally as it can allow for users of the site to plant and regrow the surrounding vegetation that has been lost.



Figure 32. Nether Aerial View

The Nether site is integrated into the landscape as it carves into the ridge of the mountainous terrain, creating a duality of architectural suspension and grounding. Since this site is situated into a ridgeline, it offers breathtaking views of the surrounding landscape in which one can see the reigning Mt. Hood over the horizon. The chosen location for the Nether site allows for participants to explore the surrounding forests and hiking trails for a complete immersion within nature.

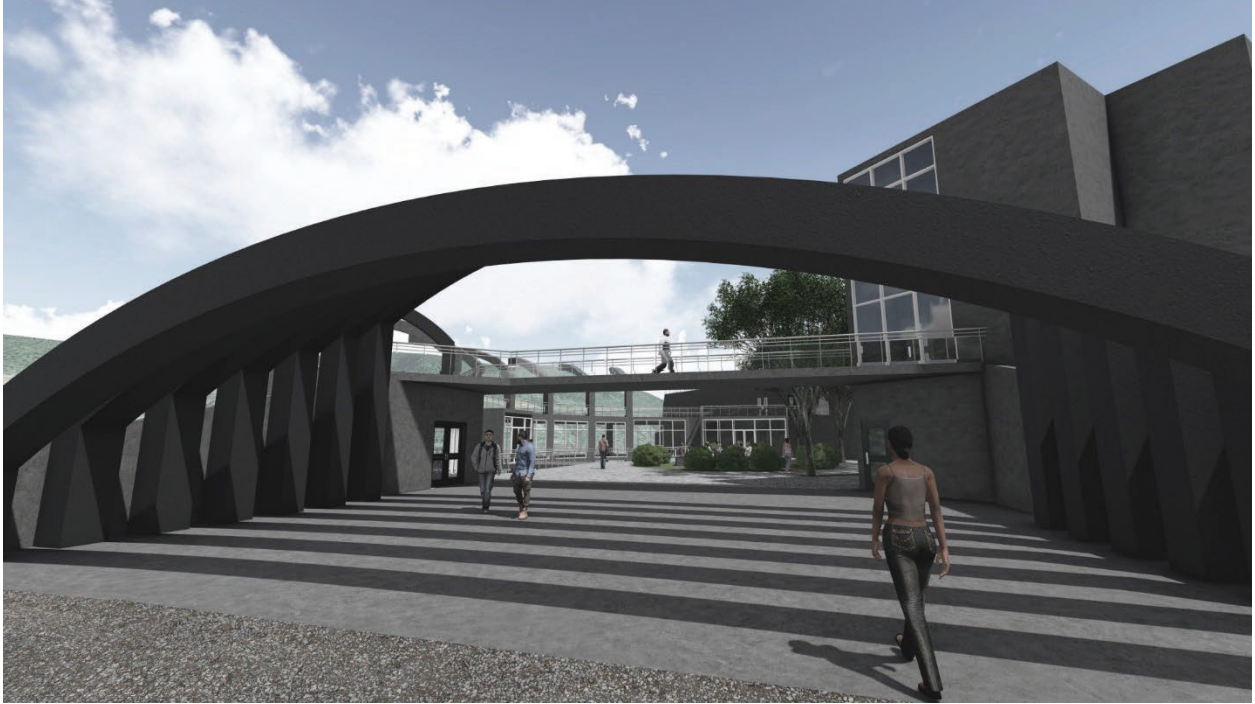


Figure 34. Nether Main Entrance

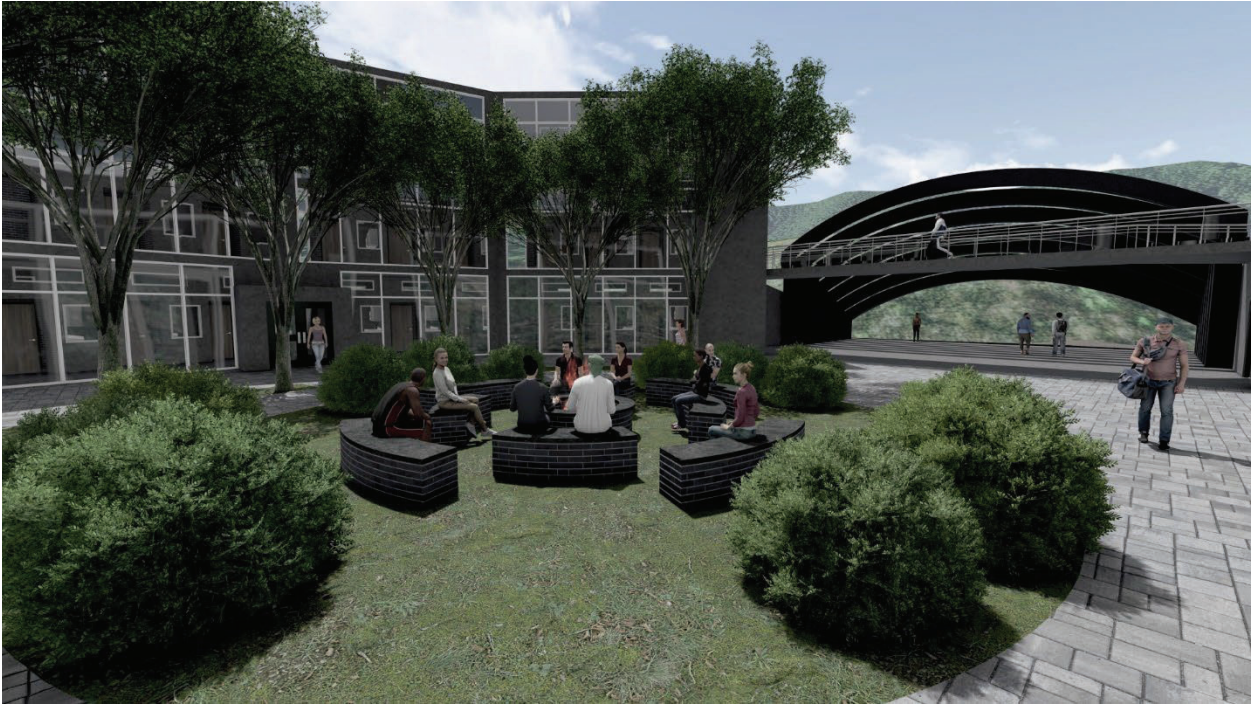


Figure 33. Nether Courtyard Fire Pit

In relational opposition to the Aether, one must ascend the terrain and go up in order to enter into the site where they will then proceed back down into the Nether tower. The user enters the site to the west where they are greeted by familiar yet different path finding structures that are inviting them into the center.

The center of the Nether site serves as one of its main communal gathering spaces where instead of encountering a reflection pond, participants are met by a fire pit with encircled seating for a sizable group. The centers of both the Aether and the Nether symbolically connect them back to their artefact counterparts and emphasize their opposite roles in their transforming the consciousness of the participants. Behind the firepit to the south of the Nether site are the 36 living pods. Since there will not be other people other than the participants and staff at the Nether, the communal firepit being at the center serves as a core element of the program in which the participants and staff can connect and bond even further as the participants continue their insightful journey.



Figure 35. Nether Courtyard, Expanded View

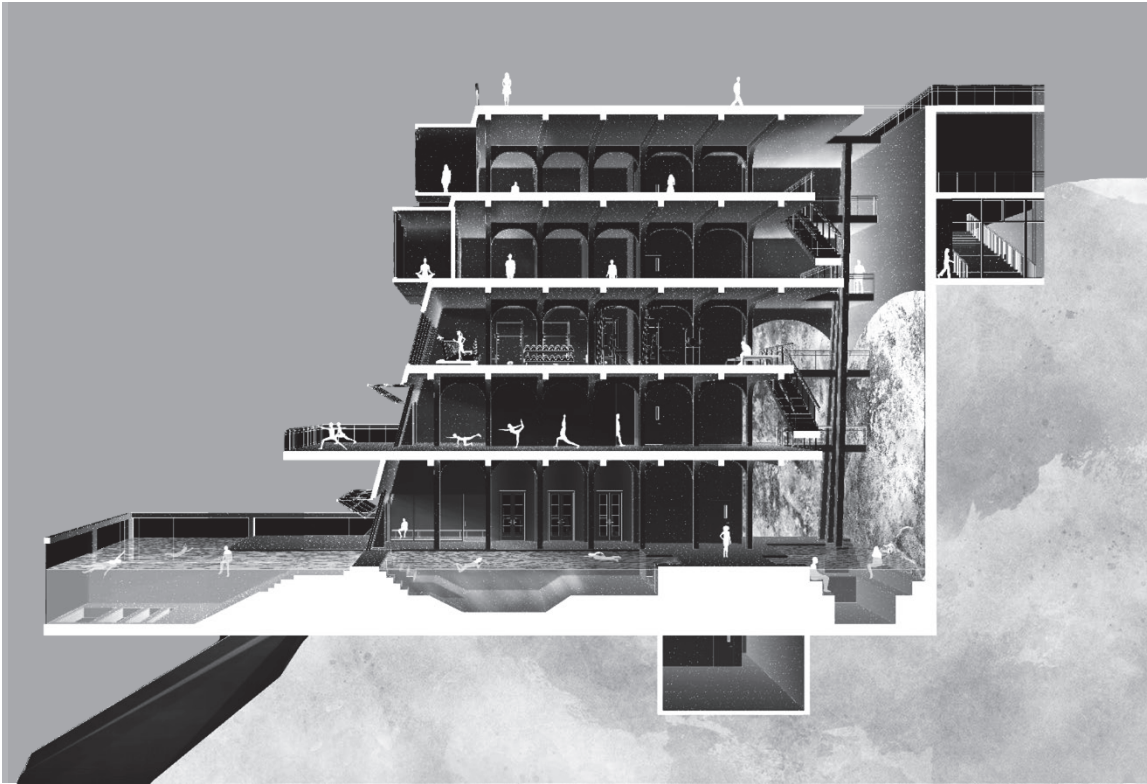


Figure 36. Nether Tower Section Perspective

As a user crosses the inner courtyard, they encounter the main doors of the mental wellness center that lead directly into the Nether tower. The Nether tower serves as a reflecting opposite to the Aether tower. As can be seen in the section perspective drawing of the Nether tower, it is integrated into the mountain ridgeline and consists of six levels with an accompanying mechanical semi-level at the bottom. The floors of this tower labeled from the top down are L2, L1 (ground level), B1, B2, and B3. The area of the tower above L2, technically L3, is an accessible roof deck that allows as outdoor flex space with panoramic views of the entire surrounding landscape. L2 and L1 serve as therapeutic spaces where participants will practice mediation, psychotherapy, sound therapy, group therapies on deeper levels than experiences at the Aether, and will also undergo the full psilocybin-assisted therapeutic experience on these floors once they are ready. L2 and L1 also contain overlook meditation rooms that allow for

more private therapeutic sessions with complete views of Mt. Hood Village and beyond. B1 contains the gym for participants to continue their regular exercises. B2 contains locker rooms and a full yoga studio and accompanying yoga deck as participants will be more focused on the practices of yoga and mediation in the Nether than they were at the Aether. Finally we have B3, the Nether's pool level where participants can fully engage in the practices of heat and cold exposure with three different pools for cold, intermediate, and hot temperatures, saunas, as well as sensory-deprivation float tank rooms for deep mediation.

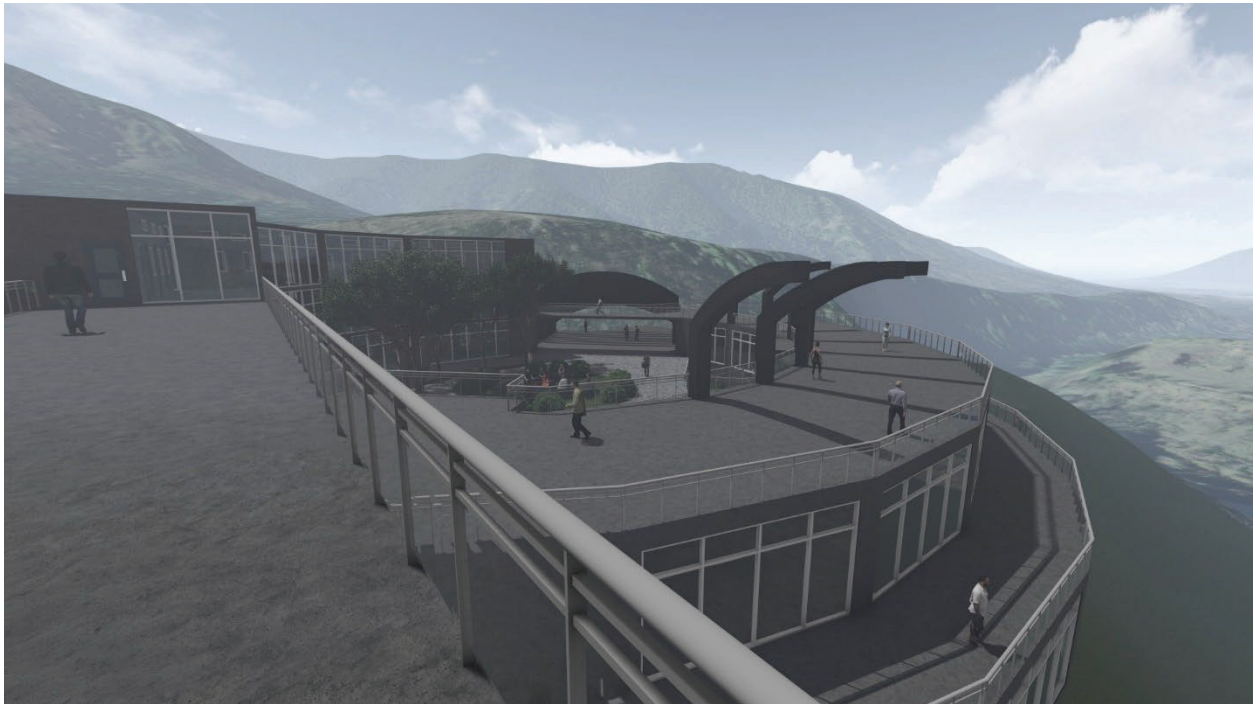


Figure 37. Nether Tower Roof Deck View



Figure 38. Nether Gym with Outward Views of the Landscape

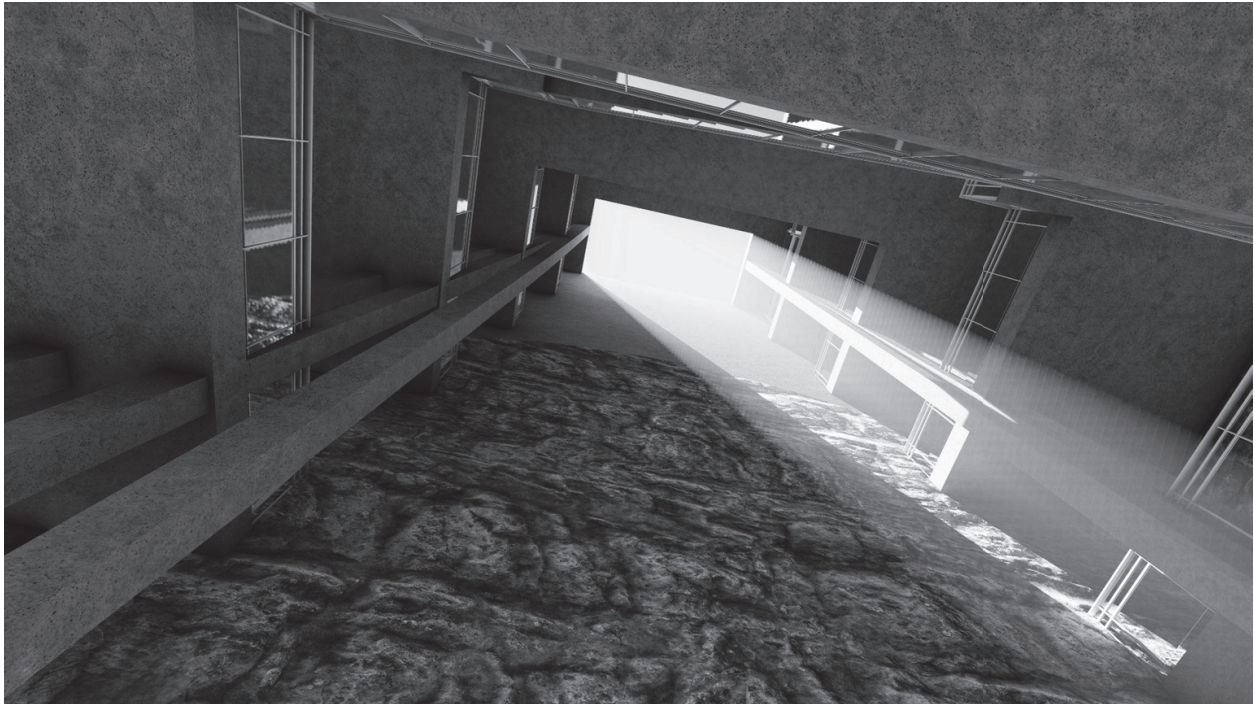


Figure 39. Nether Tower Atrium

As the participants make their way down through the Nether tower, they are met with the Nether's atrium. In contrast to the Aether's atrium, this atrium gets wider and darker as one goes lower into its depths, and eventually cuts away to reveal the rock and stone embedded within the earth which has now become an integrated part of the Nether tower's structure. This descent into the tower and the Earth insinuates the potential feeling participants may have in moving forward in their mental health journey. As they further prepare, they must acknowledge that they need to face darker sides of themselves, their hidden shadows, in order to begin the metamorphosis of their psyche. The penetrating skylight atop the Nether's atrium indicates the connection Alex Gray made in his "Polar Unity Spiral," to reassure the participants that even within the dark depths of their psyche, there is still a light to return and merge back into.



Figure 40. Nether Tower's Hot Pool

At the bottom of the Nether Tower's Atrium, the caldarium, or hot bath can be found as well as the base of the symbolically root-like structure which hold up the atrium's floors above. It is here where participants can find comfort in the shadows through the embrace of the surrounding earth combined with the intense heat which dissolves and breaks down the stressors and woes of the participants.

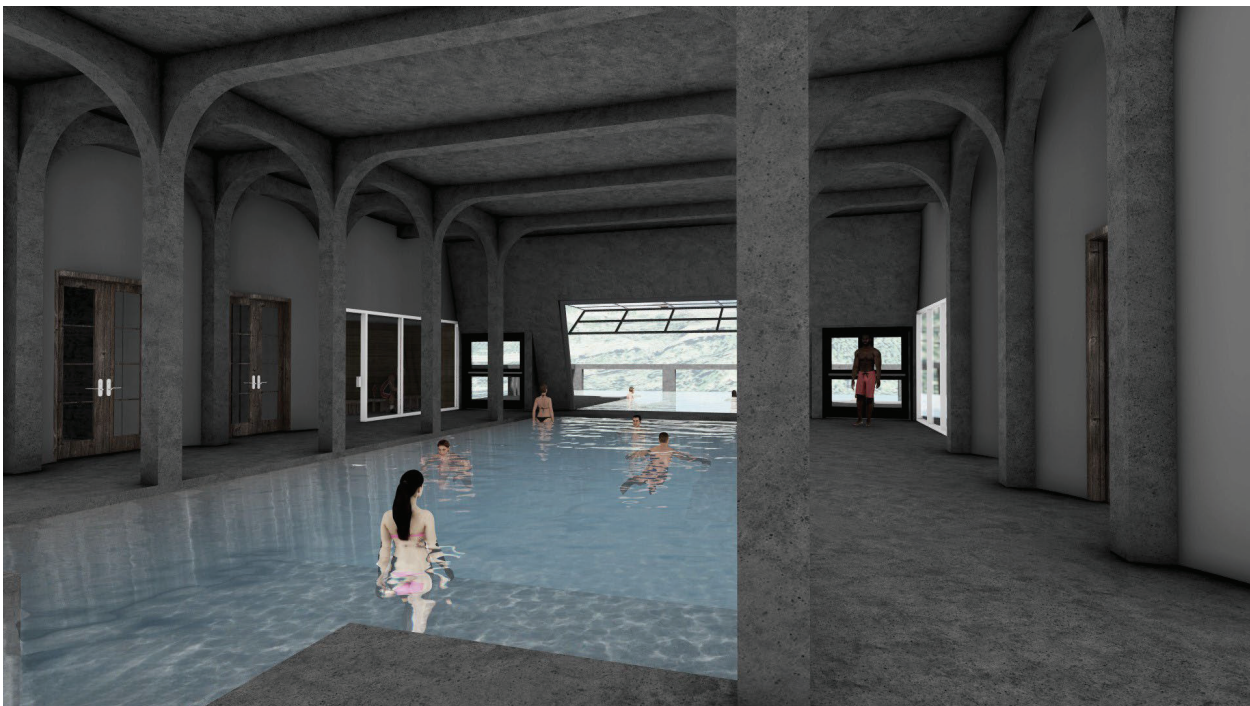


Figure 41. Nether Tower's Thermal Therapeutic Pool Floor

Walking out of the darkness towards the rest of the pool level, participants can find the leisure pool for regular swimming at an intermediate temperature. Along the sides of the leisure pools the entrance six sensory-deprivation float tank rooms can be found as well as a sauna room on either side. Straight ahead the large folding glass door opens towards the outside deck, allowing for a more seamless pass through of the pools and spaces.

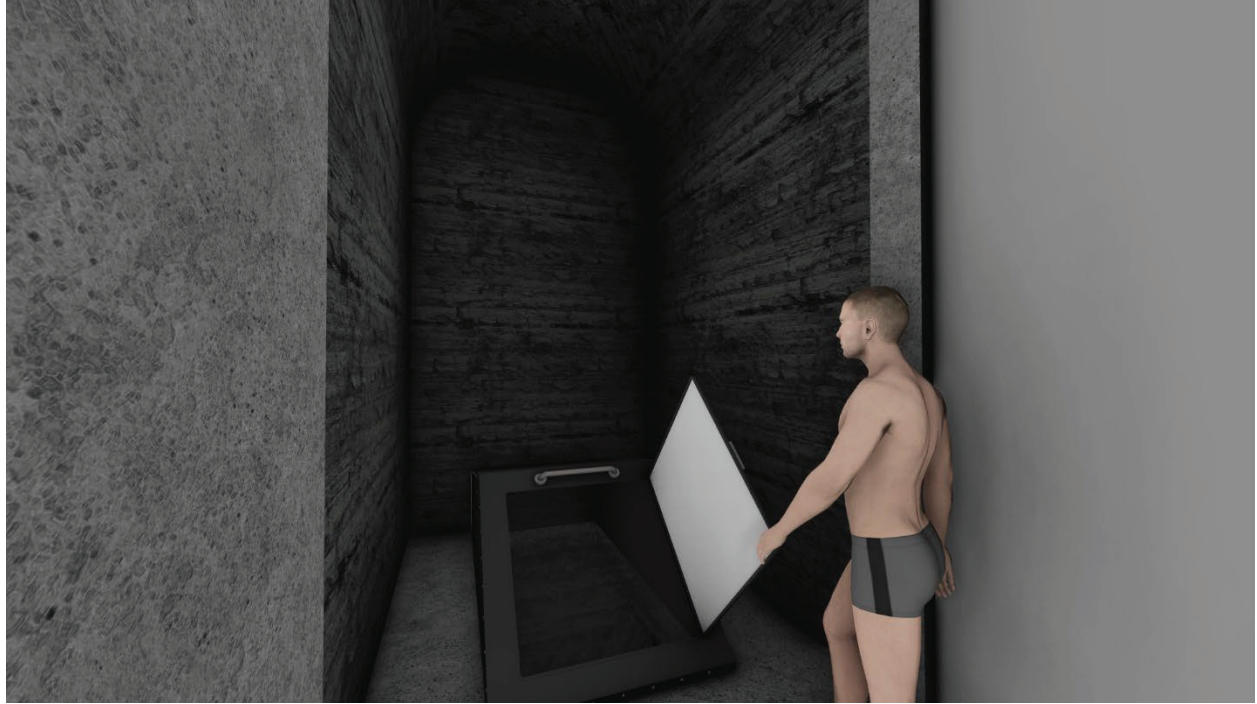


Figure 43. Sensory Deprivation Float Tank Room



Figure 42. View of Nether Tower from Pool Deck

The sensory-deprivation float tank rooms are carved even deeper into the earth, creating an atmospheric cradle made of stone. It is here where participants can be free of distractions for deep meditative practices that can allow them to dive into the inner most depths of their psyche in comfort and privacy.



Figure 44. The Nether's Sacred Space

Heading out through the folding glass doors onto the outside pool deck, participants encounter the frigidarium, or cold pools. The cold pools are split into three sections with the two smaller, outermost sections being colder than the larger, longitudinal pool section. It is these cold pools that serve as the Nether's sacred space, relating back to the Aether through that familiar sense of suspension. As the participants slowly step into the first cold pool, they are met with a subtle shock that eventually fades away into a sense of calm as they step deeper into the pool. As they become fully emerged, they swim out to the pool's edge to fully embrace the magnificent view of the world before them. As they float, fully emerged in the cold water, suspended above

the world in a cantilevered pool, the participants can once again find a familiar state of mind encountered in the Aether’s sacred space, expect on a much deeper and more impactful level. The cold forces them to bring their mind and awareness inward, losing focus on general fear and woes, yet the incredible views around them keep them suspended outward, creating a psychological sense of suspension that is poetically supported by an architectural and physical sense of perception.

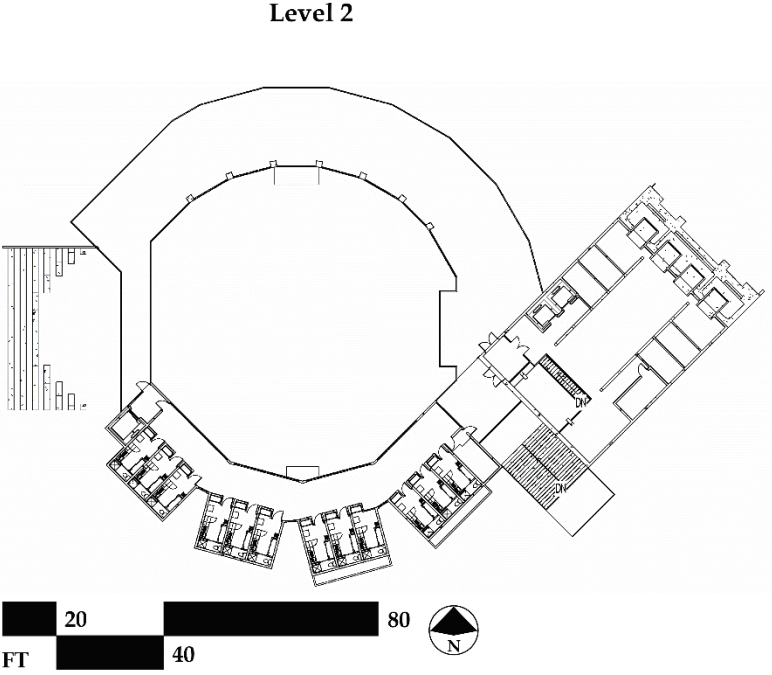


Figure 45. Nether Floor Plan for L2

Level 1 (Ground)

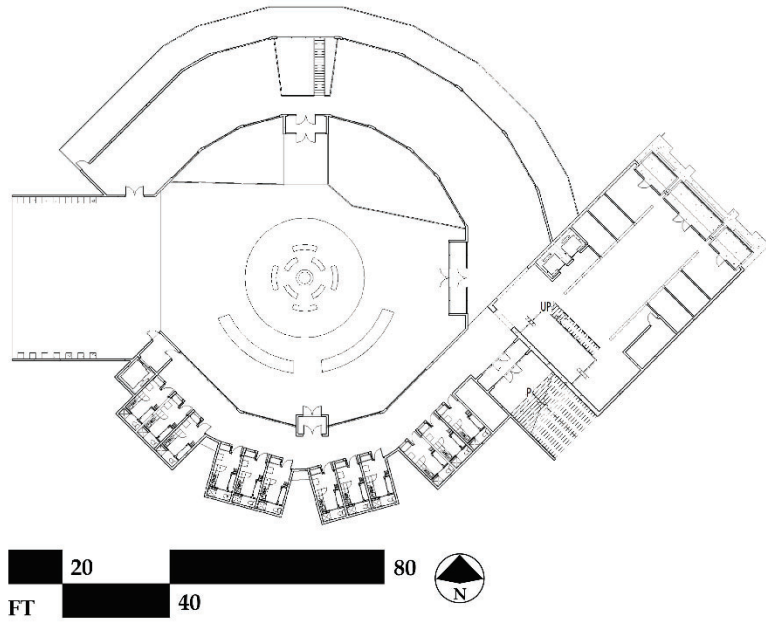
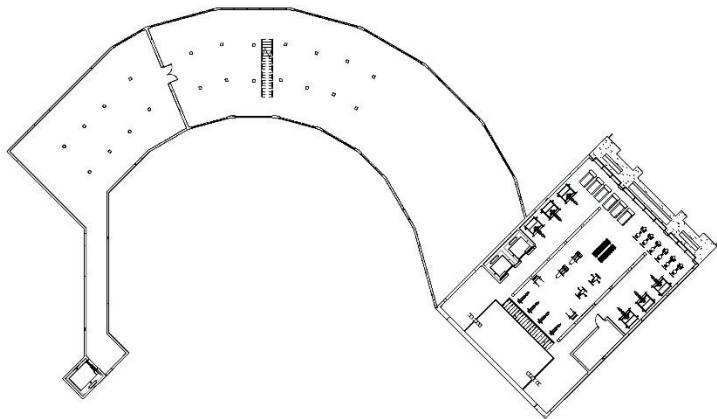


Figure 46. Nether Floor Plan for L1

Level B1



Level B3 (Bottom Floor)

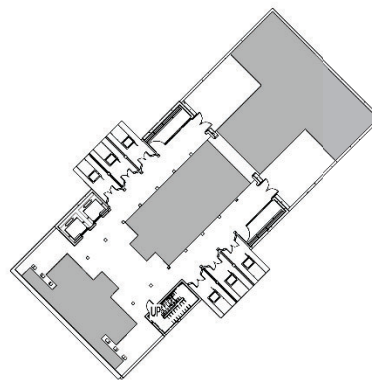


Figure 47. Nether Floor Plans for B1 & B3

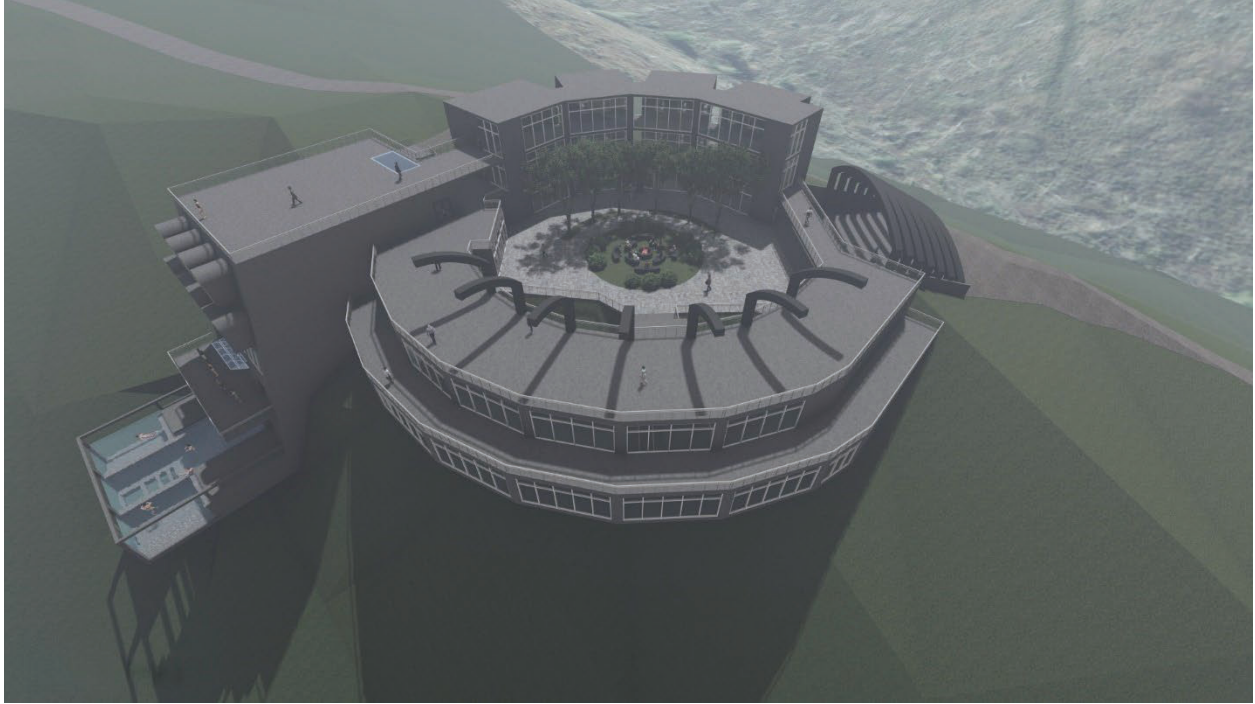


Figure 48. Nether Bird's Eye View

The Nether site works to complete the cycle of the metamorphosis of the participants' consciousness. As if cut from the same cloth, the Nether site carries strong resemblances and connections to the Aether yet serves a different purpose than the Aether as if it were the opposite adjoining half which had yet to be realized. Here it can be seen that the Nether tower, the head of its site, faces outwards and beyond, as well as the other contributing aspects of architecture and space that accompany the tower and make up the site as a whole. The inner reflections and preparations done at the Aether, have now turned into tools and methods to be used to confront the underlying unconscious psyche which waits to be addressed and integrated at the Nether. Thus, the Nether then faces outwards, representing the outward perspective participants must develop towards their lives, past, present, and most importantly future. For it is how the participants digest and integrate their experiences they had at these mental wellness centers that will determine that fate of their mental health and over-all psychological transformations.

4.4. Conclusions

The main purpose of this proposal was to create a typology of mental healthcare architecture that focuses on the use of psilocybin-assisted therapy as well as cultivating holistic healing in an effort to alleviate and address the mental health crisis. However, the research and synthesis behind this project curates far more interesting possibilities and discussions than what could be incorporated into this document and overall idea. The ideas of mental health and consciousness are so complex, it was rather bold in retrospect to attempt to dive into those realms and develop some better understanding for the sake of architecture, but it proved useful in learning how architecture and design really do play a role in the wellbeing of our lives which reaffirms the value of good design. Given the limited amount of time and resources, this proposal I created may not be the best fit to facilitate the use of psilocybin-assisted therapies and promote their use as a standard in mental healthcare, but it certainly is an ideal steppingstone in the right direction to what could be best to become a standard one day. There is still much to be researched and understood about mental health, consciousness, and psychedelics, but this proposal and overall project can serve as an example on how they can all be understood in relation to one another and be facilitated through architecture and design. I believe this proposal of mine to be a sort of beta test for something that should, and most certainly could, be continued to be pursued and attempted in the future, as research into our consciousness and psychedelics can serve as crucial tools for creating a better future for humankind and for the entire world.

Although the main purpose of this proposal was for the sake of the mental health crisis, I have come to the realization that a proposal like this goes much further beyond just this crisis. Our world is facing a multitude of crises, and mental health is just one of them. We are so deeply entrenched in our current ways of modern society that the future of the world is seemingly

unclear and more doomed than it is not. What the proper use of psychedelics can offer us on a grander scale is greater conscious awareness within our larger societies because psychedelic experiences are so intrinsically linked to our consciousness. When we are more consciously aware of what is inside of ourselves and what is outside of ourselves, we feel much more connected to ourselves and the world than ever before. This feeling of connection is something that is lacking in today's world as it is far too easy for us to not care about the consequences of our actions because it is easy to avoid them.

Whether anyone will actually have read what I have written up to this point I may never know, but I must put my ultimate conclusions in here for the sake of the revelations I have gained through undergoing my research, even if it is viewed obscurely by the world of academia and various skeptics. This research on consciousness and mental health has truly opened my eyes to a greater reality we are living in. The research led me down a trail to ultimately find what I can only explain to be God or simply a divine presence. Through consciousness, we are all connected to one another and the world around us, and more so than anyone or I can probably ever comprehend. The number of absolutely dumbfounding experiences people have had in exploring their consciousness through psychedelics that have pointed to something greater is by no means a coincidence, or at least to what I personally can conclude. This idea of mental health and many other aspects of life being in a state of crisis seems to stem from a greater disconnection. A disconnection to ourselves, others, the physical world, and most importantly the spiritual aspect of our reality. As of today, we are seeing record low amounts of people who are affiliated with a religion or sense of spirituality, and I believe there is some sort of connection between that and some of the issues of disconnect we are experiencing today.

It is truly no coincidence that vast numbers of people have gone through a psychedelic experience report it as being one of the most spiritually significant experiences of their lives. These psychedelic substances reframe our psyche and reconnect us to this greater connection that is so often severed off in this modern world. After all my research, it is no quite surprising at all why there is a mental health crisis to begin with. On the surface we may say it is because of the various different issues going on in the world such as the COVID pandemic, but these are only contributing reasons to a much deeper and greater cause to this crisis which I believe to be a spiritual disconnection from reality. This disconnection serves as a catalyst for more issues to arise such as complete disregard for our natural environments, ongoing violent conflicts between different countries and groups of people, human health being comprised with increased rates of diseases and cancers, and so much more. People are constantly being distracted by these ever-growing issues on top of the plethora of mindless distractions that come from technology, the internet, and giant corporations. These substances, if used correctly, can wake us up in a way that goes beyond this physical reality that we perceive and allow us to reconnect with that we have lost. The spirit is a real part of the human world, thus the idea of the mind, body, and spirit. Although these are perceived as different entities, they are all deeply connected to one another and influence and grow each other. Everything in our known existence works in some sort of contextual relation to something else, or as a system. Nothing works solely isolated from everything else. If we disregard the spirit, a crucial pillar to our lived experience, then the mind and body are doomed to run into issues and not function properly, and our mental health crisis is subliminally proving this to us. We must tap into the spiritual realm of our reality through an awakening of our consciousness to give us a much greater sense of awareness, and psychedelics can do just that.

A psychedelic renaissance is upon us, and we must answer to the call in proper fashion. As the use of psychedelic substances becomes more mainstream, we must recognize the power and influence that they hold and treat them with great reverence. By accommodating their use with proper places of mental healing and elevating conscious awareness, the use of psychedelics will be less likely to be misused and more people can begin to have truly transformative, reconnection, and lasting healing experiences... experiences of chrysopoia.

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