

Chapter One

Urban Space

Space is one of the two great backdrops against which city life is played out. The other one is time. Because of the complexity of these issues this chapter confines itself to the problem of urban space. Time is taken up in the next chapter. I will follow the format of my earlier study by dealing in turn with the inscape, patterns, symbolic perception, and value of urban space. Such a procedure makes effective use of the categorial scheme laid out in the introduction.

The Inscape of Urban Space

Urban space is continuous with natural space in that its inscape is always concrete, and creative.¹ It is also receptive to a variety of forms because it shares with natural space the character of extensiveness whereby a pliant character is an essential feature of its inscape. But here the similarity ends, for unlike natural space, which is always found, urban space is made. Its inscape involves the creation of three spatial characteristics—sited directionality, access, and habitat.

Urban space exhibits the dipolar character of sited directionality. Both dimensions seriously affect the quality of access, which is

the third dimension of the inscape of urban space. Natural space was distinguished by what I termed its shy openness to form. Urban space begins with an act of founding that already sets the direction of spatial possibilities within the selected region. To site is to locate in space (and time). Therefore, every city begins with a spatial mark. The creativity imprinted on urban space by the act of building sets forth continuing effects that reverberate throughout an urban region. Furthermore, every additional act of building establishes its mark on the urban landscape. What results is an interlocking matrix of spatial forms that comes to dominate urban spatial experience. This matrix is what allows urban space to create local values. The act of siting always sets boundaries around a region previously indifferent to spatial values. This indifference is the outcome of the trivial orders preexisting in the place in question. By drawing a track through natural space, urban space creates modes of order. These types of order then express both the patterns of urban space as well as their accompanying perceptual moods. Like natural space, urban regions exhibit an openness to form. All spatial regions (natural and urban) insofar as they are spatial must be part of the extensive continuum. Urban space shares in the agency to be attributed to space understood as the foster mother of all becoming. It is characterized by the capacity to accept extension. When this capacity is diminished, then urban space becomes jammed and occluded. As a result we can experience density as well as a definitive loss of spatial freedom.

The creative impulse of urban space is expressed as sited directionality. This dual character—the directional and the sited—is what shapes the spatial access definitive of various urban regions. Urban space is as concrete as natural space. It is the outcome of the events that make up its spatial character. Therefore, urban space, like natural space, is tied to the physical objects making up its particular inscape. But unlike natural space, human beings select both the site and the direction of the spatial events making up an urban environment. Whenever an urban spatial expression comes to be, it is the result of a selective process carried out by human agents.

It is a truism that the goodness of an urban environment is dependent upon the quality of its spatial character. What is not so clearly understood is that this character is first of all dependent upon the access afforded by the sited directionality inhabiting the space in question. Space is primarily about access. It is the open and the closed that mark the poles of spatial experience. What urban spatial creativity adds to this are the entwined facts of site and di-

rection. Site sets forth the limits of an urban environment. Directionality influences its potential qualitative modalities. This directionality results from the type of mark left in space by the human builder. In the act of siting the human builder sets forth both an orientation and a scale that is decisive for the inscape of space.

Much of what will later be discussed under the themes of the beauty and goodness of the city originates in the primal inscape of sited directionality and access. This is because eventually the inscape of urban space must exhibit what I term "habitat." As the final dimension of the inscape of natural space, habitat names the quality of openness essential to all human dwelling. Urban space not only protects and shelters its inhabitants. It must also lay open for them potential domains of meaning. Urban space is the first creative impulse whereby layers of meaning emerge into city expression. This also will be the theme of later chapters. It constitutes the living tissue of semiotic richness that quickens urban experience. Thus, another important difference between the city and other forms of social dwelling is the hyper-rich system of semiotic activity needed for effective city life.

In sum, the inscape of urban space expresses a perspective that founds the many importances of city life. This act of orientation shapes the future flow of meanings throughout the community. Understanding this spatial shaping involves taking seriously the dimensions of the inscape of space: sited directionality, access, and habitat.

The Patterns of Urban Space

The analysis of urban spatial patterns has two parts. First I will discuss the primary spatial patterns experienced in city life. Then I will treat the four essential orders within which the primary patterns fall. The three primary patterns are the vertical, the horizontal, and the ambient. Vertical patterns are what most people associate with urban space. Looming skyscrapers, tall buildings, and massive rising walls are among the more obvious examples of such vertical patterns. In comparison with natural space, urban spatial events tend to cluster around the vertical. Part of this is due to the sheer economic pressure to make the most of the inscape of space. The higher I build, the more space I have. Some of it is also due to a certain narcissism sometimes found in urban founders and dwellers. But whatever the motivation, it is certain that the vertical brings to cities a great deal of what marks them out as special places. As soon

as sited directionality is laid down, the possibility of upward verticality emerges as a genuine urban option. Just how much this pattern contributes to the quality of urban experience is a complex issue. Its potential for positive and negative contributions is enormous. Horizontal patterns are likewise a familiar dimension of urban space. Streets can stretch forward with decisive clarity. And whether they are leafy boulevards, tree-lined promenades, or stark neon-lit avenues, the horizontal both beckons and repels the city dweller. As a form of space that stretches straight ahead, the horizontal in both buildings and city arteries brings sharp geometric form to urban experience. In fact, when mixed with the vertical, these two geometries form the traditional pattern of the modern city. That pattern will be discussed at length when the symbolic perception of urban space and its qualitative weight are taken up. Suffice it to say, the vertical/horizontal axis forms the center of modern urban spatial experience.

Ambient spatial patterns are different in that they do not pull us upward or straight-ahead over-there in that direction. Rather, they embrace our urban existence and thereby provide shelter from the more starkly dominating vertical and horizontal patterns. Ambient space is like natural space in that its hallmark is a certain quality of enviroing intimacy that measures our body along a more human scale. The ambient surrounds us in a bath of spatial experience. It is all around at once and yet is never fully present in an ocular fashion. Rather it is sensed more through the "withness" of the body, a perceptual experience that brims with dim but rich feelings of importance. The next section deals directly with these types of perceptual experiences. For now, it is important to note that ambient patterns complete the geometry of the city. They provide for the curved, the spherical, and the circular dimensions of urban spatiality.

Whether the dominant spatial patterns be vertical, horizontal, or ambient, each such spatial expression is located within one of the four fundamental levels of environmental order: the trivial, the vague, the narrow, and the wide.² Trivial orders are those that suffer from an excess of incompatibility such that no important spatial pattern can be detected. As the lowest level of order, trivial patterns fail to single out any defining characteristic of a spatial region. One might think of an empty city lot as exemplifying this level of order. Vague orders mark a step up on the ladder of order. In a vague order a few aspects are picked out to stand in for all the potential types of order lurking in the web of spatial extensiveness. Such vague patterns suffer from an excess of identification, the opposite weakness

of trivial orders. Still, vagueness provides a level of massive averageness that marks the first step toward more compelling forms of order. When we speak of "downtown" or the "neighborhood," the vague is being identified.

Without some level of vagueness, narrowness, the next level of order, becomes impossible. For vagueness provides the necessary background of stability out of which select perspectives can emphasize their relative importances. Through narrow orders intense feelings are promoted within spatial regions. It is narrowness that focuses spatial energies such that specific values are realized and expressed throughout an urban region. One may think of the force exercised by the Empire State Building. Its very presence compels its surroundings to reflect its insistent dominance. Through narrow spatial orders cities can give rise to expressions of intense individuality. Finally, where there is individuality, there is also the possibility of the richest form of order—width. When narrowness is woven onto vagueness, then great width of spatial experience becomes available. Width joins the intense individuality of narrowness to the reach afforded by vagueness; as a result, space shows itself as simultaneously intense and congruent with a rich variety of values. Individual expressiveness is wed to relevance such that intensity and fitness become present at the same time.

Whether the primary spatial patterns are vertical, horizontal, or ambient, their location within trivial, vague, narrow, and wide levels of environmental order serves to enhance or attenuate their value. It is the task of a cosmological study to set forth these vague normative measures so that the more particular arts and sciences can utilize them in their respective analyses of urban environments. What concretely grounds the effectiveness of these normative measures is the way in which each of these primary patterns and each level of order finds its resonance within the human body's sensorium.

The Symbolic Perception of Urban Space

Part One of this study is influenced by the speculative philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead. That philosophy envisions the world of city and nature to be patterns of entwined events ever in the process of becoming. It is by reason of the universe's creative advance into novelty that environments shift, alter, come to be, and perish. Central to this event cosmology is the act of human perception. It, too, is an event that structures its world according to certain

defining characteristics. An understanding of the deep impact that spatial experience has on human beings requires a review of Whitehead's theory of symbolic perception.³

Perception is the ultimate urban body event. Through perception our body acts as both a receiver and an amplifier of environmental processes. Human perception is always a mixture of two more primordial ways of feeling the world, causal efficacy and presentational immediacy. Causal efficacy is the way in which human beings feel the insistent pressure of the past as it impacts on their being in the present. It is carried out largely through what Whitehead calls "the witness of the body." By this he means the largely forgotten fact that I perceive the world through the immediate past states of my body. It is through the chain of events that make up my bodily events that I am most intimately connected to the environment. I feel remorse within my heart. I feel fear inside my bowels. I sense the weight of the stone in my hand. Causal efficacy does not give us sharp clear-cut information. That is the gift of the other form of primordial perception, presentational immediacy. What I feel through causal efficacy are the dim, throbbing impulses of the past as they build up into the present moment. This perception does not depend on any definite sense perception. In fact it is nonsensuous. Antecedent states of my body feel the activity of the environment and pass it on to my body unanalyzed and heavy with emotional weight. Causal efficacy suggests the richness of the past without specifically identifying it. Furthermore, it is weighted and freighted by an enormous past that haunts the fringes of the present with its looming sense of importance. It is the mode of process whereby we sense most intimately the pressure of past spatial (and temporal) values. What causal efficacy grants us is dim, inexact but impressive access to the sense of the past that still clings to environmental processes. Causal efficacy is the way in which the plenty of urban experience resounds through our bodies. Without this perceptual resource our sense of environmental value would be thin and poor.

Presentational immediacy is what we normally call the perception afforded us by the five senses. Its major contribution to environmental experience is the accuracy and sharp objectivity it brings to our bodily awareness. We *see* that truck over there. We *smell* that odor right here. We *touch* this stone at our feet. We *hear* that cry over there. We *taste* this hot dog at this street corner. Presentational immediacy brings to urban spatial experience the clarity and sharpness needed to negotiate such a busy world. As the words themselves imply, through sense perception humans are granted "the immediacy

of a presence." All philosophical paradigms that take clarity, precision, and objectivity to be the signs of truth are derived from an exaggerated reliance on this form of perception. "True enough," I am given a set of objects over there in that direction that appear to be clearly and distinctly separate from other environmental events. But such perception tells no tales about the activities inherent in such events. Nor does it grant me access to the history whereby such values have been achieved. In presentational immediacy I am dazzled by the deliverance of my senses. But what I am given is an immediately present set of objects over there frozen in space and time and analyzable only through the abstractions of geometrical systems. I am cordoned off from the richness inscribed in the actual events making up that scene. Presentational immediacy is the converse of causal efficacy. It presents me with a sharp, clear-cut, and accurate picture of the environment. But that picture is thin and devoid of information. I can locate my world in presentational immediacy but I have little sense of its worth beyond that of the dazzle delivered by my senses. Causal efficacy, on the other hand, excites my interest in the active worth of events but it cannot locate them with any degree of accuracy. There is need of another form of perception that blends the opposing deliverances of these more primordial modes of perception.

It is perception in the mixed mode of symbolic reference that carries out this accomplishment. It marks the height of the human body's environmental participation, for it unites the clear but shallow objectivity of presentational immediacy with the rich but dim intimacy of causal efficacy. It makes symbols living factors in our environmental experience. When I perceive in this manner I transfer the experience of one pure mode to that of the other mode. A symbol quite literally is that which rolls together different levels of experience so that a certain depth of meaning is achieved. Thus the soldier's salute hails the dim but rich sense of patriotic allegiance transferred to the country's immediately presented flag. Or conversely, the immediate presented smell of liquor brings to the adult child of an alcoholic a dim but overwhelming sense of repulsion.

It is perception in the mode of symbolic reference that makes sense of our ever-changing environmental experience. Immersed as they are in the welter of events making up environmental process, human beings need the endowment of readily identifiable symbols to found an ordered pattern of meaning within an otherwise hopelessly chaotic environmental field. I say "within" because we literally exist inside this semiotic dimension of the urban environment. Human communicative praxis—the subject matter of Parts Two and Three of

this study—depends in the most fundamental way on this mixed mode of symbolic perception. I could not negotiate the traffic of a busy street without the assistance of symbolic reference. It is the way in which I semiotically adjust to the most practical of urban activities. On a much more radical level, it is the artist who establishes new codes of symbolic reference that move against the accepted patterns of urban meaning and thereby open up new experiential realms.

For the most part it is the social order that educates us in the creation, maintenance, and interpretation of symbolic reference. That is one of the major tasks of civilizations. Nevertheless, revolutionary symbolic transfiguration is always possible within social systems. These, too, must be accounted for by an urban cosmology. Indeed, as just mentioned, an analysis of urban semiotics and urban praxis forms the greater part of this study. What must be remembered as those parts of this work take shape, is the somatic grounding of all these symbolic references. It is through the deliverance of our senses as well as through the "withness of the body" that the most abstract semiotic schemes originate. We are never removed from the rootedness of our bodily being. Far from being worldless subjects, the human body anchors our physical, living, and cultural participation in the urban environment.⁴

Perception in the mixed mode of symbolic reference explains both the positive and negative dimensions of urban vertical, horizontal, and ambient space. When the vertical is expressed within the city, it can be either inspirational or oppressive. To the extent that the vertical becomes the towering perpendicular, it diminishes the sense of human presence and alienates citizens from proper urban dwelling. This is caused by an unsuitable symbolic reference being embedded in the percipient body of the city dweller. In altering the scale of human dwelling, we shift the environment away from what is appropriate and diminish urban existence in favor of the monumental. Now, to some extent and in some degree the monumental has its place in city life. But too much vertical reference alters the plane of the human body and thereby skews our sense of place. Vertical space needs to be balanced against the symbolic perceptual limits of the human body. It is not just the sense of oppressive verticality that is felt within the body. Presentational immediacy in the guise of vision also comes into play. I see that looming building over there and towering over me. The resultant alienation is palpable. I sense the inhuman dimension of certain kinds of vertical space. This is one more reason why a city is distinct from other forms of social dwelling. The "habitat" of a village is limited to spatial structures so

that forms of spatial openness take on a much different character. For example, the huts of so-called primitive peoples traditionally had a "smoke-hole" in the center of the roof. On the one hand, this was a practical solution to the important problem of dispersing the smoke. But on the other hand, it quickly became a symbolic reference for openness to transcendence and divinity. Even the top of the human head was seen to have such an opening, and various meditative techniques began their cultural emergence.⁵ It would be difficult to find urban dwellings with deliberately placed holes in the centers of their roofs. Intense and vividly varied forms of semiotic transmission are a central identifying feature of urban life. Transmission across widely different vertical lines of communication defines a major urban dimension. The transcendent is in the city but it is felt more through the category of feelings of stillness than open verticality.

Horizontal space can also be both positive and negative. A sense of expansiveness exalts the strolling boulevardier. At the same time, horizontal space can so stretch out the sense of urban space within the city that a measure of immeasurable distance overcomes any sense of nearness and familiarity. What is at stake in horizontal space is the creation and maintenance of a proper sense of width. Too much width guarantees shallowness. Too little width brings about irrelevance. When horizontal space is only felt as far away and over there, a human scale of symbolic reference has been lost. Both vision and touch are affected, for we can only see what our horizon grants and we can only touch with our eyes what is appropriately near to us.

Similarly, the "canyon effect" felt in some cities results from a bad mixture of the horizontal and the vertical. When an overreliance on presentational immediacy is matched by a neglect of the more intimate and familiar effects of causal efficacy, the city dweller feels the gap separating her from the environment. Spatial distancing is one major form of urban alienation. Another aspect of the canyon effect is an overwhelming sense of diminishment in the face of the social institutions that are supposed to protect urban existence. When the body feels dwarfed, the heart can register little confidence. Communal existence is not encouraged by the gigantic objectivity symbolically felt in the canyons of the skyscrapers.

The major defect of this urban spatial form is an absence of the effective presence of ambient space. Spatial environments need not oppress human beings. What distinguishes good ambient space is the support it grants to those who dwell within it. Surroundings can nourish as well as oppress. Ambient space nourishes its inhabitants

when it provides a sense of security and intimacy.⁶ A major reason for this sense of support comes from the curved and circular dimensions of ambient space. Through causal efficacy my body feels the surroundings as embracing me. This in turn is transferred symbolically to the immediately presented spatial locale. This is an important clue to what is missing in contemporary urban spatial values. The insistent presence of the vertical and the horizontal leads to an unfortunate overstressing of perception in the form of presentational immediacy. The resultant distancing effect is what produces the sense of separation, coldness, and oppressive objectivity so often felt in the corridors of urban space. A later chapter on "Place" will deepen and expand this theme. For now it is sufficient to note just how sensitive the human body is to alterations in its symbolic perception of the three kinds of urban space.

The Felt Transmission of Urban Spatial Values

The inscape of urban space provides access to habitat through sited directionality. To site is to establish limits. As the foregoing analysis of urban spatial patterns suggests, these limits establish habitats characterized by feelings that receive amplification or attenuation through the orders within which they sit. When symbolically perceived, these spatial values form the primary level of creativity experienced in city life. Finally, as the categories of transmission indicate, these feelings are transmitted through the urban environment in the modes of physical, conceptual, or propositional feelings. In this way a world of urban feelings comparable to those found in natural environments rises into being. This chapter concludes with an appraisal of these urban spatial values and the ways in which they find expression in city habitats.

Physical feelings are the source of the material world of solid objects. These feelings reenact the past in such a way as to establish stable patterns of conformity throughout an environment. It is these physical patterns that lay out the underlying ground that provides a city with its own sense of assurance through repetitive spatiotemporal structures. It is through the dominance of such feelings that important urban structures exhibit endurance. (Though it is a subject of the next chapter, time also shows regular rhythms providing urban dwellers with the confidence they need to build for the future.) All in all, physical feelings provide the rock bottom sense of conformity that is indispensable for city planning and prolonged urban existence.

It is not just material structures that express physical feelings. All the more important levels of energy transmission in a city are similarly established through the stable repetition of conformal physical feelings. Various types of communication and transportation systems are among the more obvious types of such physically based feeling systems. The most important characteristic of such systems is dependability. Consider the sense of helplessness brought about by blackouts of urban electrical systems. Such consistency is made possible through the level of regularity occasioned by the massive conformation of feelings characteristic of physical systems. The truth of scientific materialism resides in its understanding of the repetitive character of physical feelings. The basis of the capacity of empirical science to predict accurately future events is in fact this repetition of the past. For in physical systems as well as material objects it is precisely the conformation of the present to the past that builds up spatial patterns. Put differently, the continuing presence of the past is what defines environmental regions dominated by physical feelings. It is this virtual absence of novelty that makes possible "the laws of nature." Since space (and time) are the fundamental background of all environments, the conformal dimension of these feelings is the reason for the immanence of such laws of nature. Without the repetition of the past no sense of an enduring stable environment could register itself. What we habitually take to be the static and unmoving quality of material objects is in fact the outcome of the continuing repetition of past spatial patterns within the events making up the present. Thus, even the most solid urban structure, object, dwelling, or system is a nesting of events. It is the process of these events that appears unchanging; in fact, each moment of urban experience is fresh, spontaneous, and novel, no matter how similar to the past it appears to be.

Explaining the root of such novelty requires a brief detour into metaphysics.⁷ The inevitability of such novelty is guaranteed by the creative advance that marks all forms of process. Nothing is ever the same twice for it is the new and the different (no matter how slight) that is always emerging from the womb of process. Now, the most direct way in which such novelty becomes available is through the agency of conceptual feelings. Unlike physical feelings, conceptual feelings feel the possibilities latent in a process environment. Conceptual feelings sense alternatives for they are sensitive to "what might be" instead of what already is. Furthermore, they feel not just mere possibility but rather "specific forms of definiteness." When actualized, these forms of definiteness account for the determinate

features of all environments. As such, conceptual feelings also mark out incompatibles for the creative advance. A circle cannot be a square. A red circle cannot be blue. At the same time, these conceptual feelings register a broad path of continuity stretching through the realm of the possible. For example, a color implies space and space implies figure and figure implies circle. The world of actuality is made up of atomic events, each separate and distinct from each other. This determinate character of actual events is what makes possible the identification of essential and conditional environmental features. On the other hand, it is the presence of conceptual feelings that provides a sense of alternative directions for environmental advance or decay. It is this mixture of the actual and the possible that is "the stuff" of process, though there is no ultimate "stuff," only events and their relations.

Returning to the question of the felt transmission of urban spatial values, conceptual feelings provide a sense of possible alternatives for city dwellers. When transmitted widely throughout an environment, these conceptual feelings embolden humans to try the different and the new. Of course when they are absent, a certain desperate dullness permeates the urban scene. This is the difference between a dead-end slum and a growing neighborhood. Those who live in such environments directly experience such feelings of hope and despair. These experiences are the result of the real presence of conceptual feelings within an urban region. But pure possibility is rare in any environment since its orders are for the most part already settled through previous processes. That is why propositions are far more important as transmitters within urban environments.

Propositional feelings combine the actual and the possible realms of process in special ways. They also elicit unique types of feeling that are essential for meaningful urban experience. A proposition establishes a significant logical space within the world of city dwellers for it creates a halfway house between the actual and the possible. This space engages the interest of urban dwellers without forcing upon them an immediate decision. Thus they allow urban people to entertain possibilities without committing themselves to a particular course of action. Propositions are the major source of novel experience within urban areas. When later in this study the semiotic dimension of urban experience is developed, propositions will take on even more significance. What is important at this point is to understand the structure of such feelings.

A proposition has three parts: a predicative pattern, a logical subject, and a judging subject. The predicative pattern is the poten-

tial meaning awaiting realization in an actual environment. The logical subject is that group of events awaiting identification with the predicative pattern. The judging subject is that person or group of persons who affirm or deny the appropriateness of aligning the predicative pattern with the logical subjects. The resultant feelings are a contrast of physical and conceptual feelings. They are called "propositional feelings" because they can lure environmental beings into future choices. In spatiotemporal terms these feelings provide a sense of intriguing possibility such that real chances for novel experience begin to loom large as relevant and important possibilities. In sum, propositions are lures for feeling.

An example will make this discussion more concrete. Let us return to the Empire State Building, a classic urban structure. On the one hand, its form is quite simple. It is a tall building used for commercial purposes. But there are other possible predicative patterns lurking in the background of this landmark. Among these are the Empire State as a symbol of New York's prominence as a world city. Another might be its status as the first skyscraper proclaiming a new age of metropolitan architecture. Or for movie buffs, it is the site of King Kong's last stand. These predicative patterns hover over the actual steel, stone, and mortar of the Empire State Building. Those material entities have become potential logical subjects for the three predicative patterns just mentioned. Their environmental status has potentially shifted from conformal material events useful for their stability to a set of bare "its" awaiting the ingression of the predicative pattern, "New York" or "skyscraper." Stripped of their individual status as elements in a building, these material events are rendered pliable for fusion with the appropriate predicative pattern. But notice that the act of judging the fit between the logical subjects and the predicative pattern is carried out on two levels. The first level is whether or not the logical subjects and the predicative patterns have something in common. It would hardly be appropriate to entertain the Empire State Building as the propositional form of a Chinese dinner. The second level has to do with the capacity of the judging subjects to entertain the proposition in question. This introduces a decisive issue for urban life. Without citizens who have the capacity to entertain the propositions transmitted through the city by its multiform environmental events, much of the semiotic richness of the city is lost. Good urban dwelling is as much a matter of cooperation between dwellers and propositions as it is of gaining material advantages.

In sum, propositional transmission marks the bringing together of the physical and conceptual sides of the environment so that new

levels of meaning can be experienced. Each proposition brings together into a unity potential forms of meaning awaiting human entertainment. It is important to note that "entertainment" is the requisite mode of dealing with propositions.⁸ Another term for entertainment is "interpretation," and later chapters will deal extensively with this profoundly important urban activity. For now it is sufficient to reassert the fact that judging propositions has more to do with their ability to excite interest than with their putative "truth value." As lures for feeling, propositions transmit through the urban environment opportunities for discovering novel values. Novelty that includes the spatial values dealt with in this chapter is an essential dimension of city life. Without the real presence of novelty in urban environments, city existence collapses into trivial routines devoid of life and motion. Propositions are the most effective way of transmitting such novelty through city spaces.

Propositions receive intensification or attenuation by reason of the environmental orders within which they are situated. An underlying hypothesis of this study is that urban environments are regions made up of events that fall within four fundamental orders. Each of these orders registers its impact on city experience in distinct ways. Different feeling tones are evoked by each of the four environmental orders. As the previous discussion of spatial patterns argued, the four orders are the trivial, the vague, the narrow, and the wide. When trivial orders dominate city space, the accompanying mood is one of indifference. On the other hand, vague orders provoke feelings of expectation. Narrow orders create feelings of intensity. Finally, orders characterized by width evoke feelings of involvement. These moods of indifference, expectation, intensity, and involvement affect the ways in which urban spatial values are estimated.

The effects of this set of orders and their resultant feelings can be best understood by identifying the ways in which they impact the significant urban spatial patterns of the vertical, the horizontal, and the ambient. Obviously any of the primary patterns that is set within a trivial order will suffer from the reaction of indifference. The excess of incompatibility that defines the trivial drains each of the primary patterns of potential significance. Neither the vertical nor the horizontal nor the ambient can reach a level of individuality such that it can gain affective attention. The same is not true of vague orders. The vague is marked by an excess of identification. Because some aspects of a vague order are singled out to represent all elements in that order, the primary urban spatial patterns can stand out with a degree of urgency. It is this level of significance that is felt

as a mood of expectation. Something vaguely compels attention. It is neither specific nor actual but it does call attention to potential expressions of importance. Vertical patterns established within vague spatial orders promote a sense of expectation that edges perpendicular space into a place of presumptive importance. But vagueness lacks specificity and therefore the possibility of nearness is slim. Vague verticality exhibits an inevitable distance between the perceiver and the particular spatial pattern. Likewise, a horizontal urban pattern set within vague spatial orders suffers from a lack of intimate connection. Something awaits our experience but sets itself at a distance. Finally, ambient spatial patterns placed in vague urban orders suffer from a similar lack of intimacy.

Still, expectation serves a purpose for it draws the urban dweller deeper into the environmental mix. This sets the stage for the role of the remaining orders, the narrow and the wide, in urban experience. It is when narrowness provides the requisite intensity that the primary spatial patterns begin to loom large in human experience. And according to its relation to width, great spatial experience can be had. The extremes for narrow verticality are feelings of great intensity that shade toward the experience of the monumental, the heroic, and even the transcendental. This positive spatial experience is negated by its opposite extreme when narrow verticality expresses looming perpendicularity within the urban environment. The resultant feelings combine a sense of diminishment with a sense of imminent threat. This is one side of the predicament faced by city dwellers—the sense of being boxed in by the environment. (Horizontal patterns are needed to complete the box.) The issue is scale, and it demonstrates how important the inscape of space as sited directionality really is, for human perception sets limits on what is environmentally healthy. When set within the order of width, verticality tends to fade into the horizontal since its primary expression is one of narrowness.

Similarly, horizontal space is felt as a proposition announcing either the positive feeling of opulent vastness or the negative sense of flat objectivity. When experienced as vastness, horizontal spatial patterns coax the city dweller into a sense of deep and profound involvement in a cultural matrix. This occurs when spatial orders are set into contexts that weave together the narrow and the vague. When negatively experienced, horizontal space feeds the urban citizen a steady diet of boredom that pushes experience toward trivial domains. Therefore unlike the vertical, which favors narrow orders, horizontal spatial patterns ought to emphasize orders characterized

by the width that results from a weaving of the narrow onto the vague. At its best, wide horizontal space summons up feelings of intense involvement. Key to a wise use of urban space is therefore the right combination of the vertical and the horizontal. A failure of scale in either direction creates the sense of box-like doom described above. Just as there can be a canyon effect that overturns urban perceptual experience, so also the box effect profoundly alters the spatial goodness of the city. It establishes restriction as a way to be.

The last spatial pattern is the ambient. In many ways its effective presence is the very signature of great cities, and a proper treatment of its significance must await the discussion of urban place in Chapter Three.⁹ Here I wish to stress the way in which ambient space concretely expresses all the dimensions of spatial inscape. The three features of spatial inscape are sited directionality, access, and habitat. Because it surrounds us without closing us in, ambient urban spatial patterns consistently offer engaging modes of sited directionality. It marks space with a sense of direction that is open and not confining. This is also why it grants access to generous volumes of space apt for the creation of what I have termed habitat. By establishing a pervasive spatial tone, ambient patterns send propositional lures echoing through the human body. These perceptions resound with the felt causal efficacy of the environment as well as the distinct spatial marks immediately sensed within the presented locus of ambient space.¹⁰ When set in appropriate orders of vagueness, narrowness, and width, ambient space comes to take on the very definition of urban place. It softens the harshness of the vertical and the horizontal without compromising their essential strengths. It also is of major import for the building of public spaces suitable for urban experience.

This final summary of urban space and its inscape, patterns, and symbolic perception remains decidedly abstract. There appears within it little of the rush and bustle so characteristic of urban experience. In fact it appears lifeless, a caricature of city life. What is needed to add flesh and blood to these spatial skeletons is a sense of the drama of city time.

But before we leave urban space, let us try to experience it more concretely in itself. This means encountering "moving" urban space:

I, Homo Urbanus, emerge from the smelly bowels of the New York Subway System. I step out into the sun-dappled "Crossroads of the World"—42nd Street and Lexington Avenue. I will walk due west until I reach the Hudson River. Here I am on "Forty Deuce,"

the pulsating artery through which flow the Big Apple's most outrageous forms of life. I have not gone five yards when I am knocked off stride by four businessmen in their chesterfields and camel hairs, striding aggressively (arrogantly?) toward some luncheon rendezvous. But look! Here comes a madman tripping down the Deuce, smiling at all and in no way trying to hide. Then along comes a pack of teenagers bent on who knows what. To be followed by three elegant ladies clicking their high-heeled way toward some type of destiny. I come up to the corner of Fifth and 42. A man from Senegal thrusts glittering gold objects for my inspection just as a boom box plays Aretha singing "a little respect." Rhythms crash together, my ears pound, my eyes stare straight ahead, my body crunches down to protect any exposed nerve endings. Entwined levels of moving space carried by endlessly novel events are flying at me, through me, on top of me, within me, outside, inside, and side-by-side me. Even as I swirl my head to check out Patience and Fortitude, The Great Lions of The New York City Public Library, more spontaneous difference catches my attention. It is a game of three card monte and the scam is on. Who will pay and who will play? But before I can settle in, I am pushed west toward Sixth Avenue by the tide of folk who just keep coming, from the east, the south, and the north. Horns honk, drivers rage, pedestrians escape with their lives (once more!). Two out-of-towners mess up everything by gawking at the height of the buildings. Graduate students idly lounge at the CUNY Graduate Center seeming for all the world to be part of the scene, just taking it all in. Hot dogs are served, then bananas are bought and pretzels swallowed whole. Sounds confound one another in the incessant arrival of immediacy as space sweeps by bringing more and more spontaneity. I just make it as far as Times Square. I am exhausted by the flush-rush hurry of it all. Two homeless people block my path or am I stepping over them and their threadbare humanity? All is intensely interesting in an onrushing sweep of forms of value. There is no direction to take. All lacks continuity and there is no clue as to what comes next. I head back to Grand Central Station.

It will take some time to sort out all this spontaneity. In fact, it will take the semiotic metaphysics of Charles Peirce to make sense of this plunge into immediacy. We have just encountered "iconic firstness"—the reign of spontaneous quality experienced as moving urban space. Part Two will deal with the ways in which this dynamic of values can be fitted together into the texture of urban meaning.