for inspiration, but quite literally turning over a piece of the urban fabric to it.

Such places as CityWalk, 2 Rodeo Drive and virtually every urban mall in any city are sources of entertainment as much as commercial interaction. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that a key characteristic of the urban impulse right now is that it has become more closely wedded to the entertainment impulse than ever before. In an age in which electronic media have come to render many kinds of face-to-face contacts unnecessary, people are as likely to go to a public place in search of relief from boredom as anything else. But this is hardly unprecedented in the history of cities, which, after all, have always been in part sources of entertainment. Nineteenth-century Paris, that high point of Western urbanity, was an entertaining public culture; strolling on a boulevard or sitting in a cafe to watch the world go by were both forms of entertainment. There have always been close ties between the urban impulse and the entertainment impulse. The city grew up as a marketplace, but it flourished also as a stimulating, entertaining environment.

What, in the face of competition from out-towns, suburbs, and suburbanized cities in which disengagement is valued above engagement, is the traditional, dense, truly urban city to do? If there is anything that older, street-oriented cities can offer, it is a sense of authenticity, a sense that their pleasures, if not as instantly easy or comfortable as those of the new urban paradigm, are at least real. They are authentic. They are places not made out of whole cloth; they exist in time, they grow and change, like living beings. "In a city, time becomes visible," Lewis Mumford has said, and that is the one thing that the new urban paradigm has not managed to figure out how to replicate. In the mall and the theme park, things are ever new, ever perfect: there is no sense of the ravages of time, but also no sense of its depths.

There is open space in the suburbs, but not of the richness and complexity of Central Park; there is culture in Costa Mesa, but not with the powerful interaction between performance and city that exists at Lincoln Center or Carnegie Hall; there is big public space in suburban malls, but it is not capable of being as continually enriched and revived and redefined as the gestalt of Madison Avenue. Streets are not only rooms, as Kahn said; they are also arteries, carrying people and things and, most important of all, a sense of time. It is in the very nature of a street that it is different from one year to the next, while the most important quality of a mall is that it tries to remain the same.

Cities can offer reality, then: the reality of time as well as the reality of engagement. Whether that will be enough to satisfy a generation brought up to value other things—to value convenience and ease and entertainment over what older cities can offer—remains to be seen. Longevity—the mere act of survival—is clearly not enough for a city to possess, or Buffalo, Detroit and St. Louis would occupy the same role in American urban culture that Seattle, Dallas and San Diego do. Cities must appear vital and possessed of an urgent present, even as they also possess deep and resonant pasts; they must truly make the whole arc of time visible, from embracing and enlivening the past to holding out the promise of a future.

This is a noble ambition, and perhaps this notion in and of itself marks the difference between traditional urbanity and the new urban paradigm. Cities have great reach: They inspire and ennoble, and they surely challenge. The new urban paradigm seems to shrink from challenge, preferring to embrace ease and comfort. It is the familiar and the tame that are acceptable, not the new and different.

But it is clear that, whatever short-term economic benefits may come from the new urban paradigm's fondness for imitating suburbs, the ability of this model to have a real impact on the condition of older cities is limited indeed. Baltimore is a good case in point: its Inner Harbor project has managed to bring middle-class suburbanites into the city limits, and it has encouraged a considerable amount of benign thinking about the notion of the city. But the Inner Harbor is really an island unto itself, with little connection, either physical or conceptual, with the rest of the city. The prosperous Inner Harbor throws off tax dollars which affect the rest of the city, but it does not change the basic nature of Baltimore. We should be grateful that it has not remade the rest of the city in its suburban image, but its lack of connection also means that it has had little effect on the city's deeper problems. It is numb to the city's traditional urban virtue of engagement.

Cities must play to their strengths, and their greatest strength is authenticity. It is no small irony that Disney, the company that has done so much to devalue authenticity in the new urban paradigm, would be taking on the restoration of the New Amsterdam Theater in New York, a building whose very selling point is its authenticity. The New Amsterdam is real, with a long and distinguished history, and it is in a very real and very troubled place, 42nd Street. Conceptually at least, it is best to think of Disney mainly as a source of financing here, since