

appeal, one that can be called ritual celebration. This is embodied in the convergence on Times Square to greet the New Year, the Fourth of July celebration in a town square, Chinese New Year in San Francisco, the Mardi Gras in New Orleans. The satisfaction here is in the predictable, shared experience that binds people together in the present and also allows them to feel part of history. Periodic communal celebration can be facilitated through environmental management. Some ritual celebrations, less geared toward a particular moment, can occur in settings that encourage more diffuse and varied forms of activity. Bacon (1981, p. 3) describes one such event, a day-long Fourth of July celebration that was designed as “a rambling, lazy family picnic day,” spent in lower Manhattan.

Discovery

Discovery is the fifth reason for people’s presence in public spaces and represents the desire for stimulation (Lynch, 1963) and the delight we all have in new, pleasurable experiences. Exploration is a human need. Forcing people to remain in confined, bare settings is a form of torture or punishment. For children, being deprived of stimulation can permanently stunt their intellectual and social development, as dramatically documented by Spitz (1945) and Goldfarb (1945).

In the context of urban public spaces, discovery has some specific meanings. It is the opportunity to observe the different things that people are doing when moving through a site, a quality that has been associated with San Francisco’s Cannery (Burns, 1978). The visitor is able to move around and discover parts of the place – balconies that jut out, escalators, elevators, flags, strange or interesting people. In this example, the major aspects of discovery appear to be the diversity in the physical design and the changing vistas. Greenacre Park in New York often is cited as having a sense of discovery through its use of levels and the various sectors that visitors can find (Burden, 1977). It is very likely that these are unexpected vistas for the visitor only the first time in the park, although repeated use may uncover other things of interest. For discovery to continue to be part of someone’s experience of familiar places, it would be essential to have changing physical qualities and changing human activity as well. Either people must bring the components of an interesting stay with them (in the form of equipment, books, or thoughts) or the place itself must

provide the stimulation that enables users’ interests to endure.

A sense of discovery can be enhanced by the design, as is clearly evident in the case of the Cannery in San Francisco where changes in perspective offer a succession of vistas to enjoy. Lynch (1963) suggests that contrast and juxtaposition of elements can provide a sense of pleasurable surprise that people enjoy, a quality that is epitomized by the Pompidou Centre. The management also can contribute by programming activities in a creative way. The streets in front of New York’s Public Library on Fifth Avenue and along Bryant Park on Forty-second Street have been used for crafts fairs. Concerts have enlivened many moribund plazas. The experience of discovery can also contain a sense of mystery, as a photograph in Cullen’s *Townscape* (1961) suggests. The caption reads: “From the matter-of-fact pavement of the busy world we glimpse the unknown mystery of a city where anything could happen or exist, the noble or the sordid, genius or lunacy” (p. 51).

The need for discovery often is met by travel, going to new places to discover their special qualities, to meet new people, to find new challenges from landscapes that contrast with familiar ones. Some places have been designed to create a sense of discovery as reflected in Tony Hiss’s (1987, 1990) description of the entrance to Prospect Park, Olmsted’s creative design for the borough of Brooklyn, New York. But discovery also can occur at home under conditions in which elements of known places change. A concert or flea market can transform a well-used plaza or park. Toys brought to a playground can introduce new opportunities for amusement. Some of these can be initiated by users, but most depend upon the support and instigation of space managers who can extend the opportunities for discovery beyond any individual user. Ultimately, the readiness for discovery lies within each of us, waiting to be evoked in public places by enlightened designs and management policies.

Summary

The various public space needs cover many aspects of human functioning. They include the physical comforts involved in relief from the elements, rest, and seating. Social needs address the stimulation surrounding people, escape from urban overload, and protection from the threats from others. People need to relax, to enjoy the respite offered by public places and have opportunities to enjoy natural elements