When one pattern is alive, it resolves its own forces, it is self-sustaining, self-creating, and its internal forces continuously support themselves.

Now we shall see that this is just a special case of a more general effect by which the patterns in a town or building help to sustain each other, in which each pattern which is alive, itself spreads out its life.

Consider the "architecture" of a system in which many patterns co-exist.

Assume, for instance, that a certain building is made up from fifty patterns.

These patterns define the building in its totality. They define its large scale organization, the layout of rooms, the way the ceilings work, the typical positions of the windows, the way the building stands up, its foundations, its roof, its windows, and its ornament.

To all intents and purposes, these fifty patterns define the physical structure of the building, and they are responsible for the events which happen in the building over and again—both the human events, and the non-human physical events.

Each one of these fifty patterns can itself be alive, or dead.

Or, to be more precise, each one of them is relatively more alive, or more dead—of course it is a matter of degree. But anyway, each of these fifty patterns, is

relatively stable, and self-sustaining—or it is relatively unstable and self-destroying.

Consider what happens when several of these fifty patterns are more "dead."

Each of these "dead" patterns is incapable of containing its own forces, and keeping them in balance. What happens then, is that these forces leak out, beyond the confines of the pattern where they occur, and start to infect the other patterns.

Consider, for example, the pattern of a column and beam structure without a brace or capital where the column meets the beam.

In every structure, for any given pattern of loading, there are varying stress concentrations throughout the structure. Certain points, because of their configuration, tend to have very high stress concentrations—right-angle connections between columns and beams are one example. In such a configuration, as the stress concentration goes beyond the bounds of the material, small cracks develop. The cracks ripple outward from this point and weaken the structure at other surrounding points. So far the self-destroying nature of the system is still entirely in terms of mechanical forces. But now a new kind of effect begins. The small cracks attract water by capillary action: the water enters into the material, and damages its load-bearing capacities still further. When the ice comes, the

water freezes, expands, and does still further damage. Next time the loads create a concentration of stress in that damaged area, they do still further damage, and the structure ruptures further.

Or consider the pattern of a courtyard which is too enclosed.

In the living courtyard, we are nourished; we go out when we feel like going out, the courtyard gets looked after, we still feel like being there; we are relaxed and free whether we go out there or stay inside.

In the dead courtyard none of this is true. We try to go out, but are frustrated, because the courtyard itself pushes us away. We still need, somehow, to go out; the forces remain within us, but can find no resolution here. We have no way of resolving the situation for ourselves. The unresolved conflict remains underground; it contributes the stress which is building up. First, it reduces our capacity to resolve other conflicts for ourselves, and makes it even more likely that unresolved forces will spill over in another situation. Second, if the force does spill over, it may create even greater tension, in another situation, where there is no proper outlet for it.

Suppose, for example, the people who want to be outside go out instead and sit on the road, where trucks are going by. It is OK. But then perhaps a child gets hurt. Or, even if a child does not actually get hurt, the mother fears for it, and shouts, and conveys a continuous sense of

unease to the child, so that his play is spoiled. . . . In one fashion or another, the effects always ripple out.

You may say—well, people can adapt. But in the process of adapting, they destroy some other part of themselves. We are very adaptive, it is true. But we can also adapt to such an extent that we do ourselves harm. The process of adaptation has its costs. It may be, for example, that the child adapts, by turning to books. The desire to play in the street conforms now to the dangers, and the mother's cries. But now the person has lost some of the exuberant desire to run about. He has adapted, but he has made his own life less rich, less whole, by being forced to do so.

The "bad" patterns are unable to contain the forces which occur in them.

As a result, these forces spill over into other nearby systems. The cracks in the column-beam connection, in time, cause water damage in the wall. And the courtyard which fails makes children want to play outside and causes stress and danger in the street.

But these forces make other nearby patterns fail as well. The pattern of the street may not be conceived as a place for children to play. So, suddenly, a pattern of the street, which might be in balance without this force, itself becomes unstable and inadequate.

And the pattern of the wall-to-beam connection—which was originally not conceived as having to cope with a

leaking flow of water from above, within the beam—is suddenly unstable and inadequate also, because the context and the forces which it tries to put in balance, have changed.

In the end, the whole system must collapse.

The slight stress caused by the overflow of forces from these first unstable patterns spreads first to nearby patterns—and then spreads still further, since these nearby patterns become unstable and destructive too.

The delicate configuration which is self-creating, and in balance with its forces, is for some reason interrupted—prevented from occurring, placed in a position in which its configuration can no longer recreate itself.

What then happens to the forces in this system?

So long as the self-creating balanced configuration existed, the forces were in balance.

But once the configuration is put out of balance, these forces remain in the system, unresolved, wild, out of balance, until in the end, the whole system must collapse.

By contrast, assume now that each one of the fifty patterns out of which the building is made is alive and self-resolving.

In this case just the opposite occurs. Each pattern encompasses, and contains, the forces which it has to deal with; and there are no other forces in the system. Under

these circumstances, each event which happens is resolved. The forces come into play, and resolve themselves, within the patterns as they are.

Each pattern helps to sustain other patterns.

The quality without a name occurs, not when an isolated pattern occurs, but when an entire system of patterns, interdependent, at many levels, is all stable and alive.

We may see the sand ripples anywhere where we choose to put loose sand under the wind.

But when the wind blows across the sea, over the inland marshes, and the sand ripples support the dunes between the two, and the sandpiper walks out, the sand fleas hop, the shifting of the dunes is held in check by grasses which maintain themselves and the sandpiper—then we have a portion of the world, alive at many levels at once, beginning to have the quality without a name.

The individual configuration of any one pattern requires other patterns to keep itself alive.

For instance, a WINDOW PLACE is stable, and alive, only if many other patterns which go with it, and are needed to support it, are alive themselves: for instance, LOW WINDOWSILL, to solve the problem of the view and the relation to the ground; CASEMENT WINDOW to solve the problem of the way the air comes in, to allow people to lean out and breathe the outside air; SMALL PANES to

let the window generate a strong connection between the inside and the outside.

If these smaller patterns, which resolve smaller systems of forces in the window place, are missing from the window place itself, then the pattern doesn't work. Imagine for instance a so-called window place, with high windowsills, fixed windows, and huge sheets of plate glass. There are so many subsidiary forces, still in conflict, that the window place still cannot work, because it still fails to resolve the special system of forces it is supposed to solve. To be in balance, each pattern must be supported by a situation in which both the larger patterns it belongs to, and the smaller patterns it is made of, are themselves alive.

In an entrance which is whole, many patterns must cooperate.

Try to imagine an entrance which is whole. I have in mind an entry way, perhaps to a larger building: and for it to be whole, it must contain at least these elements: the arch, or beam, which brings the loads down from above; a certain heaviness perhaps, in the members which bring these forces down, and mark the edges of the entrance way; a certain depth, or penetration, which takes the entrance a distance in, deep enough, so that the light is changing on the way through the entry way; some ornament, around the archway, or the opening, which marks the entrance as distinct, and gives it lightness; and, in some form, things that I would somehow see as

"feet"—things sticking out, at the bases of the sides—they might be seats, the feet of columns, something anyway which connects the sides to the ground, and makes them one. Now this entrance might be whole. I doubt though, if it could be whole with any less than that.

So, somehow, this system of patterns, which I have loosely sketched, forms the basis for what is needed in the entrance of a larger building: and these patterns are a system; they are interdependent. It is true that each one can be explained, in its own terms, as an isolated thing, which is needed to resolve certain forces. But, also, these few patterns form a whole, they work as a system. . . .

The same in a neighborhood.

Again there are certain rough patterns, more rooted in human events, in this case, which must be there together, in order for us to experience the neighborhood as whole. . . .

A boundary, certainly, more or less clearly marked; and gateways, not emphatic, but gently present, where the paths that pass in and out cross the boundaries: inside, a piece of common land, with children playing, animals grazing maybe; seats where old people sit and watch what is happening; a focus to the whole; the families themselves, grouped in some kind of clusters, so that there are a visible number of them, not too many, for the neighborhood as a whole; water somewhere; workshops and work, perhaps towards the boundary; houses of course, too, but clustered; trees, somewhere—and sun-

light somewhere too, intense in at least one place. Now, the neighborhood begins to form a whole.

Now we begin to see what happens when the patterns in the world collaborate.

Each living pattern resolves some system of forces, or allows them to resolve themselves. Each pattern creates an organization which maintains that portion of the world in balance.

And a building in which all the patterns are alive has no disturbing forces in it. The people are relaxed; the plants are comfortable; the animals pursue their natural paths; the forces of erosion are in balance with the natural process of repair which the configuration of the building encourages; the forces of gravity are in balance with the configuration of the beams and vaults, and columns, and the blowing of the wind; the rainwater flows naturally, in such a way that it helps just those plants to grow which, for other reasons, are themselves in balance with the cracks in the paving stones, the beauty of the entrance, the smell of roses in the evening outdoor room . . . .

The more life-giving patterns there are in a building the more beautiful it seems.

It shows, in a thousand small ways, that it is made, with care and with attention to the small things we might need.

A seat, an armrest, a door handle which is comfortable to hold, a terrace shaded from the heat, a flower growing just along the entrance where I can bend down and smell it as I pass into the garden, light falling on the top of the stair, where it is dark, so that I can walk toward it, color on the door, ornament around the door, so that I know, with a small leap of the heart, that I am back again, a cellar half down into the ground, where milk and wine can be kept cool.

Just so in a town.

The town which is alive, and beautiful, for me, shows, in a thousand ways, how all its institutions work together to make people comfortable, and deep seated in respect for themselves.

Places outdoors where people eat, and dance; old people sitting in the street, watching the world go by; places where teenage boys and girls hang out, within the neighborhood, free enough of their parents that they feel themselves alive, and stay there; car places where cars are kept, shielded, if there are many of them, so that they don't oppress us by their presence; work going on among the families, children playing where work is going on, and learning from it.

And finally the quality without a name appears, not when an isolated pattern lives, but when an entire system of patterns, interdependent at many levels, is all stable and alive.

A building or a town becomes alive when every pattern in it is alive: when it allows each person in it, and each plant and animal, and every stream, and bridge, and wall and roof, and every human group and every road, to become alive in its own terms.

And as that happens, the whole town reaches the state that individual people sometimes reach at their best and happiest moments, when they are most free.

Remember the warm peach tree, flattened against the wall, and facing south.

At this stage, the whole town will have this quality, simmering and baking in the sun of its own processes.

CHAPTER 8

THE QUALITY ITSELF

And when a building has this fire, then it becomes a part of nature. Like ocean waves, or blades of grass, its parts are governed by the endless play of repetition and variety, created in the presence of the fact that all things pass. This is the quality itself.