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# Places' 25th Anniversary: An Introduction

William L. Porter

This occasion is a wonderful celebration of this journal and its twenty-five years of extraordinary accomplishment. I was privileged to work with Don Appleyard, prior to his tragic death, on the founding of *Places*. My friend and colleague Don Lyndon gallantly stepped in to realize our early hopes. This symposium is a tribute to both Dons for their inspiration and vision. Appropriate also is the setting for this celebration, here at Berkeley, where so many have made such important contributions to *Places*: Mark Treib, Alice Wingwall, Allan Jacobs, Richard Bender, and many others. But Don Appleyard is missing.

Kevin Lynch's article in the first issue provided a wonderful tribute to Appleyard, to which I can only refer in these remarks; but I recommend it to you all. Appleyard's tragic death resulted from an automobile out of control, when, ironically, he had invested so much in the control of local traffic and in the livability of streets and neighborhoods. He also had a broad interest in the public realm. I was an urban designer on Ciudad Guayana in Venezuela when Don did his research on the diverse mental images of various populations there, and on how city form could be shaped to make the environment more responsive and satisfying. He knew that form and experience should be linked—as should the real and the imagined, the ordinary and the extraordinary. His commitment was to the public's right to shape the environment and to make it part of themselves.

His last project, on "Identity, Power and Place," saw symbolism as increasingly critical in a diverse and conflicted world. He knew that symbols are better thought about as constructed by people than as properties of the environment. He saw the past as a source of information and inspiration mediated through the thoughts and

actions of many, not as formal precedents promulgated by an aesthetic elite. I was immensely pleased to hear from Bruce Appleyard, Don's son, who is here today, that he is carrying forward his father's work-in-progress, and that we shall all be able to see it one day in published form. But getting back to the origins of *Places*. Here are some excerpts from the editorial Don Lyndon and I wrote for the first issue. "Of what use are places, to whom, and when? Places as used, thought, felt, and remembered are essential to our conceptions of private self; public places secure the idea of civic self. *Places* is about caring about places."

We wanted to address the environmental professions, feeling that then-current journals were too specialized, not dedicated enough to the "continuing investment and stewardship" that places require "to yield their treasures." We wanted "many voices" to be heard: "all those who care can shed new light, supply metaphors, and suggest new directions for the notion of places and for ways in which they may be perceived and used." And we wanted to give "particular attention to public spaces in the service of shared and egalitarian ideals of society." The first issue, we wrote, "indeed the journal itself, owes its existence to the ideas and enthusiasm of Donald Appleyard and especially to his love for people and places."

J. B. Jackson wrote an article for our second issue. In it, he quoted from an article that had attracted his attention some twenty years before. According to its authors, "The architect's task is more than the manipulation of materials and molding of space, it is the definition and possession of place." Starting "with the user... the creative act of architecture abstracts intrinsic qualities of an existing natural environment, together with

components of our mechanical world, synthesizes a new place, a harmony of human and natural systems."

Jackson had been proud to publish this article, entitled "Toward Making Places," in his still-small journal, *Landscape*. Its authors were Donlyn Lyndon, Charles Moore, Patrick Quinn, and Sim van Der Ryn! In his *Places* article, Jackson went on to argue that the idea of place incorporates both natural and urban conditions; and that it is important to consider place simultaneously as a concept, as in *sense of place*, and as specific, concrete instances of physical form and experience. He charged the journal *Places* to address both.

That was then. What about now? Was *Places* originally conceived as a book to be written over time? It may have taken twenty-five years to say what needed to be said, but is it now complete? Or was it conceived as an unfolding story of deepening meaning and increasing complexity that could only be pursued, however breathlessly? Should we think of it as a continuing journey without end? Are there new vistas of thought and action now opening?

What are we to make, for example, of aspects of life-space yet not understood, let alone described? In 1962, Jackson reprinted in *Landscape* a speech by Dolf Steinberg, a professor of political science at Heidelberg, which spoke of the spaces of dwelling, work, and society as needing still another dimension, that of communication. When Steinberg originally gave the speech, in 1953, Europe was still suffering from homelessness and "enforced mobility"; but in 1962, Jackson thought Steinberg's critique offered "a way to interpret certain characteristics of the American landscape." The implication is that all spaces must be thought of separately,