

large-scale form, for which designers had previously had only inarticulate feelings. Thus, the words seemed true in themselves.

Fortunately, designers have gone on to other fashions, and accumulating studies have made it evident how differently a low-income teenager thinks of a city from a middle-class professional (just as both see a compact, labyrinthine city very differently from one that sprawls over an extensive grid). The perception of a city is a transaction between person and place, which varies with variations in each factor, but which has stable rules and strategies. Armed with a sense of those strategies, and a set of analytical methods, a designer can help citizens to understand what they see and value and can thus help them to judge proposed changes. In their work in Cambridgeport, Carr and Herr⁵ showed how these same image techniques could be used as a means of participation. In a few cases, image studies are now used in that way, but the first effect on city design was often pernicious.

Our second omission, less easy to repair, was that we elicited a static image, a momentary pattern. There was no sense of *development* in it—of how that pattern came to be, nor of how it might change in the future, as the person matured, her or his function changed, her or his experience enlarged, or the city itself was modified. The dynamic nature of perception was denied. Once again, the study unwittingly fed a designer illusion: that a building or a city is something that is created in one act, then to endure forever.

It is far more exhausting to analyze how an image develops, because this requires a longitudinal analysis. Yet that will be a necessity, if we mean to get a true understanding of this dynamic process and to link these studies to fundamental research in developmental and cognitive psychology. Some starts have been made: Denis Wood on the growth of the image of London among teenage visitors,⁶ Banerjee's comparison of the images of newcomers and old inhabitants,⁷ and Smith's replication of the original Boston studies,⁸ which showed how 10 years of physical change had affected the public image of that place. The track of image development in the maturing person and also the path of change as one becomes familiar with a place are both progressions (or regressions) that stand in need of close analysis.

The static view is mistaken not only as a matter of understanding, but also as a matter of value. We are pattern makers, not pattern worshipers. Unless we are mentally at risk, our great pleasure is to *create* order, in an ascending scale of complexity as we

mature. This is the pleasure that designers so enjoy—and so often deny to others. The valuable city is not an ordered one, but one that can be ordered—a complexity whose pattern unfolds the more one experiences it. Some overarching, patent order is necessary for the bewildered newcomer. Beyond that, the order of a city should be an unfolding order, a pattern that one progressively grasps, making deeper and richer connections. Hence our delight (if we are internally secure) in ambiguity, mystery, and surprise, as long as they are contained within a basic order, and as long as we can be confident of weaving the puzzle into some new, more intricate pattern. Unfortunately, we do not have any models for an unfolding order.

Third, the original study set the meaning of places aside and dealt only with their identity and their structuring into larger wholes. It did not succeed, of course. Meaning always crept in, in every sketch and comment. People could not help connecting their surroundings with the rest of their lives. But wherever possible, those meanings were brushed off the replies, because we thought that a study of meaning would be far more complicated than a study of mere identity. This original renunciation is now itself being renounced, particularly in the studies of environmental semiotics, in which the technical analysis of meaning in language is applied to the meaning of place. Interesting as this work is, it labors under the difficulty that places are not languages: their primary function is not the communication of meaning, nor can their elements be so neatly parsed into discrete signifiers. Nevertheless, if it can free itself of that analogy—if places can be considered in their own nature, and not as silent speech—the study of environmental meaning will undoubtedly bring rich results for city designers. Some promising advances have been made, by Appleyard just before his death,⁹ Rapoport,¹⁰ and others. If only it were not so difficult!

Last, perhaps, I would criticize our original studies because they have proved so difficult to apply to actual public policy. This difficulty is strange, because the principal motive of the whole affair was to change the way in which cities were shaped: to make them more responsive to their inhabitants. To my chagrin, the work seems to have had very little real effect of that kind, except for the first flurry of misuse, now so happily faded away.

To my surprise, on the contrary, the work led to a long line of research in other fields: in anthropology and sociology to some extent, and to a larger degree in geography and environmental psychology.