

INTRODUCTION

The *Berkeley Planning Journal* was conceived as a graduate publication, in the tradition of law reviews, of the Department of City and Regional Planning (DCRP), at the University of California at Berkeley. The editorial board is comprised of graduate students with the assistance of a Faculty Advisory and Review Committee. The journal is to serve as a means for communicating thought and research within the Berkeley community of planning faculty, students, and visitors, which we recognize extends beyond the department; between this community and alumni; and between the Berkeley planning community and the profession at large. As such it will publish articles and other features contributed primarily by students, faculty and alumni affiliated with the department.

The journal is meant to serve several educational purposes for graduate students. The editorial policy of encouraging student submissions will provide a concrete incentive for students to improve their writing skills, as well as increase the opportunities to publish student work. The *Abstracts* feature is a way of acknowledging and making public the substantive work that is involved in the preparation of professional reports, theses, and dissertations, which otherwise goes unrecognized. The student staffing of the journal will provide valuable editorial and organizational skills for those involved. The articles and other features will improve the communication of ideas within the academic community.

For alumni the journal is intended to serve similar purposes. The journal provides a vehicle for maintaining ties with the Department, for finding out the new lines of research, the new ideas of faculty and students, for keeping track of, or getting in touch with former classmates. By encouraging alumni submissions, the journal also provides a means for alumni to share their practical experience with the academic community. In this way the journal can serve as an interactive continuing educational tool for both alumni and the academic community. A special feature has been developed, the *Professional Project and Research Reviews*, which is especially suited for the presentation of practical experience or research. Another feature, *DCRP News*, will profile research groups, innovative courses, and notes on other subjects of special interest to alumni or the profession at large. The journal will also provide an *Alumni News* feature to facilitate networking among alumni.

In the course of promoting the concept of the journal, several people objected to its hybrid nature—it seemed to them a cross between a scholarly journal and a departmental newsletter. The implication often drawn was that these two things could be done better separately. For some time I did not have an adequate response to this objection. Reflecting on the state of planning theory (my dissertation topic) brought home to me the best rationale for this journal. Let me expand on it.

There is a strong consensus in intellectual circles that we, as a society, are in a state of transition—economic, social, and intellectual. Just a few years ago, this transition was thought to have reached crisis proportions, but today the buzzwords are milder ('restructuring' or 'reconstruction'). In academic fields this perceived unsettlement has provoked the near-fixation on the new activity of paradigm watch (analogous to earthquake watch). As Pollie, the writer of the critical article in *Science*⁸³ put it, many academic fields perceive themselves to be at such a stage of intellectual destitution that "Brother, can you paradigm?" has become almost as commonplace as "Brother, can you spare a dime?" was in the Depression.¹ Planning theorists share this obsession. Almost every major planning theorist is busy trying to set criteria for, or to create the next planning paradigm.

It seems to me that as a community, our anxiety about discovering or generating the next planning paradigm is misled. By doing so, we fall into the trap that most social sciences are in, and also fail to fully appreciate Thomas Kuhn's more important insight in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. For Kuhn's intent was not primarily to substitute the broader concept of paradigm for theory as the most significant unit of science. Rather his intent, widely neglected, was to show that theories and paradigms (exemplars, as well as wider conceptual frameworks) are dependent variables of historically situated communities of inquirers. The most significant unit in any scientific endeavor is the community of inquirers.² Neither theories or paradigms are disembodied, abstract forms with validity over and beyond such communities.

This communal interpretation of science, an insight first developed by C. S. Peirce, has implications for us in planning, and forms the best rationale for this journal.³ If we are concerned with the state of our theories or paradigms, this interpretation bids us look to, and nurture our communities. For it is out of these communities that theories, research, exemplars, assumptions, and other commitments that enter into paradigms, and eventually paradigms will evolve. To me this interpretation also implies that the traditional academic practice of omitting the institutional context in which ideas and theories are developed, and presenting these latter full-blown, as Athena emerged out of the head of Zeus, is wrong on several counts. By suppressing the institutional context, it perpetuates the false idea of science as an abstract, disembodied, ahistorical endeavor. Secondly, it neglects the role that the community plays in the development of individual achievement, and by placing undue emphasis on individual achievement, it is divisive of community. It fails to recognize and thereby devalues personal affiliations—affiliations which are the backbone and a great source of satisfaction in any social effort. By omitting the institutional context of academic thought, it conceals the connection of such thought to special financial or institutional interests in society. This

mystification tends to perpetuate rather than decrease the influence of such interests in academia. For the first step in any self-reflective practice is the open acknowledgement of such interests. Most importantly, it deflects us from focusing our attention and energies on the real locus of lasting change—the communities to which we belong. I do not mean to imply by this that ideas and theories are not important. Indeed, my belief is that it is only within a community of inquiry, interpretation, and practice that ideas achieve their full power. To paraphrase Peirce, the community does for the idea just what the cellulose does for the beauty of the rose; that is to say, it affords it opportunity.⁴

And we at Berkeley have a certain orientation, certain ideas that are worth lending our cellulose to. Although the Berkeley spirit or style of planning is difficult to describe in terms of doctrine, there are certain broad features that can be identified:

- a distinctive theoretical orientation, which draws from broad intellectual traditions for its planning practice;
- a close connection to the social sciences and social research;
- a social conscience, expressed in its early rejection of the planning profession as merely technical expertise, its critical attitude towards established institutions, and its strong advocacy for social justice.

During times of austerity, theory and conscience, and even basic research are deemed dispensable and often shelved. But if we, as a society, are to deal with the problems that confront us in an intelligent, democratic, and compassionate way, we cannot dispense with any of these. This lends urgency to the need for us to safeguard this Berkeley spirit, and to foster its further development. This journal is meant to forge this community, and to nurture this spirit.

Hilda Blanco, Editor

NOTES

- ¹ Robert Pollie, “Brother, Can You Paradigm?” *Science* 83, Vol.4 (1983), No. 6, pp.76-77.
- ² Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. enl. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970). See in particular pp.176-181.
- ³ C. S. Peirce, *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*. 8 vols. Vol. I-VI, C. Hartshorne and P. Weiss, eds. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931-1958). See Vol. 2, paragraph 654 (2.654), also 5.311, 5.316, 5.384.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.216.