

## **Delight's Muse: On Christopher Alexander's *The Nature of Order*:**

**A summary and personal interpretation by Jenny Quillien**

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Review by Besim S. Hakim, Albuquerque, New Mexico

The author worked as an editor and collaborator with Christopher Alexander during the last five years towards the completion of Alexander's manuscript of *The Nature of Order*. She is extremely well versed in the content of the work and the subtle nuances that such a large enterprise contains within its over 2000 pages in four volumes. This book under review must be viewed as a serious effort by someone who dug deep into Alexander's thinking process and ideas. It is in the end, as the sub-title indicates, Quillien's own interpretation. For views of others one must find and read the reviews of Alexander's *The Nature of Order* and/or read the four-volume work by allocating the extensive time necessary.

The author organized the book in four parts preceded by an Introduction on the Sources of Delight. Part I on Essential Observations is in five chapters: 1. Wholeness, 2. The Fifteen Properties, 3. Unfolding in Nature, 4. Man-made Unfolding, and 5. Color and Light. Part II on Paradise Lost and Found is in two chapters: 6. The Problem, and 7. The Solution. Part III Towards a Cosmology is in three chapters: 8. Epistemology, 9. Queerer World, and 10. The Numinous. Part IV is a collection of essays and conversations. The book ends with a bibliography. There is no index. Two glossaries can be found after chapters 3 and 7. A comprehensive glossary of terms at the end of the book would have been very helpful. Chapter one on wholeness appropriately starts the book and I wish it was more expanded as, in my opinion, it is a central overriding objective of Alexander's work.

Quillien's book is a wonderful personal interpretation and contains the essential building blocks, arguments, and suggestions made by Alexander in the *The Nature of Order*. The reader will enjoy and take away many of Alexander's notions in a short and accessible book that is heavily illustrated with mostly color photos that explain and complement the text very well. It communicates the essential ideas easily, which is not a simple task to accomplish given Alexander's work that is very long and complex. Quillien must be congratulated for taking the effort and time to produce this book and thus synthesizing her five years work and collaboration with Alexander. I recommend this book as a first step in the journey of studying Alexander's *The Nature of Order*. Once this step is completed it will provide the reader with the background necessary to indulge in the four-volume work should he/she decide to do so.