

The Editorial.

Architecture is a field of varied directions. At once, it is a field requiring dexterity in the technics of building - a knowledge of all construction methods, and at the same time it is the most important (to our mind) visual and social art. Architecture is profoundly complex. As students of this field, we find ourselves continually asking the question, "What am I learning in the school; why **this** and why not **that**?" Our future role in the profession always seems uncertain, quite definitely due to our own attitudes about Architecture, those dominant in the profession, and those at the Schools.

Upon entering a school, what one expects to get **from**, or put **into** Architecture is affected by previous personal biases (rare in these days of flaccid pre-university educational development), or by the School's early expectations placed upon that very impressionable student. Generally, an initially 'non-directed' student will remain exactly so in a 'non-directional' School, and upon leaving, will be instantly swayed by the predominant demands of the architectural profession. At this time in Montreal, a 'puppet-draughtsman' is what the profession wants, and probably will get. As time passes, these graduates will become 'puppet-architects', clocking in promptly every day at nine and out at five. Surely, this is wrong. Historically, a student of Architecture has been well-rounded - fluent - in its language of arts and science in order to leave School as an artistically skilled, socially conscious, technically proficient Architect.

Architecture, indeed, **was** a highly respected profession. We now feel that a School's objective of creating Architects or architecturally-aware individuals has lost its clarity.

Unfortunately, present-day pre-university education does **not** tell prospective students what Architecture is about. As a result, the majority of these students expect nothing from a School as 'Architecture' becomes reduced to eleven block letters on a university application form. There are those, however, who **do** care about the field. They are in the minority, and although their numbers may grow during the educational process, they remain in the minority, and are thus profoundly different from the students who simply wish to get through rather 'get into' Architecture. The administrative system's dedication to serving a middle-of-the-road majority becomes a hindrance to the minority's growth and evolution.

"Ah, but what the market wants..." has become too important a directive within the Schools of Architecture. It is akin to Law Schools producing lawyers solely proficient in medical malpractice suits because of these cases' notoriety. To that non-directed, 'get-through' majority, a School's - "All of our students get hired" - measure of performance becomes

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their educational credo. We not only think that this is wrong, but tantamount to a crime against Architecture, borne by these students and administrations which engender and share this attitude.

It must be certain that Architecture is not simply a trade. Architects cannot, or should not, be packaged and stamped as 'artists' and 'technicians'. architectural technology schools produce technicians and institutes of paper architecture produce artists. The profession today seems to thrive on and hope for the production of specialists (mostly technicians) from our Schools of Architecture. The abhorrent vision of a Skidmore, Owings and Merrill draughting room is the embodiment of this narrow professional attitude. Skidmore and Merrill are dead, and to be sure, few employees of 'SOM' have ever seen Mr. Owings - anonymous workers, anonymous architecture. That reality is with us here and now in Montreal. It is here, for the most part, because of an attitude that starts with students, continues with the School and contaminates the profession. It **can** change, but the Schools and the students they produce must alter their attitudes in order to foster that change, and, hopefully, make the big 'A' in 'Architecture' mean something. □

WMP

If discussions of Bigness were restricted to the single aspect of awe-inspiring size, those discussions would indeed be limiting. The third issue of **The Fifth Column** focuses on the generously multi-faceted theme of **Big Architecture**. The obvious question of sheer size is studied through the work of currently obscure architects. John Ostell of mid-nineteenth century Montreal and Raymond Hood of pre-World War II New York were both the 'biggest' architects of their respective time and place. The 100 year span of their works, culminating in Hood's Rockefeller Center underline the complete transformation of the concept of Big Architecture from the 19th to the 20th century. The contemporary reactive state of flux is exposed in the physically and ideologically big work of Riccardo Bofill and the Taller de Arquitectura.

The second face of Big Architecture is reflected in the Montreal Metro, whose magnitude comes from its conceptualization and impact - a subterranean Master Plan which added a new dimension to an expanding city in the 1960's.

Finally, without stretching a flexible theme too far, few, if any, would deny the 'Bigness' of Art Historian and Architectural Critic Vincent Scully, whose far-reaching and emotive influence is profiled by distinguished Historian and Theorist, Peter Collins, in this issue. □

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