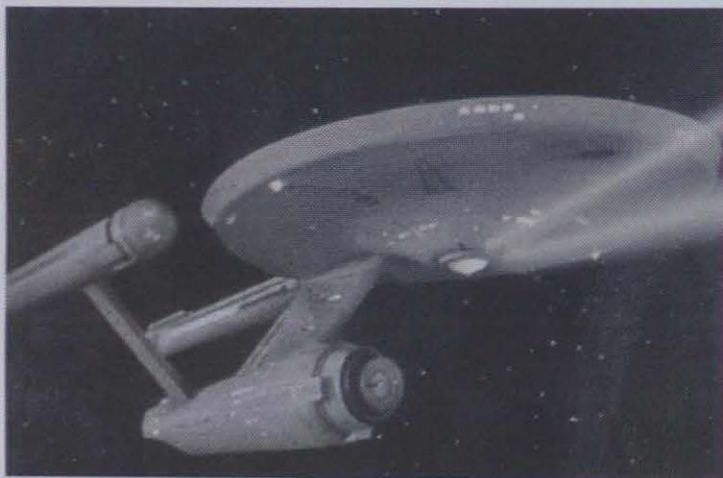


## Editorial

David Theodore



Aller hardiment où nul homme n'est jamais allé avant.

One of the functions of our journal is simply to show what students are doing, without explicit criticism or commentary, to act as a clearing house for ideas about architecture. Thus this issue of *TFC* features some final projects of students at McGill and the Université de Laval.

In what ways are the projects presented here representative of what goes on in architecture school? How should *TFC* represent the projects? The three projects from Laval are the school's prizewinners. Presumably they represent the best, the *excellent*, the school's *excellent* achievement. They are exemplary in a heroic manner, not in a democratic one. They do not claim to speak about what most students learn or achieve, but what the school sees as ideal achievements. They are Shakespeare, Homer and Goethe; they are Joe Louis and Sugar Ray Robinson; they are the Beatles.

The McGill projects, on the other hand, were chosen by consensus of *TFC* staffers before the school awarded its prizes. The reasons arose out of a partial participation in the making of the projects; these projects represent some kind of student's choice rather than an institutional choice. They are, perhaps, trendier: Witherson, Hamed, Portishead. But of course they are also not fully representative of what goes on in the school; far from it.

Obviously future features of student projects will be chosen in other ways. But I hope that criteria other than the pursuit of excellence continue to be used. Architecture is not an excellent adventure. There must be some way of characterizing what we do in school other than as a competition to be the best, even the best that we can be, or all that we can be, or even to reach our "full potential": we have other reasons for studying architecture.

Representation is not identity. We sometimes get confused about this. We talk as if our representatives have to be, do and mean exactly what we would be, do and mean if only we ourselves were there instead of our representative. But representation involves a faith, a trust; representatives are not copies. They speak for us, as us, but not necessarily exactly like us.

In this sense a representative can be an explorer, not just an exploration, the race as the prize. Whether students actually chart unmapped lands is irrelevant. No one should ask of us that we really take off into the unknown, but only that our reports, our representations of the journey, *speak* as representatives and not simply *show* as copies.

That's enough.