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History and Emotional Expression

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examinations of their judgments. They must keep their minds hospitable to new ideas. They must not be afraid to say 'I was wrong.' And in these matters I try to set them an example.

If I had my way every student should begin the study of the history of architecture on the day upon which he entered the school of architecture. He should continue that study, through widening horizons and kindling experience, during all of the five years of his curriculum; and that discipline should fling its radiance, like a gem, into every moment of his life.

History and Emotional Expression

MINORU YAMASAKI
Architect, Detroit

Architectural history, ignored during the past two decades as part of the process of learning and doing architecture, is again assuming its place in architectural education. One positive evidence that our contemporary architecture is maturing is the loss of self-consciousness toward history.

There are two great changes involved in this new attention to history. There is no attempt at slavish copying of past masterpieces. Secondly, the study of this generation encompasses both Saracenic and Asiatic historical architectures to round out the European interests of our architectural fathers.

The fact that our modern architecture is as yet limited in scope and vision makes imperative comprehension of the experience of past architectures. Though past architectures may be of little value in helping us to assess such practicalities as structural systems, almost any emotional problem which we now face has somewhere, in distant time or place, been experienced and beautifully solved.

Because we are inexperienced in understanding and in solving the emotional problems of architecture, a fuller understanding of the experience of the past can enrich our architectural sensitivity. The technological advantages we have today, coupled with our rich historical background, can produce a truly wonderful architecture for today and for tomorrow.

History and the Student

WALTER GROPIUS
Architect, Cambridge

My experience has been that a student in architecture will learn more from architectural history in an *advanced* stage of his development. I have found that the very young student, who hasn't found his own ground to stand on, is sometimes rather discouraged when he faces the old masters. If, however, he understands already some of the basic issues in architecture in the later years of his training, historical studies are much more fruitful for his own doings. In order to understand the method of approach taken by the masters beyond all technicalities, the student must have recognized something of the spiritual goals of his profession.

A Measure of History

WALTER CREESE
Professor, University of Louisville

Experience of architecture as presently built convinces me that American clients are not living up to the resources and capital of their nation. They hate to look far ahead in planning because they are so good at improvising in tempo with the way the country was rapidly developed. Their timidity in tackling a problem of the distant future and their indecision in working toward a well-balanced culture is sometimes concealed by their proclivity for topicality and busy-ness. In years to come we shall need real leadership among our young architects to help overcome these failings. It would be my contention that present-day architects tend to aggravate rather than relieve these symptoms. In the United States the superficial value of novelty design is often seized upon without regard to more permanent principles. An over-active surface of glass, chrome, or tile suggests that the architect is on his toes and the client bright to have hired him. First the building shouts, then by accident it may whisper.

The career of Raymond Hood, the forgotten architect of the 1920s, so well expresses the mainspring of this activation. No matter how reluctant we are to acknowledge such men today, the motivations which produced them are by no means exhausted. First with Hood came the Gothic Tribune Building in Chicago. This was a triumph of sales psychology in its proper anticipation of the client's wishes made amply evident in pre-competition newspaper notices. Next came the American Radiator Building in New York of black and gold, with construction begun before he knew how the top was going to appear. In the blue-green McGraw-Hill Building he turned to 'Functionalism'. Rockefeller Center brought him up to a stage where form-relationships meant more than style and there his brilliant and over-worked career ended.

The indictment seems to me twofold. The American architect realizes the commercial client may be thinking of his building as a backdrop for his promotional campaigns and advertising signs. Color, proportion, form, and line often go by the board. Designed by a first-class architect, one isolated, exhibitionistic building, such as the Johnson Wax office at Racine, may give a dash or accent to an otherwise unimaginative landscape; but a dozen of them by uninspired architects—all on a city street, complete with overhanging signs—is too much to inflict. American urban buildings are often ill-mannered and over-aggressive and the 'nature' of materials is the means by which they get that way. The great variety of American materials is today more than ever a threat to good taste, an embarrassment of riches. A study of the history of architecture in relation to planning reveals that in the long run there are only two solutions: either more corporate restraint or more rules. The architect of the next generation must assist the business client to move away from the dominating impression that the louder he shouts, architecturally, the more he will be listened to. A retreat into rigid aesthetic regulations for urban architecture such as happened after the Columbian Exposition of 1893 can settle nothing, but it could happen if more chaotic conditions, like those which called forth Burnham, McKim, and Cram, reappeared.

The second phase of this indictment comes out of the fact that however much one may want to gloss it over, Americans are prone to be economic determinists in the aesthetics of their architecture. Those within and near the profession who have worked hard to