



Design with Climate: Bioclimatic Approach to Architectural Regionalism

Victor Olgyay

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Although man apparently can survive in any region where he can obtain food, the conditions under which his physical and mental energies can reach their highest development are strictly limited. From the beginning man has searched for ways to control his environment and to create favorable conditions for his aims and activities. His housing design has reflected the different solutions advanced in each historical period to the continuing problem of securing a small controlled environment within the vast natural setting—a setting too often beset by adverse forces of wind, water, and sun. The architecture of Western civilization has not often considered the problems and solutions of distant regions and climates. Nor has it taken full advantage of discoveries in the natural and biological sciences that are relevant to building design. With the widening spread of communication and populations, a new principle of architecture is needed to blend past solutions with new technologies and insights into the effects of climate on human environment. To mature properly, architecture must pool the efforts of several sciences: biology for a definition of the measure and purpose of comfort requirements; meteorology for a precise description of the existing climatic conditions; the engineering sciences for a rational solution and execution. Using the findings from these other sciences and applying them to four distinct climate regions—temperate, cool, hot-arid, hot-humid—Victor Olgyay shows how we can arrive at new interpretations and exactness in architectural theories of orientation, shading, building form, air movements, site location, and effects of materials. His findings suggest new and exciting regional expressions and diverse patterns for town layouts. An Academy of Science publication has described this new methodology as "virtually a new science."

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