

LIVING SYSTEMS and LIVING ARCHITECTURE

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ABSTRACT

Contrasting and explaining three ideas:

- The “**Old View:**” The idea of a dichotomy between life and non-life
- The “**Living Systems View:**” the inclusion of non-living elements into living systems
- The “**Living Architecture View:**” the idea that everything has some degree of life

METHOD

Socratic Dialog

Example:

Andrea: *What is the “precise scientific distinction between organic and non-organic matter?”*

Hajo: ... In the twentieth century scientific conception of life, what we mean by life is defined mostly by the life of an individual organism. And we consider as an organism any carbon-oxygen-hydrogen-nitrogen system that is capable of reproducing life.



DEFINITIONS

life, organisms, systems, ecology

ponds, frogs, deserts, sand

THEORIES

- *Preserving Organic Life*
- *The Living System Understanding*
- *The Living Architecture View*

METHOD AND PROCESS

- Measuring Life
- Fundamental Building Blocks



UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

- *Is the "living architecture theory" founded on our current understanding of physics (the nature of matter and space)?*
- *How do the three different ideas affect architecture and design?*

REFERENCES

- [1] The living architecture tradition was first developed in Berkeley, California, with Christopher Alexander as the main proponent. Hajo Neis taught with Chris Alexander in this area of emphasis and philosophical direction at the University of California in Berkeley from 1990 to 2000.
- [2] Alexander, C. and Silverstein, M. et al. (1975). *The Oregon Experiment*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [3] One area where the value of people in the creation and maintenance of buildings as living systems can be seen is the literature on participation. Van der Ryn and Cowan emphasize that every person is also a designer, and a potential system's operator of a building. Van der Ryn, S. and Cowan, S. (1996) *Ecological Design*. Washington DC: Island Press.
- [4] Alexander, C. (2001). *The Nature of Order. Book One: The Phenomenon of Life*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [5] Neis, H. (1998). "Architecture, Value, and Feeling." *Toward a Critical Pedagogy for the Environment, Proceedings of the 1998 ACSA West Regional Meeting*, Berkeley, 34:1-10.
- [6] Guy, S. and Farmer, G. (February 2001). "Reinterpreting Sustainable Architecture: The Place of Technology." *Journal of Architectural Education*, 140-148