

*Libraries-Past, Present and Future. A Study on the Psychology of Space and Design.*

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This presentation will review the salutary effects of architectural design. Focusing on the anthropological concept of proxemics and drawing from psychoanalytic theories that view prosocial behaviors as highly adaptive, the presenter will discuss socially responsible designs of living spaces within this context, using libraries as an example. In libraries we connect narrative with emotion and history, traveling through time, using our imagination to fuse the proxemic dimensions of intimate, personal, social, and public spaces. The multisensory design of libraries can be magnificent, but an effective design transcends aesthetics and the needs of the individual and connects the user with their community at large within multiple historical contexts. Libraries, the repository of books, provide quiet areas of study and act as social equalizers, community hubs, and places of learning. They foster social connections, promote literacy, and encourage intellectual development. Successful architectural design of libraries stimulates the imagination and facilitates states of contemplation and enthusiasm, allowing for complex affective states of serenity, euphoria, rapture, and bliss. Libraries can be experienced as sacred spaces, not in the religious but in the spiritual sense, allowing people to enter meditative states that promote creativity. The presenter will share a slide show illustrating ancient and contemporary libraries in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas.