

# *Light on Two Sides of Every Room*

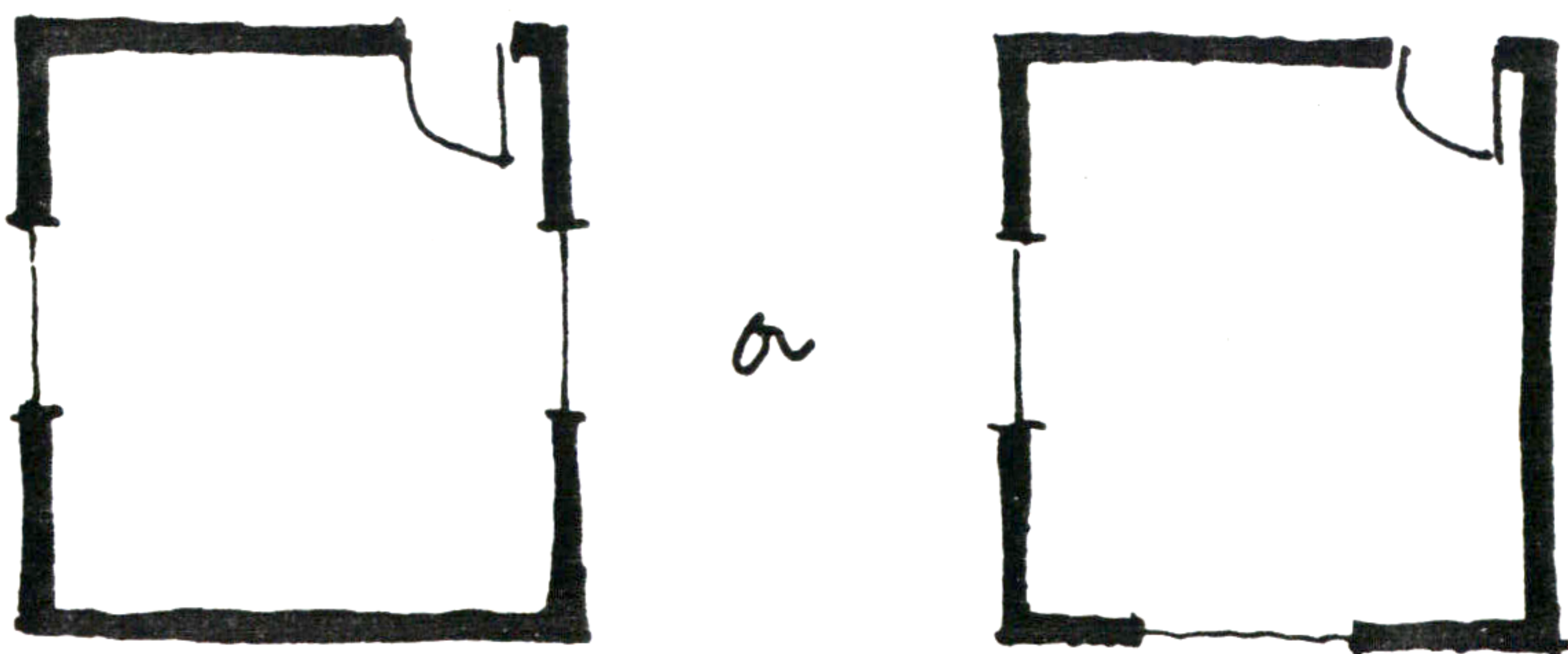
*A room lit from one side only is  
almost always uncomfortable.*



The reason for this is that the light gradient on the walls and floors inside the room is very steep, so that the part furthest from the window is uncomfortably dark, compared with the part near the window. Even worse, since there is little reflected light on the room's inner surfaces, the interior wall immediately next to the window is usually dark, creating discomfort and glare, against this light.

Although this glare may be reduced by supplementary artificial lighting, and by well designed window reveals, the most simple, and most basic way of overcoming glare, is to give every room two windows. The light from each window illuminates the wall surfaces just inside the other window, thus reducing the contrast between those walls and the sky outside. For details, and illustrations, see *R. G. Hopkinson, Lighting: Architectural Physics, Building Research Station, London, 1963, pp. 29 and 103.* (continued over)

*Therefore: Give every room used during the daytime natural light by windows or skylights from at least two directions.*



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## **Problem** (continued)

This pattern does not go into details about window area to wall area ratio, or the exact optimum placing of the windows with respect to the proportions of the room. For instance, the one case where it is acceptable for light to enter the room from just one direction is in the case of a very narrow room, narrow enough so that light entering the room through a window on the long wall can be reflected off the opposite wall, back onto the window wall. The maximum width of the room in this case is probably around 8 feet. The point of the pattern still stands – that windows in any room should be placed to satisfy two requirements:

1. reduce the light gradient in the room.
2. directly or indirectly illuminate walls immediately adjacent to windows.

## **Context**

This pattern, of course, applies only to rooms with windows. In fact we do believe that all rooms used during the day need windows, not only for natural light, but also because people need some relationship to the outdoors. See *Windows Overlooking Life*.

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*This pattern is tentative. If you have any evidence to support or refute its current formulation, please send it to the Center for Environmental Structure, P.O. Box 5156, Berkeley, California 94705; we will add your comments to the next edition.*