Contents

Introduction ............................................................................................................. 1

The Minimum on Mechanics ............................................................................. 3
  External Loads and Internal Stresses ................................................................. 3
  Thermal Expansion and Thermal Stresses ......................................................... 11
  The Finite Element Method (FEM) .................................................................... 12
  The Component Killers: Notches and Notch Stresses ....................................... 14
  Crack Propagation .............................................................................................. 20
  Overview of the Mechanics ............................................................................... 21

What Is a Good Mechanical Design? ................................................................. 25

The Axiom of Uniform Stress and How Computer Methods
  Derive from It .................................................................................................... 29
  Notches Without Notch Stresses? .......................................................... 29
  Computer-Aided Optimization – Growth in the Computer ......................... 32
  Soft Kill Option: Away with the Ballast! ....................................................... 35
  Stress-Controlled E-Modulus Distribution ................................................. 37
  The Stress-Increment-Controlled SKO Method ............................................. 39
  Presentation of the Methods at a Glance ....................................................... 41

The Mechanics of Trees and the Self-Optimization of Tree Shape .............. 43
  The Controlling Mechanisms and Their Effect on the Tree ......................... 43
  Apical Dominance: The Top Rules ............................................................. 44
  Geotropism: Stand Up Straight! ................................................................. 44
  Phototropism: The Quest for Light ............................................................... 49
Fibre Kinking: The Beginning of the End ............................................. 160

Can Trees Really Not Shrink? .......................................................... 163

Bones: Ultra-Light and Very Strong by Continuous Optimization of Shape ................................................................. 165

Bone Design: Selected Examples ..................................................... 167
  The Femur: Heavily Loaded and Successful ................................ 167
  Healing of a Femur Fracture ....................................................... 170
  The Consequences of Hip Prostheses for the Femur .................... 172
  The Vertebral Arch – A Weak Point? ........................................ 175
  Trabecular Bone: Micro-Frameworks as Pressure Distributor,
  Dash Pot and Light-Weight Internal Architecture ..................... 177
  Trabecula Axis and Force Flow: The Fear of Bending Load ........ 177
  Drifting and Rotating: The Wanderings of the Trabeculae in the
  Search for Pure Axial Loading .................................................. 178

Bony Frameworks and Tree Frameworks Compared ....................... 183
  Trabeculae and Air-Rooters ...................................................... 183
  The Reasons Why Bones Are Better at Adapting Their Shape ........ 184

Claws and Thorns: Shape-Optimized by Success in the Lottery of Heredity ................................................................. 185
  The Tiger’s Claw ................................................................. 185
  Thorn Shape and Load Direction ............................................. 187

Biological Shells ........................................................................... 191
  What Are Shell Structures? ...................................................... 191
  Why a Shell Theory Is Inadequate for Shape Optimization .......... 192
  Tortoises and Nuts ............................................................... 195

Bracing: Ultra-Light but Highly Specialized ................................ 199
  The Advantages of Bracing and Its Sensitivity to Loading
  Inappropriate to the Design ..................................................... 199
  Bracing at the Hip-Joint and in Trees on Eroding Sites:
  A Functional Identity ............................................................ 201
Buttress Roots from the Standpoint of Bracing.................................202

Shape Optimization by Growth in Engineering Design.................209
  Plane or Rotationally Symmetrical Models...............................209
    The Orthopaedic Screw....................................................209
    Beam Shoulders.............................................................213
  Shape Optimization of Three-Dimensional Components...............214
    Shaft with Rectangular Aperture..........................................214
  Frameworks........................................................................217

Unity in Diversity: Design Target and Realization......................221

Critique on Optimum Shape: Sensitization by Specialization........223

Outlook: Ecodesign and Close-to-Nature Computer Empiricism..........225

New Examples of Application in Self-Explanatory Illustrations........227

References.............................................................................271

Subject Index............................................................................273