

The function of a building – location of a fusion and the function of a focus

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Abstract

Functionality and function might be considered as including different perspectives of a building – the first comprising the properties, in German ›Eigenschaften‹, the second the features (or ›Merkmale‹). Even if this approach makes good sense complying fairly with the logical concept of function according to Frege, it opens the question how to deal with the overall concept of function when this has to relate both to the building and the concept of the designing person as well – coincidentally and not one after the other. Under this presupposition, the function becomes a focus capable of integrating any segment required. In four sections, this assumption is evolved where philosophy must assist in order to explain why conceptions – perceptions or representations – must fuse and why the focus as the inhabitant of the function must be distinct, and not only a clear one.

The first section is an outline of the problem. It does not obviate the full range of requirements from the architect, the building-owner, the contractor(s), the expert, the legal body to the beholder and finally the occupant, anyone with a special relationship to the function as possibly forming a segment or its proving agent. The second section passes to history (and in particular philosophy) in order to explain the function with Kant and Frege, both valuable contributors for its understanding. The main issue, however, is to see the function as an instance of fusion, so the argumentation needs to defend distinctness as a feature of fusion: where it has to become a real focus. This is further elaborated in the third section where the *Philharmonie de Paris* by Jean Nouvel (still in construction) has to explain the hypothesis in the concrete realm. Concerning this building, one may understand very well that it requires a special integration of the concert hall, foyers, administration rooms, rehearsal rooms, and the park landscape as well. Afterwards, the legal aspect is shown as an integral segment of the function in connection with a local development scheme for a villa suburb in South France (Sete) – planning stipulations as fusing elements within the overall villa design.

The final segment addresses the expert evaluation of design, development planning or execution of construction. Here fusion, instantiated by the requirements as to joints, the finish and paints, seems to become aesthetically real or one-one. The example is an excerpt from the concise Belgian journal *Contact* (issued by the *Centre Scientifique et Technique de la Construction, CSTC*) – where the light itself, in connection with a special study about the architectural planning of internal light, means to interpret a building, and even in advance an integral element of its function.