

Does Form Follow Function? Harnessing Philosophical Perspectives in the Architecture and Design Process

Eliezer Ntangu Ntieni

Department of Architecture, School of Architecture, Southeast University, Nanjing, China
Email: issantangu@gmail.com

How to cite this paper: Ntangu Ntieni, E. (2025). Does Form Follow Function? Harnessing Philosophical Perspectives in the Architecture and Design Process. *Art and Design Review*, 13, 30-43.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/adr.2025.131003>

Received: April 17, 2024

Accepted: January 6, 2025

Published: January 9, 2025

Copyright © 2025 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

There is a longstanding debate over the relevance of form and function in architecture and design, with different schools of thought representing various perspectives. Indeed, the relationship between form and function is still discussed today. This essay starts with Louis Sullivan's motto, "form follows function". This observation goes beyond the contradictory nature of form. Rather, it is based on philosophical considerations that reflect different cultural concerns and eras. This work aims to deepen and nuance the understanding of the maxim "form follows function" by exploring philosophical perspectives and their practical implications. In particular, this essay focuses on the complex relationship between the two concepts of architecture and design to promote a holistic approach that goes beyond conventional dichotomies. Qualitative analysis explores the interplay of form and function through ontological interpretation and historical document analysis of Sullivan's dictum in different dimensions. We note that the instrumentalist approach defends the metaphysical dimension to the meaning of the creed, i.e. attributing a truth value to a fact or a statement. This approach foregrounds the function and purpose of the object, so that its design can crystallise and effectively fulfill its intended role. Aristotle's hermeneutic interpretation is based on four laws of causality: material, formal, efficient, and final. Formalism tends to downplay or set aside the roles of interpretation, context, and external factors in understanding a system or object. Functionalism, on the other hand, upholds and supports the adaptation of form to human needs. Moreover, architecture is more than a simple, functional dwelling; it is a means by which humans inhabit their environment and enter a relationship with it. The epistemological strength of Sullivan's motto is based on arguments supported by documentary texts. This literature exploration opened a multidimensional debate throughout the discussion, through which inspiring answers were provided, aiming to understand under what conditions

one of the two concepts should align with the visions of the schools of thought in the creative process in architecture and design.

Keywords

Form Follows Function, Instrumentalism, Formalism, Functionalism, Teleology

1. Introduction

The dictum “form follows function” states that the form of a building should be primarily determined by its intended function or purpose. It was first popularised by the American architect Louis Sullivan in the late 19th century. Sullivan (1979) coined the term in his article “The tall office building artistically considered”, published in 1896. While this dictum has been influential (Townsend et al., 2011), some argue that a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between form and function is needed (Hwang, 2020; Alasmar, 2019). Crabbe (2013) claimed that the interplay between the two could be explored through ontological modelling (Bhatt et al., 2012) and historical analysis. Scholars and philosophers have long engaged with the architectural concepts that influence design principles and aesthetic values (Hendrix, 2013), but further discussion and exploration of the relationship between form and function remain necessary.

Several differing viewpoints and schools of thought find that the contradiction between form and function is a means of poetic expression in architecture. Architectural theory draws on philosophical ideas and reflects cultural concerns and worldviews (Illies & Ray, 2009). However, architects’ interpretations of philosophical concepts may differ from those of scholars. One perspective holds that the form of an architectural object should be a direct expression of its function, determined by the requirements and constraints of its intended use. This view maintains that the design process should begin with a clear understanding of functional requirements and then translate these requirements into an appropriate form (Kirschman & Fadel, 1998).

However, certain philosophers believe that the relationship between the two concepts is not straightforward. Menges (2006) suggests that the form of an architectural object can be influenced by various factors, including the production process, cultural and environmental context, and even the aesthetic sensibility of the designer, and cites Ikonnikov’s observation that “the form of an architectural object expresses the way it is organized and exists in the context of the environment and culture”. These views suggest that the design process should consider the functional requirements and broader social, cultural, and environmental factors that shape the built environment. These contrasting opinions raise ethical implications and crucial questions about the role of architecture: should design prioritise user functionality above all, or can form hold value independent of use?

Within the practice of architecture and design, Sullivan's dictum is appealing, but is it truly being applied? The attempt to find rational answers in this debate followed the opposition of ideas and the specific needs of each side and led to the birth of two dogmas: functionalism and formalism. These dogmas influenced the achievements of the pioneers of modern architecture in previous decades and continue to affect contemporary design today. Consequently, the dogma relies on the principles of functionalism, which emphasise the importance of meeting users' needs and promoting efficiency, thus making functionalism the primary essence of this trend in modern architecture. However, proponents of formalism advocate that the architectural form possesses intrinsic value and should not be subordinated to function alone. In philosophy, as in architecture, the issue is not to answer a question directly but to attempt to circumvent it according to a methodology.

Thus, the first focus of this essay is to explain and defend the Sullivanian principle that form follows function in the debate between pragmatism and instrumentalism and, by extension, to consider the different perspectives of thinkers such as Aristotle and Heidegger on the relationship between form and function in the architecture and design field. Second, the essay aims to elucidate the meaning of Sullivan's principle and the diverse philosophical perspectives in the architecture and design field that have shaped its materialisation and application. Lastly, the discussion will expand to examine two opposing theories, functionalism and formalism, taking the dictum that form follows function as a pivotal reference point.

To address these points, the article is structured as follows. The first section traces the primacy of Sullivan's dictum by deciphering its genesis and early influences and situating it in its historical context to determine its development within architectural theory. The second section dissects the principle's instrumentalist nature, considering its application as an approach to objects and human experience and highlighting its utilitarian roots. The third section delves into the hermeneutic of "form follows function" through the prism of Aristotelian teleology, exploring how this ancient philosophical perspective enriches the understanding of the relationship between form and function. The fourth section critically examines the dynamic tension between formalism and functionalism, probing the delicate balance necessary to synthesise aesthetic considerations and utilitarian needs. Lastly, the fifth section transcends the conventional limits of the dictum by questioning Heidegger's thoughts on the essence of habitat discourse. It seeks to provide a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between aesthetics and utility, using Heidegger's philosophical framework to bridge the perceived gap and enrich the discourse on the principles of architecture and design.

2. The Primacy and Genesis of the *Form Follows Function* Dictum

Before proceeding to the exploration of the meaning of "Form follows function", it would be opportune to briefly outline its genesis and discuss its philosophical makeup in the realm of architecture and design. Sullivan presented his approach

on an emerging sullivan-esque style that he referred to as a “tall office building”, which would eventually be called a “skyscraper”. The style consists of a tripartite design of a skyscraper and the upward character of the type of design for a multi-story commercial building. The building’s facade is characterized by three major divisions: a base, consisting of the lower three stories; a cap, of one to three stories; and a shaft, consisting of the floors between the base and the cap. Sullivan claimed that this design was a natural result of an all-pervading law (Figure 1). He formulated this alleged law in general terms. He wrote it is: “the pervading law of all things organic and inorganic, of all things physical and metaphysical, of all things human and things superhuman...that form ever follows function, this is the law...” (Sullivan, 1979).

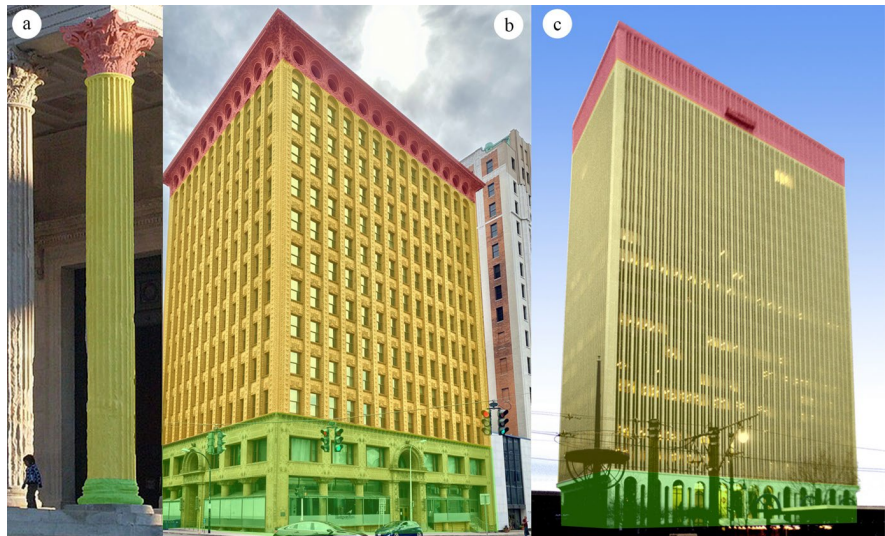


Figure 1. The Sullivan tripartite architectural approach integrates dispositions of elements, spatial functionality, and aesthetic qualities in the building’s facade. (a) Grec column; (b) Guaranty building & Interpretive Center; (c) M&T Bank headquarters building.

Originally, the idea behind form following function was a response to the excessive ornamentation and superficial decoration prevalent in architectural styles of the time. However, it encapsulates the idea that the design of a building should be primarily driven by its purpose and practical requirements. Sullivan emphasized the importance of honesty in design and advocated buildings that clearly expressed their purposes and functions. In the following years, he made it a central debate question in the field of architecture.

In the context of the concept of the primacy of function, many scholars hold the view that the perspective of form following function goes back to Roman architect and engineer Vitruvius Pollio in the 1st century BC. He stated that a building must have *utilitas* (usefulness), *firmitas* (firmness), and *venustas* (beauty) (Morgan, 1914)¹. Advocates of the *Form follows the function* concept assert that

¹*De architectura* (in English, “About architecture”) is Vitruvius’ treatise on architecture, written between 35 and 25 BC and dedicated to the Emperor Augustus. J.-P. Néraudau, *La littérature latine*, Paris: Hachette, 2000.

architecture must prioritize the practical needs and functionality of a building. By focusing on functionality, architects can create spaces and objects that facilitate their intended uses, promote efficiency, and enhance occupants' and users' well-being. From this standpoint, the design process begins with a deep understanding of an object's purpose and intended activities, which corresponds to the pragmatic doctrine of instrumentalism². This pragmatism is a philosophical theory that regards buildings or objects as only instruments at the service of action and having value only according to their practical usefulness. In this respect, the Sullivanian principle is considered to be related to affordance³ theory, which D. Norman advocates (Norman, 2013). Their relationship can be understood as a cognitive theorization in which function plays a co-vector role—a container and the content, in the connection between the essence of an object and its users. Regarding the trend of functionalism, in his article entitled “Origins of Functionalist Theory”, E. Robert de Zurko stated that “Functionalism is generally associated with [...] the practical, material needs of the occupants of the building and the expression of structure” (de Zurko, 1957). He later recognized that architecture serves a utilitarian purpose, providing shelter, comfort, and support for human activities. For instance, the layout of a school should promote effective learning, while that of a hospital should facilitate efficient patient care. By aligning form with function, architecture can fulfill its societal role and contribute to the betterment of human lives in response to the need for habitability.

Alternately, the opposite thought with a parallel approach is called “formalism”, which is inspired by criticism against the functionalist way of thinking, mainly by postmodern architects and theorists. Formalism is based on the strictness of the law itself and its consequences on the rigidity of architectural forms. Its advocates claim that the quest for form should be free from any functional restrictions for the sake of pure expression, which focuses essentially on the form of the work in the absence of functional, social, and other considerations. Form is a main concept of formalist thought, but its innumerable meanings, on the one hand, and the lack of well-organized research on its origins, on the other hand, have hindered the understanding of its essence, especially when it comes to architecture. Furthermore, formalism places a strong emphasis on aesthetics, artistic expression, and the arrangement of forms, and it prioritizes visual appeal.

Nevertheless, it believes that decorative elements can sometimes lead to a disregard for functionality. Regarding my stance on the narrative I support, the Sullivanian doctrine, I can afford to open a brief discussion oppositely. I will delve into the potential limitations of formalism, including its potential conflicts with users' practical needs and the efficient use of space. By examining critical analyses

²It is a pragmatic philosophical approach that regards an activity (such as science, law, or education) chiefly as an instrument or tool for some practical purpose, rather than in more absolute or ideal terms.

³The term “affordance” is a neologism formed from the English verb “to afford”. Several translations are possible: “to afford something”, “to have the means to do something”, or “to provide the opportunity to/offer” (a service, in particular). In a way, affordance offers the user the means to use an object, including, and if possible, without instructions.

and scholarly perspectives on formalism, one can better understand its strengths and weaknesses as a philosophical approach in the field of architecture and design.

3. Form Follows Function as an Instrumentalist Approach to Objects and Human Experience

The credo Form follows function has long been a fundamental concept in various fields, emphasizing that the design and shape of an object should be determined by its purpose and function. This principle has depth and metaphysical significance, justifying its defense. Prioritizing an object's function and purpose allows its design to emerge organically and to fulfill its intended role effectively. This principle rejects the idea that aesthetic or arbitrary considerations should determine shape. However, it emphasizes that the structure and composition of things should be derived from their actual uses. Adhering to the Sullivanian principle requires recognition of the expressive power of form because when form meets function, form becomes a visual expression of an object's purpose or essence.

The purpose or essence of an object's alignment with its purpose enhances our understanding and awareness of the object's role in the design world and creates a consistent and meaningful connection between the object and its users or viewers. This instrumental, utilitarian view introduces the relationship between Sullivan's principle and J. Dewey's instrumentalism. Instrumentalism suggests that the form of an object is determined by its function or purpose and that its value depends on its ability to meet that function effectively⁴. By embodying the purposes of objects, forms communicate the intended functions of these objects, provide clarity, and facilitate seamless interactions between people and objects. An example of a utilitarian object is a glove. Analyzing its size and shape, we can see that its appearance exactly matches the size and shape of the hand, as it reveals the shape of the fingers and allows for maximum fit and freedom of movement. However, these characteristics fit only for people with certain hand sizes. Neutral *containers*, such as gloves, provide basic warmth, albeit with less functionality, as a *hand-based* commodity is difficult. Furthermore, the form of a glove is directly derived from its intended function of protecting and covering the hand. The design of the glove is carefully shaped to accommodate the hand's structure, enabling dexterity and flexibility while offering insulation, grip, or other specific functionalities, depending on the purpose of the glove (**Figure 2**).

The form of the glove is not an arbitrary or aesthetic choice but is a result of its functional requirements. Its form is optimized to fulfill its intended purpose, reflecting a utilitarian approach to design. For instance, a winter glove may provide insulation and may have a waterproof exterior and individual finger compartments to keep the hand warm and protected in cold weather conditions. A surgical glove may have a different form, as it is designed to be sterile, thin, and flexible to

⁴Instrumentalism is the pragmatic philosophy of John Dewey, which maintains that thought, theories, and concepts are instruments for solving practical problems. It is applied in the fields of science, morality, education, and politics.

enable precise movements during medical procedures. Rather than the value of the glove depending on its ability to effectively meet its function, the form of the glove is a direct result of this functional requirement. The philosophical perspective of instrumentalism emphasizes the importance of a purpose-driven design in which form is a means to achieve the desired function efficiently. In sum, instrumentalism offers a lens through which one can analyze the connection between form and function in the specific circumstance of an object, such as a glove in this case.

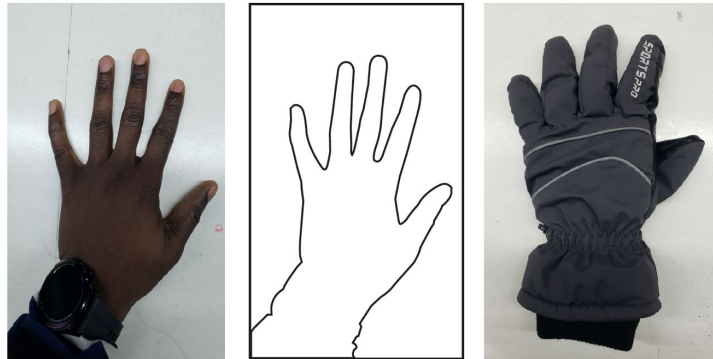


Figure 2. The process generation from a model, by shape to object.

In axiology, the contestation between human experience and function is another aspect of ethical instrumentalism when arguing that form follows function. Objects that are designed with a clear understanding of their purposes and uses enrich our daily lives and provide efficiency and comfort, improving our well-being and quality of life. In architecture or design, when objects are intuitive, ergonomic, anthropometric, and optimized for their functions, mobility becomes easier in indoor spaces, and maneuverability for everyday objects is facilitated, enabling a meaningful experience.

To substantiate my argument, I present the *service* theory presented at the first point of this essay about pragmatic philosophy. Therefore, these are calls to action in the broadest sense. Actions, such as pulling, pushing, pressing, tapping, clicking, touching, and carrying, are all means of interacting with objects or interfaces. For example, door handles encourage people to press the handle to open the door and to open it precisely with their hands rather than their feet. Psychological research shows that the shape of a chair suggests a sitting position and not a reclining. This theory has been proven in different behavioral profiles and can be applied to various fields, such as perceptual psychology, cognitive psychology, artificial intelligence, and human-machine interaction, as well as to “the design of things”, to use D. Norman’s expression (Norman, 2013).

4. Hermeneutic Interpretation through the Light of Aristotelian Teleology

The axiom *form follows function* reflects the nature of reality and existence. Reality

is governed by principles and laws dictating the behavior and functioning of objects. The order and harmony inherent in nature are mimicked by balancing form and function. This principle enables us to connect with the underlying structures and patterns of our reality, giving us a sense of coherence and resonance with the world around us. I make here an analogous interpretation that ties function to finality, as expressed in the following line: “One can say the following about the terms function, purpose, and use. All three terms are relational, meaning that they refer to a relationship of things, facts, actions, and/or people. The things that interrelate and the kind of relationship differ, however. Concerning purposes, there must always be a subject that sets a purpose, and also a means to achieve that purpose” (Führ & Poerschke, 2012).

To meet this requirement, I rely on Aristotle’s theory of causality. “Causes are expressed in four senses”, explained Aristotle in *Metaphysics* (A, 3, 983 a 26). “To someone who asks, for example, what is the cause of a house, one can indeed answer in four different ways, by invoking first: the bricks, the cement, the wood of which it is made, second: the plane on which it was built, third: the craftsmen who built it, and finally fourth: what this house was built for, its ‘end’, namely to allow human beings to live somewhere, to be at home there” (Kirwan, 1998). The first of these answers states what is traditionally called the *material cause*, the second is the *formal cause*, the third is the *efficient cause*, and the last is the *final cause*. These causes can be described as follows: “In a first sense, cause is called the matter to which the thing is immanent and of which it is made” (Kirwan, 1998). This is how the brass is the cause of the statue, and the silver of the cup, as well as the kind of brass and the kind of money.

In another sense, the cause is the form and the paradigm, that is, the definition of quiddity and its genders, thus for the octave, it is the ratio of two to one and, in general, the number, the cause also consists in the parts of the definition. In yet another sense, the cause is the first principle of change and rest. It is precisely in this sense that the author of a decision is its cause, that the father is the cause of his child, and that, in general, money is the cause of what is done, and what makes the change of what has changed. The cause is also the end, that is, the final cause. This is how a walk has health as its final cause.

Finality is an important concept in both the Aristotelian philosophy of nature (especially “The Parts of Animals”)⁵ and the philosophy of art (in the *tékhné* sense). “There is more finality and beauty in the works of nature”, he said, than in the field of art. This principle of finality is evident in physics, and Aristotle stood by it: “Furthermore, it is absurd to think that [natural] things happen aimlessly, because we do not see the engine contemplating its workings” (Charlton, 2006). In this view, everything in nature has an inherent purpose or function that determines its form. According to Aristotle, the form of an object is determined by its function, as nature tends to produce things that fit certain purposes. Aristotle also contends that objects in nature have final causes, which are their purposes.

⁵This treatise by Aristotle (384-322 BC), “The Parts of Animals”, represents the first systematic attempt in the history of thought to study comparative anatomy from a philosophical perspective.

For example, he asserts that “the eye shape is determined by visual function” (Charlton, 2006). Similarly, different parts of plants have specific shapes due to their role in important plant processes such as photosynthesis and nutrient uptake. This teleological idea of Aristotle can be applied to architecture and design because when an architect designs a building, he should consider its primary function and the purpose it needs to achieve. The shape of the building should be determined by these functional considerations. In the case of a hospital, its space configuration must be designed not only to facilitate medical care but also to enable the mental and physical healing of patients. Therefore, there is an obligation to choose colors wisely, as colors also tend to affect patients’ psyches. The shape of the building, with its various rooms and corridors, as well as its overall composition, must be adapted to these specific functions.

5. Exploring the Dichotomies about Formalism and Functionalism Dogma

As an architectural approach often associated with mathematics and logic, formalism is rooted in aesthetic philosophy. It draws upon the notion that architecture should be regarded primarily as an artistic creation, and its purpose is to evoke aesthetic pleasure and intellectual stimulation that focuses on the formal qualities of art, such as the arrangement of lines, colors, shapes, and textures. Formalist theorists advance that the aesthetic value of a work of art is primarily in its formal properties, detached from any representational or symbolic meaning. They emphasize the importance of pure form, geometry, proportion, and composition in architectural design. Philosophers, such as Kant and Friedrich Schiller, contributed to the development of formalism by emphasizing the autonomous value of an artistic form detached from utilitarian concerns. On the other hand, functionalism emerged as a response to the Industrial Revolution and the changing societal needs of the 19th and 20th centuries (SocialSciLibreText). Functionalists indicate that architecture should prioritize the practical requirements of users, reflecting the ideals of efficiency, rationality, and adaptability. This approach finds its roots in the philosophical ideas of utilitarianism and pragmatism, which emphasize the value of utility and the pursuit of the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

Concerning aesthetics, formalism places significant emphasis on the formal qualities and arrangement of elements in a work of art. It sees aesthetic value as residing primarily in formal properties, such as composition, color, line, and texture. Functionalism, while acknowledging formal considerations, looks beyond these and emphasizes the practical, social, and expressive aspects of art, considering how the work functions or engages with its context and audience. Formalism tends to downplay or set aside the role of interpretation, context, or external factors in understanding a system or object. It focuses on internal rules or structures and seeks to establish meaning or value based on these formal properties alone. Functionalism, on the other hand, recognizes the significance of interpretation,

context, or external factors in understanding the function or purpose of a system or object. Regarding its domains of application, formalism finds prominence in fields such as mathematics, logic, linguistics, and certain areas of aesthetics, in which the focus is on abstract structures, rules, or patterns. It often seeks to establish internal coherence and consistency within these formal systems. Functionalism, on the other hand, finds application in fields such as design, architecture, sociology, and biology, in which the relationship between form and function is crucial to understanding and analyzing systems, objects, and organisms in their context.

The Sullivanian principle in architecture provides a compelling argument for prioritizing practical needs and functionality in design. By focusing on the intended purpose of a building, architects can create spaces that are efficient, adaptable, and responsive to users' needs. However, this viewpoint does not dismiss the importance of aesthetics and artistic expression in architecture. Instead, it calls for a balanced approach that integrates form and function, acknowledging that architectural design can be both functional and visually captivating. The ongoing discourse between formalism and functionalism enriches the field of architecture, encouraging architects to explore innovative solutions that harmonize practicality, aesthetics, and sustainability in the built environment.

6. Beyond the Maxim: Bridging Aesthetics and Utility in Light of Heidegger's Insights

Critics of formalism argue that prioritizing functionality ignores aesthetics. However, the philosophical advocacy of "Form follows function" recognizes that both aesthetics and functionality are not mutually exclusive. Aesthetics results from the successful integration of the Sullivanian principle, and the beauty of an object is in its efficiency, simplicity, and harmony with its purpose. This harmony focuses on the essence and feel of an object by eliminating superfluous or unnecessary decorative elements. Heidegger's considerations of the relationship between humans and the environment are very inspiring to me, especially from an architectural perspective. Moreover, they provide an interesting outlook on the discussion of the relationship between form and function. In his major work, *Being and Time*, Heidegger developed the concept of *Dasein*, which describes manhood's way of being as being (*Sein*) there (*Da*), somewhere in the world. Human beings exist as being noticeably there. Their existence is not concealed.

Thus, human beings have an existential or an intimate connection with the environment. He explained, "Our existence shapes our relationship with the world in time and space, and buildings play a central role in this relationship. Buildings are not simply inert objects, but they have a profound influence on our way of being and our understanding of the world. Buildings are places where we inhabit, live, work, interact with others, and experience our existence; they form the basis of our everyday reality" (Heidegger, 1996). In this sense, we think that building forms are essential as long as they create an atmosphere and a framework in which

we can live and express ourselves. Architectural features, such as the layout of spaces, the materials used, and proportions, influence the way we interact with the built environment, as the form of a building can facilitate or impede our movements, our understanding of places, and our aesthetic experiences.

In the first discourse on the relationship between form and function in his seminal work “Bauen Wohnen Denken” (“Building, Dwelling, Thinking”), Heidegger suggests that “Architecture is not just a matter of utility but has a profound impact on human existence and our understanding of the world. He highlighted that form and function should be seen as intertwined and mutually influencing aspects of architectural design” (Heidegger, 1971). He pursued, “Their context deeply influences our perception and interpretation of objects, the cultural and historical meanings associated with them, and our own subjective experiences” (Heidegger, 1971). The essence of things, including architecture, is in their “being-in-the-world” and their relationality to human existence. He viewed architecture as more than just a functional shelter; it is a means through which human beings dwell and relate to their environments. Architecture, in its form and design, has the potential to reveal and shape people’s understandings of the world and their places within it.

The second essential point of discussion is the essence of a Greek temple, as considered in Heidegger’s “The Origin of the Work of Art: The Thing of the Work” (Heidegger, 2001). The fundamental question regarding the origin of this artwork focuses on its nature, purpose, and the way in which it reveals the truth. Before presenting my arguments, I would like to emphasize that there is a conjunction between nature and purpose as a revelation of the truth, which is closely related to the genesis of Sullivan’s axiom, as discussed in the first part of this essay. This observation is consistent with the use of ornaments in Sullivan’s architectural work. In Aristotelian teleology, the way of revealing the truth embraces causality theory, in which the order and harmony inherent in nature are mimicked.

For Heidegger, art is not only a way of expressing the element of truth in a culture but also a means of creating it and providing a springboard from which *that which is* can be revealed. He suggested that a temple reflects and embodies the Greeks’ understanding of their world, their relationships with their gods, and their modes of existence. In particular, he described the Greeks’ worldviews and their attunement to the divine, creating a space that opens up the possibility for truth to reveal itself. Heidegger would likely argue against such a position, regarding the representation of the idea of a temple in the temple itself. He critiqued the notion of representation as a way of reducing things to mere appearances or signs. Instead, he emphasized the idea of truth as *aletheia*, the disclosure of being. The temple, in its true essence, would not merely represent the core of the temple but would embody the truth of what a temple is and what it reveals. For Heidegger, truth is not something abstract or conceptual, it is a dynamic process that emerges through the interplay between humans and the world. The main point of a temple as a work of art participates in this process of truth. It reveals and unveils the world

as it is, establishing a site where truth can manifest and be experienced by those who enter its space.

I believe that buildings and all other objects have deeper meanings than just their functional uses. They embrace the symbolic and cultural dimensions that shape our identities and understandings of the world. For example, historic buildings and iconic monuments can embody a community's history, values, and aspirations. Thus, the relationship between form and function in Heidegger-inspired buildings goes beyond mere utility. The building forms express how we live in the world and how we interact with the space. It is closely related to our experiences of being and understanding the purpose of being.

7. Conclusion

As mentioned, Sullivan's principle is that "form follows function". He attempted to answer whether the design of objects in architecture follows the dictum "form follows function". We considered two concepts in architecture, proving that there is a relationship between form and function that, based on an in-depth analysis, creates a sense of formal architectural expression. Advocates for the principle believe that prioritizing functionality, efficiency, and a goal-oriented design promotes sustainability, ingenuity, and responsible consumption. Thus, *Form Follows Function* aligns with ethical considerations and promotes a more conscious and responsible approach to creation and consumption.

On the other hand, critics of the functionalist perspective argue that prioritizing function above all else risks neglecting the expressive and symbolic potential of architecture. Formalism contends that architecture possesses its own aesthetic and artistic qualities that transcend pure functionality. Critics highlight that by solely focusing on utilitarian aspects, architecture may become banal and devoid of inspiration, failing to evoke emotional responses or to provoke intellectual engagement. Formalism advocates maintain that architecture, as an art form, has the power to inspire, uplift, and contribute to the cultural fabric of society. By incorporating elements such as proportion, symmetry, and expressive form, architecture can enhance human experience and create a sense of place. They clarify that form is not merely a decorative element but an integral part of spatial composition, stimulating the senses and enriching our interactions with the built environment.

In his book *Contemporary Architectural Language*, Zevi stated, "Design according to the principles of function is the unchanging basic criterion in modern building codes" (Zevi, 1994). This statement highlights the importance of function as a fundamental criterion in modern building codes. It reflects the rational and utilitarian approach that underlies several architectural and design philosophies. From this standpoint, the focus on function can be seen as a reflection of the pragmatist approach of instrumentalism, which values practicality and the pursuit of the greatest good for the greatest number of people. It emphasizes the importance of addressing users' functional needs and requirements, ensuring that buildings serve their

intended purposes effectively. However, it is important to note that the emphasis on function does not necessarily imply a disregard for aesthetics or artistic expression, as Heidegger explained. While this reasoning is valid, the results of this research intend to give architectural designers freedom in the relationship between function and form; most importantly, meaning is reflected through the representation of the designed form. When there is no architecture, there is neither form nor function (Xiao, 2015).

Ahead of the view that form follows function, two ideologies have emerged: functionalism and formalism. These were put forward by great thinkers and theorists of contemporary architectural history, such as Manfredo Tafuri. In essence, however, what is the outcome of this tension, and how can it be observed?

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

- Alasmar, R. (2019). Philosophy and Perception of Beauty in Architecture. *American Journal of Civil Engineering*, 7, 126-132. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajce.20190705.12>
- Bhatt, M., Hois, J., & Kutz, O. (2012). Ontological Modelling of Form and Function for Architectural Design. *Applied Ontology*, 7, 233-267. <https://doi.org/10.3233/ao-2012-0104>
- Charlton, W. (2006). *Physics: Books I and II*. Clarendon Press.
- Crabbe, A. (2013). Reconsidering the Form and Function Relationship in Artificial Objects. *Design Issues*, 29, 5-16. https://doi.org/10.1162/desi_a_00226
- de Zurko, E. R. (1957). *Origin of Functionalist Theory*. Columbia University Press. https://monoskop.org/images/6/65/Zurko_Edward_Robert_de_Origins_of_Functionalist_Theory.pdf
- Führ, C. E. H., & Poerschke, U. (2012). Function, Purpose, Use in Architecture and Urbanism. *International Journal of Architectural Theory*, 17, 5-8. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280087572_Function_Purpose_Use_in_Architecture_and_Urbanism
- Heidegger, M. (1971). *Poetry Language Thought—Building, Dwelling, Thinking*. Harper. https://www.contentarchive.wwf.gr/images/pdfs/pe/katoikein/Filosofia_Building%20Dwelling%20Thinking.pdf
- Heidegger, M. (1996). *Being and Time*. State University Press. <https://epdf.pub/being-and-time.html>
- Heidegger, M. (2001). *The Origin of the Work of Art: The Thing of the Work*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hendrix, J. S. (2013). *The Contradiction between Form and Function in Architecture*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203070932>
- Hwang, K. (2020). Form Follows Function, Function Follows Form. *Journal of Craniofacial Surgery*, 31, 335. <https://doi.org/10.1097/scs.0000000000005891>
- Illies, C., & Ray, N. (2009). Philosophy of Architecture. In A. Meijers (Ed.), *Philosophy of Technology and Engineering Sciences* (pp. 1199-1256). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-444-51667-1.50047-1>
- Kirschman, C. F., & Fadel, G. M. (1998). Classifying Functions for Mechanical Design. *Journal*

- of Mechanical Design*, 120, 475-482. <https://doi.org/10.1115/1.2829176>
- Kirwan, C. (1998). *Metaphysics, Books Gamma, Delta, and Epsilon*. Clarendon Press.
- Menges, A. (2006). Polymorphism. *Architectural Design*, 76, 78-87.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ad.243>
- Morgan, M. (1914). *The Ten Book on Architecture*. Oxford University Press.
<https://www.chenarch.com/images/arch-texts/0000-Vitruvius-50BC-Ten-Books-of-Architecture.pdf>
- Norman, D. (2013). *The Design of Everyday Things* (Revised and Expanded ed.). Basic Books.
- Sullivan, L. (1979). *The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered. Kindergarten Chats and Other Writings*. Courier Corporation.
https://www2.gwu.edu/~art/Temporary_SL/177/pdfs/Sullivan_Tall.pdf
- Townsend, J. D., Montoya, M. M., & Calantone, R. J. (2011). Form and Function: A Matter of Perspective. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 28, 374-377.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5885.2011.00804.x>
- Xiao, D. W. (2015). *No Function, No Form, No Architecture*. Xinjiang Architectural Design and Research Institute.
- Zevi, B. (1994). *Modern Language of Architecture*. Da Capro Press.