

THE STRUGGLE FOR EMINENCE BETWEEN ARCHITECTURE AND FURNITURE IN MEETING THE VICARIOUS AND PALPABLE NEEDS OF MAN

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Abstract

This paper describes the development of architecture and furniture, tracing their primaevial beginnings and progressing to define each aspect (and particularly presenting architecture disambiguation) to help narrow the word 'architecture' to the needful genre to set in the course, the thesis of the paper. It draws upon the analogous and complementary aspects of each discipline which are aesthetics and functionalities, employing each aspect to cast the explanatory method of the study. Three themes were used to convey the analogous and complementary aspects of architecture and furniture, they are the functions of architecture, the hidden meaning of architecture and the architecture industry drawing parallels of these three aspects of the study against the functions of furniture, the hidden meaning of furniture and lastly the furniture industry. The tenuous boundaries that contrasted architecture and furniture which simultaneously revealed their similarities gave impetus that created the subtle emergence of the struggle for prominence that met and continues to meet the emotionality and tangibility senses of mankind through the course of history. The paper concludes with an emphasis on the consistent, salient and sustainable paths both architecture and furniture have evolved, particularly from the time when the desire and intent for raising shelter and having various forms of furniture for domestic existence sprang up continuing up until the present era.

Keywords: Architecture, furniture, functionality, aesthetics, applicability, symbolism, industry.

Introduction

Architecture and furniture have for ages been useful to meet the needs of mankind in various forms and levels of applicability and perceptibility. In the uniqueness of each of these objects of human creativity and production, each of these has both functionality and aesthetics that combine to appeal to humans. Both have simultaneously influenced man vicariously and palpably through the course of human history and development. The imagination of man towards creating shelters and household furniture steadily grew from the late Paleolithic period and early Neolithic era and has since snowballed into fascinating and in some instances provocative genres and forms. Comparing these aforementioned antecedents for both architecture and furniture, it is astoundingly evident that these two aspects of human progression and sustainable attainment have almost equal emotionality and functionality that suitably gave value to humanity through the ages. Their aesthetics appeal to the emotion and their forms which follow design satisfy the demand for functionality/usage and applicability.

So what constitutes this genre of both architecture and furniture as this study anticipates to appraise? What also are the salient aspects and tenuous boundaries these disciplines have that struggle for parallel eminence which meets the vicarious thrill and tangible needs of mankind through time?

In scale, architecture is often larger and on its part furniture always subsumes under architecture, though not in all instances. So what is architecture? Klein and Weiss (2021) opine that Builders, musicians, writers, computer designers, network designers, and software developers all use the term architecture, as do others (ever hear of a food architect?), yet each produces different results. A building is very different from a symphony, but both have architecture. Further, all architects talk about beauty in their work and its results. A building architect might say that a building should provide an environment suitable for working or living and that it should be beautiful to behold; a musician that the music should be playable, with a discernible theme, and that it should be beautiful to the ear; a software architect that the system should be friendly and responsive to the user, maintainable, free of critical errors, easy to install, reliable, that it should communicate in standard ways with other systems, and that it, too, should be beautiful. Considering this broad canvas above that captures and delineates sundry aspects of architecture, the description of the field architecture sought after in his paper is; 'Architecture', "The art or science of building; esp. the art or practice of designing and building edifices for human use, taking both aesthetic and practical factors into account" states Klien and Weiss quoting The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, Fifth Edition, 2002. This aspect of architecture is the primary and significant aspect of the word architecture of relevance to this paper.

Furthermore, Harrouk (2021) in quoting famous architects writes, "Architecture is the thoughtful and considered art of designing buildings." Both the art and science of designing buildings and other physical structures and the actual finished building are referred to as architecture. Merriam-Webster (n.d.) emphasizes thus about architecture, the art or practice of designing and building structures, especially habitable ones; a method or style of building. The disambiguation and the definitions of the word 'architecture' in the foregoing statements thus set a straight course of the genre of this human branch of endeavour discussed in contrast with furniture.

What is furniture? Butler, Lanseen and Wormley(2021) stress that furniture, and household equipment, are usually made of wood, metal, plastics, marble, glass, fabrics, or related materials and have a variety of different purposes. The functional and decorative aspects of furniture have been emphasized more or less throughout history according to economics and fashion. Chairs are always for sitting in, but some are more comfortable or highly ornamented than others. Accessory furnishings are smaller subsidiary items such as clocks, mirrors, tapestries, fireplaces, panelling, and other items complementary to an interior scheme.

Butler, et al. further emphasized, that the word furniture comes from the French furniture, which means equipment. In most other European languages, however, the corresponding word (German Möbel, French meuble, Spanish mueble, Italian mobile) is derived from the Latin adjective mobilis, meaning movable. The Continental terms describe the intrinsic character of furniture better than the English word. To be furniture, it must be movable.

However, in the modern era furniture could equally be immovable. Piplani (2019) A house should be a perfect mix of built-in and movable furniture. Built-in furniture is an immovable genre of furniture. Piplani opines again, that while built-in furniture ensures your home is designed in a set pattern, movable furniture helps give a dash of newness to your home now and then. The built-in furniture when once constructed and installed cannot be moved. Such furniture mostly includes wardrobes, kitchen cabinets, and bar cabinets, among others. These are generally designed to fit into the construction, and secured using fixtures such as hinges, nut bolts, or construction adhesive. The way they fit into the construction makes the decor look seamless and minimal. This type of furniture is for those who are looking for a set design for their home, that they don't plan to change for years to come. It is pertinent that observation be made that while architecture mostly can not be movable, but remains in the very place it was erected, furniture conversely could be movable with some built-in furniture being fixed and thus immovable.

Aim of the Study

The study aims to examine the functions of architecture, the hidden meaning of architecture and the architecture industry and draw parallels of these three aspects of the study against the functions of furniture, the hidden meaning of furniture and lastly the furniture industry. The paper further attempts at showcasing the subtle demarcation between the two columns of the study as well as bringing to the fore, the analogous and complementary certainties inherent in the two aspects of human endeavour.

Functions of Architecture

Architecture is highly functional, an aspect of Vitruvius's (b.80 BC) principles of architecture *utilitas* (utility) conveys the functional aspect of every form of architectural design. Citizendum (2018) points out that utility includes both the function of a building and its role as a protective shelter. The function of a building may determine to some point the arrangement of different spaces and rooms as well as their dimensions and form. The protective function of a building may determine its orientation and form but is most evident in the building envelope, the surface that separates the building from the outside, and also in the various mechanical systems that regulate the building's internal environment.

The primacy of function in architectural design appeared as early as the 2,000-year-old treatise by Vitruvius, *Ten Books on Architecture*. Vitruvius famously mentioned *utilitas* — Latin for usefulness — as one of the three essential components of architecture, the other two being *firmitas* (durability) and *venustas* (beauty). In other words, architecture must have a practical function stated In *The Multiple Meanings of Function in Architecture* (2018). It further observes, So, function in architecture has multiple meanings. Circling back to Vitruvius, it becomes clear that usefulness is often related to the other core values of durability and beauty. Functions of use or program may change over time, but good buildings can be adapted to new types of uses, prolonging their usefulness and durability. If a work of architecture is considered beautiful or at least pleasing, then its owners and users will be more likely to take care of it through the generations, again extending its functional life.

Functions of Furniture

Furniture has a three-dimensional (3D) form just like architecture. The element of design 'form' constitutes architecture and furniture intrinsically. However, functionality is another attribute both of these palpable creative phenomena share commonly though in various ways. Urmann (2009) states thusly, At every age, furniture is made for the same basic purposes. Tables, desks and workbenches provide space for work or dining. Cabinets, cases, and chests are built for storage. Beds, lounges, sofas, chairs and benches are made for resting. Today we have furniture for every imaginable situation, from a baby's high chair to a steel office desk. They range from soft, pillow-like upholstered sofas to sleek tables of metal and glass.

The specificity of function/s of furniture is akin to those of architecture however, the functions of architecture grant shelter and in modern times have extended in functional implications and perspectives to include industrial structures, airports, sporting utilities/facilities and in some astounding sense bridges amongst many others. Kurtovic-Folic(2015) states, that when in the nineteenth century came a stark division between civil engineer-constructors and architects, it was a time when it was also open to a discussion on what constitutes the aesthetic value of a bridge. The influence of architects in contemporary practice ranges from complete marginalization to very significant participation in improving the aesthetics of the bridge.

It is largely evident that in both architecture and furniture form precedes function. However, the need for function could determine the outcome of form. The form/s of furniture have significantly evolved, as well as giving rise to some of the complexities evident in some modern and postmodern furniture designs and productions. So furniture has its utilities transcending the basic applications of the need of sitting, lying, reclining, bearing objects upon and storage.

Furniture is built to make people's lives easier and more comfortable. The furniture industry divides them into various broad groups. One way of grouping furniture is according to where and how it is used. Furniture that is used at home makes up another large group. And also it can be classified by its style Urmann further stressed.

Anastasis (2017) succinctly observes that the use of an environment and the activities that will take place in it primarily dictate the selection and arrangement of furniture. In a period like nowadays, when downsizing is a major tendency, one space is often required to host multiple functions that ideally have a strong relationship to each other. A conversation area in a private residence, for example, might also accommodate informal buffet-style dining, and the way those two activities interface should be considered. Tables should be arranged close enough to seating for easy placement of drinks or plates, and a serving table should be conveniently located near the seating area. Tables used with seating pieces should be approximately the same height as the arm of the seating piece so that food or drink can be reached easily. To enhance the optimal gains of the functions of furniture circulation should be considered. Furniture arrangement needs to accommodate free movement or circulation from one space to another. Furniture should be placed to enhance the movement by allowing traffic to flow, or by restricting and redirecting it when necessary. The main goal here is to achieve optimal utilization of the space by eliminating unnecessary traffic patterns, Anastasis
withal opines.

Anthropomorphic factors are related to furniture and architecture in substantial ways. Human figure/form statistics are critical values to be considered when designing, producing and placing furniture in their appropriate places both indoors and outdoors. Human dimensions when standing, lying and sitting are values to be factored in when making furniture pieces like cupboards, bed chairs, benches, sofas, chaise-lounges and other basic furniture useful to man's needs in homes, offices and public housing utilities. Thus, the employ of anthropometrics in furniture design helps to tailor suitably furniture to human usage, comfort and convenience. Anastassis also states that anthropometrics, the dimensions of the human form, are to be taken very seriously into consideration in arranging furniture, as human dimensions must be the standard of measure for interior design. Apart from standard dimensions, one must also consider people whose needs for circulation are different from the norm. Those who use wheelchairs, crutches or walkers must be considered if they are to be able to move freely in an interior.

Hidden Meaning of Architecture

Besides serving ordinary purposes such as shelter, accommodation, religious and sporting utilities, architecture also serves some other concealed purposes, even espousing some containing conspiracy theories as it suits those who set out to use it. Numerous as these concealed/hidden purposes are, some would be presented in this paper to highlight their symbolism/s and further buttress these facts of clandestine attached to some architecture.

The architectural plan, when used symbolically, communicates through its shape. From prehistoric times and in many cultures, the circle, with its suggestion of the planets and other manifestations of nature, gained a symbolic, mystical significance and was used in the plans of houses, tombs, and religious structures. By slow processes, it came to be employed for memoria and shrines and hero cults in both the East and the West. When building techniques permitted, its symbolism often merged with that of the dome. In Hindu temples, the square (and the cross plans developed from it) expressed celestial harmony. The central-plan Christian church (circle, polygon, Greek cross, ellipse) fascinated the architects of the Renaissance with its symbolic and traditional values, and it is found in their drawings and treatises to the virtual exclusion of the more practical longitudinal basilicas that architects were often commissioned to build, thusly stressed in " Symbols of Furniture "(n.d.).

Looking at architectural history, the tie between architecture – especially monumental architecture – and political power can be consistently seen. One important step in exploring this connection is to assess how and why this tie exists. Leaders utilize this framework for understanding reality to convey the nature of their power over the populace. They express how they wish to be seen and force their particular view of that power on the populace through architecture, Glenn (n.d.) strongly opines. Dehbozorgi (2017) also observes, that whenever man defines power, it means the condition that the individual would be able to do something with it. However, according to sociologists, power refers to various perspectives. in 1849, John Ruskin introduced *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and he almost recognized power as the most important and influential relation between an architectural idea and its observer. Other factors of influence combine to give form, meaning symbolism and significance to architecture which are not covered in this paper. Some of these factors embrace religious antecedents, burial purposes and sundry other constraining reasons.

Hidden Meaning of Furniture

On its merit furniture has had a resounding share of the clandestine and attendant hidden purpose/s it has yielded and still does grant by implication of its ubiquity to individuals throughout history, particularly since the Neolithic period. Furniture contains numerous traces of what we are who we are and who we think we are. Cupboards, for example, contain our past - as well as our regrets and secrets. Keys which fit no locks, pieces of paper with obsolete phone numbers and PINs written on them, stray playing cards, inexplicable plastic things and old French francs. Why we keep any of this stuff I do not know, except as something to hand on to our children, to keep in cupboards of their own - our endless inheritance of waste. Our wardrobes, meanwhile, suggest who we might have become, and where we might have gone. Like wardrobes, beds act as transports for the imagination comments Sansom (2014). Sansom continued to point out, that all furniture communicates meaning - it's unavoidable. It's what things do. A bed speaks of our inner lives, of the body and the soul. Our cupboards and cabinets imply secrets. Wardrobes suggest our dreams of other worlds. And tables invite company.

There are perhaps more kinds of tables than there are of any other type of furniture - kitchen tables, coffee tables, refectory tables, drafting tables, billiard tables, chess tables, table-tennis tables, communion tables, dressing tables, operating tables, library tables, bedside tables, night tables, and side- and end- and sofa tables. Significantly, the table is at the centre of religious practices - in Judaism, in the home, in Christianity, at the altar - and our language of course is replete with metaphors using tables as proverbial meeting places and negotiating platforms. We put a deal on the table. We drink someone under the table - and then we turn the tables on them. The table is the place where we interact with others - with family, friends, colleagues, rivals - and enemies. The value of a table, like all pieces of furniture, lies in its history. We might make it, but furniture in turn makes us. It shapes us, defines us, and determines our everyday lives.

Goodson (2012) observes stools and chairs were significant objects of leadership regalia and symbols of social clout. The owners proudly display their stools for others to see and admire. As a result, it is inappropriate for one to sit on another's stool. In some tribes chairs are for chiefs and in others they represent political power. For other tribes, stools serve a spiritual and personal purpose. For one tribe, the Akan of Ghana, the stool is the centre of the soul. If a person who is not the rightful owner sits on the stool they have contaminated the soul of the owner.

The covert inclusion of 'power' symbolism transcends the physical form of a furniture piece in some instances and it also reflects in architecture where power and its exertion commands and constrains designers of architecture and furniture. Authorities such as those from religion, political and exalted social figures frequently influence outcomes of architecture and furniture which in turn impacts the citizenry under their respective spheres. Certain architecture and architecture invoke overbearing influences as one approaches them. Some inspire fear while others could elicit respect and reverence. Indeed, a person approaching a king seated on his throne (which is an aspect of furniture) would emotionally have respect for both the king and as well as have a high appreciation for the throne which conveys its visual majestic tangibility. The above-delineated aspects of hidden/symbolic meanings of furniture encapsulate only some attendant meanings that cut across the grains of societal, power, spiritual and cultural contents of furniture in climes and various regions of

existence of mankind dating back to millennia where human milieux and development had consistently evolved.

Architecture Industry

In this subsection, a look at the architecture industry is imperative. Industry (n.d.) in Merriam-Webster dictionary is defined as systemic labour, especially for some useful purpose or the creation of something of value. Keegan, (2021) avers that architects are in the service industry. And service is at least as much about process (meetings, invoices, etc.) as it is about results (the building).

Lee, (2016) remarks, that the history of architecture is about as long as the history of humanity itself, and probably just as complex. The exact origin of architecture could be said to date to the Neolithic period, around 10000 BC, or simply when people stopped living in caves and started handling the way they wanted their houses to look and feel. The architecture that we're talking about today is commonly assessed through visual terms and subject to ocular perception, but this urge to design an architectural artefact was fueled by much more than the mere need for aesthetic appeal.

Balooni (2020) points out that architecture is a function between context, functionality and aesthetics. As architects around the world compete to bring to life remarkable ideas, for most buildings the key features defining their 'iconicity' can be arranged as – strong concept design, relevant historical context and present relevance of its design and need, implied architectural design, attention to and creating striking details, well-built and pioneering structural design, well execution of the project and between these heavy terminologies, one might chance upon thoughtful materiality. The industry of mankind in pursuit of shelter informed the earliest designers of sundry forms of dwelling structures. Since then cutting across millennia, up until the present age where technological advancements have impacted the architecture industry, remarkable designs and innovations have attended the progressive development and diligence of homo sapiens in building structures for various reasons. From geographical to historical to cultural and political relevance, meticulously selecting material for a design can create and contribute towards a healthy and harmonious environment, Balooni further avers. Whitepaper, (2019) states, architecture is often driven by the desire to solve problems. From the earliest construction, which was necessary to provide security and shelter, to more recent examples of architectural skills used to take advantage of vertical space, this is a sector with a focus on progression and problem-solving. How architecture has changed over time provides a fascinating insight into the development of the human race, from the influence of industry to technological progress.

In recent years the biggest influence on architecture has been the availability of technology, such as computer programming and software. This has made ever more ambitious projects possible, from eco structures to those that appear to defy gravity. New structural methods, such as cantilevering, have become common and construction today often involves innovative materials as well as unusual aesthetics. The current period of architecture is often called 'Neo-Modernism' and is characterized by the boldness and eccentricity of design that is enabled by the involvement of technology like computers. Frank Gehry's (born. in 1929) Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain is a great example. Architecture has changed enormously over the centuries, from the temples of the Ancient Greeks to the deconstructivist design of modern pioneers like Zaha Hadid (born. in 1950). This evolution provides an exciting signpost towards what we can expect from architecture in the future,

Whitepaper continued to instruct. Architecture industry from the above activities and creative articulations, realizations and the overwhelming influences of technology adding enormous value portrays the industry as containing prodigious evidence of intentional actions backed by the irrepressible spirit of human industry. This industry has witnessed the use of stone, wood, steel, concrete, glass, aluminium, graphite, ceramic tiles and other kinds of materials human innovation, research and development have granted the steady sequels abundantly evident in the architectural industry. This industry is versatile and dynamically driven.

Furniture Industry

The industry of furniture development shares a similar history with that of architecture. From the late Paleolithic and early Neolithic period up until modern times, furniture has assumed different forms and dimensions, utilizing likewise, wood, and stone and as mankind advanced metal, glass, fibreglass, aluminium and various other amazing materials with utility and applicable qualities that adds immense value to the development of furniture.

Braude, (2016) states, about 30,000 years ago, in the late Paleolithic and early Neolithic periods, people began carving and chipping rudimentary furniture from bone, wood and stone. One of the earliest recorded references to a modern iteration of furniture was unearthed in Gagarino, Russia which depicts a Venus figurine seated in a makeshift throne. Other early evidence of furniture making includes stone chairs and stools in Neolithic Scotland, and elsewhere all over the world. We're lucky to be privy to these diagrams of beds, chairs, stools – almost always constructed with wood. In ancient Egypt and Rome, people used veneering as a way to increase beauty and durability, most notably in coffins and stools Braude continues to aver. The furniture industry has continued to morph into astounding forms of materiality and colours that make the modern genre more appealing and functional. Hayward (n.d.) points out that, examples of ancient furniture are extremely rare, but there is considerable knowledge of the pieces made by craftsmen in China, India, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome from pictorial representations. Beds, tables, chairs, boxes, stools, chests, and other pieces were nearly always made of natural wood, though veneering was known in Egypt, where it was used to produce coffin cases of great durability.

The influence of innovation and technology have equally repositioned the furniture industry granting it a broad spectrum of options to draw from for ultimate productivity. Davey (2014) stressed furniture and technology are intimately linked. With technological developments, new forms of expression and structure have become available for furniture producers. Furniture design reflects the broadening of the technological lexicon from the introduction of the nail by the ancient Egyptians to the spectrum of digital manufacturing techniques available today. With technological shifts, new developments in furniture have been enabled. New technology has profoundly affected furniture design through innovative materials and processes available to current designers. Chief amongst these are the capabilities of computer programs which enable the representation of forms previously impossible to draw but which are also translated into direct manufacturing processes.

As expressed in "How is Technology Affecting the Furniture Industry?" (2019), furniture is now in the digital age. The way that furniture is designed has been profoundly affected by the

rapid change in technology. Many companies are trying to develop furniture products that are adaptable, multifunctional and integrable to consumer electronics to enhance productivity. They want to improve the functionality and sustainable methods of furniture production. Just like marketing and advertisements impact architecture in modern times, the furniture industry is as well thus driven. In an increasingly competitive and over-saturated industry, as well as one in which consumers preferred to see and touch products in person, furniture businesses needed to develop new ways to showcase their products online. The technologies mentioned above have certainly paved the way for furniture brands to appeal to those consumer pain points and display products in a visually stunning, photorealistic manner, states Lauridsen (2020).

An important 19th-century change was the separation within the industry of those who made furniture from those who sold it. Previously the customer commissioned a cabinetmaker, perhaps after consulting a design book. After the middle years of the 19th century, the showroom gained popularity. A large store often retained its workshops where special items were made to customers' requirements, but for the greater part it became the practice to buy wholesale from furniture-making firms, Hayward further emphasized.

The furniture industry has in recent times witnessed multifaceted influences by technology, marketing and advertisements these factors are also the hard drivers of architecture in the current era. The simple ways of the ancients in carving out furniture from stone or making furniture from wood have been overtaken by the versatile applications of the products and processes of innovation and scientific inventions that aid the furniture industry. Thus architecture and furniture run for prominence toe-to-toe.

Conclusion

In conclusion, surveyed the historical antecedents of both architecture and furniture tracing their primordial origins to the late Paleolithic and early Neolithic periods. The study focused on the impact of these separate yet complimentary aspects of human creativity and sustainable development. Their inception, inclusion and adoption also conveyed their synchronized impact on humanity through the study's historical, aesthetic and functional perspectives applying historical analysis procedure.

Functions of architecture, the hidden meaning of architecture and the architecture industry were considered alongside functions of furniture, the hidden meaning of furniture and the furniture industry parallels. The tenuous tensions inherent in both aspects of the study were encapsulated in the foregoing themes conveying each aspect's emotionality and tangibility influences on humanity, additionally exposed that both architecture and furniture in their distinct designs, forms and functionalities have exhibited diverse materiality, simplicity as well as the complexity that created values for end users in meaningful ways through the course of history.

Finally, the study highlighted the consistent head-to-head sustainable paths both architecture and furniture have evolved, particularly from the time when the desire and intent for raising shelter and having various forms of furniture for domestic existence sprang up and continued up until the present era.

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