

REFLECTIONS ON A SOFA-BED: FUNCTIONAL BEAUTY AND LOOKING FIT

Abstract

This paper argues for two conclusions about functional beauty, as this notion has been understood by Parsons and Carlson in a recent book by the same name. First of all, it is argued that functional beauty either is not a distinct kind of beauty or that the members of this kind are not all and only instances of the property of looking fit. Second, it is argued that functional beauty is relative only to categories corresponding to essential functions. The second conclusion contradicts what Parsons and Carlson write about functional beauty, but the first conclusion does not, since they agree that looking fit is not necessary for functional beauty. However, their agreement on this point is based on reasons that can be shown to be mistaken. Moreover, contrary to what Parsons and Carlson claim, looking fit can also be shown to be insufficient for functional beauty.

Judging by the titles of some recent works, it seems that the term ‘functional beauty’ may be gaining currency among philosophers of art.¹ The reason probably is not just a growing interest in the aesthetics of everyday objects.² Also, and perhaps more importantly, a term that is somewhat similar in meaning, ‘adherent’ or ‘dependent beauty’, has proven to be hard to unshackle from its Kantian origins, and so to put it entirely at the service of current philosophical inquiry. In any case, no diligent scholarship is needed to discover what ‘functional beauty’ is most plausibly taken to designate: a kind of beauty that objects have in virtue of their function, and whose appreciation requires knowledge of that function. But this description still leaves a lot unspecified. First, it does not specify whether an object’s functions—usually, there is more than one—are all equally important from an aesthetic point of view. For example, are functions the object has acquired in the course of its existence as important aesthetically as functions the object was originally intended to perform? Similarly, are functions the object essentially has as important aesthetically as functions the object accidentally has? Second, the above elucidation of functional beauty does not specify whether anything more can be said about what it means to possess function-dependent beauty. For example, is functional beauty really a distinct kind of beauty or is it just the general kind restricted to functional objects? If the former, then what can be said about the nature of this distinct kind of beauty? (If the latter, why is it worth discussing?)

In what follows, my aim is to answer at least these two general questions (in reverse order), and to show that my answers are not vulnerable to objections that can be found in Functional Beauty, a recent, and timely, book written by Glenn Parsons and Allen Carlson. In a nutshell, my answer to the first question is that, from an aesthetic point of view, there is a hierarchy of functions. In particular, essential functions are more important than accidental ones, and original (for example, intended) functions are more important than acquired functions.³ (This amounts to a total ordering if all essential functions are taken to be original.⁴ There do not seem to be clear cases of acquired essential functions.) In a nutshell, my answer to the second question is that functional beauty either is not a distinct kind of beauty or that the members of this kind are not all and only instances of the property of looking fit. Of course, to make these two answers a bit more substantial, more will have to be said about the nature of looking fit and about the sense(s) in which some features matter more aesthetically than others.

2. What is looking fit?

Suppose that an object possesses functional beauty if and only if it is beautiful as the kind of functional object that it is, for example, a car or a coffee-machine. This seems to be a plausible suggestion, but it does not follow that functional beauty is a distinct kind of beauty, since functional

objects may be beautiful as the functional objects they are for very different reasons. Moreover, even if the reasons had something in common that distinguishes them from the reasons why objects possess other alleged kinds of beauty, that would no more prove that there is a distinct kind of beauty than that the existence of, say, different criteria of identity proves that there are different kinds of identity.

However, although it would not prove that there is a distinct kind of beauty, it could provide a good candidate to identify this kind with. And, as a matter of fact, such a candidate can be found in the literature: the property of looking fit. Let us look, then, at what the recent literature has to say about the nature of this property.

According to Parsons and Carlson (2008), who, for reasons to be discussed, do not identify functional beauty with looking fit, the latter is a plausibly considered to be a positive aesthetic property that an object exemplifies if it appears to satisfy the following four conditions:

(1) some of its perceptual features are standard for the functional kind to which it belongs, that is, they are features whose absence tends to disqualify an item from membership of the kind;

(2) some of its perceptual features are variable for the functional kind to which it belongs, that is, they are features whose absence or presence does not affect kind-membership;

(3) none of its perceptual features are contra-standard for the functional kind to which it belongs, that is, they are not features whose presence tends to disqualify an item from membership of the kind;⁵

(4) some of its variable features are “indicative of functionality” (p. 96).

As an example of a variable feature that is “indicative of functionality”, Parsons and Carlson cite a spoiler as found on so-called muscle cars. Presumably, a muscle car can easily lack a spoiler, but its having one provides some indication that it has a firm grip on the road, in other words, that it is functional in this respect.

3. Is looking fit sufficient for functional beauty?

Now the question is whether we can identify functional beauty with looking fit. We can do so only if looking fit is both necessary and sufficient for the possession of functional beauty. Parsons and Carlson do not believe that it is necessary, for reasons that we will turn to. But there is also reason to doubt that looking fit is sufficient, in other words, that it should be regarded as a form that functional beauty can take. For it seems possible to perceive an object as fit, and thus to ascribe the property of looking fit to it, without perceiving it as beautiful in any respect.⁶ To see this, consider that looking fit is little more than appearing to be capable of playing a certain (causal) role. Every object is fit, then, in some sense. (If there existed an unfit

object, then it would at least be fit to serve as an example of an unfit object.) But not every object is beautiful, let alone functionally beautiful. The weight of this consideration is not much lessened by the fact that the relevant looking fit—the one that Parsons and Carlson have in mind—is looking fit in respect of function, that is, in respect of the (causal) role the object is somehow supposed to play. For it is entirely unclear why assigning a function to an object that it is seemingly capable of performing should guarantee that it is beautiful. For example, imagine that there are two bags of standard-looking woodchip in front of you. The first bag contains woodchip that is merely a by-product of a manufacturing process, while the second bag contains woodchip that has been produced for recycling purposes. The woodchip in the two bags looks exactly the same and is capable of playing the exact same roles, but on the view we are considering, the woodchip in the second bag should be more beautiful merely because it has been assigned a role that it is seemingly capable of playing. That looks implausible, and so it seems that looking fit cannot be sufficient for functional beauty.

4. Is looking fit necessary for functional beauty?

As said, Parsons and Carlson agree that looking fit is not necessary for having functional beauty. The reason, according to them, is that looking fit is not the only form that functional beauty can take. In particular, there are

two other types of functional beauty that Parsons and Carlson have in mind. (To the best of my knowledge, they do not intend this list to be exhaustive.)

The first type is the functional beauty an object allegedly possesses when it appears to possess only standard features, and no features that are variable or contra-standard for the functional kind in question. According to Parsons and Carlson, this type of functional beauty is exemplified by modernist design and by sophisticated machines such as X-ray diffraction pattern detectors. In their estimation, it may be the “most familiar” type (p. 98).

The second type that is supposed to be different from looking fit is the functional beauty an object possesses when it appears to be functional and yet also to possess features that are contra-standard for the functional kind in question. As examples of objects exemplifying this type of functional beauty, Parsons and Carlson cite all kinds of artifacts (steel cranes, chairs, buildings) that appear to be functional and yet also to defy the law of gravity on which their functionality depends. For example, they cite Viktor Schreckengost’s Beverly Hills lawn chair, whose peculiar steel frame “makes the chair appear, when viewed from the side, to hold its occupant without adequate support” (p. 99).

The types of functional beauty distinguished by Parsons and Carlson can thus be summarized as follows:

The first of these involves aesthetic qualities, such as the traditionally recognized quality of ‘looking fit’, that things possess

when the functional category employed to perceive them causes us to see these things as having no contra-standard features at all and as having, to a high degree, certain variable features that are indicative of functionality. The second includes aesthetic qualities like simplicity, gracefulness, or elegance, which functional things possess when the functional category used to perceive them causes them to appear as having no contra-standard or variable features, but only the essential, standard ones. In the third way in which functional categories can affect aesthetic appearance, things appear able to perform their function, but the functional category that we apply in perceiving them causes them to appear as lacking some standard features. In this event, things, by still looking capable of performing their function, may display a pleasing dissonance in their sensory elements. The resulting aesthetic quality may be described as a surprising, even playful ‘visual tension’ (Parsons & Carlson 2008, p. 158).

The differences between the three types of functional beauty can also be represented as in [Table 1](#).

Functional	Perceptual features that appear to be...	Relevant
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beauty	Standard	Variable	Contra-standard	aesthetic qualities
Type 1	Some	Some	None	<u>Looking fit</u>
Type 2	All	None	None	<u>Simplicity,</u> <u>gracefulness,</u> <u>elegance</u>
Type 3	Some (possibly)	Some (possibly)	Some (by definition)	<u>Visual</u> <u>tension</u>

Table 1. Types of functional beauty distinguished by Parsons and Carlson (2008). The final row mentions ‘possibly’ twice between brackets because Parsons and Carlson do not say anything about the standard and variable features of objects exemplifying type 3 functional beauty.

Now one question is whether these types of functional beauty represent genuine possibilities: can objects really possess all three of them? If they can, then the next question to ask is whether their number really demonstrates that looking fit is not the only type of functional beauty. Obviously, if the answer to this second question is what Parsons and Carlson take it to be, that is, ‘yes’, then looking fit cannot be a necessary condition for functional beauty. However, there is reason to doubt that the two questions should be answered in the positive.

4a. Type 2 functional beauty

First of all, it seems to me that type 2 functional beauty is not a genuine possibility. The functional objects that we are familiar with always seem to have perceptual features that one could regard as variable for the kind in question. Chairs, for example, always seem to leave a choice of materials, finishing, colors, and even shape-properties that is independent of the standard requirements imposed by the category of chair. In the case of X-ray diffraction pattern detectors, the choice may be more constrained but still real, if only because of the casing. In fact, one may wonder if it is even logically possible for an ordinary functional object to have only standard properties. For suppose that there were such an object, and that there also existed objects of the same functional kind with variable features. If such were the case, then having only standard features would itself appear to be a variable feature. (It does not seem plausible to construe it as a contra-standard feature, however exceptional it may be.) So the object that, by assumption, had no variable features turns out to have at least one variable feature after all: contradiction.

Of course, the reductio assumes that for any object having only standard features there is at least one object of the same functional kind having variable features as well. This premise may not hold as a matter of conceptual truth. It may just happen to be true. However, suppose that there is a kind of functional object whose instances have only standard

features; no variable features are found among the members of this kind. Could such an object really strike us as simple, graceful or elegant when perceived in the proper category? It seems not. It seems that all objects within that category must look the same. They may look simple or graceful when perceived in other, more general categories, but perceived in those categories some of their properties will appear variable. So we have not identified a case in which an object appears to have aesthetic properties such as simplicity and gracefulness in virtue of the fact that it exemplifies only standard properties.

Let me try to make this last point a bit more clear by means of a concrete example. Suppose that there is a category consisting of all and only instances of Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona chair. If an undamaged instance of the chair is perceived in this category it will appear to have only standard features. As a result, it will not strike one as particularly graceful or austere (because all the other chairs in the category are just like it). By contrast, if it is perceived in the more general category of chairs, then it may strike one as particularly graceful and austere. At that level, however, the design of the chair has become a variable feature. So the chair's gracefulness and austerity do not emerge as a result of perceiving its features as all standard. But that is equivalent to saying that it does not have type 2 functional beauty.

In sum, my argument for the claim that type 2 functional beauty is

unlikely to have any instances boils down to a dilemma. Either the category in which a functional object is perceived admits of instances that have variable features, or it does not. If it does, then it does not seem logically possible for the object to have only standard features. If it does not, then it seems that the aesthetic properties characteristic of type 2 functional beauty (for example, gracefulness and simplicity) will not become apparent as long as the object is perceived within the category, that is, as long as its features are perceived as all standard. Either way, the object will not have type 2 functional beauty as defined by Parsons and Carlson.

4b. Type 3 functional beauty

Type 3 functional beauty, on the other hand, although no doubt a genuine possibility, may not threaten the view that functional beauty can be identified with looking fit. For couldn't one say that a seemingly feeble but functional chair such Schreckengost's presents us with two 'incompatible' looks at the same time, looking both fit and unfit? The looks would be incompatible in the sense of supporting contradictory hypotheses about the chair, and maybe also in the psychological sense of being difficult to integrate into a single visual perception, but they would not be logically incompatible. An object may both look to have property X and look to have property Y, X being incompatible with Y, without there being a property Z of looking a certain way that the object both has and lacks. This fact about

looks should not be found mysterious. It is no more mysterious than the fact that a person may believe contradictory things without there being a property of believing something that the person both has and lacks.

In sum, it seems possible to argue that type 3 functional beauty just is type 1 functional beauty (that is, looking fit) exemplified in a somewhat special context, namely a context in which there is also an impression of looking unfit. If that is the case, then type 3 functional beauty does not constitute a counterexample to the thesis that an object is functionally beautiful only if it looks fit, in other words, that looking fit is necessary for functional beauty.

4c. Another argument against necessity

So it seems that we cannot rely on Parsons and Carlson to provide an argument against the necessity of looking fit. My own argument against the necessity of looking fit does not assume that functional beauty can take different forms. It merely assumes that ‘looking fit’ can be understood as Parsons and Carlson understand the term. In particular, it assumes the condition that, in order to look fit, an object has to have “to a high degree, certain features that are indicative of functionality” (p. 96, 158). To see why this condition constitutes a problem for the view that looking fit is necessary for functional beauty, think of an object that is super-functional

when properly constructed, but is super-difficult to construct properly, so that improperly constructed instances almost inevitably outnumber properly constructed instances. Moreover, suppose that the properly and improperly constructed instances of this kind of object are often perceptually indistinguishable. (The difference in functionality may stem from invisible properties of the materials used or from the invisible internal mechanism.) Under such circumstances, the perceptual features of a properly constructed object would not be indicative of functionality, and yet it seems that the object could be functionally very beautiful. A real-life example of this sort of case may be constructed by comparing highly sophisticated wristwatches to their fake, and often dysfunctional, counterparts.

It may be replied that the perceptual features of the properly constructed items (for example, wristwatches) are still indicative of functionality in properly constructed items. But that is either false or trivial, depending on how 'indicative' is understood. It is trivial if it is meant that the probability of a properly constructed item being functional is high given that it has the perceptual features. After all, what could 'properly constructed' mean if not functional? It is false if it is meant that the probability of a properly constructed item being functional is higher in a case where it has the perceptual features than in a case where it does not. After all, as long as it is a properly constructed item it will function, whether or not it has the same perceptual properties.

In light of the foregoing, it may be wondered if looking fit—again, as defined by Parsons and Carlson—is of any aesthetic relevance at all. Of course, a property may be aesthetically relevant even if it is neither necessary nor sufficient for the possession of an aesthetic property such as functional beauty. Moreover, in these post-formalist days, it has become very hard to deny the aesthetic relevance of any property. A non-trivial criterion of aesthetic relevance (such as being immediately perceivable) does not seem to be immediately available. What is more, if such a criterion had been available, then we could have saved ourselves the trouble of going through the above arguments, since an aesthetically irrelevant property is an unlikely candidate when it comes to finding the essence of functional beauty.

5. Is there a hierarchy of functions?

Since Kendall Walton's 'Categories of Art' appeared, there is widespread agreement in aesthetics about the importance of the categories in which objects of aesthetic interest are perceived. In particular, there seems to be agreement on the fact that an object possesses a certain aesthetic property if it appears to possess that property when perceived in the right category (by a sensitive perceiver). However, when this fact is coupled with the undeniable fact that objects often belong to quite separate categories, then the question arises whether objects possess aesthetic properties only

relative to the categories in which they are correctly perceived. And if so, whether this sort of relativity is a widespread phenomenon, or whether it is only certain kinds of objects that may appear to have different aesthetic properties relative to different categories.

In Functional Beauty, Parsons and Carlson argue that the aforementioned sort of relativity is quite common among functional objects. In particular, they argue that an object may appear to have different, and incompatible, aesthetic properties relative to each of the following categories:

- functional categories to which the object necessarily belongs, in particular, categories corresponding to original function(s);
- functional categories to which the object accidentally belongs, in particular, categories corresponding to original—but inessential—function(s) and categories corresponding to acquired functions.

In my view, only the first kind of category can be a source of relativism. Thus, it may happen that an object is beautiful as an instance of functional kind K (for example, ‘sofa’) but not beautiful as an instance of functional kind K' (for example, ‘bed’), if K and K' are both sortals or categories to which the item necessarily belongs.⁷ However, Parsons and Carlson provide examples of cases where the second kind of category is taken to be the standard relative to which objects possess aesthetic properties:

[A] common secondary function of perfume bottles is ‘symbolizing the qualities of the person wearing the substance’. But this could easily constitute ‘a standard or criterion or ideal of beauty’: we can imagine a perfume bottle that dispensed perfume poorly but elegantly symbolized the wearer’s personality (perhaps it is fragile and transparent). Indeed, ‘secondary’ functions can ground aesthetic judgments even when they are not intended at all, as when an old perfume bottle is used as a bud vase and found, serendipitously, to be beautiful as a bud vase (2008, p. 54).

In the above passage, Parsons and Carlson distinguish between two cases in which there is relativity to concepts of secondary (that is, accidental) functions. In the first case, the secondary function is intended or original; in the second case, the secondary function is unintended or acquired. Let me deal with these cases in turn, because they may require a somewhat different response.

First, as Parsons and Carlson themselves suggest in a footnote to this passage, it is possible to question whether acquired or “serendipitous” functions affect the aesthetic character of an object. True, a perfume bottle may appear beautiful when viewed as a bud vase. However, it does not follow that it is beautiful as a bud vase, for indeed it may not be a bud vase, even if it happens to function as one (because someone or some group decided to use it in this manner). Perhaps the relevant intuition can be

brought out more clearly by imagining two perfume bottles that are exact replicas of each other. One is used as a perfume bottle throughout its existence, while the other ends up being used as a bud vase. Would one say that there is a respect in which the first one is beautiful and the other is not? That the second one has an aesthetic quality which the first one lacks? Maybe intuitions will differ here, but my inclination is to say that the two perfume bottles are aesthetically exactly alike. (Of course, they may both have the property of appearing beautiful when viewed as a bud vase.)

In any case, an accidental function can also be an original (for example, intended) function instead of an acquired one. After all, most perfume bottles have the intended function of symbolizing personal qualities, although they could have been the kind of objects they are—perfume bottles—while lacking that function. (In other words, the symbolic function is an accidental one.) Does this provide an additional source of relativity, additional to the relativity that exists because some items fall under more than one sortal concept? In what follows, it will be shown how such relativity can be avoided, and why it cannot be avoided when different sortal concepts are in play.

As a preliminary, it may already be worth noting that we do not usually make our aesthetic evaluation of an object relative to concepts that apply to it as a matter of accident. True, we say such things as ‘This is beautiful for an amateur’, meaning to compare the work in question to a

certain average or mean. However, here we are interested in a different kind of judgment, one that is not based on such a variable and contingent standard as the average or mean. This kind of judgment is usually expressed by adjoining ‘as’ rather than ‘for’ to the adjective (for example, ‘beautiful’). And indeed, we do not usually say that an object is beautiful as a red object, or as a damaged object, or as an expensive object (‘red’, ‘damaged’ and ‘expensive’ being typical contingently applying terms). The reason, it may be thought, is that the corresponding concepts do not allow us to divide the object’s perceptual features into standard, variable, and contra-standard ones. But this cannot be the real reason, because in some cases, at least, we can think of a division that would make sense. For example, the redness of a red object could be regarded as its standard property; its size and shape could be regarded as variable properties; and when it is borderline red, it may have a property that is contra-standard for red objects.

Whatever the explanation, we rarely make our aesthetic judgments relative to contingently applying concepts. It seems that this is true even when the concepts necessarily apply to other objects. For example, a perfume bottle is, or may be, contingently a symbol, but a country’s flag is not: it is essentially symbolic. Still, it would be out of the ordinary, pace Parsons and Carlson, to say of a particular perfume bottle that it is beautiful as a perfume bottle and yet not beautiful as a symbol, or vice versa. In such cases, it seems, the sortal concept—the category to which the object

belongs as a matter of necessity—‘dominates’ the other concepts under which the object falls. That does not mean that the other concepts are deemed aesthetically irrelevant. Rather, it means that, if an object is essentially \underline{F} and contingently \underline{f} , it has to be perceived as an \underline{F} that is \underline{f} , or an \underline{fF} . For example, a common perfume bottle has to be perceived as a symbolic perfume bottle or, what amounts to the same, a perfume bottle that is a symbol. In other words, the symbolic function of the perfume bottle is deemed relevant when it is judged aesthetically as a perfume bottle (instead of being irrelevant, or only relevant when judged as a symbol). In particular, it is deemed relevant as a feature that is standard, relative or contra-standard—as the case may be—for the category of perfume bottles, or for some subcategory of this category (say, Chanel bottles).

Here, then, is the sense which sortals ‘dominate’ other concepts in aesthetic evaluation: although most or even all concepts may have standard, contra-standard and variable conditions of application associated with them, only sortal concepts determine which features are to be perceived as standard, contra-standard and variable. In other words, if a perceptual feature is contra-standard for a sortal concept F , then it has to be perceived as contra-standard, even if it is standard for a contingently applying concept f . Only when it is perceived in this way will the object appear to have the aesthetic properties that it actually has.

It is not my aim here to prove this thesis. My claim is merely that it seems to cohere well with our actual practice of issuing aesthetic judgments. Still, one may wonder how the above rule is to be applied when an object falls under more than one sortal concept, for example, 'sofa' and 'bed'. Is a multifunctional object such as a sofa-bed to be perceived as a sofa that is (also) a bed or as a bed that is (also) a sofa?⁸

My view is that it can legitimately be perceived in both ways, provided that the resulting judgment is made suitably relative.⁹ Thus, the same object could be beautiful as a bed (that is also a sofa) and not be beautiful as a sofa (that is also a bed). When perceived in the first manner, the property of being a sofa would probably be regarded as variable or contra-standard; when perceived in the second manner, the property of being a bed would probably be regarded as variable or contra-standard. So it will be very hard, if not impossible, to perceive the bed-sofa in both ways at the same time. Nonetheless, it seems that there has to be some sort of agreement between the two ways of perceiving the object. In other words, it seems that if the property of being a sofa is regarded as variable (rather than contra-standard) when the object is perceived as a bed, then the property of being a bed has to be regarded as variable (rather than contra-standard) when the object is perceived as a sofa.

In the case of multifunctional objects such as sofa-beds, then, there is relativity, namely relativity to sortal concepts or categories. However, an

ultimate, absolute aesthetic judgment about a multifunctional object can be reached if the object turns out to have a certain aesthetic property no matter how it is perceived (in our example, as a sofa or as a bed). Thus, the suggestion, made in section 1, that an object is functionally beautiful (period) if and only if it is beautiful as the kind of functional object that it is, could be interpreted as: an object is functionally beautiful if and only if it is beautiful as each of the kinds of functional object that it is. Alternatively, the suggestion could be relativized as follows: an object is functionally beautiful as a K if and only if it is beautiful as a K, where K is a functional kind to which the item (necessarily) belongs.

The sense in which some functions matter more aesthetically than other functions can be made precise now. First, essential functions are the most important ones because they determine which perceptual properties are to be perceived as standard, contra-standard and variable. This makes them directly relevant to aesthetic evaluation, for reasons that Walton 1970 has made familiar. It also makes them a source of relativity. Second, original functions are more important than acquired functions because, although acquired functions may change the appearance of an object, it seems that they can also be safely ignored when it has to be determined which aesthetic properties the object exemplifies (as in the case of the perfume bottle that is serving as a bud vase). Because there do not seem to be clear cases of essential acquired functions, the resulting order is as shown in Table 2.

Position in the hierarchy	General case	Example (perfume bottle)
1 st	Essential original function(s)	Containing a scented substance
2 nd	Accidental original function(s)	Symbolizing personal qualities
3 th	Accidental acquired function(s)	Serving as a bud vase

Table 2. The relative importance, from an aesthetic point of view, of an object's functions.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, two conclusions have been reached. First, if functional beauty is a distinct kind of beauty, then the members of this kind are not all and only instances of the property of looking fit; they are more likely to be neither. Second, functional beauty, regardless of whether it is a distinct kind of beauty, (probably) is not relative to contingently applying concepts. More specifically, it is not relative to concepts of acquired functions, and it is not relative to concepts of accidental original functions. However, it

probably is relative to concepts of essential original functions, that is, sortal concepts, which matter most from an aesthetic point of view.

Acknowledgment

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- ¹ See, in particular, Davies 2008 and Parsons & Carlson 2008, as well as this very article.
- ² See, in addition to the works already cited, Author, Light & Smith 2005, Saito 2007, and Scruton 2009 (Chapter 4), among many others.
- ³ Perhaps all original functions (of artifacts) are intended. However, since Parsons and Carlson (2008, Chapter 3) reject this assumption, the present paper will not rely on it.
- ⁴ The ordering is as follows: essential and original functions \leq accidental and original functions \leq accidental and acquired functions. Examples of each type of function will be discussed in due course.
- ⁵ Their understanding of ‘standard’, ‘contra-standard’ and ‘variable’ features derives from Walton 1970. See, for example, the reference on pp. 91-2n3.
- ⁶ The same observation is made by Budd 2006, pp. 270-71.
- ⁷ See Author.
- ⁸ The term ‘multifunctional object’ refers here to an object having more than one primary or essential (non-accidental) function. It is not clear how primary functions are to be counted, but one, somewhat ill-formulated, suggestion can be found in Author. This paper also contains an argument to the effect that there is no separate sortal for sofa-beds, in other words, that a sofa-bed just is something that is both a sofa and a bed.
- ⁹ For the sake of clarity: by ‘perceiving x as K’ is meant ‘perceiving x’s features as standard/relative/contra-standard for Ks’.