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Transformation

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TRANSFORMATION

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Ordet transformation kan passende være en betegnelse for den forandringsproces, som kulturskabte objekter mere eller mindre naturligt eller hjulpet af mennesker undergår, inden de forgår.

The word transformation can serve as a suitable term for the process of change that cultural objects undergo, more or less naturally or with human assistance, before they perish.

AF / BY LARS NICOLAI BOCK

Ordet “transformation” har fået arkitektfaglig betydning i Danmark og forbindes med den arkitektoniske kulturarv i alle skalaer. For dem, der traditionelt har arbejdet i dette fagområde, har ordet restaurering været det mest brugte. Nogle hilser ordet transformation velkommen, mens andre stiller sig spørgende til, hvad dette ord betyder. Hvad betegner ordet? Denne artikel tager udgangspunkt i dette spørgsmål.

Dette er ikke en videnskabelig artikel, hvor ordenes historie, brug og udvikling grundigt og dækkende undersøges og forklares, men snarere et udtryk for forfatterens syn på og erfaring med brug af ord inden for fagområdet *architectural heritage*. Undertegnede ønsker hermed at stimulere diskussionen om brug af faglige termer i håbet om, at selve diskussionen på sigt vil kunne bringe arkitektfagets fælles forståelse videre. Herved kan vi diskutere mere præcist og måske i lidt højere grad undgå klicheer, overfladiske jargoner og misforståelser, der ofte adskiller arkitekter i mere eller mindre nødvendige polariseringer.

Ordet transformation er ofte sat op som en modsætning til, eller en parallel til, ordet restaurering. Men hvor stammer ordet fra? Denne artikel vil forsøge at bidrage til en forståelse af, hvor i arkitektfaget ordet dukker op.

Der oprettedes i slutningen af 1990'erne en afdeling for Transformation på AAA som en

parallel til Afdeling for Restaurering, By- og Bygningspleje, hvis mere omstændelige navn og dets betydning var meget omhyggeligt overvejet af daværende professor, Johannes Exner, og nuværende professor, Gert Bech-Nielsen. Ordet transformation appellerede imidlertid til et antal studerende, der kun ville bearbejde historiske bygninger formæssigt og ikke “spilde tiden” med metodiske bygningsundersøgelser og den slags.

Ordene, brugen af dem og den betydning, vi lægger i dem, har en historie. Ordet restaurering har over 150 års historie, og dets betydning har betegnet alt fra Viollet-le-Ducs rekonstruktioner til Fehns og Scarpas iscenesættelser af historiske monumenter. Der er stadig uenighed om, hvad *restaurering* bør betyde, og spørgsmålet er, om vi kan blive enige om det. Begrebet udvikler sig nemlig hele tiden.

Ordet *transformation* har udfordret ordet *restaurering* og er blevet et populært ord.

Arkitekter bruger mange ord om det, de gør. De bruger gerne nye ord for at vise, at de har “opfundet” noget nyt. Men jo mere overordnede og generelle ordene er, jo mere diffust fremstår meningen med dem. Ordet transformation er et diffust ord og bliver da også af mange opfattet som et buzzword.

Slår man ordet *transformation* op i *Den Store Danske Encyklopædi*, kan flg. indledning læses:

“**transformation** (af lat. *transformatio*

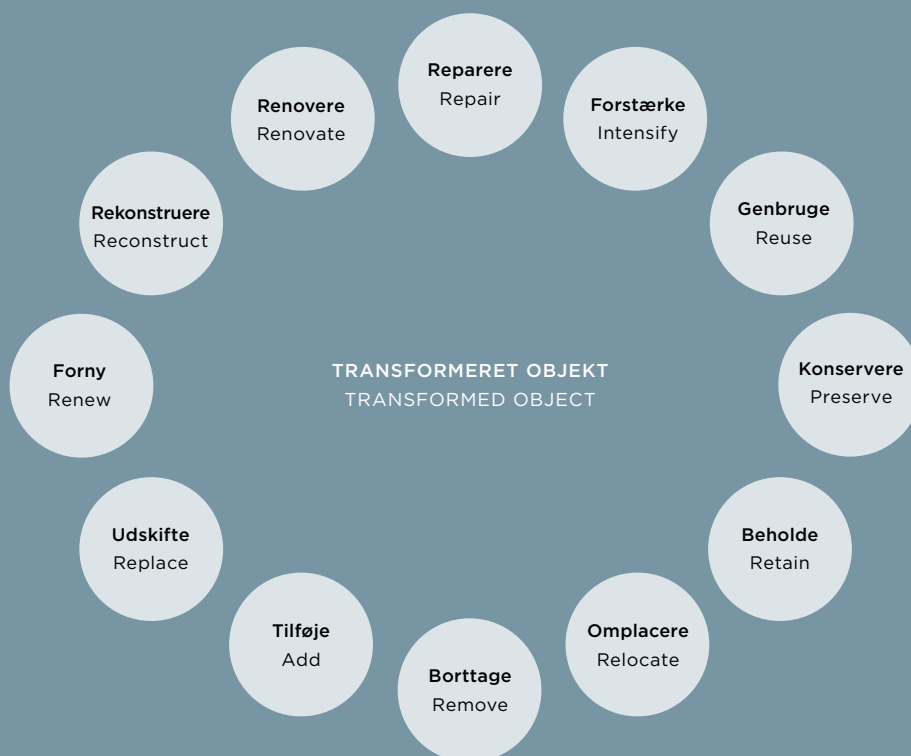
‘forvandling, omdannelse’, af *trans-* og *formare* ‘danne’), i udviklingslæren de ændringer i arvemassen, der fører til fremkomst af nye racer og arter. En transformationsrække er en opstilling, som beskriver en arts udviklingshistorie fra en stamform gennem en eller flere mellemformer. Se også evolution.”

Det har været tydeligt fra begyndelsen, da ordet transformation kom ind i fagterminologien i arkitektskoleregi, at der lå noget stærkt normativt og holdningsrelateret i brugen af ordet. Ikke mindst blandt studerende, for hvem det meget ofte er vigtigt at profilere sig selv eller gruppen, man tilhører, i forhold andre. Det handler om at være progressiv og “med på beatet” frem for at blive sat i bås og i værste fald blive marginaliseret som dem, der er bagud og “kun kan se det gode ved det gamle”. Studerende er følsomme over for mode, og det er arkitekter i det hele taget, når det drejer sig om at blive kategoriseret som værende “hot or not”. Det ser ud til at være et belastende rammevilkår for faget, og man må agere efter det. Det gør det imidlertid ofte vanskeligere på en dybereborende måde at nå ind til sagens faglige kerne, fordi det hurtige formprojekt altid overhaler det mere langsomme og undersøgende projekt hvad angår branding.

Det kunstneriske element står centralt som en naturlig, nødvendig og uomgængelig del af arkitektfaget, men hvis ordet kunst kommer til at stå som det eneste ombejlede begreb, vil

Betydningen af ordet restaurering har løbende ændret sig. Det er belyst og dokumenteret gennem over 150 års teori og praksis. Restaurering betegner en handling, et indgreb, man påfører et objekt. Indgrebene kan have forskellig hensigt og karakter, hvilket er søgt illustreret med denne skematiske opstilling. Sat her overfor er en transformation at betragte som en hændelse, der mere eller mindre uomgængeligt altid vil overgå et objekt – også via en restaurering.

The meaning of the word restoration has undergone a gradual change. It has been illustrated and documented by more than 150 years of theory and practice. Restoration signifies an action, an intervention in the state of an object. These interventions vary in intention and character, a fact which may be illustrated by this diagram. A transformation, on the other hand, signifies an event which will happen to an object more or less as a matter of course.



The word “transformation” has become an architectural term in Denmark and is associated with architectural heritage on every level. To those who have traditionally worked within this field, the term restoration has been the most common. Some welcome the term transformation, while others wonder about the actual meaning of this word. What does the word denote? This article addresses that question.

This is not a scientific article offering a careful and exhaustive study and explanation of the history, use and development of the terms but rather an expression of the author’s view of and experience with the use of words in the field of architectural heritage. Thus, my hope is to stimulate the discussion about the use of professional terminology in the hope that in the long term, the discussion in itself will facilitate a common understanding within the field of architecture. This will enable a more precise exchange, and perhaps we can better avoid clichés, superficial jargon and misunderstandings, which often serve to divide architects into more or less necessary polarisations.

The word transformation is often presented as either a contrasting or a parallel term to the word restoration. But what is the origin of the word? This article attempts to help clarify where in the architectural profession the word appears.

In the late 1990s, a Department for Transformation was established at the Aarhus School of

Architecture as a parallel to Afdeling for Restaurering, By- og Bygningspleje (department for restoration and city and building care); the more cumbersome name and its meaning were the result of careful consideration by then Professor Johannes Exner and current Professor Gert Bech-Nielsen. The word transformation, however, appealed to certain students who only wanted to work creatively on the design of historical buildings, and who did not care to “waste their time” on methodical building studies and the like.

The words, their usage and the meaning we ascribe to them have a history. The word restoration has more than 150 years of history, and its meaning has included anything from Viollet-le-Duc’s reconstructions to Fehn’s and Scarpa’s work with staging historical monuments. There is still some disagreement about the proper meaning of *restoration*, and the question is whether we can ever reach an agreement, as the concept is constantly evolving.

The word *transformation* has challenged the word *restoration* and gained popularity.

Architects use a wide range of words to characterise what they do. They like to use new words to demonstrate that they have “invented” something new. But the more overarching and generalised the words are, the vaguer their meaning appears. The word *transformation* is vague, and indeed, many consider it a buzzword.

The entry for the word *transformation* in *Den Store Danske Encyklopædi* (The Great Danish Encyclopaedia) includes the following introduction¹:

“**transformation** (from Latin *transformatio*, ‘change, conversion’, from *trans-* and *formare*, ‘form’), in the theory of evolution the changes in hereditary material that lead to the emergence of new races and species. A transformation series is a presentation that describes the evolution of a species from a primeval form through one or more intermediate forms. See also evolution.”

It has been clear ever since the word transformation first entered the professional terminology in the schools of architecture that the use of the word had a highly normative and attitudinal slant. Not least among the students, who often find it important to profile themselves or the group they belong to in relation to others. It is essential to be progressive and “with it” rather than being pigeonholed and, in the worst case, marginalised as someone who lags behind the times, blind to anything but the good aspects of the past. Students are sensitive to fashions, as are architects in general when it comes to being characterised as “hot or not”. This appears to be a burdensome fact of the trade, and one must behave accordingly. However, it often makes it harder to reach the true, professional core of an issue, as the quick form project always beats the more protracted and explorative project with regard to branding.

Veneziachartret

Venice Charter

ARTIKEL 12

Ved udskiftning af manglende bygningsdele skal disse indpasses harmonisk i helheden, men samtidig kunne skelnes fra det oprindelige, sådan at restaureringen ikke forfalsker det kunstneriske eller historiske bevismateriale.

ARTIKEL 13

Tilføjelser kan kun accepteres, såfremt de ikke forringer bygningens særlige kvaliteter, dens oprindelige kontekst eller balancen i kompositionen og bygningens forhold til omgivelserne.

ARTICLE 12

Replacements of missing parts must integrate harmoniously with the whole, but at the same time must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the artistic or historic evidence.

ARTICLE 13

Additions cannot be allowed except in so far as they do not detract from the interesting parts of the building, its traditional setting, the balance of its composition and its relation with its surroundings.

konsekvenserne for kommende restaureeringsarbejder være voldsomme. Ordet *restaureeringskunst* er brugt af bl.a. Ove Hidemark i Stockholm, og dette ord er vel lige så naturligt som ordet *bygningskunst*. Men på en eller anden måde bringer det også tankerne hen på *kogekunst*, *tryllekunst* osv.

Der lægges af mange noget særligt kunstnerisk i ordet *transformation*, og det synes, som om ordet for mange rummer en særlig mulighed for at sætte et personligt præg på en historisk bygning. Som mange også udtrykker det, så skal man jo kunne se nutidens aftryk, spor eller præg – i hvert tilfælde i de nye tilføjelser. Det sidstnævnte er jo egentlig i overensstemmelse med f.eks. Veneziachartrets krav fra 1964².

Man må antage, at sigtet med formuleringen i Veneziachartret havde et afsæt, der vedrørte etik og autenticitet. Tendensen i nutidens præferencer med hensyn til brugen af ordet *transformation* synes mere at vedrøre trangen til en mere potenspræget måde at bearbejde og omforme historiske bygninger på.

Der er en indbygget dynamik i ordet *transformation* sammenlignet med ordet *restauration*, der dog, hvis det undersøges etymologisk³, får en overraskende drejning. I *Dansk Etymologisk Ordbog* kan man indledningsvis læse: "Se under I. styre". Ser man under *styre*, får man en redegørelse, der slutteligt med bl.a. referencer til skibes ror peger på en for-

ståelse, der minder om det at styre tilbage til noget. Det latinske *restaurare*, "at sætte i stand igen", suppleres i forklaringen af det latinske ord *instaurare*, "at sætte i stand". Der er altså forskel på re- og in-

Ordet *instaurering* kunne i dansk sammenhæng slås op i *Salmonsens Konversationsleksikon*⁴, men ordet er siden gået ud af det danske sprog. Der stod flg.: "instaurere (lat.), genoprette, forny. Instaurations, Genoprettelse."

Der kan måske argumenteres for at genindføre dette ord, fordi det peger et andet sted hen end *at styre tilbage*.

Den arkitektoniske kulturarv vil blive udfordret i fremtiden. Hensyn til nødvendige funktionsændringer forårsaget af funktionstømning vil sammen med hensyn til bæredygtighed stille nye krav til bygninger og arkitekter. Det vil kræve meget gode arkitekter med viden og evne til indlevelse at håndtere de værdier, der ligger i den samlede arkitektoniske kulturarv, på en måde, så de bringes med ind i fremtiden.

Det kræver veludviklede arbejdsmetoder, og disse kan tilvejebringes via uddannelse og efteruddannelse. Det vil i fremtiden ikke være nok at "være kunstnerisk begavet". Man skal også vide og kunne noget særligt for at løfte dette ansvar.

Ifølge den østrigske kunsthistoriker Alois Riegl⁵ vil alle kulturskabte objekter for-



FOTO: LARS NICOLAI BOCK

Facadeudsnit, Ghetto i Rom: En formmæssig ændring kan have mange udtryk og kan på trods af et nærmest vilkårligt arkitektonisk udtryk, der på alle måder peger væk fra værkbegrebet, have stor æstetisk kvalitet og fortællerværdi.

Part of facade, Ghetto, Rome: A formal alteration can have many expressions and may, in spite of an almost random architectural expression, which in every way seem to differ from the conceptual core, have great aesthetic quality and narrative value.

svinde. Noget forsvinder hurtigt, og andet forsvinder langsommere. Det, vi kan gøre, er at forhale forsvindingsprocessen. Ordet *transformation* kan passende være en betegnelse for den forandringsproces, som kulturskabte objekter mere eller mindre naturligt eller hjulpet af mennesker undergår, inden de forgår.

Riegls tankesæt peger for undertegnede tydeligt på nødvendigheden af og behovet for arkitekter, der har kompetencer til at forstå en historisk bygnings spor og perioder og på grundlag heraf formulere en professionelt begrundet værdisætning som grundlag for arkitektonisk intervention.

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1: Den Store Danske Encyklopædi / The Great Danish Encyclopedia: http://www.denstoredanske.dk/Natur_og_milj%C3%B8/Biologi_generelt/Pal%C3%A6ontologi/transformation - download: 10. marts 2011

2: http://www.international.icomos.org/charters/venice_e.htm - download 10. marts 2011

3: Ordenes historie, Dansk Etymologisk Ordbog - Gyldendal 1991

4: Salmonsens Konversationsleksikon, 2. udgave, bind VII, s. 426

5: Se / See: Alois Riegl, Der moderne Denkmalkultus: sein Wesen und seine Entstehung, W. Braumüller 1903



FOTO: LARS NICOLAI BOCK

Neues Museum, Berlin: Et udstrakt hensyn til en historisk bygnings værdier, en forståelse for dens identitet og autentiske tilstand kan være den nødvendige baggrund for styringen af de mange forskellige tilgange til fagområdet restaurering, der synes at være i dette projekt. Her kan stort set alt iagttages, fra rekonstruktion, over skabende nyfortolkning til tydelig addition. Samlet set kan man sige, at bygningen har undergået en transformation.

Neues Museum, Berlin: A deep consideration for the qualities of a historic building, an appreciation of its identity and authentic state may serve as the necessary background for managing the many different approaches to the field of restoration, which this project seems to comprise. Almost every approach is represented, from reconstruction via creative reinterpretation to obvious addition. All in all, the building may be said to have undergone a transformation.



FOTO: LARS NICOLAI BOCK

La Galerie de Paléontologie, Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Jardin des Plantes, Paris: Her har tiden stået stille. Absolut intet er blevet transformeret af en arkitekt. Kun små naturlige ændringer i materialernes overflader afslører tidens gang. Ikke engang de med blæk håndskrevne forklaringer ved de udstillede genstande er ændret siden 1898.

La Galerie de Paléontologie, Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Jardin des Plantes, Paris: Here time has stood still. Nothing whatsoever has been transformed by an architect. Only small natural changes in the material surfaces bear testament to the passing of time. Not even the with ink handwritten explanations for the exhibits have been changed since 1898.

The artistic element occupies a key position as a natural, necessary and inescapable part of the architectural profession, but if the word “art” comes to be the only desirable term, the consequences for future restoration assignments will be far-reaching. The term *the art of restoration* has been used by Ove Hidemark in Stockholm, among others, and in a sense, this term is as natural as *the art of architecture*. But in a sense it also sparks associations with *the art of cooking* etc.

Many attribute a certain artistic slant to the word *transformation*, and many seem to feel that it implies a special opportunity to leave a personal mark on a historic building. As many have argued, it should be possible to see the imprint, traces or characteristics of the present time – at least in the new additions. The latter is in fact in keeping with, for example, the requirements of the Venice Charter from 1964².

Presumably, the goal of the language in the Venice Charter had to do with ethics and authenticity. The tendency in contemporary preferences with regard to the use of the term *transformation* seems to have more to do with the urge to apply a more potent approach to the treatment and alteration of historic buildings.

Compared to the word *restoration*, the word *transformation* has an inherent dynamic; however, if the etymology³ of restoration is examined in *Dansk Etymologisk Ordbog*, it reveals a surprising twist. The opening descrip-

tion has a reference: “See I. steer”. Under *steer*, one finds a description that eventually, with references to a ship’s rudder among other things, points to an understanding related to steering back to something. In the explanation, the Latin *restaurare*, “to bring back to a former or original state”, is supplemented with the Latin word *instaurare*, “to renovate”. Thus, there is a difference between re- and in-

In a Danish context, the word *instaurering* (instoration) was included in the Danish encyclopaedia *Salmonsens Konversationsleksikon*⁴ from the early 20th century, but since then, the word has become obsolete in Danish. The entry was: “instore (Lat.), re-establish, renew. Instoration, re-establishment.”

Perhaps an argument could be made to reintroduce this word, because it points in a different direction than *steering back*.

Our architectural heritage will meet challenges in the future. Concerns for necessary functional alterations due to a loss of function along with sustainability requirements will place new demands on buildings and architects. It will take highly skilled architects with knowledge and empathy to manage the values of our architectural heritage in a way that brings these values into the future.

That will require well-developed working methods, and these can be acquired through education and supplementary training. In the future, “artistic talent” alone will not suffice.

Specialised knowledge and skill will also be required to meet this responsibility.

According to the Austrian art historian Alois Riegl⁵, all cultural objects will eventually disappear. Some objects disappear at a fast pace, while others disappear more slowly. What we can do is to slow down the process of disappearance. The word *transformation* can serve as a suitable term for the process of change that cultural objects undergo, more or less naturally or with human assistance, before they perish.

To me, Riegl’s mindset clearly demonstrates the necessity and indispensability of architects who have the skills to understand the traces and periods of a historic building and to use this understanding to articulate a professionally motivated value set as the basis for an architectural intervention.

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