

# Translation Transposition Translocation

The Development of a Phenomenology of Architecture by Christian Norberg-Schulz, 1973 - 1980

By Anna Ulrikke Andersen



Master Report in Architectural History  
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# **Translation Transposition Translocation**

The Development of a Phenomenology of Architecture by Christian Norberg-Schulz, 1973 - 1980

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2013

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Anna Ulrikke Andersen

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# Abstract

The title *Translation Transposition Translocation* derives from an until now unknown, single page document written by architectural theoretician Christian Norberg-Schulz in 1979. By interpreting this document through a step by step analysis uncovering his references, this report aims at allowing new aspects of Norberg-Schulz's theoretical formation to be brought to light. A particular focus is on the period from his research-related stay in Rome 1973-74 until the publication of his landmark treatise *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* in 1980. This development of a phenomenology of architecture is seen in relation to the reality of his life; a polyglot and frequent international traveller, translation and translocation was an integral part of his every day. A journey through this document invites a broader theoretical framework and discourse of architectural history including Vitruvius, Gottfried Semper, George Steiner, Rosi Braidotti, Walter Benjamin, Martin Heidegger, Jorge Otero-Pailos and the wider field of translation studies. Norberg-Schulz's conception of Norwegian Architecture, specifically adapted to Norwegian conditions are also key. This enquiry is based on archival research; in particular exploring the Christian Norberg-Schulz Archive, but also The NRK Archive (The Archive of the Norwegian Broadcasting Collaboration), Oslo, has led to pivotal discoveries. Close sustained reading of the multiple texts Norberg-Schulz wrote in the period has been key in investigating the multilingual process of publishing, writing and translating *Genius Loci*. Additionally, several people who knew and worked with Norberg-Schulz has been interviewed and this oral history has filled the gaps of existing biographical literature.

# Acknowledgements

The many interviews I have performed during the course of work, has been essential in my research and I wish to thank everyone who found the time to respond to my emails or meet me in person. I particularly wish to thank Kari Greve, my gateway into Christian's inner circle of friends, colleagues and family. Additionally, I wish to thank the curators, archivists and librarians at the Architectural Collections and The NRK Archive, both in Oslo. Throughout the year, I have had the benefit from exchanges with my fellow students and members of staff of the Master Program of Architectural History at The Bartlett School of Architecture, where my supervisor Professor Adrian Forty in particular has offered his kind advice, support and treasured comments. I also want to give special thanks to my parents Arnt Edvin and Marianne for their invaluable support. For his enduring encouragement and rewarding conversations, I wish above all to thank Mikkel.

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Norberg-Schulz, Christian. CV. Box Diverse uregistrerte fra den sorte pulten. The Norberg-Schulz Archive. The Architectural Collections. The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo.

Fløistad, Guttorm et al. editors. *Christian Norberg-Schulz: Et festschrift til 70-årdagen*. Oslo: Norsk Arkitekturforlag, 1996.

**2. Translations of Heidegger's concepts *Ort* and *Platz*. This table is based on:**

Heidegger, Martin. *Basic Writings from 'Being and Time' (1927) to 'The Task of Thinking'* (1964). Edited and translated by David Farrell Krell. London: Routledge, 1993.

———. *Poetry Language Thought*. Edited by J. Glenn Gray. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper & Row Publishing, 1975.

———. *Vorträge und Aufsätze*. 11th ed. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2009. First published by G. Neske, 1954.

Norberg-Schulz, Christian. *Genius Loci: Landschaft, Lebensraum, Baukunst*. Translated by Angelica Schweikhart. Stuttgart: Klett - Cotta, 1982.

———. *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*. London: Academy Editions, 1980 and New York: Rizzoli, 1980.

## List of illustrations

1. Christian Norberg-Schulz. "Translation". 18.04.1979. Box 60,70,80-tall. The Christian Norberg-Schulz Archive. The Architectural Collections. The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo.

2. Section of the document “Translation”. Christian Norberg-Schulz. “Translation”. 18.04.1979. Box 60,70,80-tall. The Christian Norberg-Schulz Archive. The Architectural Collections. The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo.
3. Section of the document “Translation”. Christian Norberg-Schulz. “Translation”. 18.04.1979. Box 60,70,80-tall. The Christian Norberg-Schulz Archive. The Architectural Collections. The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo.
4. Anna Ulrikke Andersen, Generated map of the destinations of Norberg-Schulz’s many journeys and around Rome 1973-74. 2013, maps.google.com. Based on Christian Norberg-Schulz. Travel Journal. 1973-74. Box 2002:15 Arkivstykke 2F notatbøker/notater. The Christian Norberg-Schulz Archive. The Architectural Collections. The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo.
5. Christian Norberg-Schulz. Travel Journal. 1973-74. Box 2002:15 Arkivstykke 2F notatbøker/notater. The Christian Norberg-Schulz Archive. The Architectural Collections. The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo.
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Christian Norberg-Schulz “Genius Loci: et opprinnelsens begrep”. In *På klassisk grunn: Det norske institutt gjennom 40år*. Ed. K.B. Aavitsland and R.T Eriksen, 100-1009 (Oslo: Andresen og Butenschøn, 1999), 108.
7. Section of the document “Translation”. Christian Norberg-Schulz. “Translation”. 18.04.1979. Box 60,70,80-tall. The Christian Norberg-Schulz Archive. The Architectural Collections. The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo.
8. *Villa Stousland II* (1936-37). Ove Bang. Sogn, Oslo, Norway. Photo: Anna Ulrikke Andersen, 2011.
9. *Planetveien 12 - 16* (1955). Arne Korsmo and Christian Norberg-Schulz. Oslo, Norway. Photo: Teigens fotostudio, 1954. Oslobilder.no, Oslo Museum, Oslo. Available online: [http://www.oslobilder.no/KFS/DEX\\_T\\_4062\\_004?query=Christian+Norberg-Schulz&count=73&search\\_context=1&pos=8](http://www.oslobilder.no/KFS/DEX_T_4062_004?query=Christian+Norberg-Schulz&count=73&search_context=1&pos=8)
10. Section of the document “Translation”. Christian Norberg-Schulz. “Translation”. 18.04.1979. Box 60,70,80-tall. The Christian Norberg-Schulz Archive. The Architectural Collections. The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo.

## **List of interviews:**

Anna Maria Norberg-Schulz. Wife of Norberg-Schulz. The Interview took place at 12.07.2013, in her home Gyldenløves gate 19b, Oslo, Norway.

Elisabeth Norberg-Schulz. Daughter of Norberg-Schulz. Email correspondence. 07 - 15.05.2013.

Guttorm Fløistad. Professor of Philosophy, editor of *Tankekors* and friend of Norberg-Schulz. The Interview took place at 22.05.2013, in the Café at the University Library, Blindern, Oslo, Norway.

Kari Greve. Conservator at the Norwegian National Museum, former student and friend of Norberg-Schulz. The Interview took place at 23.05.2013, in the Café at the Architectural Museum, Oslo, Norway.

Mari Hvattum, Professor in Architectural History and Theory, AHO.  
The Interview took place at 24.05.2013, at AHO, Oslo, Norway.

Gordon Hølmebakk. Former editor at Gyldendahl Publishing house, where he worked with Norberg-Schulz. The Interview took place at 24.05.2013, in the Café at Kunsnernes Hus (Artist's house) Oslo, Norway.

Anne Marit Vagstein. Architect. Partner and colleague of Norberg-Schulz. The Interview took place at 27.05.2013, Skøyen, Oslo, Norway.

# Introduction

“Architecture is born from the dialectic of departure and return”. <sup>1</sup>

Christian Norberg-Schulz, 1980

In an archival box in the Norberg-Schulz archive in Oslo, a folder marked “The 70s” contains a stack of assorted papers which are Thorvald Christian Norberg-Schulz’s (1926-2000) personal, handwritten notes from the decade. The 1970s were fruitful years for the young professor. With the book *Intentions in Architecture* (1963) he had established himself within the international scene of architectural theory. He was invited to speak at the RIBA, The University of Cambridge, Yale University and MIT, along with being the editor of the Norwegian architectural journal *Byggekunst* and continuously publishing articles in international journals. In 1973 he moved to Rome to research his next book *Genius Loci*. After his first serious encounter with the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger in 1974,<sup>2</sup> he developed what is considered to be his landmark treatise *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (1980). The notes from this period are remarkable, addressing several issues which are considered vital in his theoretical authorship, being place, landscape, language, philosophy and architecture. Less known, and therefore intriguing, are the keywords ‘translation’, ‘transposition’, ‘translocation’, which appears in one of the notes from the period, dated 18.04.1979, titled “*Translation*”. (Fig. 1)

This MA report will offer an analysis of the until now unknown document “*Translation*” and investigate the role translation, transposition and translocation played in Christian Norberg-Schulz’s theoretical formation and link this to the reality of his life, by uncovering his references. How does the document fit into a larger tradition of architectural theory? To limit the scope of this

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<sup>1</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1980), 170.

<sup>2</sup> Jorge Otero-Pailos, *Architecture’s Historical Turn: Phenomenology and the Rise of the Postmodern* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 173.

report, an emphasis will be on the period between 1973-1980, from his research-related stay in Rome to the publication of the English version of *Genius Loci*. However, events from other periods of his life will also be mentioned. What new aspects of his theoretical formation could be highlighted through this particular note, focusing on these keywords?

The report will start with the present state of the Norberg-Schulz archive in Oslo, followed by an in depth, step by step, analysis of the document “*Translation*”. The main focus will be on the first half of the page, as the second part invites different questions.<sup>3</sup> The report will also be based on other artifacts from the Christian Norberg-Schulz archive and the NRK Archive (The Archive of the Norwegian Broadcasting Collaboration). Several people who knew and worked with Norberg-Schulz have been interviewed, filling some of the gaps in existing biographical literature. It was a great pleasure to establish a direct contact with those who were close to him, yet the nature of these interviews are more like conversations, which have not been used as primary material of investigation, but rather as advice and confirmation of facts. I have therefore chosen not to attach transcriptions of these. Additionally, articles and books that resolved into the final product of the book *Genius Loci*, have been read carefully and given insight in this multilingual process. In a broader architectural discourse, the legacy of the Vitruvian hut, Gottfried Semper and the phenomenology of Heidegger will be key. This invites wider theoretical debate and involves George Steiner, Walter Benjamin, Rosi Braidotti, Jorge Otero-Pailos and the field of translation studies.

It is suggested that this report is read with the document, that is figure 1, close by. Throughout, when referring to literary works, the title in the original language will be presented, with the English translation in brackets. After this initial presentation, the English title will be used throughout. The terms translation, transmutation, translocation and transposition will be used

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<sup>3</sup> Generally speaking, the second part of the document is an architectural concretization of Heidegger’s fourfold, where sky and earth are given material counterparts in ceiling and floor. Norberg-Schulz makes phenomenology all the more tangible when mentioning the loft, a traditional Norwegian building type, as an example of where sky and earth meet. ‘Kleivi’, is a reference to a particular building, designed by architect J. Rønjom, which is depicted and discussed in a later article of his, “Den poetiske forståelsesform.” Christian Norberg-Schulz, “Den poetiske forståelsesform,” in *Øye og Hånd*, ed. Gordom Hølmebakk (Oslo: Gyldendahl, 1996).

widely and risk confusion. As Norberg-Schulz used the term translation as heading, this word appears throughout the report and based on his use, translation occurs as an umbrella-term, that could at different times be comparable and even synonymous to the others. Transmission is not as charged a term as the others and will loosely be used to refer to the act of translation.

Transmutation refers more directly to the legacy of Marcus Vitruvius Pollio and Gottfried Semper; translocation ascribes a movement between more concrete spaces and geographical locations. Transposition is used mainly to describe an act of transmission of meaning between mediums, as from photography to text or words to buildings.

The report builds upon my previous explorations and longstanding fascination of the theory of Norberg-Schulz. In “Norwegian Functionalism: International, National or both?” written at the University of Oslo, 2011, I explore the emerging International Style in interwar Norway, where Norberg-Schulz’s account of Norwegian natural conditions are key.<sup>4</sup> In “Place: from Heidegger to Norberg-Schulz”, I investigate how Norberg-Schulz developed the phenomenology of Heidegger towards the field of architecture, with a particular focus on his concept of Place.<sup>5</sup> In “The Spirit of the [Natural] Place”, I produce a critical work, underscoring Norberg-Schulz’s tendency to present general categories, inviting post-colonial and feminist critique.<sup>6</sup>

For this master report, I have been inspired by Adam Sharr’s *Heidegger’s Hut*, a skillful study of the role architecture played when Heidegger wrote and developed his phenomenology. Sharr highlights Heidegger’s thoughts through tangible material and architectural examples from the everyday life of the philosopher, which go hand in hand with phenomenology, a philosophical direction aiming towards concrete experience. Life, philosophy and architecture are brought

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<sup>4</sup> Anna Ulrikke Andersen, “Norwegian Functionalism: Norwegian, International or both?” (Essay, Art History, Institute of the history of Art and Ideas, The University of Oslo, Oslo, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Anna Ulrikke Andersen, “Place: From Heidegger to Norberg-Schulz” (Essay, Architectural History, The Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London, London, 2012-13).

<sup>6</sup> Anna Ulrikke Andersen. “The spirit of the [Natural] Place.” (Project: Architectural History, The Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London, London, 2012-13). <http://vimeo.com/64596951>

together in this inspiring piece of architectural history.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, Adrian Forty's *Words and Buildings* has influenced me in the way it introduced me to the rich relationship between architecture and language, and opened up the possibilities of also considering translation as both linguistic and architectural.<sup>8</sup>

The existing research on Norberg-Schulz focuses mainly on his concept of Place, his relation to the phenomenology of Heidegger and the latter's importance for architecture. The 2009 publication *An Eye for Place: Christian Norberg-Schulz: Architect, Historian and Editor*, evolved from an earlier conference and is the most comprehensive publication presenting the variety of international research on Norberg-Schulz.<sup>9</sup> Internationally Jorge Otero-Pailos's archival based research in *Architecture's Historical Turn*,<sup>10</sup> or Hilde Heynen's critical account from *Architecture and Modernity: a Critique*,<sup>11</sup> shows two differing attitudes. On the Norwegian scene, research by Gro Lauvland<sup>12</sup>, Mari Hvattum<sup>13</sup> and Anne Marit Vagstein<sup>14</sup> has in particular contributed to discourse on Norberg-Schulz, and philosopher Arnfinn Bøe-Rygg<sup>15</sup> stands as an eager critic. As for more biographical material, a publication of the journal *Byggekunst* was dedicated to Norberg-Schulz on his 60th birthday in 1986, and ten years later his 70th birthday was celebrated with a book. The many contributions in these publications are a great source of insight to the life and contemporary importance of Norberg-Schulz, but unfortunately most of it is only available in

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<sup>7</sup> Adam Sharr, *Heidegger's Hut* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT press: 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Adrian Forty, *Words and buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture* (London: Thames&Hudson, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> Gro Lauvland et al., eds, *An Eye for Place: Christian Norberg-Schulz; Architect, Historian, Editor* (Oslo: Akademisk publisering 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Otero-Pailos, *Architecture's Historical turn*.

<sup>11</sup> Hilde Heynen, *Architecture and Modernity: A Critique* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999).

<sup>12</sup> Gro Lauvland, *Verk og vilkår: Christian Norberg-Schulz' stedsteori i et arkitekturfilosofisk perspektiv* (PhD Dissertation, Oslo: Arkitektur- og Designhøyskolen, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> Mari Hvattum, "Genius Historiae," in *An Eye for Place: Christian Norberg-Schulz; Architect, Historian, Editor*, eds. Gro Lauvland et al. (Oslo: Akademisk publisering, 2009).

<sup>14</sup> Anne Marit Vagstein, *Stedet det stemte rom: Sammenhengen mellom sted og arkitektur* (PhD dissertation, Oslo: Arkitekthøgskolen, 1999).

<sup>15</sup> Arnfinn Bøe-Rygg, "Arkitektur og filosofi: om Christian Norberg-Schulz' bruk av Heidegger's senfilosofi", in *Norsk Filosofisk Tidsskrift* (1986).

Norwegian. However, much remains to be discovered about Norberg-Schulz beyond his reading of Heidegger and concept of Place, particularly through archival research. The focus on translation, transposition and translocation in this report, attempts to extend the limits of existing enquiry.

# The Christian Norberg-Schulz Archive

When Christian Norberg-Schulz died in 2000, his personal library and archive went to the Architectural Collections of the Norwegian National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design. The collections contain architectural drawings, photographs, correspondence, notebooks, sketches, models and ephemera from architect's personal archives. Particularly rich is the material from the interwar period, where architects Ove Bang, Arne Korsmo and Blakstad/Munthe-Kaas are strongly represented. The Norberg-Schulz archive and library is one of the main attractions of the Architectural Collections, due to the richness of the material and his strong standing within architectural theory.

In spite of its interest and importance, the Norberg-Schulz archive is far from accessible. When the artifacts were moved from his study, they were only roughly cataloged. Individual artifacts are still not available for search in the online database and some archival boxes are yet to be organised, but remain as they were found in Norberg-Schulz's study in 2000. One box is marked "Artifacts from the large black drawer in desk", another "the 60s, 70s, 80s". But beyond this difficult first encounter, the surprises are remarkable. Some of the highlights are original manuscripts, notes from lectures he attended and books he had read, newspaper cuttings, travel journals, correspondence with several of his contemporaries, including former teacher Sigfried Giedion and colleague Robert Venturi, and his private address book. Some items are still in the possession of his family. His photographs are kept by his wife, Anna Maria Norberg-Schulz, his slides were given to his son, Architect Christian Emanuel Norberg-Schulz. The many translations of Norberg-Schulz's own publications are currently (2013) waiting to be included in the Architectural Collections.

The Norberg-Schulz Archive also owe its inaccessibility to the demands it places upon the language skills of its visitors. Norberg-Schulz both read and wrote in English, German, Italian and

Norwegian, and on occasions communicated in French. One of the most intriguing examples of his multilingualism is seen in a notebook from 1957. Within the range of a few pages, he switches between the four languages, depending on what he had read.<sup>16</sup> It is obvious that Norberg-Schulz was comfortable reading literature in its original language and moved easily in the landscape between languages. Nevertheless, this makes the archive difficult to encounter and read in the way it deserves, leaving the archive relatively unexplored. Besides Otero-Pailos' archival based study in *Architecture's Historical Turn*,<sup>17</sup> no major archival based study of Norberg-Schulz has been conducted. Most studies, Norwegian included, relies on published material.<sup>18</sup> The archive invites further research and deserves to be made more accessible.

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<sup>16</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, 1957, Box 2002:15 Arkivstykke 2:FC, The Christian Norberg-Schulz Archive, The Architectural Collection, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design.

<sup>17</sup> Otero-Pailos, *Architecture's Historical Turn*.

<sup>18</sup> As in Gro Lauvland's PhD Dissertation, *Verk og vilkår*.

18.4.79.

## "Translation"

stone building (e.g. classical) translated  
into wood becomes a "box" (e.g. my own house)

"translation" ↔ "transposition"

translocation.

preserve  
import  
export

translation is a tool for gathering

Ach. as language. cf. mirror-play

(stone: earth. stone-church: sky)

⊕ → Loft as meeting of earth and sky (Heivi!)

(also as content: agriculture (products)  
as product of earth and sky.)

(flower: roots in the ground  
opens towards the light →  
meeting of earth and sky.)

earth → floor  
sky → ceiling wall: meeting.

not "why", but "how"  
(to hell with explanations).

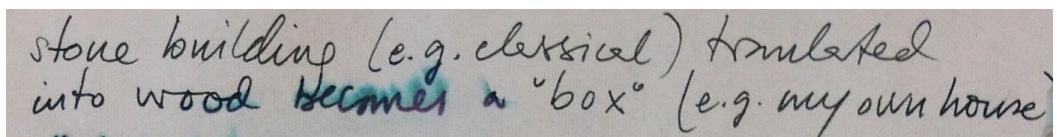
Fig.1: "Translation"

# Section One: From Hut to Temple

“All that architecture has invented in this respect draws upon the most ancient symbols, which allude to a few basic ideas.”<sup>19</sup>

Gottfried Semper, 1863.

Figure 1 is a reproduction of the until now unknown document “*Translation*” written 18.04.1979, currently located in the Norberg-Schulz Archive, Oslo. Under the heading “*Translation*”, Christian Norberg-Schulz begins this remarkable note by referring to a long tradition within architectural history and theory. He writes:



stone building (e.g. classical) translated  
into wood becomes a "box" (e.g. my own house)

Fig.2: Section from the document.

With this, Norberg-Schulz relates two materials (stone and wood) with two building forms (the classical building and the wooden ‘box’). Involving a process of transmutation, the one translates into the other. This idea of translation of motifs between materials goes back to the very beginning of architectural theory, starting with Marcus Vitruvius Pollio (ca 80-70BC - 15BC) and his *De Architectura libri decem* (*Ten Books on Architecture*). In this extraordinary piece of writing, Vitruvius created a handbook for the architectural profession accounting for everything from the intrinsic qualities of materials, to the origin of specific architectural motifs, such as the caryatid or the corinthian order. In his remarks on architectural development, the notion of an act of translation of motifs from one material to another, is vital. He claimed the temples were developed according

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<sup>19</sup> Gottfried Semper, *Style: Style in the Technical and Tectonical Arts, or, Practical Aesthetics*, trans. H.F. Mallgrave and M. Robinson (Los Angeles, Calif: Getty Research Institute, 2004), 743.

to the same ancient principles as found in the prehistoric hut. Vitruvius writes: “Drawing from these elements and from the art of carpentry and applying them to the construction of sacred dwellings in stone and marble, craftsmen imitated these arrangements in their sculptures and agreed that these inventions ought to be adopted.”<sup>20</sup> This implies that every stone temple has its precursor in an earlier form, represented in a different material and Vitruvius is proposing both how architecture originated and how development occurs through a process of translation.<sup>21</sup> Since its rediscovery in the Renaissance, *Ten Books on Architecture* became a cornerstone in architectural thought which was discussed and further developed. Amongst those who developed his ideas of translation was Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy (1755 - 1849), going beyond the idea of the hut, by introducing the cave and tent into the origins of architecture.<sup>22</sup>

A major contributor within this legacy, was the German architect Gottfried Semper (1803-1879) with his book *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten: oder Praktische Aesthetik (Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts; or, Practical Aesthetics)*. Discussing the evolution of style, he aimed at uncovering a few general forms or motives of art, which would be universally recognisable. Semper argues that the arts of textile and ceramics, not the tent, cave or hut, could be seen as a prequel for architecture. Each treatment of the original forms, with its specific conditions, would require the “original type [to] be modified...[Where the] new form will be a composite, one that expresses the primeval type and all the stages preceding the latest form.”<sup>23</sup> This process of translation is by Semper explained through the term *Stoffwechsel*, or transmutation. Although the original form had gone through a transformation from the ceramic pot to the temple,

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<sup>20</sup> Marcus Pollio Vitruvius, *Ten Books on Architecture*, trans. Ingrid Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 56.

<sup>21</sup> Vitruvius, *Ten Books on Architecture*, 109.

<sup>22</sup> Samir Younés, *The True, the Fictive, and the Real: the Historical Dictionary of Architecture of Quatremère de Quincy: Introductory Essay and Selected Translations by Samir Younés* (London: Andreas Papadakis, 1999), 37.

<sup>23</sup> Semper, *Style*. 250.

the earliest material styles, or idea, from a pre-architectural origin of architecture would still be evident.<sup>24</sup>

Although interestingly reversed in this specific note, namely from stone to wood and not the other way around, Norberg-Schulz refers to the tradition of the Vitruvian hut. This references suggests how Norberg-Schulz understood the idea of translation: an act of transmission of motifs between different materials, and a crucial element in architectural evolution. Norberg-Schulz had encountered Vitruvius' writings already in 1945-46 at ETH,<sup>25</sup> and later acknowledged Vitruvius's standing as the originator of architectural history, articulated in the article "Et faglig testamente"<sup>26</sup> ("A theoretical Testament"). Also, Norberg-Schulz had read Semper, as he refers to the original German version of *Der Stil*, in *Intentions in Architecture*.<sup>27</sup> Through his studies at ETH, where the Semper tradition had remained familiar, one may assume that he was aware of the concept of *Stoffwechsel*. Nevertheless, the theoretical impact Semper must have had on the young student is relatively unexplored, but of great interest as it would involve a rather different approach to architecture, which I will return to later: the link between Norberg-Schulz and Semper invites further research.

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<sup>24</sup> Henry Francis Mallgrave, *Gottfried Semper: Architect of the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1996).

<sup>25</sup> His notebook from his first year at ETH contains notes from a lecture on Vitruvius. Christian Norberg-Schulz, Notebook, Box 2002:15, Arkivstykke 2FC, Notatbøker/Notater, The Christian Norberg-Schulz Archive, The Architectural Collection, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design.

<sup>26</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, "Et faglig testamente" in *Øye og Hånd*, ed. Gordon Hølmebakk (Oslo: Gyldendahl, 1996), 85.

<sup>27</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Intentions in Architecture* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1963), 102.

## Section Two: Translation Transposition Translocation

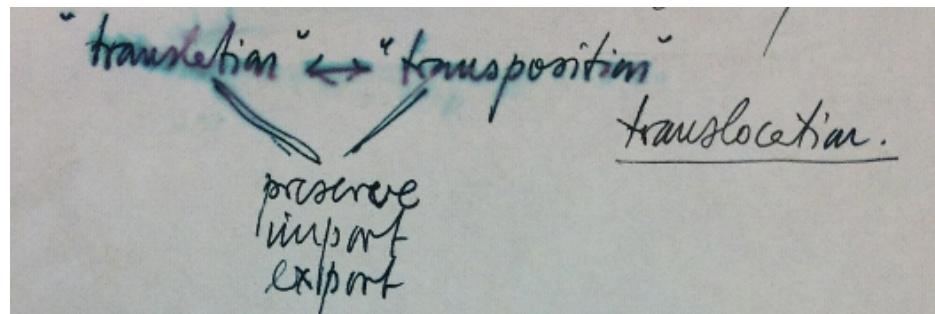


Fig.3: Section from the document.

### Norberg-Schulz - the Translator

“As a typical exponent of international culture, this “flying Norwegian”... has spent a great part of his time moving between the universities of the world (showing a mobility which may be compared to that of the famous Gothic architect Villard de Honnecourt)”<sup>28</sup>

Paolo Portoghesi, 1986

Norberg-Schulz's first major journey was in 1945, when he and several other aspiring students of architecture traveled by train through a Europe in ruins. Their destination was Zürich and the ETH, where the young student eagerly absorbed the ideas of Sigfried Giedion. From Zürich the “flying Norwegian” returned to Norway, before he received a Fulbright Scholarship and went to Harvard between 1952-53. Here he was introduced to the Northern American architectural scene and met his Italian born wife Anna Maria. Throughout his life, Norberg-Schulz travelled with great enthusiasm and sought to experience architecture in its natural surroundings. He had impressive foreign language skills. Fluent in German, English and Italian, his daughter, Elisabeth Norberg-Schulz

<sup>28</sup> P. Portoghesi, “To Christian: From Paolo Portoghesi,” In *Byggekunst* 8 (1986).

recalls a multilingual upbringing where English, Italian and Norwegian were spoken in the home daily.<sup>29</sup> In addition, his native Norwegian tongue has two official written languages, and Swedish and Danish he knew due to linguistic similarities of the Scandinavian languages. Within this everyday reality, translation was central to Norberg-Schulz's life.

When studying Norberg-Schulz's processes of writing and publishing, translation is a recurrent theme. *Intentions in Architecture* (1963) was originally his PhD dissertation conducted at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim. Written in Norwegian and finished in 1960, Norberg-Schulz attempted to get his work published. The Scandinavian University press in Oslo finally agreed, but thought Norwegian would not reach the desired audience. Norberg-Schulz translated the manuscript to English and the book was published in 1963, in cooperation with Allen Publishers, London. As the book became a great success, the publishers later contacted Norberg-Schulz to publish a Norwegian version in 1967. At that point the original Norwegian manuscript was lost and he himself had to translate the English back into Norwegian.<sup>30</sup>

An investigation of the process of writing his landmark treatise *Genius Loci: Towards a phenomenology of architecture* (1980) also provides fascinating insight to a multilingual process. Ordered chronologically, Table 1, gives an overview of all the articles, publications and pre-1980 translations of *Genius Loci*. Some are articles, which either are excerpts of the book or presents his ideas on a nascent stage. Others are editions and translation of the actual book. I will not comment upon all the texts, but instead focus on some of the most interesting examples. A year after his first sustained reading of Heidegger in 1974, the first public expressions of his theory occur in 1975 on the symposium *Entwerfen der historischen Strasse* held in Berlin, and published a year later. His Heideggerian influence, his concept of genius loci and basic ideas of the structure, character and

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<sup>29</sup> Elisabeth Norberg-Schulz, (daughter of Christian Norberg-Schulz), email to author, 07.-15.05.2013.

<sup>30</sup> Jan Carlsen, "Den standhaftige arkitekturfilosof: en fagbiografisk skisse," in *Christian Norberg-Schulz: Et festskrift til 70års dagen*, eds. Guttorm Fløistad et al. (Oslo: Norsk akitekturforlag, 1999), 20-21.

Year of publishing	Title	Publication	Language	Written/Translated by
1975	“Ørkentanker”	<i>Byggekunst</i> , Oslo.	Norwegian	Christian Norberg-Schulz
1976	“Genius Loci”	<i>Entwerfen der historischen Strasse</i> , Berlin.	German	Christian Norberg-Schulz
1976	“Preface” (Although first printed and published in 1979, the preface to <i>Genius Loci</i> is dated 1976)	In : <i>Genius Loci: towards a phenomenology of Architecture</i> (1980) Academy editions, London.	English	Christian Norberg-Schulz
1976	“Place”	AAQ, London.	English	Christian Norberg-Schulz
1977	“La fenomenologia del luogo”	Itaca, Roma.	Italian	Christian Norberg-Schulz. Translated by Anna Maria
1978	“Il Genius Loci di Roma”	Roma interrotta, Roma.	Italian	Christian Norberg-Schulz. Translated by Anna Maria
1978	<i>Mellom jord og himmel: En bok om steder og hus</i>	Universitetsforlaget, Oslo.	Norwegian	Christian Norberg-Schulz
1978	“Om å bo og bygge”	<i>Byggekunst</i> , Oslo.	Norwegian	Christian Norberg-Schulz
1979	“The Genius Loci of Khartoum”.	<i>AHO skrift</i> , Oslo.	English	Christian Norberg-Schulz
1979	“Genius Loci of Rome”	<i>Architectural Design</i> , London.	English	Christian Norberg-Schulz
1979	<i>Genius Loci: Paesaggio, Ambiente Architettura</i>	Electa, Milan.	Italian	Christian Norberg-Schulz. Translated by Anna Maria
1980	<i>Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of architecture</i>	Academy Editions, London.	English	Christian Norberg-Schulz
1980	<i>Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of architecture</i>	Rizzoli, New York.	English	Christian Norberg-Schulz
1980	“Genius Loci: The spirit of the place”	<i>Architectural Design</i> , London.	English	Christian Norberg-Schulz
1984	“The Genius Loci of Khartoum”	<i>Swissair Gazette</i> , Zürich.	English	Christian Norberg-Schulz
1992	<i>Mellom Jord og Himmel</i> , 2nd Ed	Pax forlag, Oslo.	Norwegian	Christian Norberg-Schulz

**Table 1**

spirit of the place, is apparent in this German article.<sup>31</sup> The preface to the 1980 book, written in English, is dated 1976, and the first third of his book was presumably more or less complete at this point. This becomes evident in the AAQ article from 1977, where he presents almost word for word the first chapters of the book.

The table shows how after 1977 he published several other articles in German, Norwegian, English and Italian, before the book *Genius Loci* was first published, in Italian, in 1979.<sup>32</sup> Although Norberg-Schulz himself had written it in English, as it is evident in his initial, handwritten notes from the archive.<sup>33</sup> Norberg-Schulz was fluent in Italian, but it was his wife, Anna Maria, who translated the book for an Italian audience. She recalls how they worked on the Italian translations together. He would write a complete draft in fluent English, she would propose a translation, before they would discuss specific terms or passages, in English, Norwegian, German or Italian, and agree on a final result.<sup>34</sup> A year after this first Italian edition, London publisher Academy Editions published the first English version and later sold the US rights to Rizzoli, New York. The British version is distinguishable from the American, as the former was printed in hardback, but the content

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<sup>31</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, "Genius Loci", in *Entwerfen der historischen Strasse*, ed. Martina Schneider (Berlin: Abakon - Verlag, Edition Licherfelde, 1976).

<sup>32</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Paesaggio, ambiente, architettura*, trans. Anna Maria Norberg-Schulz (Milan: Electa, 1979).

<sup>33</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, Genius Loci Manuscripts, Box 2002:15, Arkivstykke 5:GA Bokmanuskripter, GB: Artikkelmanuskripter, The Christian Norberg-Schulz Archive, The Architectural Collection, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design.

<sup>34</sup> Anna Maria Norberg-Schulz, (wife and Translator), in conversation with author, 12.07.2013.

of the two is identical. From this point on, foreign publishers bought the rights to the book and translated it with their own translators.<sup>35</sup>

Oddly enough, the book was never translated for a Norwegian audience,<sup>36</sup> but *Mellom Jord og Himmel (Between Earth and Sky)* from 1978, is considered to be the Norwegian popular version of *Genius Loci*.<sup>37</sup> *Between Earth and Sky* is far from a literal translation of the book *Genius Loci* from 1979, as it is much shorter and has different illustrations. Written as part of a series, *Tankekors (Considerations or Crux)*, it aimed at making philosophy more accessible to the Norwegian population.<sup>38</sup> Norberg-Schulz addresses contemporary challenges of governmental city planning and advocates a more careful treatment of the genius loci of each building task. To what extent the book could be considered as a Norwegian version of *Genius Loci* is widely debated and probably it is best to define the two publications as no more than related, in the sense that the theoretical core is the same.<sup>39</sup>

Overall, which it could be said that translations usually are premised upon an original, the process of writing and publishing *Genius Loci* could rather be explained as a network of translations without any original. It is evident that Norberg-Schulz not only aimed towards an international audience with his multilingual theory, but additionally developed the ideas in several languages, on several platforms simultaneously.

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<sup>35</sup> To my knowledge, these translations exist: Italian (1979 and 1997), English (1980), French (1981), German (1982), Czech (1994 and 2011), Chinese Taiwanese (1995), Chinese (2010) and Greek (2011). It is also likely that a Japanese translation exists.

<sup>36</sup> The fact that *Genius Loci* never was published in Norwegian, or in any other Scandinavian languages, might appear surprising to some. However, after speaking with Guttorm Fløistad, philosopher and editor of *Tankekors (Considerations)* and Gordon Hølmebak, editor of translation at Gyldedahl publishing house, it might appear that an Norwegian architectural audience was too small to get any profit from a Norwegian translation. Also, those who were interested in his phenomenological approach to architecture, would most likely have the foreign language skills needed to read English. The short version, *Between Earth and Sky*, would reach the wider Norwegian audience. It became quite popular and was reprinted, with revised illustrations, in 1992.

<sup>37</sup> Norberg-Schulz himself described *Between Earth and Sky* as the populist version of *Genius Loci*.  
Norberg-Schulz, "Et faglig testamente," 86.

<sup>38</sup> Guttorm Fløistad (Philosopher and Editor of *Tankekors*) In conversation with the author, 22.05.2013.

<sup>39</sup> Anne Marit Vagstein, "Helhetens navn er et sted", In *Christian Norberg-Schulz: Et festschrift på 70års dagen*, eds. Guttorm Fløistad et al. (Oslo: Norsk arkitektforlag, 1996), 138.

Norberg-Schulz's language skills also affected his encounters with existing literature.

Several of my sources confirm that Norberg-Schulz preferred to read philosophy in its original language, which would suggest that he read Heidegger in the original German.<sup>40</sup> This would contradict Otero-Pailos claim that Norberg-Schulz first sustained reading of Heidegger was during a stay at MIT in 1974, through *Poetry, Language, Thought*, translated into English by Albert Hofstadter.<sup>41</sup> Otero-Pailos bases his argument on the inscription 'Boston 1974' on the copy of Norberg-Schulz's book.<sup>42</sup> Still, could Norberg-Schulz have encountered Heidegger, in German, before this?

Through archival research, no concrete evidence of a pre 1974 reading, has been found, but a close reading of Norberg-Schulz's writing compared with Heidegger's German original and English translations by Hofstadter<sup>43</sup> and Krell<sup>44</sup> could suggest that the German original was Norberg-Schulz main point of reference. Central in Norberg-Schulz's development of Heidegger's phenomenology is his adaption of the concept of *Place*. Norberg-Schulz is critical towards the loss of place in contemporary architecture, as place allows for dwelling. He writes:

"Dwelling is more than "Shelter". It implies that the spaces where life occurs are places, in the true sense of the word.... we have therefore chosen to approach the existential dimension in terms of place. The Place represents architecture's share in truth. The place is the concrete manifestation of man's dwelling, and his identity depends on his belonging to places."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Kari Greve, (conservator and friend of Norberg-Schulz), in conversation with the author, 23.05.2013.

Anna Marit Vagstein, (architect and partner), in conversation with the author, 27.05.2013.

Elisabeth Norberg-Schulz, (daughter of Christian Norberg-Schulz), email correspondence with author, 07-15.05.2013.

<sup>41</sup>Otero-Pailos, *Architecture's historical turn*, 173.

<sup>42</sup> Although Otero-Pailos refers to the book in his bibliography, it does not appear in the online search engine of the archive and none of the two archivists I have spoken with knew where the book could be. After email correspondence with Otero-Pailos, he explains that he looked at the book when it was still in Norberg-Schulz's study, that is before the library went to the Architectural Archive of the Norwegian National Museum. One explanation could be that it is at Getty, as they bought parts of the collection before the Norwegian National Museum got around to it. The books that went to Getty are still in boxes and has not been cataloged. However, it is unlikely that it is there, as they mainly were looking for the most valuable 19th century publications, and would not have been as interested in *Poetry, Language, Thought* from 1971. The current location of the book remains a mystery and I must therefore base my own study on Otero-Pailos' reading.

<sup>43</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Poetry Language Thought*, ed. J. Glenn Gray and trans. Adolf Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row Publishing, 1971).

<sup>44</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings from 'Being and Time' (1927) to 'The Task of Thinking' (1964)*, trans. and ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 1993).

<sup>45</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, 6.

By recovering place, architecture can again let us dwell, an idea Norberg-Schulz adopted from Heidegger. In his German original, Heidegger refers to this concept of place as *Ort*. Simultaneously, he is critical towards the more abstract concept *Platz*, which implies nothing but mere location and does not provide dwelling.<sup>46</sup> A problem occurs when both *Ort* and *Platz* are translated, as they are usually into the one English term *Place*.<sup>47</sup> This creates problems for the English translator, something Adam Sharr acknowledges in *Heidegger for Architects*:

“Ort” is the closest equivalent of the English word ‘place’, rather than ‘location’, because ‘place’ suggest the same sense of rootedness and immediacy. However, Heidegger also used the German word ‘Platz’, which also best translated as ‘place’ although it is perhaps closer to ‘site’ or ‘area’. Because it shares the same root as the English, the translator chose, understandably, to render ‘Platz’ as ‘place’ but this causes a problem when he translates ‘Ort’. For ‘Ort’ he is forced to substitute ‘location’.”<sup>48</sup>

Needless to say, both Hofstadter and Krell translate *Platz* into *Place*, and *Ort* is into *Locale*<sup>49</sup> and *Location*.<sup>50</sup>

But Norberg-Schulz did not write about the spirit of the locale, but rather the spirit of the place. Maybe it was his Norwegian mother tongue, where *Ort* and *Platz* could be translated into the more equivalent *Sted* and *Plass*? Or was it to highlight the correspondence between place and dwelling through the verb ‘to take place’, as suggested by Sharr?<sup>51</sup> Still, if it was so that his main sustained reading of Heidegger was through Hofstadter’s translation, would it not be likely that Norberg-Schulz would have acknowledged this problem? And why would he only list *Poetry*, *Language*, *Thought* in his bibliography of the English publication of *Genius Loci* (1980), but not in the Italian first edition that came a year before? Even the German translation of *Genius Loci* from

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<sup>46</sup> Martin Heidegger, “Bauen Wohnen Denken”, In *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 11th ed (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2009), 150-151.

<sup>47</sup> *Oxford Essential German Dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), s.vv. “Ort,” “Platz.”

<sup>48</sup> Adam Sharr, *Heidegger for Architects* (London: Routledge, 2007), 51.

<sup>49</sup> Martin Heidegger, “Building Dwelling Thinking,” in *Poetry Language Thought*, ed. J. Glenn Gray and trans. A. Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row Publishing, 1971), 154-155.

<sup>50</sup> Martin Heidegger, “Building Dwelling Thinking,” in *Basic Writings from 'Being and Time' (1927) to 'The Task of Thinking'* (1964), ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 1993), 356-357.

<sup>51</sup> Sharr, *Heidegger for architects*, 52.

1982, does not contain any reference to Hofstadter and translates Norberg-Schulz's *Place* back into the German *Ort*.<sup>52</sup>

Martin Heidegger “Bauen Wohnen Denken” (1951)	Martin Heidegger “Building Dwelling Thinking” Krell (1993)	Martin Heidegger “Building Dwelling Thinking” Hofstadter (1971)	Christian Norberg- Schulz (1980) and Adam Sharr (2007)	Angelika Schweikhart (1982) German translation of <i>Genius Loci</i> by Norberg-Schulz (1979)
<b>Ort</b>	Locale	Location	Place	Ort
<b>Platz</b>	Place	Place	-----	
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Table 2: An overview of the translations of Martin Heidegger. Note the translation of *Ort* and *Platz*, and to take place.

There are several other ways besides his 1974 stay at MIT that Norberg-Schulz could have encountered Heidegger. Norberg-Schulz's own German version of Heidegger in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* is annotated.<sup>53</sup> His notes to this book are in German dated 1979, but the heading suggests that these are from a second reading.<sup>54</sup> His wife Anna Maria also read Heidegger, but she could not remember when exactly she, or he, first encountered these texts,<sup>55</sup> although her Italian copies of Heidegger were published in 1973.<sup>56</sup> In the article “Et faglig testamente” (“A Theoretical Testament”) Norberg-Schulz himself mentions how he immersed himself in phenomenology, including Heidegger and Otto Bollnow, after a stay at Yale University in 1965.<sup>57</sup> The connection

<sup>52</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Landschaft, Lebensraum, Baukunst*, trans. Angelica Schweikhart (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982), 5.

<sup>53</sup> Norberg-Schulz's copy of *Vorträge und Aufsätze* is kept in The Norberg-Schulz library, The Architectural Collections, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo.  
Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: G. Neske, 1954).

<sup>54</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Notes from books*. Box 2003:05, Notater fra Bøker, The Norberg-Schulz Archive, The Architectural Collection, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design.

<sup>55</sup> Anna Maria Norberg-Schulz, (wife and translator), in conversation with the author, 12.07.2013.

<sup>56</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Il cammino verso il Linguaggio*, trans. A. Carracciolo (Milano: U. Mursia&C, 1973).

<sup>57</sup> Norberg-Schulz, “Et faglig testamente,” 86.

with Bollnow, a philosopher considered to be within the Heideggerian tradition, is particularly interesting. Between 1956-58 the philosopher Guttorm Fløistad, editor of *Tankekors* and friend of Norberg-Schulz, studied philosophy in Berlin under Bollnow. This link undoubtedly influenced the Norwegian academic scene long before 1974. Fløistad recalls that Norberg-Schulz and he shared an interest for phenomenology, which was the main reason Fløistad invited Norberg-Schulz to partake in the series *Tankekors*.<sup>58</sup> Also, an entry in Norberg-Schulz's travel journal from May 1974 refers to *Das Geviert* rather than *Fourfold*, which implies that we was well aware of the German.<sup>59</sup> These discoveries neither prove nor disprove Otero-Pailos's claim, but one can assume that Norberg-Schulz main reading was in the original German. He did read Hofstadter, but I believe he followed it as a guiding principle, not as a main reference. The Norberg-Schulz archive in Oslo also contains his copy of the Krell translation. However, the paperback copy appears almost untouched and "Building Dwelling Thinking" appears not to have been read.

Exactly how and when Norberg-Schulz conducted his first sustained reading of Heidegger remains unknown. Still, this discussion underscores the practical implications of translation and additionally raises new questions regarding the role multilingualism played in Norberg-Schulz's work. Whether or not his main reading was in German or in English the argument above at least proves that he read Heidegger both in German and in English. Being a polyglot, he moved between the two and with his Norwegian native pen he wrote his theory in a multilingual landscape.

Literary critic and translator George Steiner describes the natural conditions of the polyglot in his book *After Babel*. Based on his own experience as a polyglot, he discusses to what extent the mind of a polyglot operate differently than someone monolingual.<sup>60</sup> While the polyglot and author

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<sup>58</sup> Guttorm Fløistad, (philosopher and editor of *Tankekors*), in conversation with the author, 22.05.2013.

<sup>59</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, Travel Journal, Box 2002:15 Arkivstykke 2F notatbøker/notater, The Christian Norberg-Schulz Archive, The Architectural Collections, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo.

<sup>60</sup> George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 122.

Franz Kafka at times felt “the multiplicity of languages to be a gag in his throat”,<sup>61</sup> Steiner argues how a multilingual sensibility potentially could be pro-conductive. The polyglot would experience the spatiality of languages in a different way, whereas each language would have its own mental spatiality coexisting with others, implying that a polyglot's conception of his or hers own mental, lingual spatiality would be more complex as it would include not one space, but several, leading to a layered mental self. Also external spaces, being locations, social situations etc. affect how a polyglot uses and understands both language and surroundings, as in the saying ‘when in Rome, do as the Romans’. This suggests that a polyglot has a natural conception of a layered reality, which Steiner explains spatially, both internally and externally.<sup>62</sup>

Feminist thinker and philosopher Rosi Braidotti addresses similar issues in her nomadic theory. Being a polyglot, Braidotti describes the process of developing her book *Patterns of Dissonance*,<sup>63</sup> where her first draft was in French, then translated, and finally rewritten in English. Her nomadic existence and multiple language skills lead to a product of many translations and no original, a process clearly comparable to that of *Genius Loci*.<sup>64</sup> Braidotti defines the polyglot as a linguistic nomad, with a great mobility between different systems with a self settling in between languages. According to Braidotti, the nomadic subject is a suitable theoretical formation of contemporary subjectivity, and nomadism is an ontological concept, defining a way of being. She writes: “The polyglot becomes the prototype of the postmodern speaking subject, struck by the maddening, fulminating insight about the arbitrariness of linguistic meaning and yet resisting a free fall into cynicism.”<sup>65</sup> This mobile identity beyond and in between borders could be used as a critical tool to break up binary oppositions, linear narratives and normative constructs, and hence allow for

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<sup>61</sup> Steiner, *After Babel*, 71.

<sup>62</sup> Steiner, *After Babel*, 307.

<sup>63</sup> Rosi Braidotti, *Patterns of Dissonance: a Study of Women in Contemporary Philosophy*, trans. Elizabeth Guild (Oxford: Polity, 1991).

<sup>64</sup> Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 21.

<sup>65</sup> Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 41.

a greater diversity, and uncovering of layers. Being a polyglot therefore means having direct insight to a convoluted and diverse reality, where universal truths simply do not exist.

## Translocation

Braidotti's idea of the nomadic subject, linking thought to movement as a reaction to the mobile and transnational aspects of a postmodern reality is a provocative theoretical concept. Norberg-Schulz, the 'flying Norwegian', led a nomadic life, with much travel and this translocation might have stimulated his attention to place and influenced his theoretical project. In 1973 he moved to Rome, a stay he later described as "Research work in Rome (Genius Loci)."<sup>66</sup> From September that year, he travelled around the country while carefully writing down ideas, experiences and impressions in his travel journal.<sup>67</sup> Figure 4 shows maps where his destinations in and around Rome are plotted,



Fig. 4: A map of destinations in and around Rome, 1973 - 1974.

<sup>66</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, CV, Box Diverse uregistrerte fra skuffen i den sorte pulten, The Christian Norberg-Schulz Archive, The Architectural Collections, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo.

<sup>67</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, Travel Journal, Box 2002:15 Arkivstykke 2F notatbøker/notater, The Christian Norberg-Schulz Archive, The Architectural Collections, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo.

although he also travelled to places further away during this year. The Spring of 1974, he went to Boston and according to Otero-Pailos, conducted his first sustained reading of Heidegger, before again returning to Rome. He later visited Jordan and Paris, and at the end of his research stay drove north from Rome, through Germany towards Norway.

By comparing the travel journal with *Genius Loci*, the nature of this research stay becomes clear. He travelled, observed, reflected and wrote. A phenomenological approach is clear from the beginning, where he is quoting Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) “Back to the things themselves”<sup>68</sup> when describing his experience of Rome, 09.10.1973. His observations are accurate and detailed, describing the architecture and the surrounding landscape of places he visits, each having their unique genius. 20.05.1974 he writes how he understands Piazza Navona as a Tuscan valley, that the genius loci is the same, a central idea in his chapter on Rome. He returns to the particular event from Piazza Navona in the article “Genius Loci: Et opprinnelsens begrep” (“Genius Loci: a Term of the Origin”), written towards the end of his life. Recalling the process of writing *Genius Loci*, he describes sitting in a café at Piazza Navona with a glass of Campari in his hand, suddenly seeing the link between Rome and the surrounding landscape.<sup>69</sup> In a documentary about Norberg-Schulz from 1992, the introductory scene shows him on a train through forest in Norway. A voiceover explains how he took this trip many years earlier after a longer stay in Rome. When he reached the Norwegian border he suddenly felt struck by a familiar feeling. The rugged terrain, the moss and the rocks, appeared well known. The spirit of the place spoke to him, clear and vivid.<sup>70</sup> The longer stay in Rome, was quite likely in 1973-74, as he did return to Norway in August 1974 and writes about a similar experience in his journal. The first traces of Heidegger’s phenomenology occurs after his stay in Boston, when he makes an attempt to explain places he visited, being Subiaco or

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<sup>68</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, trans. J.N Findlay (Oxon: Routledge, 2001) 1:168.

<sup>69</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, “Genius Loci: Et opprinnelsens begrep,” in *På klassisk grunn: Det norske institutt gjennom 40år*, eds. Kristin Blikstrud Aavitsland and Roy Tommy Eriksen (Oslo: Andresen og Butenschøn, 1999), 102.

<sup>70</sup> Helgesen, Sven-Erik. *Livet finner sted*, multimedia, Norwegian National Broadcasting (NRK) 1992, The NRK Archive, The National Norwegian Library.

Palestrina, through the concept of the fourfold, here referred to as the German *Geviert*. These journal entries have been read and later annotated with a red and blue pen. (Fig.5)

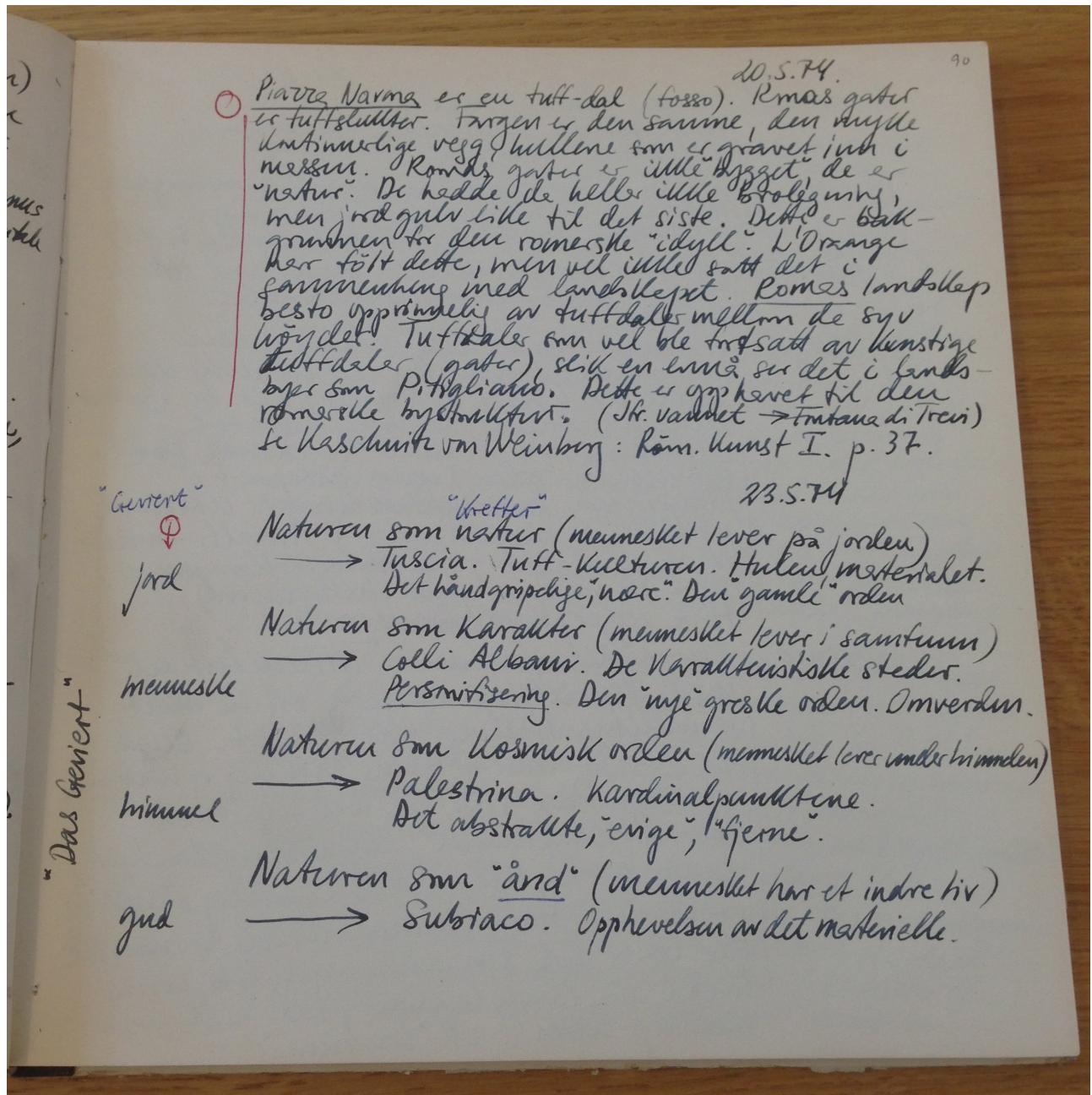


Fig. 5: Journal entry 20.5.74 and 23.5.74, in Norwegian. The first addresses the topic of Genius Loci, by describing Piazza Navona as a Tuscan valley. The following refers explicitly to Heidegger's concept of the fourfold, here in the German *Das Geviert*.

The second half of this page, dated 23.05.1974, is particularly interesting, as it appears to be an early attempt to find concrete, architectural and geographical counterparts to Heidegger's fourfold. He lists the four elements: earth, mortals, sky and divinities, and matches these to four specific characteristics of nature, and geographical locations. For example mortals (menneske), refers to personification of the character of place, as in Colli Albani, and sky (himmel) is nature as cosmic order, the eternal and distant Palestrina. This link between the fourfold and specific places does reoccur in *Genius Loci*, when he claims the sky to be the dominant feature of the natural place of Jordan and Sudan, and earth in the Norwegian conditions. However, the correspondence he finds between these Italian regions and Heidegger's concept of the fourfold, appears to be an early attempt to develop a phenomenology of architecture, which later evolved into considering a larger scale. This development is undoubtedly linked to his travels. Italy is his point of departure, but as he traveled to other places in the world, including USA, Jordan, Sudan and Norway, his horizon was broadened and he could include more suitable examples for his theory.

How particular journeys and places affected his theoretical formation is even further supported by comparing the illustrations of *Genius Loci* with the notes in his travel journal. Almost all of the illustrations that are Norberg-Schulz's own photographs must have been taken during this journey.<sup>71</sup> Most of the locations that are not mentioned in the travel journal, are from previous journeys, as his visit to in Egypt in 1968<sup>72</sup> and Vienna 1969.<sup>73</sup> To suggest that Norberg-Schulz understood himself as a nomadic subject, in accord with Braidotti, would be speculative.

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<sup>71</sup> Illustration no 39 of Subiaco corresponds with his journey 02.10.1973, and he visited no 238, Nordica 20.06.1974. Along with photographs from Khartoum, where he worked in 1975, photographs from Jordan illustrate the genius loci of the dessert and Norberg-Schulz visited Jordan with Portoghesi from 27.7.74-04.08-74. His examples from the US where he is the photographer are exclusively from Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts, on accord with his stay at MIT in 1974. Illustration no 55, Lüneburger Heide is described in his journal 18.08.1974, along with Einbeck, no 317. These are only some of the many examples.

<sup>72</sup> In a note kept in the Norberg-Schulz Archive, Oslo, Norberg-Schulz mentions a visit to the Norwegian ambassador in Egypt, by the name Anker. Peter Martin Anker (1903-1977) held that position 1966-1973, but he was additionally the Norwegian Ambassador of Sudan, from 1967, and Jordan from 1969. One can easily assume that Anker had a large part to play in Norberg-Schulz's international career, which included consultant work in both Jordan and Sudan.

"Peter Martin Anker (diplomat)," last modified 21.03.2013, accessed 25.08.2013, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter\\_Martin\\_Anker\\_\(diplomat\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Martin_Anker_(diplomat))

<sup>73</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, Notes, Box 2002:15 Arkivstykke 2F notatbøker/notater, The Christian Norberg-Schulz Archive, The Architectural Collections, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo.

Nevertheless, the correspondence between the mobility she describes in the reality of her life, and that of Norberg-Schulz's cannot be overlooked. Particularly not when the link between his travels and his theory are that strong, a discussion I will return to later.



Fig. 6 : “The Majesty of Tufa overlooking his kingdom” - Christian Norberg-Schulz in Italy.

# Tradditore, Traduitore

“[Translation] may very probably be the most complex type of event yet produced in the evolution of the cosmos”<sup>74</sup>

I.A Richards, 1953.

The old Italian saying *Tradditore, Traduitore* meaning *to translate is to betray*, highlights one of the main problematics within translation studies: Can one translate without betraying? The history of the field is well accounted for by Edwin Gentzler in his book *Contemporary translation theories*,<sup>75</sup> outlining a major difference in translation theory between those in favor of translations that are most true to the original word by word, as the early I.A Richards (1893-1979),<sup>76</sup> and those that are more concerned with uncovering the original meaning instead of exact words used in the original text. This is evident in the works of bible translator Eugene Nida (1914-2011).<sup>77</sup> With the emergence of poststructuralism in the 1970s, a more pluralistic and interdisciplinary approach was developed, as when James Holmes dismisses a unified theory and science of translation,<sup>78</sup> and Jaques Derrida's (1930-2004) deconstruction blurs the borders between original and translation and suggest translation as a way of experiencing *différance*.<sup>79</sup> Lawrence Venuti highlights the important role of the translator in his book *The Translator's Invisibility*, located culture within translation,<sup>80</sup> and George Steiner understood translation to occur through all acts of communication.<sup>81</sup> In the 1990's the field experienced a cultural turn, where the focus was shifted towards how cultural

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<sup>74</sup> I. A. Richards, “Toward a Theory of Translation,” in *Studies in Chinese Thought*, ed Arthur F. Wright (Chicago: University Press, 1953), 250.

<sup>75</sup> Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories*, 2nd ed. (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 2001).

<sup>76</sup> Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories*, 9.

<sup>77</sup> Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories*, 44-48.

<sup>78</sup> Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories*, 77.

<sup>79</sup> Jaques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. A. Bass (London: Athlone, 1987).

<sup>80</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A history of translation*, (London: Routledge, 1995).

<sup>81</sup> Steiner, *After Babel*.

constructs were maintained and shaped through translations as proposed by André Lefevere (1945-1996) and Susan Bassnett. Homi Bhabha plays a key part in the recent spatial turn of translation theory, with his focus on the location of culture, which has proved itself fruitful in highlighting the translation of culture itself, including its location.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, it appears that architecture is rather underrepresented in the field and Mark Wigley's introduction to *Architecture of Deconstruction* is to my knowledge a rare exception.<sup>83</sup> Allowing translation theory to inform architecture could undoubtedly raise intriguing questions, and invites further development.

A much quoted article on translation, is the short, but dense article, "The task of the Translator" by critical theorist Walter Benjamin (1982-1940). Here he addresses the problematic relationship between the original and the translation by refuting the common conception of the original as superior to its translations. He claims that it is the translations that gives the original its afterlife, where new ideas, associations and meanings would occur and appear in constant flux. Ultimate meaning lies beyond any single language text. He writes: "Translation thus ultimately serves the purpose of expressing the central reciprocal relationship between languages... Languages are not strangers to one another, but are... interrelated in what they want to express."<sup>84</sup> This implies that translation is vital for the true language of the artwork, a pure language which appears through the process of translation, where, to refer back to the Norberg-Schulz's note: certain elements are preserved, some are imported and others are exported. The statement "all great texts contain their potential translation between the lines"<sup>85</sup> underscores the importance of what occurs between German or English, Norwegian or Italian. *In between* - the artwork flourishes.

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<sup>82</sup> As accounted for in Fredrico Italiano, "Translating Geographies: The Navigatio Sancti Brendani and its Venetian Translation," in *Translation studies*, 5, 1, (2012).

<sup>83</sup> Mark Wigley, *The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida's haunt* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT press, 1993).

<sup>84</sup> Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator", in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt and trans. Harry Zorn (London: Fontana Press, 1992), 73.

<sup>85</sup> Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator", 82.

# Transposition

“Translation is formally and pragmatically implicit in *every* act of communication, in the emission and reception of each and every mode of meaning, be it in the widest semiotic sense or in more specifically verbal exchanges. To understand is to decipher.”<sup>86</sup>

George Steiner, 1975.

In his book *After Babel* (1975) George Steiner expands upon and broadens the conception of translation. Steiner investigates the difficult issues of understanding and creation of meaning in language, encountering these issues through the idea of translation. This process of transmission of meaning is seen as difficult and at times even impossible. He recognises how translation occurs between all forms of communication, not only from one language to another, as from German to English. Translation occurs when communicating within the same language and also when communicating meaning between different mediums. By understanding every act of communication as an act of translation, he additionally suggests a new and more complex understanding of the traditional linguistics. *After Babel* gives a broad account of the concepts of understanding, meaning and communication, and provides for a conception of translation that could inform architecture. With every attempt to articulate a building through words, a process of translation then would occur between architecture and language, as Wigley explores in *The Architecture of Deconstruction*.<sup>87</sup>

It could also mean an exchange between the word, the idea and the image, as in Otero-Pailos’s exploration of Norberg-Schulz’s historiography as “Photo[Historio]graphy.”<sup>88</sup> Through an investigation of the visual aspects of Norberg-Schulz’s work, with a particular focus on *Genius Loci* and *Intentions in Architecture*, Otero-Pailos claims that Norberg-Schulz’s illustrations take on a life of their own. Grounded in gestalt psychology of Jean Piaget and Rudolf Arnheim, Otero-Pailos draws attention to how Norberg-Schulz investigates the visual structures of our surroundings, where

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<sup>86</sup> Steiner, *After Babel*, xii.

<sup>87</sup> Wigley, *The Architecture of Deconstruction*.

<sup>88</sup> Otero-Pailos, *Architecture’s Historical Turn*.

a certain type of landscape would invite a certain architecture. Photography is a brilliant medium to convey this visual message and becomes crucial in Norberg-Schulz's historiography. His ideas are conveyed through various mediums and become dialectic.

This would challenge a previous project of mine, where I proposed a critique of Norberg-Schulz's tendency to generalise experience. Through the methodology of *Site-Writing* and with the supervision of Professor Jane Rendell, I question Norberg-Schulz's categories of landscape through the creative work of a film. "The Spirit of the [Natural] Place" investigates a chapter in *Genius Loci*, where Norberg-Schulz describes four categories of landscape: the romantic, the cosmic, the classical and the complex. The romantic landscape is rugged, subdivided and with a rich microstructure, as found in Norway. The Cosmic, on the other hand, is monotonous with an overwhelming sky, as in in the dessert of Jordan.<sup>89</sup> Norberg-Schulz proposes that these structures in the landscape affect the way we build and the way we are as human beings in this world. To propose that all people of Jordan act and appear in a certain way, and Norwegians another, does not allow for diversity and might be questioned. These issues are addressed by several scholars. With "Worthy of Question: Heideggers role in Architectural Theory", Hilde Heynen raises several issues of Heidegger's legacy, generalisation included.<sup>90</sup> Also, in his essay "The Place is not a Post-Card: The Problem with Genius Loci", Alberto Pérez-Gómez addresses this issue and advocates for a more nuanced conception of place.<sup>91</sup> In my site-writing project, I placed a model of a Norwegian window design in romantic, Norwegian terrain and cosmic landscape in Jordan. Along with carefully selected quotes from *Genius Loci*, I put an emphasis on the generality of Norberg-Schulz's works and the film invites for post-colonial, feminist and religious debate.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, 23-50.

<sup>90</sup> Hilde Heynen, "Worthy of Question: Heidegger's Role in Architectural Theory," in *Archis*, 12 (1993).

<sup>91</sup> Alberto Pérez-Gómez, "The Place is not a Post-Card: The problem with Genius Loci," in *An Eye for Place: Christian Norberg-Schulz: Architect, Historian and Editor*, eds. Gro Lauvland et al. (Oslo: Akademisk Publisering, 2009).

<sup>92</sup> Andersen, *The spirit of the Natural Place*. <http://vimeo.com/64596951>

But the process Otero-Pailos claims to occur between image, text and theory would, according to Steiner's broad definition, be an act of translation. Benjamin would have argued that each of these translations would give the artwork a more profound and rich afterlife. Steiner's claim of the layered reality of the polyglot, along with Braidotti's postmodern nomadic subject, also suggest that Norberg-Schulz might not be as rigid as first assumed but rather dialectic and dynamic. Presenting his ideas through a variety of platforms, either written text or photography, could be read as an attempt to allow for a more dynamic understanding of the ideas presented.

In "Kahn, Heidegger and the Language of Architecture" Norberg-Schulz mentions Place followed by the term Locations in brackets.<sup>93</sup> This suggests that he was well aware of the different solutions to translating the term *Ort*, although he never acknowledges this as a problem. The ambiguity that occurs between *Ort*, *Location* and *Place*, appears to be an important contribution to the after life of Heidegger's initial term, rather than a disturbing. This would challenge criticism of Norberg-Schulz's phenomenology such as that of Bø-Rygg, which is based upon the claim that Norberg-Schulz advocated stabile, constant and universal meaning.<sup>94</sup>

It appears that *Place*, *Location* (ENG), *Ort* (GER), *Luogo* (IT) or *Sted* (NOR) all contributed to the development of the theory in *Genius Loci* and create an intriguing ambiguity which allow for a broader and more nuanced understanding his theory. Any translation of Norberg-Schulz's theory, either in German, English or Norwegian, or through images or words would add something vital to the afterlife of the original idea. As he indeed positioned himself in a multilingual landscape, the borders between languages might to him not have been so important. Or even further, it could be suggested that Norberg-Schulz saw his ideas best explained through not one, but several languages. Transposition in this sense, is pluralist, un-absolute and, as Otero-Pailos is proposing, postmodern.

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<sup>93</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, "Kahn, Heidegger and the Language of Architecture", in *Oppositions*, 18 (1979), 41.

<sup>94</sup> Bø-Rygg, "Arkitektur og filosofi".

# Section Three: Introducing Martin Heidegger

“The philosophy of Heidegger has been the catalyst which has made the present book possible and determined its approach.”<sup>95</sup>

Christian Norberg-Schulz, 1980.

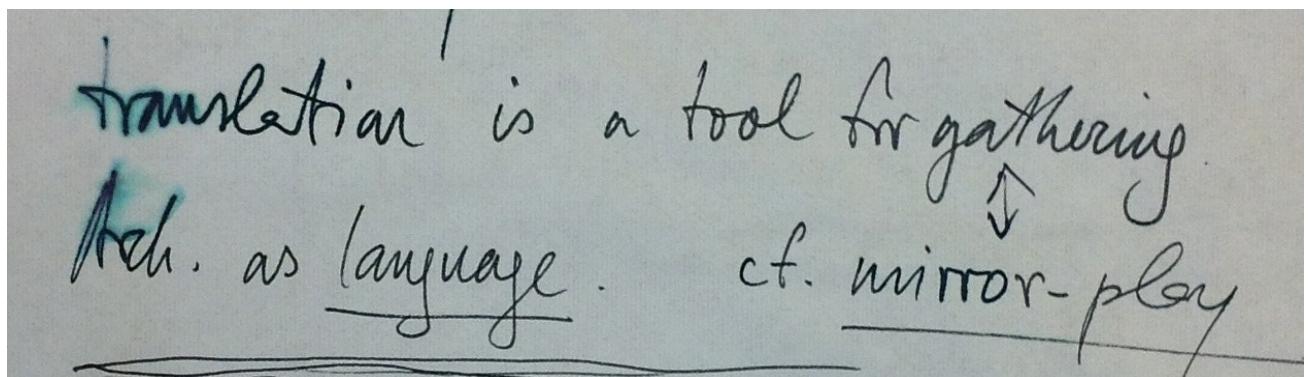


Fig.7 Section of the document. The focus on this section will be on the first sentence, and cf. mirror-play. I will return to the notion of Architecture as language in the next chapter.

With the following section, “translation is a tool for gathering cf. mirror-play” the references to Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) are clear. His phenomenology is complex and it would not be possible to give his philosophy the attention it deserves within the scope of this report. However, at the risk of over-simplifying, I will present a general outline of his terms gathering and mirror-play. In his phenomenology, Heidegger aimed towards a concrete understanding of being, also in relation to our surroundings. What are the fundamental phenomena of our world and how are these experienced? In his article “Das Ding” (“The Thing”), Heidegger is concerned with the meaning of the thing, as of a simple object like a jug, and how it relates to our reality.<sup>96</sup> In “Bauen Wohnen Denken” (“Building Dwelling Thinking”) he elaborates upon same argument, by understanding the building as a thing and describing the relationship we have with our built environment.<sup>97</sup> Central to

<sup>95</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, 5.

<sup>96</sup> Martin Heidegger, “Das Ding,” in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 11th ed. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2009)

<sup>97</sup> Heidegger, “Bauen Wohnen Denken.”

both of these arguments, is that the thing, either a bridge or a jug, relates to our world in a specific way: it *gathers*. What it gathers, Heidegger names *the fourfold*. This is four fundamental aspects of our existence and of our world, namely the sky, the earth, divinities and the mortals. This reality must be preserved and gathered, by things or through building, dwelling and thinking. Gathering could be understood almost as an action, in which the four elements of our world, the fourfold, are pulled together and becomes graspable and meaningful. For instance, a bridge, built as a thing, relates to its surroundings by gathering the fourfold and making it tangible and understandable. The bridge gathers the two banks on each side of the river, and relate to the flowing water below and the rain pouring from the sky. It allows for godhead to be present and for mortals to cross in their everyday life. If this system of relations, between the fourfold and what is built, is broken or corrupted, humans would no longer find existence meaningful.

The idea of *mirror-play* explains how the four fundamental elements of the fourfold relate to each other and function together as one. Earth, sky, divinities and mortals are not independent, they exist as one in the fourfold and mirror each other in their own way. When we see sky, we simultaneously see the mirroring of the three others within the one. Heidegger writes: “The mirroring that binds into freedom is the play that betroths each of the four to each through the enfolding clasp of their mutual appropriation... This expropriative appropriating is the mirror-play of the fourfold.”<sup>98</sup> It does not appear that this idea of mirroring is static or strict, but rather a way of projecting freedom. Through play, this appropriation occurs.

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<sup>98</sup> Martin Heidegger, “The Thing,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, ed. J. Glenn Gray, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971), 178.

# Translation is a Tool for Gathering

What does it then mean when Norberg-Schulz states that *translation* is a tool<sup>99</sup> for *gathering*? As already mentioned, Norberg-Schulz was well aware of the Vitruvian hut, and with translation he is referring back to the legacy of transmutation from wood to stone. It is this concept that Norberg-Schulz claims to be a tool for *gathering*, in the Heideggerian tradition, which suggests a reconciliation between two distinctively different lines of thought, namely the philosophy of Heidegger and the architectural theory of Semper. The two are not necessarily easy to reconcile. One is aiming at understanding architecture and the other philosophy. Semper was an idealist, in search of a few general motifs, which ideas are translated into new forms through an act of transmutation. The origin is therefore always present in each new form. Heidegger, on the other hand, investigated the etymology of the phenomena, to grasp a more spiritual reality and describes an origin that never can be explained only experienced. Gathering the fourfold would never propose a set of general forms and Heidegger is far from an idealist. But through Norberg-Schulz's note and through the concept of translation, Heidegger and Semper meet, and phenomenology appears to be reconciled with this line of architectural theory. The document is the gateway to encountering this information.

With *Genius Loci*, Norberg-Schulz truly aims towards a *phenomenology of architecture*. The legacy of Heidegger is well known, but also influence of Semper is evident in several places in the book. Firstly, one of his key arguments is how the spirit of the place is visible in an interplay between surroundings and architecture. When explaining how the natural and man made environment correspond and communicate meaning, Norberg-Schulz describes it as a process of translation. This is even further underscored in his chapter on Rome, where he proposes that the

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<sup>99</sup> The term tool (*Zeug*) is used by Heidegger in “The Origin of the Work of Art”, but in this particular case it does not appear to be relevant to Norberg-Schulz note. Note that Hofstadter translates *Zeug* into *piece of equipment* rather than *tool*.

Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Artwork,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, ed. J. Glenn Gray and trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1971).

streets of Rome resemble the same spirit as the ‘Tufa Valleys’, and a process of translation occurs.<sup>100</sup> Rome as *caput mundi*, imports, exports and preserves from various sources. The specific light, the several landscapes, values and beliefs of several places are gathered, by translation as a tool, into the *genius loci* of Rome as we know it. The basic principles of Colosseum and Pantheon corresponds with those the hidden order of nature, which he describes through its ‘antromorphic orders’ and ‘cosmic axes’, structures which reminds us that we are mortals, between the earth and the sky. In this, “the architecture of Rome gathers and visualizes a “complete” environment.”<sup>101</sup> This complete environment, is the *genius loci* of that particular place. This process of gathering does, according to Norberg-Schulz, imply translation and translation becomes a tool for this gathering.

## Proper Appropriation

Crucial to Norberg-Schulz’s idea of translation as a tool for gathering is how each particular place imports, exports and preserves distinctive features specific to each place, as he argues by saying: “Gathering means that things are brought together, that is, that they are moved from one place to another. This transposition is in general done by means of symbolization is a creative act of interpretation and translation.”<sup>102</sup> Norberg-Schulz’s most creative interpretation of the Vitruvian tradition is his reversal of wood translated into stone. Norberg-Schulz suggests the opposite, that the stone building is translated into a wooden box. What does this translation imply?

Norberg-Schulz’s meaning with this reversal is unclear, but we can suggest an interpretation. Unlike Braidotti and Steiner, whose traveling and multilingualism led to a rootless existence, Norberg-Schulz was inevitably linked to his Norwegian roots, always returning to his

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<sup>100</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, 166.

<sup>101</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, 166.

<sup>102</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, 169.

native country with every departure. As well as being an architectural theoretician, Norberg-Schulz is internationally renowned as a spokesperson for Norwegian architectural history. In *Modern Norwegian Architecture*, he articulates a history of Norwegian architecture, with a great focus on the natural conditions.<sup>103</sup> *Nightlands* also presents a clear attempts to describe the mystery of the Nordic landscape.<sup>104</sup> His standing as the Norwegian architectural ambassador is also evident in the Norwegian popular version of *Genius Loci*, namely *Between Earth and Sky*. Here he dedicates a chapter on the contemporary loss of place in Norwegian reality. His main agenda is to propose a proper Norwegian architecture, which takes the spirit of the Norwegian place into account.<sup>105</sup> One of his main arguments, which do correspond with his theoretical project of understanding the spirit of the place, is how Norwegian architecture is shaped by the climate and the conditions of the country. Since Norway only got its independence in 1905 after 400 years as a province of Denmark and 90 years in an unequal union with Sweden, the country has long been perceiving itself as provincial. Hard winters demand introverted buildings and a surplus of forest suggests wood as main building material. His account of the Modern movement in Norway is interesting, as he is proposing that the formal language of the International style was adapted (or could one even propose translated?) into Norwegian conditions.

*Villa Stousland II* (1936-37) by Ove Bang, is a great example of this. (Fig. 8) The treatment of volumes and formal language resembles that of Le Corbusier, whereas the extensive use of wood, both in exterior and interior are traditional Norwegian traits. To Norberg-Schulz, wooden architecture represented a unity between humans and their surrounding culture and nature, something he was known to promote to his students at his annual lectures on traditional wooden

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<sup>103</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Modern Norwegian Architecture* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1986).

<sup>104</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Nightlands: Nordic Building*. (Cambridge, Mass: MIT press, 1997) .

<sup>105</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Mellom Jord og Himmel: En bok om steder og hus*, Tankekors, ed. Guttorm Fløistad (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1978, Oslo: Pax Forlag, 1992), 122-124. Citation refer to the 1978 edition.

architecture.<sup>106</sup> The fact that Norberg-Schulz speaks of translation from stone to wood, might relate to these ideas. In the Norwegian experience, to translate from hut to temple was never a reality. It was rather to translate international currents, which were stone and concrete based, into the natural, wooden conditions of Norway.



Fig. 8: *Villa Stousland II* by Architect Ove Bang. Norberg-Schulz described this architect as the only architect pre WWII who managed to find a Norwegian Identity within the Modern Movement.

What he means with a “box”, remains unknown, but by mentioning “Eg. My own home”, it is likely that he was referring to his home in Planetveien 14 (1955), Oslo. (Fig. 11) Designed by himself and architect Arne Korsmo, the formal language with the large panes of glass, treatment of volume and steel structure suggests an international formal language, resembling Northern American postwar architecture.<sup>107</sup> However, as it was located at the margins of the city, where the woodlands starts, the inhabitants would be in close contact with nature. The double glazed windows, framed by a wooden structure, reflect the tall pine trees and invite nature into the

<sup>106</sup> Jorge Otero-Pailos, “Norberg-Schulz’ hus: en moderne søken etter hjemmets visuelle mønstre,” in *Byggekunst*, 88, 7, (2006), 11.

<sup>107</sup> Otero-Pailos, “Norberg-Schulz’ hus,” 10.

living space. Norwegian pine is again the material in the interior and the imported architecture is appropriated to the local conditions.



Fig. 11 *Planetveien 12-16*. (1955) Arne Korsmo and Christian Norberg-Schulz, Oslo.

The idea of architectural design as appropriation could be further supported by the concept of mirror-play, being the constant play and appropriation of the fourfold. I believe Norberg-Schulz is proposing that if the natural conditions are different, the appropriation of the fourfold would appear differently. The domination of the sun in Jordan, would demand a certain kind of architecture. The cold and snow in Norway, another. Could mirror-play be understood in this sense, would this support how Norberg-Schulz understood translation as a tool for gathering?

From Vitruvius's wooden hut translated into a Greek Temple, Norberg-Schulz translates international stone architecture back into wood. However instead of arriving back where it all started, Norberg-Schulz's wooden box is very different from the prehistoric hut. A translation from A to B which are expected to return to A, instead results in C. The original meaning could be uncovered in between the two. Norberg-Schulz's departure from wood to stone followed by a return to wood, gives birth to an architecture that simply is different, and each translation rich and valuable. If every translator is a traitor, the betrayal of the translator is a constructive one.

## Section 4: Architecture as Language

"Of all the metaphors found in architecture, there have been few put to such a variety of uses, and certainly none so contentiously, as those derived from language."<sup>108</sup>

Adrian Forty, 2000

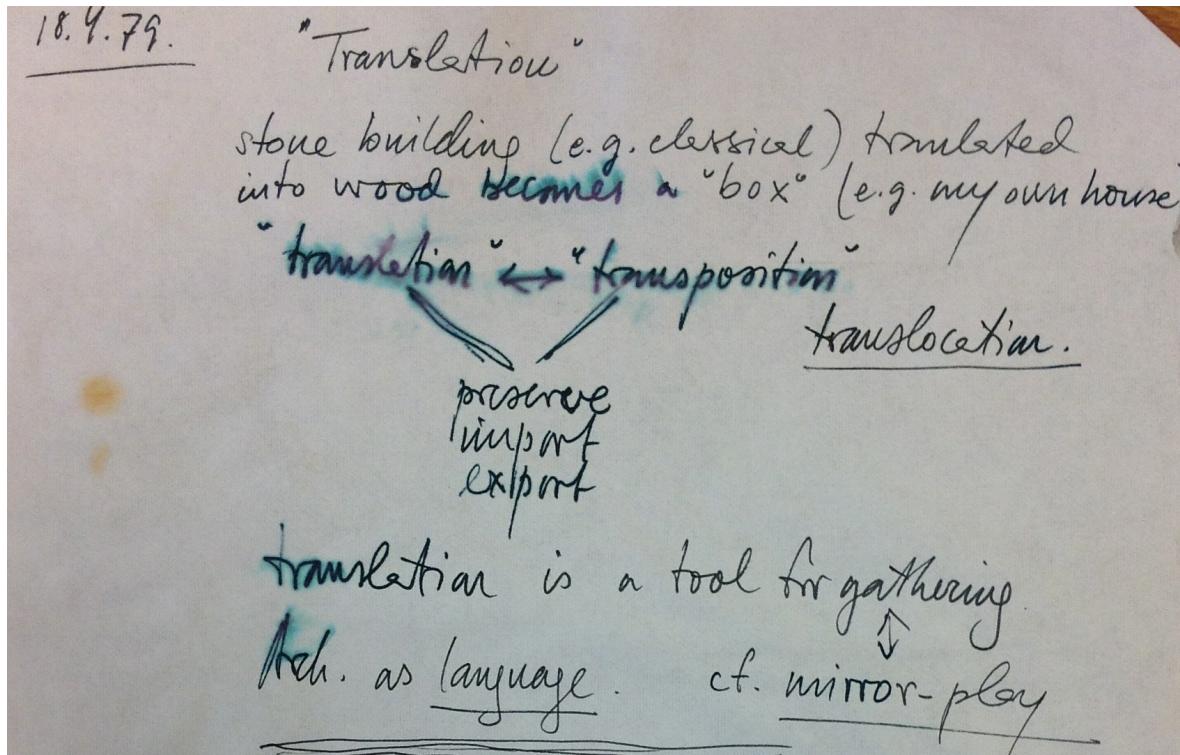


Fig. 10: Section of the Document.

The section which remains to be reviewed, is the sentence 'Arch. as language' at the lower left of figure 10. The discussion of this report has by and large revolved around uncovering references of each section independently. But standing at the end of this journey, one should ask oneself what was Norberg-Schulz purposes with the note in its entirety? I believe an answer to this lies in the last, concluding sentence: Architecture as language.

Above all, Norberg-Schulz was interested in understanding the meaning of architecture, which implied a notion of architecture as a system of communication, similar to that of language.

<sup>108</sup> Adrian Forty, *Words and buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture* (London: Thames&Hudson, 2000), 63.

This suitable metaphor therefore figured in his theoretical formations throughout his career, although the way he defined an architectural language varies according to his theoretical framework. With *Intentions in Architecture*, Norberg-Schulz wished to outline a theory of architecture based on gestalt psychology and semiotics. The way we perceive our world and communicate this perception, is formulated in architecture as a symbol system, which should be understood as a whole consisting of various parts. Architects should know this language and speak it fluently, so every building task could be adapted to each specific situation. This understanding of language derives from semiotics, which acknowledges meaning to occur through an act of communication. Through design, meaning is constantly being produced.<sup>109</sup>

His quest for understanding the meaning of architecture continues with his phenomenological approach a decade later, although this implies a rejection of semiotics. Phenomenologists believe that meaning occurs even before communication, that it exists in an original state, which clearly contradicts semiotics. Norberg-Schulz then leaves what he later characterised as a “scientific analysis... based on methods taken over from natural science”,<sup>110</sup> and embraces Heidegger’s phenomenology as a way of understanding architecture as a concrete phenomenon. This shift, from semiotics to phenomenology, also affected Norberg-Schulz’s metaphorical use of language. After encountering Heidegger his notion of the architectural language is not where meaning is produced, but where meaning comes forth, is experienced, gathers and lets humans dwell. Panayotis Tournikiotis describes Norberg-Schulz’s phenomenological notion of language when he writes: “The language of architecture,[according to Norberg-Schulz].. defines the very beginning of architecture and is not to be related to any artistic will or individual aesthetics but

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<sup>109</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *Intentions in Architecture*.

<sup>110</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, 5.

to the deep structure of that *being-in-the-world* which he calls existence.”<sup>111</sup> Architectural language therefore lets humans dwell, which is the objective of architectural design.

This particular note was written in 1979, the same year *Genius Loci* was published in Italian, but also when Norberg-Schulz wrote “Kahn, Heidegger and the Language of Architecture”. A close reading of this uncovers several similarities between the article and the note. In the article Norberg-Schulz argues that the architecture of Louis Kahn is the closest contemporary society can come to the building, dwelling and thinking that Heidegger advocates. After accounting for Kahn’s architectural ideas, compared with Heidegger’s phenomenology, Norberg-Schulz concludes by saying that it is through the language and poetry of architecture and understanding its existential basis, the two meet. Norberg-Schulz articulates this by defining architectural language as morphology, topology and typology.<sup>112</sup> This triadic formulation reoccurs in his last book *Architecture: Presence, Language and Place*<sup>113</sup> and defines how a building rises and stands, relates to the place and its building task. He argues: “Together topology, morphology and typology make up *the language of architecture*... In general the language of architecture possesses the capacity to translate lived reality into built form. This translation happens through a process of gathering.”<sup>114</sup> These concepts are tools to formulate this original state of being architecturally and not the semiotic idea of meaning as constructed while it is communicated.

If translation is gathering, also language is gathering. Steiner makes an interesting remark when stating how “Translation exists because men speak different languages,”<sup>115</sup> meaning that in the core of every notion of translation lies language. This would imply that Norberg-Schulz’s

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<sup>111</sup> Panayotis Tournikiotis, “Dwelling is a Place for Language: Nature and Artefact in 20th Century Greek Architecture,” in *An Eye for Place: Christian Norberg-Schulz: Architect, Historian and Editor*, eds. Gro Luvland, et al. (Oslo: Akademisk Publisering: 2009), 44.

<sup>112</sup> Norberg-Schulz, “Kahn, Heidegger and the Language of Architecture”, 42-43.

<sup>113</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Architecture: Presence, Language and Place*, trans. Anthony Shugaar (Milano: Skira Editore, 2000).

<sup>114</sup> Norberg-Schulz, “Kahn, Heidegger and the Language of Architecture”, 44.

<sup>115</sup> Steiner, *After Babel*, 51.

main concern is not translation as such, but rather the language of architecture. Translation is a tool for gathering, but what is gathered is the fourfold expressed through the architectural language. The specific note refers more to a Norwegian, wooden reality than to the architecture of Kahn, yet the core idea of translation, language, architecture and gathering appears to be key. The final statement also draws parallels to *Genius Loci*, when he claims that: “*The existential structures which are gathered by a place constitute its genius loci*, and that *the gathering is taken care of by the language of architecture.*”<sup>116</sup> Therefore, *Genius Loci* with its phenomenological approach was also intended to discuss the language of architecture. In this way, the note, the article and the book all appear as translations of an initial idea, the idea of the language of architecture that was crucial in Norberg-Schulz’s theoretical development. Much remains to be said about this concept and the scope of this report does not allow this topic the attention it deserves, but this note underscores the key role changing notions of language played in Norberg-Schulz’s theoretical formation throughout his life. In this way, tracing his use of language as a metaphor, also illuminates an important shift in his career and outlines a continuity. Semiotics and phenomenology may come and go, but to Norberg-Schulz, the language of architecture remains.

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<sup>116</sup> Norberg-Schulz, “Kahn, Heidegger and the Language of Architecture”, 46.

# Conclusion

In an interview Norberg-Schulz once admitted “to being misunderstood most of the time”<sup>117</sup> which, according to himself, resulted in undue criticism. In light of the discussion of this report, it could rather be suggested that instead of misunderstanding, his peers were simply lost in translation. Under the heading “Translation”, Norberg-Schulz appears open ended and layered, rather than rigid and general. He is not as ‘universal’ a thinker as has sometimes been supposed, but on the contrary creates a very particular kind of space, that accommodates considerable richness and variety of thought, through simultaneous use of many different languages. In this way, translation has highlighted new aspects of Norberg-Schulz’s work, refuted previous criticism, as my own film project, and supported others, as Otero-Pailos’s Photo[historio]graphy. Considering Norberg-Schulz as a translator and focusing on translation, translocation and transposition, has therefore proven itself fruitful.

Norberg-Schulz as a translator, was a pro-constructive traitor, who often allowed himself certain liberties. In the document, translation appears to reconcile two distinctive lines of thought: Heidegger and Semper. As suggested, their theories played a pivotal role in informing Norberg-Schulz’s approach, yet his own definition of language, differs from theirs. To Heidegger, language was the Origin, in contrast to Semper’s understanding of language as an impulsive expression of feeling. Norberg-Schulz’s conception of the language of architecture changes in the course of his career. The meaning of ‘language’ appears to be in constant flux and it could be suggested that his theoretical formation is an outcome of the fact that he takes on the role as a translator. Through a process of translation, phenomenology and architecture meet.

Considering Norberg-Schulz as a translator has strong implications for understanding architecture. The introductory quote of this report, explains architecture as born from the dialectic

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<sup>117</sup> Thom Gorst, “The Language of Memory: Christian Norberg-Schulz talked at the RIBA; Thom Gorst reports, “ in *Building Design*, 841 (1987), 2.

of departure and return. This is best illustrated through his peculiar reversal of the Vitruvian legacy, as illustrated with the two examples *Villa Stousland II* and *Planetveien 14*, where international stone was translated into Norwegian wooden conditions. To Norberg-Schulz this reversal is urgent, as it would recover place and create an architecture which allows for dwelling. Design, as gathering, is a process of translation where elements are exported, imported and preserved. The dialectic of departure and return, as in the mobility of architectural motifs or his own journeys, gives birth to architecture, in which architectural outcome is not inferior to its precursor, but simply different and something constructive might emerge. The discoveries from the Norberg-Schulz Archive opens a new gateway into Norberg-Schulz's authorship and emphasizes the various ways he understood a language of architecture and developed a theory from a multitude of places and languages.

As an enquiry, this report is the groundwork for further research and much remains to be uncovered about Norberg-Schulz authorship. His relation to Semper is in many ways unclear and should be investigated further, as with Norberg-Schulz's concept of the language of architecture, which figures throughout his career. Above all, this report stresses how a theory of translation could be used to explore many disciplines, including architecture, providing vital insight to complicated processes of communication, understanding and development.

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