

Approaching our dog.

Transformation design –
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1 Transformation design – why? Motivation.

Why transformation? Why design? The motivation to use the capabilities of design to establish a post-growth society arises not solely from the pretty picture vision of a ‘better’ world, but at the same time starts pragmatically in the here and now: A ‘better’ world corresponds not necessarily with the individual’s interpretation of a ‘better’ life. And this is most likely the crux of the issue: it is where we might find our dogⁱ, the guardian of the key to transformation.

We have been promised everywhere that in order to have a better life we’ll just have to consume more. Design plays a big part in the solidification of these conditions. The logic of the lazy dog is clear: Not only will consumed products bring us happiness, we are also stimulating the economy.

Based on this argument we can rest easy. If we follow this logic though we are destroying our socially created, natural and therefore limited livelihood, the ‘context of life’. This is first and foremost what enables life, including a ‘better’ one. How can we get closer to the dog, who tricks us and who thinks this ‘better’ world is too complex anyway? Who is not prepared to even start a change because it wouldn’t lead anywhere, and especially not a ‘better’ life. From the perspective of the dog basket it doesn’t look too dramatic.

Let us dare in our deliberations about the possibilities and functions of transformation design: As a trial, let’s send our dog outside, to sniffle and search and look around in the world. He isn’t just lazy and idle, he is also a searcher, a hunter, a finder. As designers we ask ourselves in view of the urgent questions of our time: How can we focus on the context of life instead of just products that are strewn around and over which our society increasingly stumbles?

Now lets consider what the dog, which we are dis-covering, really loves: Comforts. Comforts, often thoughtless consumption and mobility, based on the depletion of the resources that feed them. The dog might not realise this at first, in his basket, with his eyes closed. Before him, others suffer who have gradually been robbed of their livelihood. But even our dog is not free from suffering, and especially

not filled with happiness. The pains of the overfed dog in his basket are manifold, but don't force him (yet) to take action. Diabetes, rheumatism, gout, depression, various addictive drug dependencies and other gluttonous aches and pains make it even less attractive for him to leave his little basket. Not least because his puppies suffer from neurodermatitis he appreciates the design of the health system including its product-oriented structure. At the hairdressers he reads about flood victims and war refugees, this affects him so he walks home and – settles himself back into his basket. Where does transformation design begin in this case? Transform the health system? Transform war? The basket? The dog?

Let's further investigate where we can find our dog.

We imagine him to be surrounded by comforts. They are making our undertaking quite tricky. Transformation design, which puts itself at the service of the notion of a post-growth society, can't have its eye on the abrupt relinquishment of the comforts of the Western lifestyle, the dog's life. What are these comforts? And do they make us happier?

What is contained in the wish to own a new smartphone? What is concealed in the attraction to use it constantly? What is behind it all?

If, on a design level, we can understand what is hidden here, if we could literally dis-cover the dog, we wouldn't be doomed any longer to design gadgets, which drain our resources, make us tolerate exploitative working conditions and force us to buy products that destroy capital and time, but instead could... yes – what?

If we consider social transformation from a design perspective, we'll find ourselves in two movements: The first reaches far towards a vision of a post-growth society – what it could be like, how it could be designed. That is design work. The second movement is considerably smaller, more delicate and being modestly carried out: Looking towards one's neighbour, a fellow human being, caught up in his desire for comforts. Social transformation won't succeed without him and our dog. It is not solely a design vision, but takes place through the cooperation of the many individuals with their many individual dogs that have dug themselves deeply into their comforts and doggedly insist on the justification of the status quo.

Against the background of the post-growth society vision let's now deal with the individual and his comforts – for him this is: Not saving the world, but rather his private happiness. We believe that this is where we'll find our dog. We are starting to scratch and can barely recognise him. He is down in the dumps: exhausted from his dog activities that are based on his position in his basket.

He wastes plenty of lifetime, energy and potential through shopping, the use of technical devices and hanging around in front of the TV. This

makes the dog fat and sluggish, his basket becomes his private sanctuary. The individual, who we depend on if we want transformation, diminishes in his approach to the consumer and in his actions into an operator of programs - not to mention his skills or talents. A common picture: Reduced to a swiping motion he stiffens, equipped with blinkers, at best with a completely receptive attitude. Zero action. Zero point zero transformation. A fixed stare towards the neatly packaged gadget box, an obedient response towards every plea to consume, a stubborn conformity of ones own communications culture to the possibilities of the gadgets and structures of purely commercial logic that follows network offerings, corresponds with holding onto to the so-called progress that has nothing in common with humanism that aims for freedom, but rather amounts to slavery. Are they the comforts?

We have been spending some time with the dog. And we believe indeed that, in terms of transformation, without his discovery, nothing is going to happen. Let us dare to briefly pause and not just examine what we do or consume, or how we behave. Let's ignore those perfectly designed products – including any technical aspects that certainly dominate and direct our daily life. Let's examine what makes us human beings, the parts that the dog does not want to know about. We are entering a slippery slope and bravely question, what we are used to declare as genuinely human achievements. On our search for the discovery of the dog we came across the thought of why, despite all this wonderful progress, we are so sick, so unhappy and so unable to transform. Let's assume happiness can be found somewhere between what we are and what we do, an approximate congruence of the symbolic and meaning, then we can find our dog exactly where things becomes human. And this, we claim, we relinquish more and more. In this we are related to the dog that has traded roaming through the forests with obediently walking on a leash. Both are certainly extremes, neither should be glorified. But polemic should be permitted, just to show what we can find while we dig for the dog: Experience, dirty but beautiful – human gold. If we go treasure hunting for this gold we will realise: We don't have to get our hands dirty anymore to collect a potato. We don't have to sweat anymore while we build our home, nor scream during childbirth or jointly cry while dying. Looking after our smallest, caring for the elderly – and within it the potential, as if sealed in amber, of genuine human experience. This is rapidly being institutionalised and soon maybe even automated: Existence incomplete.

And this offers many creative challenges that could keep us designers busy forever and a day: Apart from products we could design institutions and even its automats, equipped with a promising human face. The more perfect the plastic visage, the more distorted its reality underneath. Do these designed objects really contain the potential for social transformation?

Of course, behind everything hole that our dog has dug, lie famous human achievements. We are capable of a lot, institutions are efficient. That is good and often very handy. Searching for a dog we also learn that a 'better' life still has to be discovered, and therefore a 'better' world. Where is human activity, inspiration, potential? Screaming, sweating, giving birth, bringing up children, caring for the elderly, experiencing death – it can all be, yes, even beautiful, and definitely human. And anyway: decisions and free will? Hogwash says brain research - condition of a potential for humanness we respond.

Humanism – where did it slip to?

No, we don't want to complain, we have to deal with it.

Our motivation is clear – where is the material?

2 Transformationsdesign – womit? Material.

«Only that can be which refers tentatively to more than it already is.»ⁱⁱ
(Bloch, 1975, p. 70).

We believe: experience is it. So we will find our dog through experience. If as designers we have created products meanwhile as well as the behaviour of the individual towards them, of the individual who perceives these products as consumer or user, receives, buys and uses them, then we are turning post-materialistically or trans-materialistically from product to system, from behaviour to experience. We try to take this individual into view and with that the possibility of authentic experience, the capacity to act, creativity. We try to reflect on product independent comfort and to view experiences as artefacts that can be designed.

Transformation design that wants to grab our dog by the collar ceases to work with products, but it works instead with possibilities that turn through their implementation into experiences.

Where it concerns design, unless we mean visual communication or industrial products or other, tangible material, we also use the term 'System'. Is the system the new product? And is this where we will find our dog? Not just design – this term is rampant everywhere, not least as 'system critique', which puts the principal blame on anything that isn't quite right with this world. In our request for social transformation we will attempt a systemic positioning - which, as we will see, will be an ambiguous undertaking typical of creative conducts within systems.

Even though we are expected to view everything critically, we don't agree with a system critique that relieves the individual from his responsibilities. We don't want to butcher the interpretation of Adorno's saying, there is "no real life in the false" (Adorno, 1969, p. 43) by, in the light of the fatality of our attempts, seeking comforts in our false privacy.

Comfort is guaranteed by this false life anyway – but for how much longer and for whom? Even if much goes wrong inside 'the system', from a design perspective we can still imagine proper conduct within it. To think of transformation as an object of design we use the term 'system', not so much as viewed result of a design process, but rather as scene, stage, road network, where we can look for our dog and where we think he might be caught up.

The system therefore turns into a permeably perceived playing field of designer concepts and planning competence, into an area for treasure hunters.

If we want to capture our dog, and therefore the individual, by what it means for him to be comfortable, then we will have to think about what specifically design can shape. In this maybe (still) false system we might be able to realise part-systems where real, in our case authentic, experiences can emerge. What we can consequently design does basically not differ from classic design objects. We design cognition, communication, resulting in cooperation. Only through this triad will we be able to actually bring about transformation and get our dog to dance. Transformation, we believe, does not start with a master plan but with the cognitive composure of the individual, inter-subjectively transmitted – discursive through communication, creatively through cooperation.

How can we cooperatively renounce the paradigm of growth? Only if the individual creates original self-aware experiences that are therefore independent of the production of comforts. The self-awareness of the individual, equipped with the finest senses, is placed on wobbly legs because of a current focus on surface programming. Our dog rolls into a small ball and snores. A distorted perception of the environment and our shared world, and a neither subject nor object appropriate action in a global context, expresses itself in a shortening of perspective, communicative scarcity, human impoverishment. Is there another way? Where is design? Dog, do something, reflect – cognition! While we potter around, when we deal with matter, when we communicate, deal with others, we have the chance to become aware of the essentiality of matter and our social immediacy. No theory can impart this, no app can replace it. Where it concerns the design of a post-growth society, it is about the whole issue. What arrives in a pathetic fashion is, rationally speaking, quite plain: With this realisation it is hardly possible to create an image of a fellow human being and nature that makes it possible to view it solely as a means and not also as a purpose in itself. This insight is of course not new.ⁱⁱⁱ And: It doesn't seem to help anything! Our dog continues to sleep. What philosophy, literature, social, humanities and natural sciences have recognised and communicated does not lead to the desired paradigm shift.

For transformation design this can mean that it can position itself at a different, design specific point: Not through the realisation of experience but through experience itself. What do we mean by that?

An example: Human rights don't get realised through formulation and demands on the political stage, but through the actual realisation of human dignity – of others. Actual experiences with your fellow citizens, concrete dealings with them, challenge the paradigm of speed and growth, not the Kyoto protocol. Theoretical dancing? Not possible.

Let us look further into our design material: To design the potential of experience as a base for social transformation, we are considering objects that we can design: Social environments, relationships and contexts. Important here is the design of relationships, rather than the design of things, gadgets and institutions that we use to communicate, but relationships themselves. We attempt this by way of enabling experience and generating potential for discourse – with continued focus on the triad of cognition, communication and cooperation, which rhythmically underlie the dance of our dog.

The enabling of experience takes place in virtual space. Virtual space doesn't mean the world wide web, which sucks up our experience, but literally the virtual space of possibilities where the experiences of the individual unfold as existential realisations. The human with his intrinsically projective disposition is always ahead of himself and moves openly and permanently around in this virtual space. He does not have to forcibly lose himself completely within it, he can find his way in his virtual movements, especially regarding cooperation, to which he has been fatally doomed. This is his opportunity – his good fortune. And even here we will find our dog. Searching for good fortune and a 'better' life he withdraws into his world of comfort because the terrain is so unclear. The size of the space of possibilities tends to confuse us on an existential level – biographies have cracks, life stories follow curves, nearly all role patterns appear to be melting – masks cease to function. Design certainly does take part in the establishment of new masks. We build perfectly designed alternative role patterns that are beautiful to look at and whose demands we are failing – even if we consume everything that is deemed necessary for the fulfilment of endlessly new role requirements. This failure is luxurious in comparison. Let us dare to take a broader view: Elsewhere, self-proclaimed despots are cutting a path of violence and oppression in the name of lifestyle conformity and cementation of roles, compressing the space of possibilities down to a small box into which existence has to fold itself. Not even failure is a possibility. To what degree does our dog get wind of this? His snout is sunk into the usual daily fare, what remains is the wobbly global ground, onto which he rests, undetected – having enough problem

zones of his own. The basket that has been woven by children's hands? A dog always sleeps well in it. Even if the possibility of failure as such comes across as comparatively luxurious, even if we wallow in the seemingly luxury of free choice, based on something, that we are used to call prosperity: The individual space of possibilities here does not seem to be developed further, movements within it are not getting freer. As Cassirer clearly worked out, "at the front of the world processes" (Bloch, 1959, p. 230) there seem to be two paths on offer: the hardening path of conditions or the softening path that pays tribute to permanent insecurity – dictatorship or freedom.^{iv}

To move around in the net of relationships by letting go of the old masks, the emergence from old roles not the cognition accompanied question "who am I?", not the question of status and acknowledgement as a "what do I have?" is brought into view, but the question that initiates cooperation: "what am I going to do and with whom?" Do you want to dance with us, dog?

3 Transformation design – what in? System.

There is a discipline that deals with things such as the space between trees. It is called ecology, is relatively new, and most of us haven't yet learnt to think within its categories. Because those that think ecologically don't understand things but facts, not objects but systems. (Flusser, 1998, p. 208)

New fields of activity for design and new design products certainly arise from this human questioning: Design products that don't cement social relations but soften them. Artefacts/ design products, which sometimes aren't tangible anymore but get realised, eco-logically, through relationships. New design tasks arise based on these assumptions around cognition and communication as enabling components of transformation-in-cooperation.

Regarding cognition we see our effective range in the enabling of experience, regarding cooperation the design of systems and networks come to the fore – we will call it the design of ecology. In this case we understand ecology not just as something that we associate with the colour green, but rather as a system structure that makes transformation possible. We see ecology as relationships within a system that is based on cooperation. Designing ecology starts by imagining space, network, cognition, communication and cooperation as one, and, as a designer, to consciously move around in this systemic entanglement, knowing that he/she can't fully see through any of it.

Despite the conscious knowledge of the fact that it is nearly impossible to comprehensively design all relationships, transformation design still likes to tamper with it. We can forget about a complete control over the design process – this fairytale of omnipotence might be attractive but it won't lead to anything. We are certainly still trying to understand what designers actually do. With that in mind we are so far moving along a notional meta level, where we are attempting to conceptually abstract activities and design objects. We tear them from their tangles – and therefore change them. In practice this involves taking the design object, manipulating it, informing it, fiddling with it, playing with it. Transformation design entangles itself in the system, not so that it can grasp it, but in order to design it. Transformation is unlikely to succeed by abstracting single elements of a system. Transformation design transcends form.

To not be form fixated but to think eco - logically means for design to be ecologically active, meaning to create relations and relationships.

Projects that, in the broadest possible sense of social transformation, focus on a post-growth society, are essentially about designing transformation itself, rather than (just) communicate its gaze towards it. To design transformation towards a post-growth society and to

create it is a complex process that involves numerous stakeholders. They neither always know of each other's existence, nor are they capable of keeping each other informed. Design is heading into quite a hazy affair here.

Let us be specific and examine a system that appears to be in a lousy mess: The global food system. By dealing with the design of social transformation towards a post-growth society we find that food-creating systems are important for future global developments. Apart from the urgency of dealing with the question of how we use resources, the production, processing, preparation and intake of food lies on a constitutional basis level of transformation. Our dog has to eat after all. If he isn't currently asleep. Systems of food production have a powerful morphological effect, reason alone to be of designer interest. They leave their mark on and design landscapes, economic cycles, feelings, health. Where it ceases to primarily be an issue of survival, nutrition itself has become a designer product, including as a form of demonstrative luxury and habitual characteristic of a lifestyle.

With all these system entanglements that cloud experience, and in which our dog is caught through immobility, we next discover a tricky situation. Global food production does not look like post-growth at all. Looking at figures there is much that is growing. Looking deeper: It is based on death. Producers suffer existentially from a discount-driven pressure on prices and a lacking appreciation of their work. If we view this on a global level, we can see a large proportion of the world's population starve while we are confronted by an issue of justification of those that live in abundance, and who either insist on various special diets as a form of self-optimisation or suffer from a range of industry food dependent illnesses. Nothing of what the individual calls a 'better' life can prosper here. With regard to this problem we could develop new drugs, or new programs for the support of the so-called developing countries, or new brochures for health insurance companies that explain it all. But is this where we will find our dog, we ask ourselves, our overfed dog on his leash, who doesn't know what it means to dance? He knows to appreciate his system entanglement that keeps him blind and is grateful. He his satisfied with a society that is capable of providing him with sufficient insulin injections. He doesn't wonder anymore why he might have diabetes in the first place. Condition of possibility: Wonder and dance belong together.

Three times a day, our dog drags himself to his food bowl. What it contains distinguishes itself in colour only from its nicely designed packaging. He doesn't know anything else about it. After his feed he is tired and lies down for a nap. There is not much happening in terms of actual competence. Where does that leave our request for the enabling

experiences of the autonomous creation of comforts? He is hardly helped by a promisingly packaged instant soup – nor is social transformation. The instinct for one's own needs has been robbed by everyday social life, even with the help of professional designs. This has resulted in frayed identities, split by the unrealised demands of parallel identities waiting to be fulfilled. Nothing really grows here anymore – apart from a numbers conglomerate, which at best generates intellectual joy. Happiness does not grow alongside profit – neither globally nor individually. That is something we at least attempt to pursue! But competence is lacking, not just when dealing with food products, but generally the competence in dealings, and we blindly follow even the smallest trend. Competence for the evaluation of the quality and preparation of foodstuffs is mostly out of the window. This happened quickly.

The purely “what tastes good?” does not suffice anymore, because sensors have been clouded by industry food and an exaggerated expectation of what a food product is capable of delivering as a lifestyle product. Cooking skills have ceased to be part of the pedagogic base equipment and jointly experienced family life. In a short timeframe, the competence to distinguish good food from bad has mostly been lost. This equally applies to many other areas; where we hand over competence and lose knowledge based on experience. If you can't recognise the characteristics of the material, you can't really deal with it or intuitively perceive its quality. It is only possible to learn about the characteristics of any material, including food, through interpersonal relationships but only by actively dealing with it, through experience. Experience seems to slip through the fingers of our frantically lived daily lives. Corresponding with the primacy of growth and speed the multitude of roles the individual plays is appreciated. Everybody is confused. Nobody is happy. A case for design! How can we use the tools of design here? Ourselves caught up in global food systems we declare, stubbornly searching for humanness, experience enablement as a matter close to the heart of social transformation ambitions and with it the autonomy of nutrition. Why is it going so badly?

The promise, to satisfy attached masks, of the optimisation of individual diets brings with it the expensive marketing of high-tech foods. This is growth.

Our dog eats and sleeps and hopes for glossy fur that will conceal his neurodermatitis. Even design keeps busy through the generation and marketing of roles and their accompanying products. We continue to dig, looking for experience. Transformation design therefore does not create products but instead designs and implements subsystems in

which experience is possible. A design task in and for a post-growth society is to develop social scenarios in which it is, in regards to the above example system, again made possible to cook at home and eat in peace – regularly. Oh dear! The ‘stay-at-home bonus’! Great visions translated to a smaller scale don’t sound terribly sexy.

Let us dig a little deeper in our treasure hunt to find out how we can escape this box of rigid conditions. Even if it might at first look ugly, let’s try it the other way around. After all, we designers also happily played our part in the degeneration of experience. The design task, regarding our expectation to enable experience, would not mean setting a new trend that pretends to fill the hole that was left by the experience-lacking feeling of emptiness, the launching of a lifestyle product that silences the search for meaning, but instead it could for example mean to imagine the actual compatibility of family, career and good nutrition and to install systems in which this becomes possible. This doesn’t mean the design of, with a logic that is appropriate for economic growth, more efficient food disposition systems, more ‘intelligent’ refrigerators, more flexible childcare, but rather an advancement of social togetherness, appropriate for the logic of ecological post-growth, that values experience and knows that this requires time and space.

Let us venture further to address intuition as a genuine human tool of decision-making. This is about dancing...

Where we don’t want to rely on statistics and algorithms anymore, on brain research and economic analysis, we can look at what humans have always practised relatively successfully, and where we are simultaneously approaching the problem of the incoherence of reflection and action, as well as the attempted identity of the symbolic and the actual.

Our dog is buried where the potential to experience disappears and, if he asks his intuition, he gets confused. To rely on ones intuition even while designing certainly opens one to attacks. But even numbers can make mistakes and we don’t always have time to wait for them anyway. Reality moves on while we are still calculating. There lies, we think, design’s strength:

Designing over and across the gaps of knowledge. It is often based on intuition. To keep intuition alive we depend on a manifold of experiences.

It’s all about the sausage. Crunch time.

4 Transformation design – Where to? Product.

“There isn’t a proper way to stretch out in the wrong bathtub...”
(Mittelmeier, 2010).

...or is there? At the start we claimed: If we can discover our dog, we won’t any longer be doomed to design devices that drain our resources, tolerate exploitative working conditions and buy products that destroy capital and time, but instead could... yes – what? What we attempted to show next: New products aren’t the answers to our questions and won’t help us to find our dog. He can be found through new behaviours, new agents, new configurations. If, as designers, we strive for social change we will no longer be designing products and the behaviour of the consumer towards them but will instead take part in social transformation projects, develop sub-systems and enable the experiences of the individual in it. Concerning the individual, these systems are initially imaginable as locally based projects that act on a small scale and are in perspective connected with trans-regional, often global themes. This corresponds with the dual-direction structure of transformation design in the development of a ‘better’ world and a focus on the small, the next, the neighbour.

The result of our above deliberations about the motivation and material of transformation design are projects of social transformation such as a home birthing centre, an Alpine dairy and a communal garden.^v

Designers were involved in these projects, professional designers and lay people, knowingly or unknowingly. They share the creation of something that initially couldn’t be recognised and classified as a design object, and are producing something that can’t be measured – experience, comfort, autonomy – invisible dance floors for discovered and escaped dogs.

Phew – the designer heart is starting to stumble. Birth pools and cheese making tubs? One has to pull oneself together if one wants to write about social transformation and ends up in a home birthing centre, the Alpine dairy or in a communal garden. Are we being serious? Yes. Focussing on the individual – this is a real challenge; the search for experience and autonomy is really complex. What can be achieved, how can one even generate relevance, something that at least vain designers are quite attached to. It has to be worth it what one is doing, and preferably even look good. Post-growth, even designers have to make sacrifices in terms of comforts and kudos. We dare to risk the focus on the small wheel in a large system, and immediately this huge contradiction becomes apparent that we have to deal with and change: Design with social processes, like in our case the running of a birthing

centre and the re-activating of a village dairy, the installation of a communal garden, endangers the self-image of the designer and simultaneously has the potential to enhance it. What do designers in this type of project do differently than the birthing mothers and midwives, the cheese makers and Alpine farmers, hobby gardeners and social workers? Or, more precisely: How do they do it? What does the aim to creatively take part in areas that so far have not explicitly been the domain of design, mean for the design profession?

Who has design knowledge available? Don't all humans, from a design theoretical perspective, freely create permanent social transformations anyway – and actually faster than professional design would be able to keep up with? As simple as these projects look for the time being and as redundant as the role of the designer initially seems, they are just as multi-layered, including through the networks, which they are able to erect and the design tasks, which they generate. They are not one-dimensional. The birthing centre is not just about birth, the Alpine dairy not just about cheese and the communal garden not just about vegetable. It is always about a diversity of culture, about heterogeneity of lifestyles, about pluralism and participation – and about the planning of all these, about design.

Of course, we can't quite live without products (yet). But if we design products – then preferably those that are attuned to the human way of being, that generate experiences and also make them visible. Where processes, manufacturing techniques and included resources have to hide behind the marketing screen, the focus on the designed object solidifies, and it either works and is available or is broken and being thrown out. Fully packaged, narratively air-tight products aren't just differently received than incomplete, unfinished, narrating objects, but also work back to the responsiveness of the viewer and the user, who shies away from handling, comprehending, understanding to operating on a predominantly uniform user interface. The experience with such a thing becomes shallow and barely useful, we think, for social transformation. The result is a “product character of reified thought that feels most secure within the finiteness of the past“ (Bloch, 1975, p. 20). The dog is happy about his new dog blanket and continues to snooze.

The question for design in a post-materialistic era arises of how “beautiful things” can be created “without being captured by materialism that is usually linked to creative activities” (Koren, 1995, p. 9). We considered a solution for design in the development of experiences with a focus on communication and cooperation that needs

to be supported, as well as a solution for humans which aren't primarily or even entirely consumers anymore. Design has the capacity to create the awareness that many of the experienced defects can't be solved by consumerism. This can only be experienced. Design can therefore also make its contribution in a post-growth economy (Paech, 2009), by raising the awareness that something is missing that can't be bought or calculated, but only experienced.^{vi} To sharpen the focus and sensitivity for the rampant degeneration of genuinely human experience can likewise be a task for design, just like it has so far focussed on consumable products and has been able to awaken consumer desire. Experience can't be serially produced like an industry product – once the accolade for good design. Experience is never completed, it usually is uncontrollable, organic, individual, in constant flux. Post-materialistically, design releases what it used to love: universal models, control, finished products.

If usage led to breakage or wear-out of beautiful designs, the engagement of the participants instead intensifies the experience. The transient, hazy, ambiguous is in stark contrast to design that in its modern tradition just doesn't want to be ambiguous and contradictory. If design used to be “completed physicality”, in the design of enabling experience it strives for “completed immateriality” (Koren, 1995, pp. 26-28), and within that does not become abstract, but rather concrete, concrete in a complete sense: Concrete in the permanent lively emergence and mutation of experience in a world, in which too much stuff is moving around.

Found our dog? Knowledge gained from experience, we feel to have discovered while looking for our dog, will be the deciding factor for the future of transformation design. The emphasis here is not on the big gesture, the universal, the generally accepted, the way modernism implored, but rather on an inconspicuous and sustainable zigzag^{vii}, digging and burrowing. It appears that design needs to be humble, certainly not self-important. It should renounce noisy victories and should distinguish itself by giving an unassuming impression.^{viii} Design therefore stops being a fetish, stops being a secret product, it loses its cult status, it is normal. And this is the best that design can be: normal, common property. Our dog lifts his dirty snout into the air and wags his tail – slowly.

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Notes

ⁱ Translator's note: In the English translation it is not immediately apparent, as is in the German original, why the author has chosen the dog as a metaphor and not a hippopotamus. She explained in a discussion, that she does this to allude to the crux of the matter. In Southern Germany this can also be called 'where the dog has been buried'. The term 'Hundling' (doggy person) is used for clever, resourceful and smart people. Another level of meaning reveals itself in the implicit allusion to Goethe: Faust I 'Des Pudels Kern' (the poodle's centre). The dog is also to some extent, through his double disposition as an originally wild but nowadays predominantly domesticated and loyal animal, a design object itself. The author also had the film 'Die Höhle des Gelben Hundes' (the lair of the yellow dog) by Byambasuren Davaa in mind.

ⁱⁱ Translation of this quotation by Rainer E. Zimmermann, all other quotations from literature by Elke Prielipp.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ernst Cassirer describes the progressive possibilities of human culture (Cassirer, 1944) as well as the disastrous (Cassirer, 1946).

^{iv} In the complete false life every niche, which attempts to lessen or negate this falseness, is doomed for failure, yes, even plays into the hands of falseness because it provides an illusion of the possibility of a real life, which is not possible, because life, the way it is right now, is completely false." (Mittelmeier, 2010). With this design task in mind, in terms of transition design we also have the possibility to buckle the bathtub through insistent stretching.

^v In the following projects the author is engaged as a transformation designer: www.geburtshaus-kassel.de, www.mach-was-stiftung.de/projekte/forstfeldgarten/. The Alpine dairy has been brought „back to life“ by Martin Bienerth: www.sennerei-andeer.ch

^{vi} The slogan of sustainability needs to be debunked. It often serves as a cover to maintain existing conditions. Growth and industrial economy in itself aren't in question, but are only wrapped in green (Paech, 2009 & Hubenthal, 2012). Transformation only happens when we don't wrap things nicely anymore, but when "society and existence (...) grab themselves by their roots..." (Bloch, 1959, p. 1628).

^{vii} Michael Wilkens supports "the designs of the donkey, who moves around in the "zigzag" which was so despised by Corbusier (Wilkens, 2005).

^{viii} Peter Handke clearly verbalised the call for the renunciation of victories: "Play the game. Endanger the work even more (...) Be clever, get involved and despise victory. Don't observe, don't examine, but be watchfully prepared for the signs (...) Decide only when excited. Fail calmly" (Handke, 1981).