



Courtesy of the National Library

The synecdoche is a prime vehicle to conceive what we call the *work of time* in *semiotic* terms: that is, time as *semiosis*. At a superficial level, the Gausta Peak—that we see outside the windows, in the background—is a part of the photographic whole determining where we are: *Gaustablikk Hotel*.

The *only place* that had a pool, at the time the photo was shot in 1971. The female gaze, instantiated by the woman stepping up from the pool—could either be one approval of game and fun, within the limits of propriety, or one of sexual interest (and even arousal). A male in the back holds the hindsight.

His gaze catches the scene from behind—he is accompanying a small girl in the children’s pool—then couple in the chair are more passive witnesses. Though seated according to leg-postures that are proper to women and men, at that time. The woman with the ball: her hairdo will not take splashes.



Geelmeyden's pocket atlas published in Oslo 1893, courtesy of the National Library

If intercepted as part of the present — i.e., through a synecdoche—the ‘work of time’ features that aspect of the world that *never* repeats itself. Which is why repetition is essential to reveal what is the *substance* of mediation. That is, the **X**-factor emerging as the material counterpoint to repetition.

‘This moment will not come back’ says the top photograph [*recto*]; but also photography in general. The *specific* moment lived by the people in the photo: *this* moment will not come back. The *generic* moment arrested by the photograph: *that* moment will not come back. It becomes *readable*.

A similar duality is expressed in the Japanese cultural notion of *wabi sabi*: **1)** *wabi*—the parsimony & dearth involved in celebrating the moment; **2)** *sabi*—the solitude of the moment even as it underscores the presence of others. Hence, *wabi sabi* triangulates with the work of time, as does *photography*.

The elusiveness of the compound notion of *wabi sabi*—if we attempt to grasp it as a concept—derives from this: since **X**-factor, where *wabi* and *sabi* converge, is conceptually *between* *wabi* and *sabi*. But since it is a notion linked to a certain *life-practice*, it does not have to be conceived.

It suffices that it is *intercepted*. In the West, we are more incline to *separate* notions as these, than to *conjugate* them (and getting practised at this). It is likely an opportunity missed to exercise interception as an act of discernment. Terms of the *wabi sabi* kind that keep triangulating and evolve at it.

Since such interception articulates from two vantage points—*wabi* and *sabi*—that *cannot* be reduced to one, it produces a stereo-effect at which the **X**-factor will emerge and evolve at the *interstice*. Evidently, the work of time can do without us, our presence and its presence to us. But we can stage it.

This staging does not produce it but has a *shaping*—transformative—*impact*. Both *wabi* and *sabi* point to the **X**-factor (hence there is a double synecdoche), while the **X**-factor points *beyond* them. The one (*wabi*) denotes a *position* of austerity. The other (*sabi*) connotes the *situation*.

Accordingly, *wabi sabi* could propose an aesthetics for a *positioned* and *situated* way of taking knowledge of the world. One in which the imagery is *not* self-serving, but in the service of *flight-lines*: such that follow in the wake of sustained effort and dedication. A difference that makes a difference.

Time works on itself, and is in this sense automatic: it entails a memory that may/not be in our favour. It can evolve into a growing *mesh*. Or, contrarily, it may evolve into a conceptual *seed*. The bringing of the mesh to seed, is an idea of repairing the world with deep roots in the *kabbalah* (*tikkun olam*).

No matter the direction, the work of time is *deep*: that is, there is an aspect of trivial *daily* matters that is *deep* and requires *depth* (psychology); there are spiritual *moments* given to *deep* learning (philosophy); there is work to link the two with the work of time (mediation). All of it in our back yards.