



Wilhelm Bendtz, the Waagepetersen family (1836)

A methodological problem at the margins of the historical query of design & art (DA), springs from this question: how can we work on DA with an *historical* angle, when taking into consideration of those aspects of DA featuring *different time-layers* (to some extent working as 'time-machines').

That is when it is the interaction between multiple time-layers that constitute the whole we are interested in. But with which methodological approach if not historical? The *part-whole relations* between discrepant/discrete time-zones within a painting makes it available for a *mereological* analysis.

What is the *part-whole* relationship between the *future* (what comes next?), the *past* (how was it before?), the *current* (what's cooking?) and the *present* (how are we doing?)? This is the *expanded field* of DA-studies defining *anthropomy*. These are evidently also questions from the C19 lockdown.



Edward Hopper, Western Motel, (1957)

Wilhelm Bendz's painting of the Waagepetersen (W) family (1836) invites a mereological analysis: in the relation between the different parts of the motif a surprising whole is brought about, in which the use of templates, live models and creative invention of forms alternate. A whole of 4 parts.

The parental couple is likely painted from live models, the children from templates (small adults), the frontal chamber of the study encompass art, history and science, while the antechamber way may perhaps see today as Altermodern (to use Nicolas Bourriaud's term—the other modernity).

These four parts of the composition in the painting may be seen as different time-zones: **1)** the W-parents as the future; **2)** the W-children as the past, **3)** the study as the current; **4)** the antechamber as the present. Can we develop an anthroponomic vantage point transposing the image as an episteme?

That is, an ontological leap unto the realities featuring in the painting, to come out with propositions on its epistemic claims. The steps are similar to the German hermeneutic method of *Auslegung* and *Einfühlen*, but these are often not included into what we call interpretation, and deserve a fresh start.

The approach could also be coined as phenomenological, in the sense of proposing an analysis of interception: arguably a major feature of Reinhart Koselleck's *saddle-time*. Note how in the saddle-point of the current feature an exchange: the children are old, parents young, and present Altmodern.

Or, precisely: the makeshift *come-and-go* between *simplicity* and *ornament* in the 19th century, in a current possibility of multiple alternative futures.

With the provisional simplicity of modernism as a possibility at the number of saddle time transitions, -thresholds, in the past. We were always modern.

Now the purpose of the present query is not to propose an historical project on simplicity, but to investigate the transition from the current to the present as one of vertical motion (ascent/descent), alternatively moving sideways. For instance, growing up suggests the vertical motion of moving upwards.

In the saddle time of Wilhelm Bendz the children's interest in tales and things past, shifts to the adults taking charge of the future (and embodying that to the next generation of children). Broadly becoming achievers and not leaving up to one's children to make up for past failures: children as future.

The success at bypassing these limits will find its metric in the *current* and in the *present*. The current taking stock of all ongoing transactions—as in the W-family's finances (wine trade), in the arts and in scientific knowledge. But what might be the metric of upwards/downwards movement in the present?

Narrowed down, one could reduce the question of what design is and does, to this. However, there is an expanded field of design in which the *current*, *past* and *future* define the saddle-points relative to what the possible alternative interceptions of what we call the *present*. An *anthroponomic* angle.