Aesthetic Communication

Ole Thyssen

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Also by Ole Thyssen

BUSINESS ETHICS AND ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

Aesthetic Communication

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When procreancy draws near the beautiful
it grows genial and blithe, and birth follows swiftly
on conception. But when it meets with ugliness it is
overcome with heaviness and gloom.

Plato, *Symposium,* 206d

Preface

There is nothing new about aesthetics. As long as organizations have existed, they have made use of aesthetic tools. Kings and popes have erected great buildings and decorated them with images and balconies. Priests and politicians have chanted and wavered between flattering and threatening tones. Warriors have puffed themselves up with animal hides, horns, and terrifying masks and adorned their axes and cannons. Men made themselves larger and stronger; women have covered or uncovered themselves, dyed and bleached themselves. When Julius Caesar stumbled and fell to the ground upon landing in Africa, he covered it up in the eyes of his superstitious soldiers, who were ready to see omens in anything, by quickly fabricating a tale: 'Africa, I embrace you.'

Modern organizations are also intimately familiar with the use of aesthetic tools. They compete with magnificent headquarters, fill the public space with logos and half-naked models, send their directors to courses on how to deal with the multi-headed media-monster, swathe ordinary goods with beautiful and alluring wraps, and allure with scents and colours, shades and textures to fill our senses and empty our pocketbooks.

Aesthetics is used to programme people, so that, through their own urges, they help promote the life of the organization. A powerful aesthetic moment is not allowed to stand alone but must be inseminated and filled with the future. It becomes a time crystal that connects the present with the past and the future. This is where art is distinguished from craft. For an organization cannot use Aristotle's claim that pleasure is a whole that closes around itself in the present and does not contain any movement toward something else.[1]

Nor can it use Plato's dream of an eternal possession of the beautiful.[2] From all sides, the speech, the brochure, the reception desk, the building, and designer objects accost us and all our senses, attract and repulse and, in time, gain an automaticity, so that, along with the impact effect, there arises another effect that we can call familiarity, which has penetrated down into invisible, emotional layers.

So aesthetics is an old friend. Why spend any time on it? The answer to this question must take a detour through *decision*, because organizational management deals with decisions that must be able to be justified. Some justifications are objective, having to do with facts or presumed facts. So we talk about *knowledge management*, which is not the theme of this book. Other justifications are normative, having to do with values, explicit or tacit. So we talk about *values management*, which is not the theme of this book, either. And still other justifications have to do with *form* – with the way decisions are made, with the way the organization communicates, and with the way its products, buildings, and interiors are shaped.

With form, we step into the area of aesthetics and this book. We explain what aesthetic tools are and how they are used by organizations. Even though aesthetics is nothing new, it is not every day that the relationship between aesthetics and organization is given an overall, principled treatment.

From time immemorial, it has been noted that communication can be strengthened or weakened with the help of form, whether through the materials, colours, intuitions or sounds. This strengthening loses itself in biology and the origin of species in which animals by colour, puffed-up size, or mimicry have made themselves or failed to make themselves known in their environment. In every picture-book about stone-age society, you find ornamentation, masks, ceremonial dress, impressive buildings, and ritual magic that take form not from claims or principles but have to do with making an impression.

To make an impression requires a coding, so a distinction is made between two sides that are presumed to be known. If the colour red does not signal danger, as opposed to other colours, there is no point in turning up in red, whether you are a toad or a suburban housewife. If size does not signal power, it is meaningless to erect great public buildings. If off-road vehicles had no particular meaning, it would be pointless to drive around in them in the big city. And if people were not receptive to rhythm, beauty, and mellifluousness, the way priests, politicians, and lawyers present their material would be a matter of indifference.

Such effects make a difference. 'Aesthetics is powerful,' it may be said straight out,[3] while others advocate a 'Dionysian transformative power', which makes the recipient capable of re-finding the primitive joy that is also found in pain and destruction.[4] In this book, they will generally be referred to as *aesthetic tools*. This requires a limitation on another front.

When we are talking about aesthetics, it is normally art that springs to mind. But this book does not deal with the relationship between organizations and art. This relationship is an external relationship between two parties who each have their own egoism and who may be able to unite their interests for a certain time. Regardless of how interesting this tepid *folie á deux* might be, I find the use of aesthetic tools, which is a normal part of the normal communication and the normal products of organizations, to be more interesting.

Nor is the theme of this book the use of 'beauty' or 'the sublime' or other brands from classical aesthetic theory by organizations.[5] I have tried to dig down to the root of what it means that people are influenced by aesthetics, that is, attuned by patterns in sensation and meaning. As indicated, the phenomenon is primeval, and even though it is intimately familiar, it is still difficult to express in words, because the aesthetic is not in what is said but in the way it is said. There is an irreparable loss of information, when you try to put into words a certain attunedness, which often lies buried in the body of both a sender and a receiver and, therefore, cannot be described except modestly as 'what feels right' or 'I was captivated'.

Finally, I have consciously avoided linking aesthetics together with what is dangerous or perverse. Art and advertising can cultivate these things, because they have enclosed themselves in a bell-jar in which they are decoupled from normal considerations. Therefore, they are suited to symbolic trials that do not intervene in everyday life. And, therefore, they can pretend they are far more dangerous and perverse than they are and put words such as 'scandal' and 'revolution' to shame. Aesthetically, these things are highly normal, almost banal. They have been a fixed part of the aesthetic programme for the past 200 years.

Applied art is a practical use of aesthetic tools. In order to unfold this theme, I have tried to explain in the book's first – and longest – chapter the essence and effect of aesthetics. This is the book's most theoretical section and can be skipped, if you have no taste for theory. The book's other chapters present six fields in which organizations use aesthetics – in their creation of an image, in their rhetoric, in their narratives, in their design, in their advertising and, finally, in their architecture.

These six fields are linked together as variations on a common theme. Even though there are cross-references, they can be read separately. I have tried to minimize the unavoidable repetitions to which this construction leads.

These six fields are fundamental aesthetic focus areas. All organizations make use of them, consciously or unconsciously, simply for the reason that all communication has an aesthetic dimension – an excess of meaning and effect, which consists of the fact that communication must use sense-based media and take place in time. Even if an organization wants to be irreproachably objective and rejects aesthetics as so much hot air, its products, its letters, its buildings, its cars and interiors are inescapably fashioned and, therefore, show an aesthetic influence and can be read aesthetically.

Since communication is the stuff of which organizations are made and since communication must shape meaning into patterns that can be sensed, an organization cannot shrug off aesthetics, even if it had such a perverse desire.

It is my hope that I have succeeded in casting some light on this phenomenon called aesthetics and the use of aesthetic tools by organizations.

OLE THYSSEN

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1
Organizational Aesthetics

Introduction: the aesthetic gaze

Traditionally, aesthetics has to do with 'the beautiful', which may be found in fine art, applied art, and nature. Traditionally, aesthetics also has to do with the enjoyment that not only art works but also actions and nature can give. The beautiful promotes life, as Kant puts it,[1] while Aristotle many years earlier claimed that '[p]leasure completes the activity not as the inherent state does, but as an end which supervenes as the bloom of youth does on those in the flower of their age'.[2] Later came 'the ugly'. In the following, we shall limit ourselves to looking at the relationship between aesthetics and communication. This requires some explanation.

If we sketch out what communication is in its most naked and simple form, there must be 'something' that is communicated between a sender and a receiver, which we call information. There must also be a movement in which the sender conveys information to the receiver, that is, an utterance. And, finally, the receiver must understand – or misunderstand – the stated information, which we call understanding. Communication is a unity of information, utterance and understanding and, when it is implemented, the sender and the receiver must decide what they then wish to do. This simple model may be endlessly refined. That will not happen here.

Communication presupposes that the sender and the receiver are not in spontaneous contact. If they were, communication would be superfluous. Therefore, communication takes place in this way: the sender encodes the information in a medium that both the sender and the receiver can sense by sound or light or body, whereupon the sender decodes what was encoded. We shall not grapple with the problem of whether the encoding corresponds to the decoding. What is crucial is that communication inevitably works with a complex of sensation and meaning. This may be put another way: communication works with signs, so the sender, by giving form in a sense-based medium, opens up an imaginary world of meaning on which the sender and receiver must agree, if the communication is to succeed. They must have or be able to develop a common language.

For those familiar with a language, the sensual side of language – the sounds, the letters – is normally unimpressive. You see them and overlook them in order to get to the meaning on the other side. But it is an age-old experience that the sensual basis of language provides a surplus of meaning to communication, because its *mode*, the special way in which the information is presented, can bolster or weaken it. It creates a *gradation* from the work to an invisible network of implied experiences that are lost in the body. If you are interested in communicating and getting a message across, you must not only take an interest in the information but in the way it is presented. Thus, we move into the realm of aesthetics, not as beautiful or unbeautiful art but as an inevitable dimension of all communication.

Communication has a sensual dimension that has an influence not only as meaning but as sensation, whether the sender and receiver are aware of it or not. An interest in aesthetics arises when you focus on the way in which you communicate, regardless of the fact that communication always and inevitably has both content and *mode*. The same information can be put differently, and these differences may be important for the success or failure of the communication.

The opaque interplay between sensation and meaning makes the aesthetic experience time-bound. That silk and velvet and cashmere can stimulate the fingers and indicate luxury is due to the symbolic meaning of the sense experience and the material. There is an uncertain balance between the raw sense experience and its symbolic meaning. You can imagine a man waking up with something soft, round and warm in his hand and, in the foggy transition from a sleeping to a waking state, he does not know whether it is a woman's breast or a baby's bottom. Only when he opens his eyes can he see the situation he is in and what this soft feeling in his hand means – that is, what possibilities it opens up.

A simple touch is not communication. But when a clothes store puts out its wares of silk, velvet and cashmere, the potential buyer sneaks a bit of a feel that bolsters his pleasure from both the luxurious and the forbidden – this communication is all the more effective if the victim is unaware that communication is going on and, therefore, deems the desire as his own. He is complicit in the same way that a café patron who steals an ashtray with a logo on it is unaware that it is precisely the point that he should steal it.

We want to focus on a special way of communicating that, *at the same time*, works with sensation and meaning.[3] The aesthetic effect consists of this duality, which makes it impossible for the sender and the receiver to control the communication: they cannot be fully aware of both sides of the differences between sensation and meaning in linguistic signs and must compensate by making themselves sensory, that is, vulnerable and impressionable, in a way that is lost in the invisible substratum of their attention – in their body and in their culture. Le Corbusier speaks of the 'physiology' of aesthetics.[4]

We are familiar with the fact that sensation is richer than we can say. No one can describe a tree or a pond exhaustively. The same is true of communication. It strikes broadly and implicates more than straightforward information. It requires a special form of attention, so the sender must sense what 'works properly' and the receiver what 'feels right'. It is often impossible to provide much more than vague words, when you have to explain why you send or receive in a particular way. Both parties must be fluid, and this both involves and goes beyond language. In order to identify the aesthetic patterns, they must place themselves in a state of what Freud called a 'free, flowing attention[5] and put the quick mode of the everyday observation out of service.

Everyday observation and communication get their effectiveness from the fact that we quickly leap from sensation to standardized meaning. We see 'a bottle' but not how it looks. We see our girlfriend but not her new hairdo. We see 'a car', even though we only see a windshield. We observe in the familiar forms of language, and this relieves us of enormous effort. But this liberation has a price: that we are not attentive to what we sense, so we become both less inventive and lose the joy of sensation.

Aesthetic interest is decoupled from the everyday and cultivates and enjoys patterns of sensation, whether they arise in language or in reality. This requires a slow, lingering sensation that brings the rhythm of the everyday to a standstill. When you peel an egg, you may enjoy the way the shell breaks off, bit by bit, from the silky-smooth surface of the white of the egg and the slight suction when the last half of the shell is pulled free. For a moment, you are in another world outside of the everyday world and its purposes.

In modern society, a special domain has arisen – the art system, which has specialized in aesthetic observation and which is often ruthless to everyday experience. In its extreme forms, it can ignore human suffering and, for example, view the bombing of the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001 as an aesthetic phenomenon, a dramatic gesture, a feast for the senses.

Even though the concepts and schemes of language are unavoidable for observation and communication, they cannot exhaust the wealth of sensation and meaning. We are richer than we can say. The theme we are grappling with here is the communication that takes place in organizations, which inevitably includes an aesthetic dimension. It may occur consciously, as when an organization develops a design or builds a headquarters. It may occur unconsciously, as when people do not pay attention to how they use language in letters or face-to-face meetings with employees, customers and clients.

Aesthetic communication may be presented as background or 'support' in the everyday, such as music in supermarkets, the tone in a letter, buildings we see without seeing or advertising images to which we give a momentary glance. It can also be isolated and made into an object of particular attention as happens in the art system and among professional aesthetes such as designers, architects, and advertising people.

For organizations, aesthetics is not a matter for museums but for the everyday. It has to do with an attraction that can be built into sensation and which cannot be exhausted in claims or technologized in manuals. It is at once powerful, irreducible, and indeterminate.[6] It can endow the everyday with something unusual, which can be striking in peak experiences and can normally be elevating.

Aesthetic tools are effective both openly and behind the scenes. Even indirectly, they are effective directly. Even for someone who has no idea what the work is doing, the work does something, because we sense spontaneously and cannot look behind the sensation to reveal its mechanism. The immediate 'total effect' is the result of secret operations that are only revealed to the schooled gaze. This intuitive enjoyment does not preclude that a work can do *more* and open up extra enjoyment if you penetrate and reveal its machinery, because there is a noticeable pleasure connected to revelation, even though what is revealed is not very interesting. These two sources of desire can strengthen or weaken each other. A tricky question – do the amateur and the connoisseur see the same thing or something different?

Aesthetics is effective both in and outside of the everyday. Its fundament is purely empirical: that people's attention is captured by patterns and by ruptures in patterns, which send it into mazes in which it can happily lose itself and happily come out again. There is a pleasure connected with sensing and finding meaning. But in everyday experience this pleasure is worn down, because it becomes routine. We sense in constancies – trees, buildings, people – and ignore variations. Familiarity with the everyday is due to the haste with which our surroundings are read.

Around the year 1800, aesthetic experiences were described in passionate language in which the receiver blushes, trembles, quivers, feels chills run up and down the spine, goes into convulsion, or faints. Whether these were real experiences or linguistic conventions is difficult to determine. Erotic inhibitions and a limited exposure to art may explain the powerful reactions. But modern metropolises are flooded with aesthetic and erotic titillations, so receivers must protect themselves. Aesthetic observation is polite, perhaps interested, often pleasurable, but rarely earth-shaking.

Here, aesthetics undertakes a dual move: on the basis of everyday routines, everyday routines are put into play, so the relationship between constant and variable is broken. This does not threaten the everyday directly and is not more dangerous than receivers themselves want it to be. Aesthetics may be half-hidden and only appear as a slight titillation, a word play, an unusual body position, or a brittle voice that captures the attention without needing to give it any special thought. You can at any point decouple yourself from everyday aspects and engage with the interplay in the patterns of sensation and meaning, before you return to the so-called 'real world'.

If you are in the domain of art, it is more demanding. Art works are calculated for the aesthetic gaze and are not satisfied with less.

Regardless of whether aesthetics is hidden in the stream of everyday sensation or appears self-consciously in particular works, receivers embark on aesthetic communication with their freedom intact. Even though the effect of aesthetics is often described in passionate terms: enchanting, breathtaking, ravishing, overwhelming, and delightful, aesthetic *naïveté* is declining. Normally, we know that we are influenced, and the sender must also reflect the receiver's reflection, which often makes the effect of communication unpredictable.

Nevertheless, aesthetics can influence and motivate, because it activates the pleasure of sensing and creating meaning. This 'noticeable pleasure' that arises when sensation and meaning grate on you and require an effort is reminiscent of a child's pleasure in discovering the world. When things have become normal, the pleasure of observing them disappears. What works aesthetically is dependent, therefore, on a tradition, that is, on what is normal and unusual for a culture or an individual. Aesthetics is independent of a tradition that it must presume in order to break from it – but to break does not necessarily mean to reject but may be a re-description and re-discovery. If it were not for routines in observation, aesthetics would not know what to do. This also links it to time-bound surprise, which may be amazement and admiration.

The aesthetic miracle is that *Sinn* and *Sinnlichkeit* (*sense* and *sensibility*) may be placed in a collective motion that can be controlled neither by the sender nor by the receiver. Meaning and sensation comes into a controlled–uncontrolled dual gradation, which may be a one-time phenomenon but can be observed again and again in a work, so it can both be experienced in a totality and split into parts. The work of synthesis and analysis has its own special enjoyment.

By virtue of the interplay between what Kant called understanding and imagination, that is, recognizing and being surprised, aesthetic experience is the epitome of all human intellectual faculties.[7] Understanding makes it possible to describe, imagination to re-describe. To observe aesthetically is not to use other senses than normal but to use them in another way. You can see a tree by the edge of the road as a woodcutter, as a lover, or as a motorist. Even though all three see the same tree, they take note of different features.

You can talk about attitude or perspective. Here, another terminology is used which has to do with observation and, thus, different *gazes*, each of which is oriented toward a particular *difference*. Even though the world can be observed in many ways, you nevertheless presume that there is only one and, without agreement (about existence), there is no disagreement (about relevance). Everyone sees the same trees but notices different things, places them in different contexts, and gives them different meanings. The woodcutter looks at the tree in terms of economic use–value – whether it should be cut down or not, depending on its age, condition, and location in the forest. A lover looks at the tree in terms of whether it can be a tool in his play for love – whether it provides shade or support or can be made into an interesting story. The motorist assesses the tree in terms of his motoring – whether it is a danger or an obstacle. If we construct another fictive person, whom we can call the aesthete, the question becomes how he observes. In accordance with what difference does he orient himself?

As opposed to the three other persons, the aesthete does not observe the tree in terms of external criteria, be they money, love or transport. To observe aesthetically is to orient oneself in accordance with observation as observation. Classically, aesthetic distinction had to do with the difference between beauty and ugliness and, thus, the pleasant and the unpleasant. In modern society, this has been replaced by a more diffuse difference between success and failure in the attempt to mobilize the desire *to* observe, which is different from the pleasure *in* observing.

What is common is that the aesthetic gaze is decoupled from external functions, indeed, from existence. The aesthete fine-tunes observation itself, which becomes alien to the purposes of everyday life – in extreme cases, cynically so. The aesthetic fighter pilot enjoys the magnificent red plumes that rise from the point of impact of his bombs; the aesthetic doctor sees beauty in glossy, fevered eyes or the surreal patterns of a wound; the aesthetic tourist is disgusted by the odour of beggars. And to return to the aesthetic woodcutter, he enjoys the play of light among the leaves, the gentle rocking of the branches, and the odd rule-bound, yet rule-less furrows in the bark that move up the tree to gather in circles around lost branches.

Aesthetics is based on the fact that not only that which is observed but observation itself also has its attraction, so that the desire to observe can be built into observation. Where this comes from is lost in the blindness of the body and culture. But its existence is a fact, and it is cultivated within art. 'The artist's genius is primarily his body', it is claimed,[8] by which it is implied that the artist must also step back from his work to see what he has done. But the aesthetic pleasure in observing does not only flourish within pure art but can be linked to and strengthen all communication. When it is used, we no longer speak of art but of applied art. This applied art in a broad sense is the theme of this book. And we shall redouble the use by focusing on the use of applied art by organizations.

The book's first part explores what is to be understood by aesthetic observation. Therefore, this part is inevitably theoretical. If you are more interested in practical applications, this part may easily be skipped and you may go directly to the second part, which deals with some of the areas in which an organization can make use of aesthetic tools – image, rhetoric, narrative, design, advertising and architecture.

If the aesthetic dimension is present in all communication, there is nothing social or organizational that is alien to aesthetics. We have focused on certain areas and thus ignored others. You will learn nothing about the interior design of shops or offices or the crafting of advertisements.

Aesthetic examples

We can start with some examples of aesthetic communication. They have been chosen from different areas and can be considered as samples.

1 In the cartoon series, *Prince Valiant*, the prince at one point lands with his queen Aleta and his Vikings in an area that is later known as North America. Here, he encounters Native Americans who are suitably impressed by the white men and their strange ways. The beautiful Aleta is brought into the symbolic power struggle between Vikings and Indians as an aesthetic trump. The trick is not her beauty but her staging. When the Native Americans visit the Vikings' long house, she strides up through the building's long aisle but not simply as a woman who walks the required twenty metres from one end of the building to the other. For on the roof, the clever Vikings have laid hides and, as Aleta promenades to the front, the hides are moved adroitly, so Aleta moves in a ray of sunlight that follows her up through the aisle. She is more than an ordinary woman, she becomes the director and goddess of light, the sunrays cling to her and demonstrate her alliance with superhuman powers. With an aesthetic tool, light, she is transformed from human to god. This does not happen through a claim – 'Aleta is a goddess', but through a staging that makes the Indians draw their own conclusions. Everything happens before their eyes, and they are only apparently innocent. Certainly, they have been seduced by the work, *Aleta's Luminous Walk*, and its array of sense impressions. Certainly, the Vikings have performed a priestly deception, so that, with sensual tools, they activate and occupy an imaginary space. And, certainly, neither the Vikings nor the Native Americans created the idea of divine powers. But it is the Native Americans themselves who draw the desired conclusion. They are seduced, not forced.

   You can imagine that the staging of Aleta as an angel of light only happened for the enjoyment and admiration of the people. So, it was not applied art but art and the question of success or failure would not depend on what the Native Americans later did but by their happiness and pleasure at observing the work.

Image 1.1 Alfa Romeo advertisement, 'Seducing forms'

2 In a brochure for the Italian car Alfa Romeo (see Image 1.1), there is a partial picture of a woman in which her head and arms are cut out of the image. A triangular shape with a series of horizontal lines is cut into a magnificent, fire-engine red robe, shaped like the car's triangular radiator grill, revealing the model's prominent breasts. The image is carnal and sensual, hovering between the sensibilities of a lady's magazine and a gentleman's magazine. But it has the same immaculate perfection as the millions of magazines on fashion, food, and lifestyle that produce voluptuous and excruciating figments of the imagination for the world's consumers.

The message is not hard to interpret: a car merges with a woman, so two imaginary spaces, that of transportation and that of the erotic, are juxtaposed not randomly and abstractly but as an Alfa Romeo. The car is a woman and the woman is a car – so, in this understanding, you can 'drive' a woman and 'cuddle' a car. An association is created, so that a characteristic feature of the car, which symbolizes the car as a whole, its logo, is connected with sensual longing. But the association is not a claim. It is not claimed that cars are sex. To the contrary, a pitch is created from an attractive woman to a car that has the same characteristics. This is not stated but shown. The image contains no claims to which you could say yes or no but creates a sensual, evocative link, the intention of which is to change the network of meanings that surround an Alfa Romeo like an aura. The 'meaning' of the car is modified: a specific car is linked to a virtual woman, so the purchaser of the car is brought into a space of desire centred around the woman, which is then transferred to the car. For while the woman is unattainable, as a fantasy, the car is for sale, so you can add a touch of imaginary, erotic magic to your everyday experience by acquiring the car. Both what is called 'woman' and what is called 'car' are slightly changed in this operation in which linguistic constants are put into play. Of course, it is banal – a variant of the old theme of a blonde on the radiator. Of course, it is transparent. Of course, it works anyway, because cleavage and perfect breasts are machines that make men's brains stop functioning. Desire has paths the brain does not know, and an association once encoded in the brain does not just disappear again. It can work in the dark and, perhaps, be unleashed and strengthened with new associations until the receiver turns up one day at the local dealer and, like a modern day Little Red Riding Hood, throws himself eagerly into the arms of the wolf.

3 A flautist practises a piece that he has played many times before – so the problem is not getting the fingering right but to achieve the right phrasing. There is one spot in the piece that is a transition, which he looks forward to, because the composer was able to create an elegant shift so that the interweaving of two motifs becomes a small, sensual hinge he can rest on, listen to, move beyond, and enjoy. It is not an earth-shattering joy, just a modest pleasure – something in the small delights department, which is due to neither a shock nor a change, just a nice, little detail, a couple of notes placed in a soft curve, rounding off a musical sequence. It is not a joy that can be used for anything other than a small delight. There is no political force in it, no seduction, and hardly any good stories from which you could garner attention by telling. It plays no special role in the flautist's life; no more than a good cup of coffee or a sunset or an apple blossom is anything other than a banal charm. They close in on themselves, improve the quality of life a little, and are clearly the stuff of which a pleasant day is made.

Constancy and variation – the aesthetic relevance

All observation and all communication are based on an interplay between constancy and variation. Only by introducing constancy to the fluid stream of consciousness or communication can we give it form and, thus, open ourselves to its variation. What is constant is what consciousness and communication is 'about', and this need not be a solid thing. Even fluid and boundless patterns, such as a bike ride, a capital city, or a depression may have 'sufficient identity' to be experienced and described. But without variation, there is no constancy and, without constancy, no variation. Pure variation is noise, and pure constancy is death. The modern cultivation of change and turbulence is somewhat exalted, because people overlook that it is only on the basis of constancy that you can talk about variation.

To learn to communicate is to learn to recognize and give names to constants, so a dog is a dog, regardless of size, colour and bearing. Little children take great pleasure in sensing and recognizing. But with time and with language, this passion is diminished, because routines in observation develop. Finally, we become so adept at getting around in our everyday lives that we can give names to extremely complex things such as a state, a forest, and dilatoriness; we allow language to overcome sensation, so we give names to an entire thing of which we only see a fragment. We see 'a car', even though we only see a radiator, and we don't see our colleague, because we know how he looks.

Routines and simplifications are extremely useful. Without them, we would not get very far in our lives. But quick sensation has its price: we do not see what we see. In addition, we lose the surplus of pleasure that arises, when – with a free, streaming attention, decoupled from everyday routines – you discover new patterns in sensation and breakthroughs in understanding. The everyday does not only make us blind but uninventive. Therefore, special areas have been developed outside of the everyday in which the patterns of sensation and meaning may freely vary without threatening the everyday and in which the *tempo* of sensation and meaning must be reduced dramatically. We are also challenged as a part of the everyday to observe slowly, to linger and fill our senses – to school our aesthetic gaze.

We shall pursue this thesis that the aesthetic experience arises around shifts in the relationship between constancy and variation. The thesis can be refined in two directions: first, in the direction of the aesthetic mode of observation and, then, in the direction of the beautiful and the sublime.

Aesthetic observation

To observe aesthetically means to decouple two important constants in the experience of everyday life – namely, the question of *existence* and the question of *morality*. The existence of a fact, physical or social, is normally an important thing. If a piano is to be moved, the movers must agree on what a piano is and where the relevant piano is to be found. At the same time, normal relationships between human beings are filled with finely nuanced expectations about what duties we owe each other. A work of art must, of course, exist in order to be observed. Only the content of the work is pulled out of the everyday network of expectations and obligations.

With the switch to aesthetic observation, normal considerations are dissolved with the snap of a finger. It has to do with observation, not existence or duty. Even considerations of one's own refined intuitions are lost.

The aesthetic mode of observation can in theory be generalized into a general attitude. When the Danish poet Emil Aarestrup talks about how a young woman swoons upon learning that her fiancé is dead, he puts it this way: 'She fainted – fell as if crushed – / one finds no marble / more lovely displayed in the dust.' Gone is all sympathy, and what remains is the enjoyment of a beautiful woman in a picturesque position. Not only is it in practice simply perverse to maintain the aesthetic gaze consistently but also impossible. Consideration and interest are pressing.

Kant characterized the difference between the aesthetic and the everyday gaze as the interestlessness of the aesthetic gaze,[9] while Schiller spoke of the fact that aesthetic observation looks for 'beautiful appearance'.[10] Therefore Schiller could claim:

> Living feminine beauty will please us just as well as, even somewhat better than, what is equally beautiful but only painted; but insofar as it pleases us better than the latter, it pleases us no longer as absolute appearance, it pleases no longer the pure aesthetic feeling.[11]

For Schiller, 'the unavoidable effect of beauty is a freedom from passion'. The lack of interest in existence also explains the lack of moral participation. The little word 'is' creates a focal point of expectations. But the aesthetic 'is' unfolds in an imaginary space that follows other paths than those of the everyday. You can observe the everyday aesthetically or you can focus on special works that offer an aesthetic observation, so you liberate yourself for a moment from the web of everyday considerations, cast a skewed gaze upon the world, whereupon you can return home with your booty. You can stop and enjoy the filigree patterns of a bare tree or the play of colours in a frog crushed in the road. You can bring snatches of poems, descriptions from novels, or stereotypes from film into your everyday experience. But there is nothing inevitable about aesthetic observation. Nor is there a 'should'.

Aesthetic observation loses constancy, when it places itself beyond day-to-day *interaction* with the everyday and its moral *care* for things and people. Day-to-day interaction does not permit lingering, because things have to be done. Nor does care allow aesthetic distance, because neither things nor people may be squandered. Therefore, time is important – 'constant care'.

And, therefore, aesthetic lingering is alien to the everyday. It leads to an unacceptable loss of tempo.

In its pure form, aesthetic observation is both impractical and immoral, when it moves outside the bell-jar of art. Therefore, there is an old enmity between aesthetics and morality, which can also be seen in religion's ambivalent relationship to the aesthetic – art is to be tamed and used but must not be a goal in itself. The statue of the Virgin Mary is to lead the soul to salvation, not enclose itself within its beauty. Aesthetic observation dissolves the idea of duty, because it shifts attention from things and persons to the act of observation. In this way, it is open to experiences that can vary freely in relation to any ideological programme, because they are constructed in a non-ideological mode – outside of obligation and with a hyper-sensibility for feelings. Therefore, aesthetics can make itself available to any ideology. And, therefore, the old suspicion of cynicism.

Leni Riefenstahl's work is an example of this dilemma but also of the strength of aesthetic observation. When she allowed herself to be persuaded to film the Nazi congress in Nuremburg in *The Triumph of the Will* from 1935, she sealed her fate by making her art available to the incarnation of evil in the twentieth century. Her film assumed ownership of and glorified Nazism, which from air and land, with fire and light, was placed within a grand mythic context. Whether Leni Riefenstahl was genuinely convinced or allowed herself to be persuaded, whether she saw Nazism as a small expression of something great or the grand cause itself, or whether she just seized the chance to get the resources to fulfil her artistic ambitions – that is less crucial. Despite the repugnance of the subject matter, the film is powerful and powerfully seductive, so that you have to guard against being swept away with the attunedness and carried along in a direction that, for other reasons, you would resist.

Leni Riefenstahl is used as evidence of the intimate connection between aesthetics and moral responsibility. But the opposite is the case. She is powerful evidence of their radical separation. While heaps of politically correct films are forgotten, her perfect film of an imperfect theme still fascinates. Not because it demonstrates the truth of Fascism – perhaps, a little because it draws on the fascination of Fascism in the way that people have always been more fascinated by cruel despots than humane princes of peace – but most of all because, by virtue of its aesthetic touches, its shaping of sensation and meaning, it provides breathtaking evidence that people are receptive to the patterns in which sensation and meaning can be encoded beyond their empirical and moral content.

The beautiful and the sublime

For Kant, aesthetic agreeableness has to do with the pleasure in subsuming, that is, to make a judgement on the basis of sensation. We have seen that, when recognition becomes routine, the joy of recognition is lost.

Observation is made automatic, so we can speed up sensation and allow suggestions to serve as a replacement of whole categories such as 'house' or 'car'. We do not see what we see, because – faster than the eye can follow – we can insert the word and its claim of wholeness and constancy.

Aesthetic judgement contains a paradoxical – impossible and, yet, possible – return to the slow sensation you find in children who have not yet acquired language skills. They have a great desire to recognize things. They are happily surprised to rediscover things that have just been hidden from their eyes.

For Kant, beauty unleashes a concept-less intuition of the agreeable. Beauty is a quality in the thing that is not empirically on the same line as form and colour but, rather, what Alberti called a 'dispersed' quality,[12] that is, a quality that demands an effort from an observer, even when he is 'struck' by beauty. The work of fine-tuning oneself toward beauty arouses the 'noticeable pleasure' Kant speaks of. Even that beauty which strikes like a bolt of lightning may require some later effort to discover what was really so powerfully effective. But even when it is put into words, there can be a tragic mismatch between words and quality. This is true of musical, figurative, and linguistic beauty. Here, wordsmiths may try with new words to create a reflection of a beauty that exists irretrievably outside the firm grip of words.

Since art works are unique, they cannot be observed routinely. They are slow food, so you must make yourself sensible to new patterns of sensation and meaning. When you make yourself sensitive in this way, small differences in the work can unleash great differences in the receiver, so it is as though he is struck by a bass rhythm and feels tremors whose source is unclear: whether it is the work doing it or the receiver doing it or some combination of both.

A work of art cannot be captured in a single glance. You must surrender to it with an expectation that there is more than meets the eye. You have to accept variation in your own observation and its routines. As mentioned earlier, Freud spoke of the free, flowing attention, which is necessary to capture the hidden logic in a dream's apparently capricious constructions. Even though the understanding is in the mix with its constants, for example, around the work's empirical qualities, its framework, and its theme or topic, aesthetic observation requires the observer to make himself variable. On the other hand, the work does not move. It is what it is, even though observers may be in dispute. But different interpretations must relate to the same work, if the disagreement is to make sense. The work offers resistance as a constant, even when it is observed as open and indeterminate. It does not compel a single, determinate observation when the receiver is seduced. You have to presume that the work is perfect in order to discover that this is not the case.

Aesthetic agreeability arises when the observer accepts making himself unusually variable, that is, giving up his normal use of the difference between constancy and variation and being rewarded for this effort. This plasticity has special conditions of growth in a domain in which it is not a high risk to suspend one's routines, and there is no cost to making a mistake.

Another aspect of constancy and variation arises in the relationship to the sublime. In eighteenth-century aesthetics, particularly with such British names as Richardson, Hogarth, and Burke, people were attentive to the fact that not just the harmonious but the disharmonious can trigger aesthetic agreeability, so the difference between the beautiful and the ugly was not identical with the difference between the harmonious and the disharmonious, as Renaissance aesthetics had claimed. Disharmonious beauty was called the sublime and received an interesting treatment in Kant.

Kant claims that, while the beautiful transports life, it is impeded by the sublime, which suspends linguistic routines around observation. The observer is forced into a great, almost catastrophic variation. However, this can be lived with, because it takes place in a domain that does not allow actual catastrophes. You are in danger but only symbolically.

If the sublime is pleasurable, despite the immediate experience of aversion, it is because a constant is introduced that is not found in the work but in the observer himself. He discovers that he himself is what he is, despite the overwhelming interplay of senses around him. He exultantly rediscovers his own constancy in the chaos.

Whereas the beautiful evokes the agreeable by forcing the observer to allow himself to vary in relation to a constant work, the sublime evokes a sort of agreeableness by allowing him *to rediscover the constancy in himself* despite external variation. What is decisive is not what is constant and variable but the interplay between ordering and becoming 'disordered' in which the relationship between constancy and variation itself varies.

The aesthetic – an interim conclusion

If you follow the trail from Kant,[13] there is a 'noticeable pleasure' connected with subsuming experience into concepts, since this subsumption, which is also a recognition, succeeds with a certain difficulty. Recognition is undoubtedly spontaneous but also offers resistance, that is, a temporary loss of order. The entropy must not be life-threatening, so the observer panics. In modern society, a special domain has developed, the art system, in which meanings can be unusually fluid, so the everyday relationship between constancy and variation can easily be brought into play and experience disputed symbolically.

It requires a suspension of the observer's routines, that is, of the automaticity of recognition. There is an agreeability connected with reducing the tempo, hesitating, and allowing sensation and meaning to flow freely, ready to find agreeableness or, at least, interest in both expected and unexpected coherence. Boredom in endless repetition and endless innovation can be overcome.

In children, who are not familiar with concepts, it is easy to observe this pleasure. There is an infantile joy connected with re-cognition, because recognition still requires an effort. There is also an infantile 'sensual pleasure' in which a mobile that slowly rotates before a child's eyes can bring the child almost to ecstasy. The joy has an active component, doing, and a passive component, experiencing, in which it is not the experience of pain but of passion that is at play.

Kant finds aesthetic enjoyment connected with the joy of 'being able to' in which joy is intensified by encountering resistance, that is, *deferment*. This resistance has disappeared in adult routines around observation in which recognition has been made automatic, because it saves time. Attention to the now – the moment – is limited in order to liberate attention to the future, so the increased time span of observation is paid for by a lack of presence. For busy people, the moment is not something that is to be lingered over but something that is to be put behind quickly in order to get to what is essential, which is always out there, in the future.

The point is not that children are especially aesthetic but that their observation contains sources of desire that later harden and must harden but which can be reactivated in special domains outside of the everyday or in special pockets of the everyday. An aesthetic attitude in the everyday means that one takes the considerations and time-demands of the everyday out of their routines in observation. You don't hear what is being said but enjoy the mellifluousness of the words; you don't use the corridor as a passage but stop and linger on its finer details; you don't help up a lady who has fallen but puzzle over the peculiar shape of a broken leg. If you do this consistently, you replace work and duty with play and pleasure. There is a price for replacing ethics with aesthetics,[14] and in the long run it is not possible. No society can content itself with aesthetic observation.

Aesthetic pleasure has the structure that Freud described as happiness – a delayed fulfillment of infantile desire. Without ascribing a desire to childish observation and thus a source of sensual pleasure, it becomes difficult to understand from where the child gets the power to undertake such a gargantuan learning process, which consists of the fact that, from being a sprawling baby, a child becomes in the course of a couple of years a person who can talk and act.

For Kant, there is a pleasure in being able to, which is also a pleasure in recognition. Therefore, for the child, it is a goal in itself to recognize patterns, as Gestalts and as associations. It is just another way of saying that we are talking about a passion, which is activity and passivity, hypothesizing, testing, and imitation at one and the same time. Even though the adult may consider the child's game as a rehearsal for the future – for the child, the game is a means to something else. The child has his own fascination with rhythm, which Charles Fourier called the butterfly passion – to flit from one activity to another, governed only by what captures, enchants, and holds the attention. And this formula is a formula for aesthetics.

Aesthetic experience contains a passion that preserves the old meaning of the word 'suffering' – that something happens to you, perhaps, something good. In passion, there is also passivity, which we have translated into the fact that both the sender and the receiver are inevitably blind to its sources. No one who enjoys observation has control over what works, why it works, and how it works.

Even though aesthetic experience also has to do with training and thus control, it also has to do with training to let go and to let things happen. If there were only control, the effort would be restrained, that is, would not exhaust the person, would not be a passion. To do your utmost, aesthetically, is to surrender yourself and to be capable of finding yourself, as form, at the height of yourself, where you lose and regain yourself at the same time in a transformed form, which you have both created and not created. A master of aesthetic observation has effortless access to this peculiar combination of total control and total lack of control.

The artistic, the erotic and the religious

The combination of powerful presence and powerful absence, great activity and great passivity, is not only an aesthetic matter. The erotic and the religious are served by the same figure, so you give yourself up to an erotic experience to re-find yourself in a more intense form through the beloved, and, in the religious experience, you are at the mercy of the universe and lose your ordinary ego to receive a universal self. All three places transcend everyday experience, that is, its combination of constancy and variation.

Art, the erotic, and the religious localize the source for such experiences very differently, so they take part in different contexts of meaning and action. A work of art, a person or the universe is opened to disparate forms of behaviour. But all three domains nurse a strong experience of pleasure and a sort of gratitude, so you overcome modern society's characteristic asymmetry between joy and dissatisfaction in which it is easy to find an address for dissatisfaction – society – but harder to find an address for joy.

The artistic, the erotic and the religious, therefore, can use each other as metaphors for each other, so aesthetic pleasure is carried over to the erotic, if a happy rapture can be used to describe the relationship to the divine, which again as 'inspiration' can be used to describe aesthetic activity. All three domains offer what Freud called a mild narcosis.[15] For it is an indisputable experience that special ways of observing have a built-in pleasure or, at least, an interest that in itself motivates one to continue observing. As far as aesthetics is concerned, it has to do, in short, with *form-giving* – with patterns that have a sufficient constancy and a sufficient variation to maintain attention. This a basic experience. Without it, the aesthetic experience and those institutions that have developed to receive and guide it would collapse into dust.

Even though you can observe aesthetically, because you have further purpose for it, there must sometimes be found a special aesthetic bliss: it tickles the hairs on the back of your neck, you are riveted by it, you feel happy and uplifted, insight breaks through. Like spouses and skiers, aesthetes are patient people who accept that there might be some long dry spells and that they must go through many humiliations before achieving their chosen bliss. But sometimes they sense that heaven is close.

The work

The centre for aesthetic communication is the work. This is true for art and for the broader aesthetic domain, which includes aesthetics in organizations. The work is communication's vital address, its 'about'. There are works other than aesthetic works; a work can be evaluated in accordance with other criteria than aesthetic, and there need not be a sender who has consciously produced the 'work'. An inhabited space, a painter's palette, a woman's gait, or a monkey's scrawls can be observed as works.

Outside of communication, sunsets, muscle shells, and bacilli are observed aesthetically, even though they are not works. This should not worry us here. What is decisive is that a work is a peculiar thing, which is not simply what it is – sensed features scratched into a medium – but also is what it is not – namely, a hinge to an imaginary space on the other side of the sensed feature. By virtue of this duality, the work acquires meaning.[16]

It sounds strange to speak of a 'work' in a private or a public organization. A picture on the wall and a designer teapot are freely called works, while a letterhead or a radiator grill or a plastic mug resists the word. In order to save repetition, we will use the word 'work' about all phenomena that are either created by persons to be observed aesthetically or used as addresses for aesthetic communication.

That something is a work is not immediately obvious. If there are to be works of art, there must be both art and artists.[17] But all reactions to art – pleasure or elevation or unease – may arise without art – for example, in relation to nature, the erotic, religion, or organized communication. The similarities are so many that you may well consider art as nature without the world, the erotic without a lover, or religion without god. You can also consider an organization as a work, even though it is only in celebratory speeches that CEOs are elevated into 'artists in their field'.

Both art and the applied arts invite aesthetic observation or count on having an influence with aesthetic tools. When the focus is on the aesthetics of *communication*, the work becomes a structure that is extracted and localized in the ongoing communication as a benchmark or an address – even if the sender did not realize that he had produced a work. In the art system, the idea of a work is still being worked out, so it both contains constancy in the form of prototypes of works and variation in the form of uncertainty about what a work is. No other functional subsystem has the same radical freedom to shake up everything that is stable.

The distinction between a work and 'everything else' occurs by drawing a boundary, that is, a *framing* which, once again, is of a dual nature.[18] With a building – for example, a museum or a theatre or a concert hall – a special place is isolated in which you can expect to encounter works. You are prepared in a special way to observe, when you cross the threshold. But within the framework, there are new frameworks. There are special boundaries – the stage or the picture frame – that attract attention, because the conventions of the art system tell us that everything that takes place on the stage, at special times, is information, while everything else is noise. The audience may cough, rustle their programmes, chew popcorn, and slurp cola. It is not a part of the work but – Aristotle claims – a reaction to the fact that the work is bad.[19] Birds may chirp and the sun may go down, while you attend a concert, and all these impressions are noise, not information.

The work is delimited in time and space with the framing, even though there are works, for example, on the internet that are modified on a running basis by unknown participants – so, there is neither 'an artist' nor a finished work. However, it is thanks to the boundaries that the boundaries can be experimented with – for example, putting a picture in a picture or making a picture that looks like a frame or a picture that spills out over the edges.

The idea of a work contains a powerful presumption of constancy, so a work can be abbreviated, varied, mistreated, modernized, and performed in strange ways without losing its identity. However, the art system's compulsion toward innovation also frames the framework of art. The relationship between information and noise can be changed, so what takes place on the exterior of the work's 'frame' becomes relevant for the work of art. This is a normal part of art's constant – and impossible – attempt to go beyond itself and to penetrate and merge with the everyday.

In an organization that normally does not observe itself aesthetically. It is not obvious what would be a work. It could be a logo, a campaign, a conference room, or a pep talk. A work could also be a detail within a larger work, so we get works within works within works. What a work is depends on what an observer or a group of observers choose to observe and describe as a work. Thus, they create a boundary that can be considered as the framing of the work, permanent or temporary. They draw a boundary around the phenomenon they want to observe.

A work consists unavoidably of a number of physical elements – features – in which fixed forms are placed in a loosely linked medium. Fluid paint is fixed on a canvas, fluid sound possibilities are fixed into tones, and words with their sounds and their fluid wreath of meaning are put together in a sentence.

Thus, order arises, or an ordered disorder, that not only the originator but others may observe. A work is public, even when it is a transitory phenomenon that ceases in the moment it arises. Therefore, thoughts in a head may be a precondition for a work but not a work itself. Of course, you can also imagine here a borderline case – for example, a hermit who produces works, describes them, and then destroys them. But this is a refined and peripheral exception we can ignore.

A work is a composition of physical features that get their meaning from being part of the whole they make up. It is not the work that creates its elements, since a work does not create itself. But it is the work that gives meaning to each feature, since a work must be observed as a whole before it can be observed as a collection of elements. A cathedral is viewed as a church with porch, aisle, nave, and altar before you dive into what may be endlessly complicated details.

By virtue of its composition, the work steers the receiver's sensation, even when he allows the eye to wander, so it seduces him in this purely mechanical sense. A work is a chain of features that a receiver must decode if he wants to accept the work's offer of communication. He can refuse to decode it or shut off his senses. He can choose to observe noise as information – for example, noise from a party at night is deemed a provocation. But in order to understand, you must follow, so the sender se-duces (from the Latin, *se-* apart and *ducere* to lead) and leads the dance as long as it lasts. This does not mean control, since the sender cannot control the receiver's understanding.

Even though there are methods to increase the chances of understanding questions, for example, there is no guarantee that the understanding is correct. It would overburden the communication, if every step were to be ensured and double-ensured. Often, the test is in the receiver's behaviour, so the sentence 'pass me the salt' is understood, if the salt is passed.

If the sender and the receiver wanted to be sure that they understood the same thing by the same words before they began communicating, they would run headlong into the paradox that communication had to start before it started. Normally, a broad margin of uncertainty, which does no particular harm, is tolerated. Built into all communication is the misfortune that you can only keep a successful communication going if you do *not* bore into whether the encoding and decoding correspond to each other. Both sender and receiver would get into trouble if they were to clarify on a running basis what they have reported and what they have understood.

Works can normally be understood in several ways, and the sender does not command a privileged understanding. This forces the conclusion that even misunderstanding is productive. An advertisement can work as intended, even though the sender and the receiver disagree wildly about its meaning. Communication does not allow itself to be blocked by misunderstanding, even though it tests and corrects itself on a running basis.

With aesthetic tools, attraction may be built into communication so that the receiver is captured and enticed to continue. This can happen without any goal other than communication itself, or it can happen with ulterior motives. We shall look at how this happens.

Aesthetic seduction

Aesthetic communication, like all communication, is constructed asymmetrically. It creates a unity out of a difference between two complementary roles, each of which has its own special input. In communication, a sender and a receiver are constructed which may be very different from the real sender and receiver. However, if one party disappears, communication dissolves. Even though you can talk to yourself and even though an artist can be surprised at what he is doing, both solitary speech and solitary art are borderline cases – hard cases – of communication.

To communicate is to harmonize differences.[20] One party has information, the other does not yet. Since information does not move itself, it must be disseminated and, in order to disseminate it, the sender must encode differences in a sense-based medium and present the encoded message to a receiver. In this *technical* sense, he must seduce. He has the initiative and must *se-ducere*, that is, lead away. If he does not, there is no communication. But in order to interest the receiver in the message, he can also resort to seduction in the normal sense of the word: he must entice the receiver and make him want to engage or, as it is put in classical rhetoric, make the receiver 'receptive, well-disposed, and attentive'.[21] For example, this is true of unsolicited messages called advertising, which often entice with eye-catchers.

Here, the roads diverge. In the development of art, it was an important step to pull art out of its service to other functional subsystems – for example, economics, politics, and religion – and thus make it possible to talk about 'pure art' or *l'art pour l'art*. Aesthetic observation isolated its own pleasure and passion. It motivated independently, without lifelines to other motives such as property, power, and faith. What we covet we are not free to observe aesthetically. If what Lawrence Durrell called the wily sex glands play a part, we are beyond aesthetics. This leads to murky situations in which the sources of pleasure are unclear and where there is no objective, only rhetorical means to clarify the question. And it is the nature of rhetoric that it can always present a good and a bad version of the same case.

Kant insists on the purity of the aesthetic judgement, that is, its radical distance to any *Reiz und Rührung*[22] – whereupon he encountered the insoluble problem of how he could make the distinction in practice. Edmund Burke was more pragmatic. He defined the beautiful as the qualities of the object that cause 'love or some passion similar to it'.[23] In passion, there is a built-in attraction that is not without interest. Even though Burke limits himself to sensible qualities and precludes any love that has to do with 'desire or lust', he admits readily that aesthetic and erotic love may sometimes operate together. The cooperation between desire and aesthetics is important for aesthetic communication in organizations. Here, aesthetics is not pure but *in principle* mixed with other interests – in both the sender and the receiver.

Before we look at this mixed phenomenon, we must look more closely at the time and space of aesthetic seduction. All seduction has a relationship to *time*. This is in its very nature: it requires time to *ducere*, to lead, since 'to lead away' consists of guiding observation into an ordered context that can either be a strict logical chain (such as a speech in which one word follows the next) or a structure (such as a house in which the receiver himself can determine the order of his observations). All seduction aims at binding time, that is, to make probable a particular future. If the transition from one state to the next is arbitrary for all parties, we are not talking about seduction – but, perhaps, the stage prior to seduction in which the seducer studies what works and, thus, seduces himself.

All seduction also has a relationship to *space*, both because it inevitably takes place in a situation with at least two parties – where one may be absent – and because it conjures up an imaginary space as 'the other side' of the physical space in which it takes place. It could be asked of all communication where it takes place. If it takes place nowhere, it does not take place at all. It must also be asked of all communication what world it opens through the signs it makes use of. If no common world is unfolded, albeit ever so minimal, it fails as communication, regardless of what the parties to the communication may think or feel.

Within the art system, people are experimenting as if their lives depended on it to undermine the preconditions for communication and, yet, communicate, so communication and non-communication loop into each other. This creates a borderline case in which the chances that the sender and receiver have coordinated differences are poor but in which both parties know that this is the case. The only thing being communicated may be a minimal suggestion, an infantile 'I'm here', or perhaps an absence that is a parasite on the expectation of presence, so what is communicated is that nothing is communicated. A couple of sounds or colours become a modest entry way to a gargantuan space of meaning, criticism or irony. Without the can-openers to break the code, it is difficult to see what is being reported – which is thus reported.

In an organization, one wants to be cautious with such radical aesthetic effects, because their inherent provocation is risky. In an organization, aesthetic observation is not its own goal but is to promote the organization's autopoiesis. There are always several games going on at the same time – that is, at least, a dual agenda. Aesthetics must not close in on itself but seduce towards a goal. It is and must be functional. It is a limitation that does not need to close but is able to open up to inventiveness.

The sensed, the imagined and the attuned

A work must be sensed. A work opens up an imaginary world beyond what is sensed. And a work attunes the person who observes it. While the work's sensed features are objectively present, so great agreement can be expected from its physical components – the number of words or tones, the size and colour of the figures – the imaginary and the attuned contain a number of invisible qualities that only come into existence and are unfolded when the work is observed – read, heard, seen or, perhaps, even remembered, even though that is a lot to ask for.

The sensed, the imaginary, and the attuned do not exist separately but are localized in different places in the triad between sender, work, and receiver. Every feature in a work – tones, words, strokes – is a bearer of meaning. Everything sensed in a work has the character of a sign, whether there is a reference to the work itself or to its surroundings, so the sensed is one side of a form of which the other side is the imaginary world that the work opens up. At the same time that the work opens up its world, the observer is affected or 'attuned' in a special way that in aesthetic communication is not an indifferent circumstance.

We can begin with *the relationship between the sensed and the imaginary* and then look at the *attunedness* a work can create.

The relationship between the sensed and the imagined

A work consists of physical features that open up an imaginary world. There are two extremes here. On one hand, there are *pure signs*, which have no conventional meaning and which are only signs, that is, information and not noise, because they are observed as elements in a work. They are not accidental and can be decoded, even though we may only be talking about a brush stroke on a canvas or a nonsense word. This is also true when the decoding is paradoxical, so the sign's meaning is not to have any meaning.

On the other hand, there are *mimetic signs*, which require an effort even to observe their sensed basis, because the receiver is momentarily on the other side of the signs in what they refer to or 'mean'. There is a certain coolness in saying that love is a four-letter word or that the Mona Lisa is a few grams of colour smeared on a canvas.

To change the physical side of a sign is to change its meaning side. When letters are changed, you can follow how whole clumps of meaning begin to shift. From COW to COWL to SCOWL, there is a shift from one space of meaning to the next. Each word is a centre in a web of associations that contains a magnetism not just to other words but to memories and actions. Each of the three words opens up a world and fits into its own context that contributes to the meaning of the word. The word TAIL, which is appropriate in the context of COW, is inappropriate or only metaphorically appropriate when used about SCOWL, where the scowl's 'tail' might be the downturn at the corners of a mouth in disapproval. A 'pure' sign has no such context.

If we change sensation, we change meaning, we change the world. But this variation presumes a constancy that consists of the fact that the variation takes place 'in the world'. If we close our eyes, we are in another world. If we take a hallucinogen, the world is changed, because we sense, think, and feel differently. Pain disappears, duty is veiled, words and images combine without logical limitations but with an intense experience of clarity, and our relationship to other people becomes easy and light.

You can imagine a culture constructed of space, organized around symbolic centres or attractors that make some connections more probable and spontaneous than others. Every space constitutes a context of sensation and meaning, that is, a world, so we can talk about the world of the kitchen, of art, and of crocodiles. Each world creates a hub of prototypes and a periphery of hard cases in which, for example, a shovel can be dislodged from the world of the garden only with a special explanation and placed into the world of the bedroom.

These different spaces are not arbitrary. They form the basis for communication as resources or topics that are not the creator of either a sender or a receiver but can be taken as given. In a way, they are integrated as expectations in the formal unit called 'I', in the physical world ('It'), and in the social world ('Thou'). Nor are they sharply divided. Rather, they are able to borrow any meaning whatsoever from each other, that is, become metaphors for each other. It is possible to create new powers of attraction and to combine or 'mix' them. New experience requires new words, and old experience can become like new by being re-described. There are political, religious, and erotic communities in which common experience is cultivated around words, rituals, and symbolic objects that together unfold a world.

Such symbolic spaces are imaginary. They do not exist alongside physical space, not even as protuberances. And they are complicated, because they are at once private, constructed from invisible psychic thoughts and feelings, and at the same time common by being linguistically organized, so they are prepared in advance for communication.

Symbolic space is both psychic and social. The psychic and the social are two sides of the same thing, so you can emphasize the cultivated individual or the culture of which he is a part. What you cannot do is to reduce a culture to the sum of psychic systems. Even though art and science would disappear if all psychic systems disappeared, neither art nor science is a private phenomenon. They arise as communication and are stabilized in traditions to which each individual must be linked: by adapting to it, rejecting it, modifying it, exploiting it, and contributing to it. Neither their construction nor dynamic can be understood from the individual person.

There are powerful connections between the sensed and the imaginary – so powerful that you can doubt that pure sensations or 'raw feels'[24] are possible – sensations that are not charged with meaning or governed by conceptual schemes. The doubt is due, in part, to the fact that the absence of meaning itself becomes meaningful, so it is impossible to avoid the formation of meaning and, in part, to the fact that sensation takes place against a background of memory, so that it is spontaneously connected with past or future sensation, such as when black clouds warn of rain or a particular tone voice in a quarrel. Even artificial structures – such as, for example, art works that, by virtue of conventions, are isolated from their surroundings by framing and, therefore, can isolate sensation, so normal meaning is ligated – recreate their own meaning by virtue of these conventions that are constructed within the art system, including the convention of breaking with conventions. When tonal music with rhythm and chords is replaced by atonal music that is again replaced by noise, which is then replaced by silence – so silence is not just silence but intensified silence, because the framework that the art system sets up transforms silence from a neutral absence to a reflective and meaningful silence.

An imaginary space is built on a scheme of constancy and variation that determine each other in a circuit. If there was only variation, there would not be 'variation' as opposed to constancy, only chaos, where all combinations of elements are equally probable. Without the scheme of constancy and variation, there would be neither identity nor deviation, neither sensation nor action. Constancy is also found in invisible conventions that connect the sign with the signified and makes it possible to connect signs with other signs, so the sign's other side – the signified – is brought along, when the sign is linked with another sign. Free access to connect separate signs is the background for the imagination, creativity, and other forms of successful instability. But this presumes constancy in the world that words enter into and are associatively connected with.

Words have conventional meanings that can be looked up in a dictionary. Pictures have a natural relation to what they depict even though we do not know whether they 'resemble' it, as is the case with portraits prior to photography. But whether an image of a tree resembles the specific tree of which it is a picture often has no meaning in relation to the universal: imagining a tree. Against the background of such constants, you can freely combine the latticework of associations in signs, so the signs are detached from the natural and social world and unfold a new, self-made world. Even though Hamlet's grave is in Jutland, it is not Shakespeare's Hamlet who is buried there. In Mondrian, you can follow the shifts in which, from being depicted with a full trunk and network of leaves, a tree is slowly stylized until only a non-figurative structure remains. Here, we are talking about 'abstract' art in the true sense of the word, that is, art that has come from a process of abstraction, so the process of purification ends in structures without conventional meaning – even though, as indicated, there is feedback, so the absence of conventional meaning *itself* becomes a convention.

In this leap in which the sign's reference is given up, so visual art, tonal art, and linguistic art approach each other, it makes sense to talk about signs in which the signified is given furlough. The observer can yield to the seduction of the work, penetrate into its labyrinth, and open himself to an imaginary world on the other side of what is sensed but without much support in the work. Here, the semiological point holds true that the qualities of what is sensed must themselves carry the meaning. We find ourselves on the outside of the work, that is, on the sensed side of the sign of which the work makes use, even though it can be difficult and often impossible to undertake a 'pure' analysis of the sensed side of a work, separate from the sense it 'makes'.

Something happens to the observer in the encounter with a work that cannot be deduced in any simple way from the work's qualities. We shall now look at the attunedness that emerges in the observer. First, we shall look at the pure form, which has to do with a reaction to sensible patterns, whereupon we shall gradually complicate the issue, so more complex and reflective patterns in a work are brought in – for example, how the relationship between different 'voices' in a text invokes a special attunedness.

Attunedness

Attunedness is the focus of the work's pragmatics. When a work is pulled out of the art system and considered as a tool, the crucial thing is how it affects the receiver. That attunedness comes into focus does not mean that a work 'is nothing other than' the way it attunes. All the sensed qualities of the work are exactly the way they are in their sumptuous splendour or precise minimality. The imaginary world the work opens up unfolds slowly, when the observer gives himself time to receive the work as a blow to the face or to reveal its composition in the interwoven layers a work can contain. When Rembrandt reproduces with a few strokes of ink the dry wrinkles in old skin or the soft patterns of hair in a cow's hide, you start by seeing it as just 'a picture of', whereupon you can admire its 'how' and look closer at the strokes.

By virtue of attunedness, via the work, the observer is brought into a special relationship with himself, with others, and with the world. It is nothing he need note. At the same time, there is nothing to prevent him from noting it, and the attunedness may change by observing it, because the mediate desire to guess its riddles is added to the work's immediate attraction – perhaps, accompanied by a disappointment that the work gives nothing away – with the *memento* that it is uncertain where the responsibility for emptiness is to be placed.

A work, as a work, contains an appeal to be observed, slowly and ready to allow the everyday's relationship between constancy and variation to become fluid and, perhaps, simply by this hesitation, to break up the normal manner of observing in which things are what they are. By receiving the work as a context of signs that refer to themselves or, perhaps, to the world, its imaginary world is opened up at the same time that the observer is transformed into a sounding board with a special tone of voice. It can be agreeable to observe intuitively and to observe reflectively, so the work's patterns can be complicated and reveal ever more secrets – subtexts and readings-between-the-lines in relation to the text that is offered on the surface.

In this process of acquisition, something invisible happens to the receiver – something minimal or catastrophic or in-between. And this invisibility can become a handle that the work puts on the receiver in order to steer him in the desired direction. It is no simple handle and it permits no sturdy grip. At the same time, however, it is an elemental experience that seems contained in the very words, that works work – that tones and colours and words *do something* and *do more* than what the naked eye sees. It makes an impression to express something, and whether the sender is following his own idiosyncratic path or fine-tuning them to the receiver, a work or a context of works can be both experienced and used.

That art from the end of the 1700s became pure and cast off all utilitarian purpose did not prevent the rise of applied arts, which still aimed to serve, alongside pure art. This utilitarian aspect is the subject of this book. And we are approaching it by looking at how a work attunes a receiver with or against his will.

When people seek out art, it happens, as a rule, from their own free will and with prior motivation. Organizations cannot count on such favourable circumstances. They have to work with more robust means, because they cannot merely presume motives but must also create or clarify motives. Often, it is their first task simply to capture the attention and penetrate the modern bombardment of the senses.

The relationship between the imaginary and the attuned is not simple. They can support each other, so the pleasure that unfolds in the work's imaginary universe attunes the receiver positively. But the work might arouse disgust. Perhaps, an intense description of misfortune would not arouse sorrow in the observer but, as in Aristotle, purify and relieve his soul.[25] In the Renaissance, it was accepted that morally repulsive topics such as war or rape could be aesthetically acceptable by virtue of the way they were produced. And, since Romanticism, morality has been put into parentheses in the art system in which everything is allowed, beautiful or sickening, protected by the label 'art'.

You can imagine all sorts of interference between the imaginary and the attuned, in wax and wane and everything inbetween. The interplay in-between work and receiver regularly evades control – in part, because the receiver's reflection makes him unpredictable and, in part, because all the operations of the work are internal. No work can operate on its own level of totality – not even, for example, if a novel comments on itself and enters into a dialogue with the reader about its own tools. The 'reader' who is brought into the text in this way is a different reader from the one who reads the text and thus reads about 'the reader'.

The real, flesh-and-blood reader is inaccessible to the work and its sender. The totality of the work is inaccessible to the work itself and must be created by the receiver. There is no guarantee that sender and receiver observe in the same way and construct the same totality.

Basic forms of attunedness

Attunedness has to do with the way in which a receiver is affected by communication's *mode*, that is, not its empirical or normative content but the way in which information and values are presented. We are deep within aesthetics and its 'noticeable pleasure', which we follow in its pragmatic dimension in which it is all about the strategic use of the attunedness linked to communication – because communication takes place in a sensed medium and cannot evade aesthetic observation. The aesthetic 'mode' can be an unintended by-product. But its power is so great that it is not allowed to lurk in the semidarkness of chance but is brought forth and made into an object of professional interest, not just in the art system but also in organizations. What things are to be produced and displayed and how they are displayed, that is, their sensible surface, are modelled on the heart's desire with a view towards changing the receiver's motives and the things that motivate him.

It may be asked whether there are any basic modes of attunedness. One possible answer is that there are as many forms of attunedness as there are works and observers of works. So, any attempt to define basic forms becomes arbitrary. The quantity of attunednesses and the wealth of their nuance evade categorization.

This claim of multiplicity is not wrong. But it is not satisfactory. It only shows that it requires abstraction, and thus violence to nuances, to define fundamental forms. No work 'is subsumed' in a basic form, for example, a genre. But the fact that works vary is compatible with the fact that there are consistent genres in relation to which they can vary and which they can make use of for their own purposes. We shall first look at the relationship between the intuitive and the reflective reception of a work and, then, at the different forms of attunedness.

Intuition and reflection

A work can affect on many levels – which will here be divided into two extremes. On one hand, it can be experienced intuitively as a totality in which the receiver allows himself to be overwhelmed by the work and does not worry about details or technical means. Even when he is attentive to the composition of the work, it happens on a level at which different elements contribute directly to its totality. Sender and receiver find themselves each on their own level at which the sender has presented the work and the receiver embraces it. Everyone has experienced the immediate enjoyment of a work, which is the first and normally also the only way you experience a work. You are 'seized' by the work, so the violent metaphors of enjoyment come into their own – being struck, having your legs swept out from under you, being in the grip of the work, and so on. This applies to novels you read for the sake of excitement, pictures that overwhelm with their harmony or disharmony, or music you become wrapped up in.

At this level – which, as a rule, people do not abandon – people are attuned by the work as a whole and are just as ignorant of the details as they are ignorant of what is happening in the eye when they see. They take the reasoning and draw the conclusions that have to be there in order to go further but without the effort becoming reflective or methodical. Just as a child can dance to music without knowing anything about chords or play in the water without knowing about the law of gravity and hydraulics, people can enjoy works without being familiar with their tools.

This immediate experience can create a capital of memory and pleasure that can be great enough that the work never loses its fascination, if you delve later into its details and invisible structures. If the work does not grab you on the intuitive level, there is a great chance it will never grab you. Even though, out of cultural respect, you may explore a work that is a classic or famous for its aesthetic qualities, nothing will come from it but a marriage of convenience – unless you later, perhaps after many exposures, suddenly see the light and fall in love with it.

A work must be post-consummated by an observer, and its insight cannot be exhausted in a claim or a topic but consists of a transformation of his relationship to himself, to others, and to the world. The sheer care with which you can work to understand a work can become a model for how you understand the world around you. A work is the same, even though it is observed differently, so you can repeat and refine your observation without it slipping through your fingers like everyday events do. You can tighten the screws and force confessions, and you can tell others about the confessions without it being embarrassing or private. Works are meeting places for people.

The other extreme is the *reflective* approach to a work in which you undertake the hermeneutic back-and-forth movement between part and whole and try to put into words the tools to which you were subjected on the intuitive level – even when the work consists of words.[26] Here, by reading the score of a musical piece you can penetrate to a layer of meaning that is inaccessible to the ear alone. In this way, you can become attentive to the fact that, if Mona Lisa smiles so mysteriously, it has something to do with Leonardo's *sfumato* technique in which the corners of the mouth and the eyes are indeterminate, so the receiver himself must determine them and thus get them to vibrate with life or with the fact that the two landscapes on each side of the female figure are at different heights, so an inner unease arises in the picture.

To penetrate into this game and not simply enjoy it but multiply the enjoyment by putting the work's mechanisms into words, to formulate hypotheses about the work, and to find subtexts and between-the-lines readings in the text contain another enjoyment that reaches its pinnacle when diverse details suddenly fall into place in a pattern that is strong enough to make even stubborn parts of the work become understandable. This desire to control can do violence to works but also elicit new tones and another form of enjoyment.[27] Here is confirmation of Kant's thesis that the work of art's 'noticeable pleasure' arises when you have the will for it. While the intuitive 'will' occurs in the dark, you get your reflective will through a struggle with the work, which is also a struggle with the language in which the work is to be described in a parallel way, so that the work and the description of the work form two parallel universes, strongly or weakly linked to each other.

Art offers itself not only to amateurs, who enjoy it intuitively, but also to professionals, who also enjoy it reflectively. Just as there can be enjoyment by letting oneself be overwhelmed by the work, there can be another enjoyment in revealing the complicated machinery, to expose the tools, to track their history, and to compare it with other works. A distinction can be made in theory between intuitive enjoyment, which is unfamiliar with the tools, and reflective enjoyment, which is about insight into the tools.

Even though the two extremes are drawn sharply, it speaks for itself that they cannot stand alone. No work is only a totality, since a totality consists of parts. And no part acts independently of the whole of which it is a part and from which it gets its meaning. We enjoy intuitively most of the works we expose ourselves to. It is just difficult to imagine an observer who is entirely inattentive to how a work works – unless we are talking about infants. Sometimes, and in some areas, we want to go deeper, to penetrate into the work's background, structure and reception and supplement our own observations with the observations of others. The work is dissected and analysed and split into its varied details, so you can describe what you have only observed intuitively. Intuitive and reflective enjoyment can be two phases in the story of an observer's encounter, from the rapture of love to the intimacy of marriage. And both can change slowly over time.

Many receivers refuse to allow their intuitive enjoyment of a work to be transformed by this gruelling process in which a work is 'reflected upon to death', as they say, or winds up in 'the creative bookkeeping of over-interpretation'. And many works do not survive the shift from intuitive to reflective observation. They crumble when they are subjected to strong, direct light. Other works emerge strengthened from this purgatory, and other receivers are enriched with extra enjoyment. In the spirit of Darwin, it could be claimed that, if a work is not sturdy enough to tolerate analysis, it does not deserve to survive. A work must be able to tolerate being put to the test, so you can see whether there is a reward to be mined from its most intricate veins or whether reflection transforms the bright neon lights of Las Vegas by night to the dreary, sad props of Las Vegas by day.

The art system's compulsion toward innovation has the effect that all works are swallowed up in time and must struggle to keep alive, which only the very few succeed in doing. *What* ensures survival is not always clear and brooks no mechanical analysis. That a work breaks through and becomes a classic transforms it into a prototype of 'what art is' and also transforms the way it is observed, so a self-fulfilling hypothesis is created that the work is good, because the receiver presumes that it is good and, therefore, proceeds reverentially, letting all doubt redound to the benefit of the work.

Depending on the resources on which the receiver can draw when he observes a work, the same thing can become very different. What for one person just seems strange or, perhaps, is not especially noticed is for another person an example of a well-defined stage in a particular variant of the Mannerist school, clearly influenced by X and with just as clear a distance from Y. And what for one person are a couple of indifferent strokes on a piece of paper are for another person an ironic comment on Romanticism in modern art and an expression of a minimalist renunciation of intuitive enjoyment, putting everything into providing a reflective treat for connoisseurs.

From here, the conflict can start: whether you can experience intuitively without knowing something of reflection's theoretical apparatus, whether this apparatus strengthens or weakens the experience of a work, whether the amateur's enjoyment is better or worse than the professional's, whether you can construct a universe from words, parallel to the work's own universe, that weaves the work into a huge space of historic, philosophical and cultural meaning.[28]

We shall not add fuel to this fire, which has deep historical roots.[29] Generally, the principle must be that a work can be observed in many ways, upon many a premise, and that no form of enjoyment is better than any other. A simple, temporal consideration shows that intuitive enjoyment, like any innocence, is a fragile thing that is doomed to stagnation, to oblivion, or to reflection.

Attunednesses

Instead, we shall look at how a work can attune an observer. We start at the intuitive level, where the receiver is confronted by the work. Here, at a minimum, he is receptive, and we can ignore possible reservations about the work or the situation in which he encounters the work – his irony or duty or inattentiveness or desire to use the work in his own game. The intent is to find some fundamental forms of attunedness that arise in the intuitive encounter between a work and an observer. An additional intent is to look at how a work can spontaneously attune and, thus, motivate an observer, so that an attraction or repulsion or a blend of the two is built into the work. If such forms are to be convincing as *basic* forms, they cannot just be inventively set up. They must be developed systematically.

An intuitive attunedness has no concept or principle, as Kant would have it. It is not deduced from a premise and, therefore, is indeterminate: the receiver must allow his attention to flow and give up the everyday's relationship between constancy and variation, so he can open himself up to 'diverse' qualities, such as 'beauty' or, even vaguer, 'quality' – because even ugly works can create an intended attunedness.

This creates a simplification: we can ignore attunednesses that are due to a conscious effort of linguistic reflection – *even* when it has to do with linguistic works. Novels and poems also work intuitively, when you deal with both their sound side and their meaning side. Even though reflection takes place in language and even though a language user can hardly experience without language, conscious reflection cannot be language's first achievement. There has to be language in order to identify a work, and there has to be reflection in order to get the work to hang together. However, this effort can be spontaneous and, thus, blind, as happens when, for example, you are 'riveted' by the excitement in a novel or 'overwhelmed' by a picture.

Our point of departure will be observation's triad of *I*, *Thou*, and *It*, which communicatively corresponds to the triad between sender, receiver, and work, and we can ignore the complications that arise when *It* coincides with *I*, *Thou* or the relationship between *I* and *Thou*. If the model is to be used for intuitive observation, it must have its roots in the prelinguistic, that is, in the blindness of the body and culture.

An intuitive attunedness is based on the fact that communication's triad between *I*, *Thou*, and *It* is not created by language. If the *I*'s relationship to the *Thou* and the *It* were created by language, the triad would never be able to be established. Prior to language comes recognition, so language demands that both the sign and what is signified be identified independently.

Language is based on prelinguistic differences between the poles of the triad. This is compatible with the fact that these differences are bolstered and refined in language. Each point in the triad is constituted by its relationship to the other two, so the isolation of one point is an artificial but effective abstraction. What is of interest here is the dynamic that can arise between the observer and what he observes, whether he observes himself, another or an object.

It is easiest to isolate an attunedness in a musical experience or in the experience of non-figurative art, because attention is not complicated by an external object. Since Plato, music had been loved and feared for arousing powerful feelings. But not feelings for anything determinate. We are not normally attentive to such indeterminate feelings, even though they carry our mode of observing. They are without language and are difficult to put into words, even though nothing prevents us from focusing on them or giving them names. Thus, a distance arises between observer and feeling, which punctures the intuitive attunedness.

A speech can work with musical rhythms in many ways: by shifting between summarizing and elaborating, assertion and omission, speech and silence, slow and fast speech, sound and stillness. The speech can also be divided into blocks, each with its own theme, which are in turn connected either directly (by using key words in the various blocks) or indirectly (simply by being a part of the same text). 'Words that work' do not do so simply by addressing the listener's apparent interests but also by dramatizing shifts between sounds and associations, so it becomes a piece of music that attunes listeners – exciting them, soothing them, orienting their attunedness toward particular topics and objects, so feelings arise that can 'move' and, thus, 'motivate' to act. It is a classic insight that feelings move people.[30] In Latin, a feeling is called an *emotion*, which quite literally means a mover. The word *motive* also refers to a force that moves us with our will, against our will or as our will.

An attunedness is not a simple but a complex thing. Even though it functions blindly, it is not without structure. It need not surprise: all observation is based upon complicated blindness. An attunedness is the unity of a difference between tension and release, where the focus can be on the *tension* that consumes itself on a running basis and thus is also a form of release (for example, rage, which has a short lifespan) or on *release*, which is also a form of tension (for example, laughter, which as a liberation demands a pre-existing accumulation of tension, whether it is created for the occasion or can be presumed by virtue of a sensitive topic).

Therefore, every attunedness is internally uneasy and has its own lifespan. Just as you cannot be attentive for an especially long time, you cannot hold onto an attunedness. If you try, you end up in a sad self-manipulation. Even though you can 'create a mood' with candles and wine, you cannot control its attunedness.

The absence of *reference* means a dramatic limitation of what attunedness can be. But this indeterminacy opens up possibilities. To be attuned is not to be directed toward concrete things or persons but to be attuned, that is, receptive to association. Attunedness is a *mode* that carries observation regardless of what is observed.

However, this seems to leave us in a vacuum. How can we identify attunednesses, when we cannot orient ourselves in accordance with observation's triad of *I*, *Thou*, and *It*? To observe is to observe something. Unobserved attunednesses that carry observation are not themselves observation. And if they are observed, an immediate transformation occurs, so they become something other than carrier waves. They are dissolved, and the vacuum they leave behind is filled by new, perhaps more diffuse, and mixed attunednesses.

But even though we apparently cannot use observation's triad as a starting point, there are no *other* places we can begin. We must find a new angle, and we can begin with three assumptions:

1 We can assume that every attunedness has a 'counter-attunedness', just as every concept has a counter-concept. On the other hand, it makes no sense to deny attunedness in general. Even though you can distinguish between the quick everyday mode of observing and aesthetics' slow mode, this is not the difference between being attuned and not being attuned. All observation is attuned.
2 We can further assume that aesthetic attunedness arises in pairs in which one has the character of attraction, the other repulsion. It is an open question whether we can differentiate further if we want to stick to intuitive and, thus, language-less attunedness. The more nuances, the more language, and the more movement from a general attunedness to a concrete feeling *for*.
3 Finally, we can assume that, if attunedness has a direction, it also has a source – not a specific object but rather a general field of objects that can be identified from the poles of the communicative triad. Attunedness can emanate from me toward others or from others toward me.

With these three assumptions *in mente*, we can go back to the triad and investigate whether special modes of observation can be determined from its three poles in which we do not look at observation's directedness *toward* but at its object-less *mode*. Since we are talking about modes of observing, the observer, that is, the *I* in the schematic triad, is at the centre.

Around the *I* can be distinguished expansive strength, such as love of life or 'élan', and contractive weakness, such as loss or anxiety. I can radiate a magnificent sense of ability and will, which makes it a joy to exist, or I can be weakened by an anxiety that crushes and tightens and make everything seem hopeless. These two attunednesses may be directed toward persons or toward the physical world, and they can spring from myself or be localized in my surroundings. The strength can come from me or to me; weakness issue from the inside or come creeping in from the outside.

Around the *Thou* can be distinguished a general mood of community in which all or some or an individual is implicated in a grandiose feeling of empathy and care. In this particular attunedness, even the waiter is embraced with sympathy. The opposite attunedness is the isolation that makes an encounter with others an impossible task, so the observer is thrown back on himself. Here, too, a distinction can be made as to whether the source of this relationship is in myself or in others. The community can be due to me or come to me as a place where I belong, and isolation can be due to my own withdrawal or the rejection of others. Since we are not talking about an objective relationship but an aesthetic attunedness, truth values are without meaning. Whether the others want nothing to do with me or I simply believe they do not is irrelevant for the here and now of the attunedness but not for its ultimate fate.

Around the *It* can be distinguished the cosmic feeling of solidarity with everything as opposed to the tragic insight that the world is at a distance and runs according to its own merciless rules, where people and objects are puppets. Here, too, there is an active and a passive variant. The unity with the world may come from me or from the world, so I seize or am seized, and the world's distance can once again be due to the coldness of the world or my own powerlessness.

Strength and weakness, community and isolation, unity and distance. We are approaching the aesthetic mode of observation, which is decoupled from true/false and right/wrong and is oriented in accordance with a spontaneous *mode* of observation. It seems as if we cannot get any further with the differentiation without coming to language, since the simple distribution of sources has brought us within a threatening proximity of it. If we begin to combine or to allow the attraction/repulsion scheme to vary, so attraction can be connected to weakness and repulsion to strength, and so on, we are also approaching language.

Each of the six modes can be divided into an active or a passive form. Depending on where the centre of the attunedness is placed, there can be different attunednesses. We get the scheme shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Six modes of attunedness

Attunedness	**Attraction**		**Repulsion**	
I	Strength	< = >	Weakness	< = >
Thou	Community	< = >	Isolation	< = >
It	Unity	< = >	Distance	< = >

Note: The arrows indicate that there is both an active and a passive variant.

How a work attunes is an uncertain matter, even though we acquire experience over time. An advertisement can wager that, if it shows a person in a state of ecstatic strength, explosive with energy, this will in itself infect the receiver and get him to long for something. Or that a representation of a person who is struck by weakness or abandonment, because the laundry or a cake has gone wrong, will make the receiver see washing detergent or cake as tools for strength. Here, the sender relies on the attraction and repulsion, which are built into the difference between pleasure and dislike. But no sender has full control over the attunedness in the receiver. Therefore, there is uncertainty around the initial reception of a work, because it is the birthplace of the first public description of the work – for example, a review – which, therefore, can establish, if not the work's truth, its social fate.

A work need not stick to a single form of attunedness. It can orchestrate them and make the receiver's soul undulate. Theme shift and tempo shift are important tools for holding his feet to the fire, so no particular attunedness is stifled by satiety or flattened out into routine. The rhythm among many forms of attunedness *itself* helps attune the observer, so the work acquires a special time pattern. Rock music shifts between hard and soft numbers, action films love to shock with sudden transitions from idyll to horror, and a speech can shift between appeals to swooning and energetic beauty and, thus, fulfil the longing for creamy passivity and crystalline activity. One classic method of seduction is to hold out the prospect of transforming chaos (repulsion) into order (attraction), so the observer has the opportunity to leave behind weakness and a hostile world to be filled with strength, enter into a community, and live in a habitable world. This involves constructing a narrative that occupies time positions – past, present and future – with a particular attunedness. Religions can be considered to be programmes for such transitions from innocence to sinfulness to salvation.

This attunedness at which the work aims need not be definitive. The sender may reckon that, if he leaves the receiver in a mood of abandonment, the receiver will resist it on his own and assert himself. In classic tragedies, people die by the dozen, and the rest is silence. But the very performance of the tragic conditions and the strength of the representation of human weakness may be a tonic against the apparent message, so it is not just death but also art that triumphs. By expressing the hopeless, the work creates distance and, thus, hope: you can breathe again.

Architecture also works with attunedness. A house can be created as a labyrinth in which the receiver gets lost – such as in Catholicism's cathedrals in which simple, fundamental forms are complicated and enriched into infinity, beyond all imagination, until the receiver senses through his own weakness the strength of God, who has the power to create and, thus, comprehend the labyrinth in which he himself loses orientation. So the church becomes a symbol of the world but also a hinge that can swing the receiver from weakness to strength if he surrenders and submits himself.

Both in tragedy and in the church, the receiver is left in a negative attunedness that can spontaneously be transformed into a positive attunedness. And he can experience a sublime aesthetic pleasure, because the pattern created is his own effort, also when the sender calculates that he can leave the receiver in a vacuum who must by his own efforts not only solve the mystery by logical means but follow the trail and make the desired transformation, which in turn means a shift in attunedness. This parts many waters – the divide between those who understand the hint and those who are deaf to it, and the divide between those who take the hint as it is meant and those who are content with the aesthetics.

The relationship between attraction and repulsion is complicated. In an organization, it is often risky to rely on the public giving itself time to undergo the necessary transformations. Here, negative attunedness is made into a background, the positive the foreground. Both are present at the same time, since they are forms of reflection of each other: one is defined by reference of the other. But just as Talcott Parsons could claim that the modern exercise of power prefers to make the reward very visible and the sanction almost invisible,[31] it can be claimed that organizations will typically only take note of repulsion as a sounding board for attraction, so strength and community and the habitable world drink nectar from the skulls of the slain (Marx). Even if the organization can conjure up a crisis and thereby stress weakness in a hostile world, it inevitably happens in a time perspective in which weakness must *now* strengthen community and be transformed into future strength.

Attunedness is a paradoxical thing. On one hand, it is present as observation's carrier wave and, on the other hand, it can *itself* be observed. This is a way of expressing the fact that the blindness that lies behind all observation is not empty or neutral but has a colour and a tendency. If the attunedness is strong, it can overtake self-observation and use it to strengthen itself, so consciousness of happiness – or unhappiness – becomes a part of an even more intense happiness or unhappiness. But it can just as easily happen that self-consciousness creates distance, so it is impossible to find one's way back to the spontaneity of an initial attunedness. It is irritating when a 'good mood' disappears simply because it was mentioned and will not return, no matter how many handsprings you do or how many buttons you push. And many athletes are afraid that a lucky streak might suddenly stop or that an unlucky streak might go from bad to worse if just the *word* is spoken.

When it comes to art, attunedness is often only aesthetic. Modern art is not, as in Plato or in the Renaissance, intertwined with the great powers of society. Therefore, the aesthetic experience is rarely sweeping. Even when it is strong and intense, it stays within the aesthetic domain and does not mix with politics or religion. Not even when art represents existential role models or re-describes the world can it do anything other than suggest.

Here, however, the theme is not fine art but applied art. So, we have to go back to contexts prior to the purification of art, when we are to investigate how society's great powers – in economics, politics or health, for example – make use of aesthetic means and, thus, involve aesthetic attunedness in their own game. It happens specifically in organizations that are the central agents of modern society.

From attunedness to feeling

We shall move from intuitive to reflective attunedness and show how attunedness can be made – that is, attempted to be made – functional and transformed into a feeling with a name and an object. Only because this transformation is possible do organizations have an interest in attuning receivers to their communication.

To be attuned is something different from harbouring a feeling *for* something, whether it is for a work, a figure in the work, or what the work does for the receiver. To feel *for* something is to be able to point out what the feeling is directed toward. Even though there are diffuse, floating and 'nameless' feelings, there are reasons to distinguish between being prelinguistically attuned and linguistically having a feeling *for* something. To be attuned is not to be directed toward something particular but to observe in a particular way, whether you are observing yourself, others, or what is the case.[32] Attunedness is primitive (but not for that reason structureless) and can be observed as a plastic corporal capacity, whose distinctive features are its tropistic movement *toward* or movement *away from* and its varying strength, which stretches from a slight quivering of the hairs on your neck to catastrophic reversals.

By virtue of the difference between attraction and repulsion, the 'system of attunednesses' acts as a sort of immune system for the soul: it promotes or hinders connection. Someone who is weak does something differently from someone who bristles with power, regardless of what they do. Therefore, it can be of interest to manipulate strength and weakness. A feeling, on the other hand, is far more precise. It has a name, an object, and a direction. In this way, language and the infinite nuance of feeling come into the picture.

As indicated, subtle interferences can arise between attunedness and feeling, so we can feel ourselves attracted by works that represent things that disgust us.[33] The work attunes us positively, even though it activates negative feelings. And a strategic connection between attunedness and feeling is created when an attunedness is created and has a name associated with it, so the tendency and strength of the attunedness is symbolized, given direction, and transformed into a feeling *for* or *against*.

In this way, an aesthetic attunedness can be transformed into an ideological feeling – for example, in the film *Cabaret* in which the pure, melodious sound of a boy's voice ends up bolstering Nazi solidarity. The melodiousness can be enjoyed in the moment or lead to a long-term effort, which opens up two different ways of experiencing aesthetically. Antonio Strati notices that an organization can be experienced as a jewel, that is, a crystalline totality, or it can be experienced as a piece of music that slowly unfolds, which requires effort and suffering, whether the story ends happily or tragically.[34]

Since there is no demonstrative logic, that is, no objectivity for attunedness, an individual gets a part of his identity through his special balance of attunednesses or his special mode of being attuned by a work. Reactions to a work can be interesting information about an individual and, throughout the history of ideas, there have been many attempts to put such 'characters' into a system. The doctrine of 'the four temperaments', Theophrastus' theory of character[35] and astrology come to mind. This also allows the formulation of the experience that an individual is not master over his attunedness, since this would lead to a paradox: to claim that you can be master over your own 'ultimate expression' is the same as claiming that this ultimate expression is not ultimate. At our own pinnacle, we must inevitably be spontaneous, that is, blind and incapable of determining what we are up to – until, perhaps, afterwards.

When aesthetics becomes functional, the splendour surrounding art disappears. The aesthetic tools of organizations can be shamelessly fortified by desire. Advertising in particular must, unbidden, use what works if the gaze is to be captured. In contrast to the work of art, which is liberated from interest and thus existence, the applied arts must motivate people to act. Therefore, it cannot be content with pleasing or titillating but must lead the pleasure and the titillation on, to motivate concrete actions – for example, buying something.[36]

Myriads of things and people can be observed and treated with the indifferent attention of everyday life until you suddenly encounter something that touches a magic point where the soul's observation is connected to the body's desire and sets not just the soul but the whole body on fire, so you are not content until you *possess*. This is a sublimated form of pornography, which also contrives texts and images to activate powerful bodily urges along unknown paths of nerves and channels of hormones. An image of happiness is suggested along with a promise that it is right at hand – with one simple, radical action, you can step out of the everyday and transform your life, make it intense, cleanse it of warped considerations and pale compromises, and permeate it with angelic tones.

The aesthetic tools that an organization uses are considered successful if they succeed in activating this hot spot by snaring, seducing, and securing the receiver and getting a handle on him, so that, of his own free will, he does what is wanted, even though it may lead to his ruin. Therefore, the urgent voices encourage us to do this or that and the beautiful people stare at us with desire from posters and magazine pages, so that our desire for them is symbolically met by their desire for us – thus, contributing to an attunedness based on community: they like me, I can become a participant in an imaginary, perfect, and timeless world of beautiful people and beautiful things and may be there already.

Even though everybody knows the promise is empty, it is pointless to sue the promise breaker. He only displayed a picture, after all. That it works, even though you see through it, is only partially his fault.

Aesthetic appeal is not present as an operation alongside communication's other operations. It is built-in. Attunedness is the sounding board that is created recursively in the patterns of sensation and meaning, when everyday relationships between constancy and variation are broken up. To create these breaks is a professional task for creative minds in advertising agencies, design offices, and PR firms. They consider desires, both deep and superficial, as free capacities that can acquire new names and be directed toward new things. They display attunednesses at the same time that, as hinges, they can transform them. An experience of abandonment can be accommodated by commercials that show how wine or cheese or sanitary napkins are cherished and enjoyed by happy people, so that a *mechanical* hinge is *symbolically* created between abandonment and community. And the disappointment that the hinge is not as robust – as physical – as the commercial implies can both lead one out of the universe of advertising but also lead one further into it, toward new purchases, if the receiver has no better images of community than those the commercial provide him.

Attunedness can be transformed into feeling in a two-step operation. First, attunedness must be symbolized and, thus, acquire a specific address. What is without language must be connected with language. This occurs by being *schematized*. Then, this schematized attunedness, which has now become a feeling, must be brought into a relationship with other feelings and objects. This occurs by being made *contingent*, so that it enters into a network of causes and effects. When attunedness is pulled out of its darkness, the vacuum behind it is filled with other forms of attunedness that can promote or hinder schematization and contingency. We shall look a little closer at these two mechanisms.

Schematization

To schematize is to distinguish between centre and periphery, that is, to determine what is to be remembered and what can be forgotten. This also creates a topic, or *topos*, about which the conversation is to revolve. Thus, the languagelessness of attunedness disappears, which is also its indeterminacy. It may be stated and communicated and brought into relation to what is normal and unusual, acceptable and unacceptable. It passes, if you will, from nature to culture. An indeterminate attunedness becomes a determinate and named thing that can be changed without losing its identity. By being schematized, attunedness acquires substance (constancy) and, therefore, can also have qualities (variation). It is open to manipulation.

Contingency

To be contingent is to place attunedness into a network of causes and effects, so it can be decided what – probably – will invoke it or make it disappear. While schematization has to do with substance, contingency has to do with causality. By virtue of this dual operation, attunedness is transformed into a feeling that is brought into relation to other feelings and includes all the poles in observation's triad of *I*, *Thou*, and *It*.

Thus, a complex web of feelings is created, which are woven into each other and itself. My feeling of strength can be contingent on the fact that *I* participate in a community with you, that is, *I* am recognized by you, or that the world is welcoming, so *I* also become welcoming. By virtue of my connection to the *Thou* and to the *It*, *I* am brought out of my inner, empty infinity. And if *I* acquire my identity by virtue of my symbolic relationship with the *Thou* and the *It*, a subtle handle is put on the I, so it can be controlled, not against but through its will. That the world is habitable can be contingent on the fact that the *I* has access to wealth and luxury, that is, *I* can spoil my senses. That the difference between wealth and poverty is not absolute only means that schematization and contingency are dependent on time and place.

In this way, forms of attunedness can be transformed and captured in a strategic game in which it can be claimed that certain things and activities can directly condition a transition from anxiety to strength or indirectly make the same movement by a detour across the social dimension: a particular thing or activity means that the *I* is recognized by the *Thou* and, thus, moves me from weakness to strength.

Similarly, attunedness makes use of feelings by a binary mechanism of attraction and repulsion. It has its roots in the body, where attunednesses are available as a plastic or malleable capacity that can be symbolized and nuanced endlessly, because language, culture and memory make a rich repertoire of names, prototypes, and situations available, so we can describe feelings or, if we lack words, refer to models or situations. Language, culture, and body are part of a symbiosis in feelings that are the great driving forces in our psychic system. We feel ourselves drawn to and feel strongly in favour of some things; other things we fear and are disgusted by. Feelings are symbolized attunednesses that are dependent on

> [t]he meaningful interpretation, control, and utilization of sufficiently plastic organic capacities. Their symbiotic base is generalized in the sense that it broadens the range of compatibility between organic and social processes.[37]

In principle, there are no limits to the sophistication with which feelings can be defined. There are feelings of such complexity that you can doubt that they have a solid, bodily foundation and do not simply live a transitory life in linguistic constructions in which the pleasure of language, more than a raw feeling, is at stake. At the same time, all possible combinations and ambiguities are possible, so you can go endlessly into detail in the interplay of jealousy and envy between constancy and variation. Here, the point I earlier alluded to is relevant: it is utterly hopeless to create a schematic of all feelings.

With symbolization, aesthetic attunedness is brought into a game of *recognition*, which has to do with meaning and which embraces the *I*, the *Thou*, and the *It*. Things are not just things but – as Hegel knew – symbolic things. [38] People are not just people but – as Mead knew – 'meaningful others'.[39]

Attunedness is what it is and, if it gets the name, a new attunedness sneaks in hidden behind the previous one and takes possession of its empty place. On the other hand, feelings can, by virtue of their names, be reflective. They have a word, that is, a constancy, a description. You know that they are there; you observe and describe them, and learn from your experience with them. In this way, they acquire a history that contributes to their endless complexity. You can talk about them. For with feelings, it is not only the simple case that they are weakened over time but also more complex in that their fate depends on whether they are accepted or rejected, when they clash with other feelings and with the feelings of others. Normal crises arise, whose outcomes are idiosyncratic but which transform feelings – when love is transformed into hate or indifference or when frustration in one place is compensated by an increased effort somewhere else, so a failed career is veiled with the remark that 'now I'm going to concentrate on the family'.

Despite their symbolic identity, feelings as such are not to be controlled. Not only because we love feelings because they are beyond control but also because they have to do with *attribution*, that is, a construction of motives that need not be recognized by the person who 'has' the feeling. Unconscious feelings also count; so many diverse features can be collected in a synthetic unity – 'he is vain' – but can also be rejected for that reason.

Since feelings can be endlessly described and re-described, they become just as mysterious for those who have them as for those who observe them in others. And since they have their roots in indeterminate attunednesses, there is also a struggle to define them, that is, to put them into words and, thus, control them in strategic games, which has to do with what should be done and, thus, about which future should be realized.

An organization can, through its narratives, indicate which feelings it wants to promote and to hinder and what are considered legitimate goals for the feelings of employees, so it does not simply seek to shape but also to 'arouse' feelings. It is hardly too much to claim that an organization's fate is decided in these struggles about feelings and their words.

That an attunedness cannot be observed but remains in observation's invisible background[40] is a condition for its use: attunedness is the place where observers are naïve, regardless of how sophisticated they otherwise are. But to use it is no simple matter. There is always a high loss quotient, because observers are not trivial machines in which a determinate input is transformed into a determinate output. People note that they are influenced and safeguard themselves by influencing the influence. They are no innocent victims.

Therefore, there is often a powerful redundancy at work – for example, influence along many sense paths. In a commercial for beer, we hear the slight suction, when the cap is opened, we hear the trickling sound of liquid that flows down into a glass, we see people enjoy the aroma, we see the bubbles and the foam rise up and flow over exuberantly, and we sense the sensation of frost around the glass. Since it is not possible to control all the senses at once, the chance is strengthened that some of the impressions go straight through the critical filters, even though the receiver knows that it is 'just' a commercial. It can help create an attunedness around a cosmic unity, from the world to me, in which beer becomes the meeting point between me and the world, so I desire to become one with the beer and incorporate it. In this way, a banal consumer item can be woven into a cosmic game and acquire its meaning dramatically strengthened. Advertising is a *meaning amplifier*. That is why it can help sell things that do not sell themselves.

The aesthetic management of organizations

In organizations, you cannot normally expect that the receiver is inclined toward the slow, lingering observation that is mobilized for fine art. You cannot count on the public 'rejecting their own rejection', if they are offended by the organization's communication, as happens when the public observes avante-garde art that throws all decency to the winds. In advertising, an eye-catcher must be built in, so the eye or the ear does not pass by indifferently. Management must communicate to employees and the public in a way that is 'easy to understand'.[41]

To use attunedness demands a transformation, a clarification so that its attraction or repulsion becomes a directed motivation. In antiquity, rhetoricians dreamed that they could control their audience and make them putty in their capable hands. But this fantasy about aesthetic omnipotence is exaggerated. Aesthetics is fragile, when it contributes to specific actions. It is only a single filament in a complex tapestry called a motif. And even when a schooled professional is addressing eager amateurs, he can be seen through, simple causality and its 'one-potato, two-potato' effect disappears in an impenetrable feed-back and feed-forward pattern.

A virtuoso speaker can use his schooling to attune his audience and put the attunedness into words. He knows his audience and what they love and fear. A classic example may be found in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, when Mark Antony, making adroit use of classical rhetorical tropes, turns the mood of the crowd from hatred of Caesar to sympathy for his fate and thus hatred for his murderers. All public figures, rock musicians, politicians, salesmen, think about their comportment and tools. It gives them a head start over their receivers, who normally do not have a great interest in seeing through the tricks of communication. Afterwards, they can be praised by their colleagues for their talent, that is, the cynicism with which they run their game.

There is a difference between the small manipulation that will entice a single purchase and the large manipulation that will transform a person's character. And there is a difference between an artist's seduction, which opens up an imaginary world, and a manager's seduction, which opens up a vision of the future with a claim that, if 'we' (community) come together, each individual can have an important role to play (strength) to create a better future (a habitable world). While the artist introduces an imaginary world and allows his receiver to do with it what he will, the manager turns back toward the concrete world with a requirement of effort and change.

The organization's seduction does not simply aim at making people experience something in a particular way but also at making them act in a particular way. Therefore, it must orchestrate its tools differently.

In an organization, aesthetics has a function: it is to promote the autopoiesis of the organization. This can happen through many channels. A powerful and elegant piece of architecture that allows the viewer to sense his tragic powerlessness can, at the same time, offer him a surfeit of strength by entering into the organization. By contrast, a soft, welcoming piece of architecture can make the observer feel at home. This appeals to two different observers who are attuned differently and must be motivated in different ways.

It is also possible for an organization to play on conflicts between attunednesses, so majestic spaces that activate weakness are compensated by a cordial tone that creates a sense of community and strengthens the ego through weakness overcome. To play two attunednesses against each other without a clear time sequence makes it uncertain what will be weakened and what will be strengthened by the contrast. Additional attempts at control will only contribute to what you could call the flicker of attunedness.

To say that an 'organization does' is, of course, misleading. An organization does not do anything. It is persons who act when they take on the aims of the organization and thus promote their own and the organization's interests. They accept suspending their own motives, assuming their masks and roles, and doing as they must.

Attunedness and feeling in organizations

To be attuned is inevitably to be 're-attuned'. A work of art can do this. It seduces the observer into a context in which something happens to him, so he is captured – perhaps, only in the sentimental second when a lump gathers in the throat and brings a tear to the eye. Attunedness is a shadowy feeling in the body that lasts as long as it lasts and declines on its own, if nothing intervenes. And to intervene is to programme it with symbols, so that it steps out of its blind moment and acquires a relationship to *time*. The intensity of the moment can be the starting point for an effort that can last years. The strength in bright ideas or the intense community of love can provide energy for continuing the work and the relationship. Memory of the sweetness in being attuned can add lustre to less sweet moments at a later point in time.

An organization can programme cognitively, normatively, and aesthetically. These are three modes of getting individuals, of their own will, to contribute to the autopoiesis of the organization, whether it is employees, clients, investors or the media. And these three modes can be isolated analytically but, as a rule, are united in a work – for example, a speech, a brochure, a building, a product or an image. However, all require 'accommodating forms of life'.[42] The receiver must be primed, because they can only motivate on the precondition of an attunedness in the receiver.

There is no guarantee that aesthetic communication is able to attune us and to transform the attunedness into a feeling for an organization or its product. For an organization, the transition from attunedness to feeling is the very moment of truth. If it does not happen as intended, the aesthetic effort is wasted, regardless of how much pleasure the sender and the receiver have had from it.

For an organization, aesthetics is an investment, a piece in the economic game. Therefore, it must prevent its works from being enjoyed *purely* aesthetically, taken out of their function. A church must not only be beautiful – it must, above all, attune the soul and, with sensual means, communicate the impossible transition from the sensual to the suprasensual. A beautiful teapot may be, for the designer, a goal in itself. But for an organization, it is also a means.

In this way, the work becomes a *theme*,[43] intersected by many interests that may be alien to each other. Therefore, aesthetics in organizations is not only a question of personal enjoyment but also about negotiation and power, so you can talk about a *hybrid aesthetics*.[44] A house is not only observed by the builder but also by the architect, the tourist, and the consumer. Each party has his own gaze and, thus, his own blindness. And even though the house is created as communication, what is crucial is not whether the receiver understands what the sender wanted but whether he is affected by it.

That aesthetics is a hybrid does not mean, however, that analyses of aesthetic tools are rife with irreparable ambiguity – that they are 'impure' or downright confused.[45] What can work together must be able to be separated, so you can see *what* it is that is working together.

A work is a juncture in communication between strangers who neither know nor care about each other. They are not out to help each other, as little as the bee is out to help the flower that it aids. But bent upon their own interests, they may merely be more useful to each other than if they stare agog out into the darkness and guessed at what the other party was after. The desire to please yourself is more stable and more secure than the desire to please others – and must regularly take a swing through others' pleasure to be fulfilled.

Attunedness is a little time crystal in which past, present, and future meet. It can arise in a local context that touches on the right repertoire of familiar topics and stories or it can open up a universal pattern that binds and leads beyond the everyday. A universal rhetoric uses different tools from a local rhetoric, which knows its receivers and their desires. And by 'universal', I mean not only the geographical–global but also tones and colours, forms and rhythm, which designate nothing and attune with elemental means.

Aesthetics and strategy

It is a mantra in this book that, for an organization, aesthetics is not a goal in itself but a tool to promote its autopoiesis. Basically, you can distinguish between an organization's *mission*, which is its answer to why it exists, and its *vision*, which is its answer to what it wants to achieve, that is, how it handles the difference between present and future. In the organization's narratives, a strategy appears, that is, a timetable of where it came from, where it is, and where it is going.

If you say strategy, you say goal and, thus, you step onto shaky ground. Goals can be determinate and indeterminate, rigid and flexible, official and unofficial. They can find themselves further down the road, as happens in many fairy tales. When the soldier in Hans Christian Andersen's *The Tinder-box* chopped off the head of the witch, he did not know that there was a princess waiting in the wings. His no was not yet mirrored in a yes. Nevertheless, he went forth through one situation after another until his destiny appeared. Organizations, too, can drift, so their official goal is a cloak that has only ritual interest. Organizations, too, can discover what they want when they see what they have done. These difficulties should not delay us here.

At a minimum, a strategy is an action plan in which actions create asymmetry in the stream of communication by localizing actors and ascribing responsibility. Actions require material resources but also immaterial resources in the form of knowledge and values. Nor shall this hold us up. We shall go on and ask whether they also require 'aesthetic resources', what such resources consist of, and what function they have. And we want to steer the question of function in the direction of an analysis of access to alternatives. What can be achieved with aesthetic resources, and can they be replaced?

In a strategic light, aesthetics is a resource. If it is not, it has no place in an organization. If the resource arises and is allocated randomly, its contribution to the organization's autopoiesis will be a fortunate or unfortunate accident but will not permit systematic efforts. The organization must undergo a test as to whether it is possible to control, first, the attunedness of people and, then, their feelings. Even though the effort proceeds down the narrow path of causality and even though it is lost in black boxes, there must be a demonstrable connection between effort and reward. If not, we find ourselves in the domain of faith.

This control simply means that the organization's management does not consider it useless to make an effort. Even though an aesthetic contribution is not as well-defined as an economic contribution and even though it does not permit tight control, it must be able to be considered an investment, which can be risky but not absurd.

Nothing prevents aesthetic innocence, so aesthetic tools arise as an unintended side-effect of a completely different activity. There can be an awkward charm about a person who forgets himself, completely absorbed in his task, and there can be a raw beauty in a workshop, where the building is purely functional and everything is arranged for a practical purpose. Aesthetic innocence, however, is not durable. It is observed, and its effect is evaluated. Once the word is uttered, child-like innocence is transformed into childish guilt or adult distance, which opens up alternatives. Thereafter, there is no way back to spontaneity.

When an organization uses an aesthetic premise for its decisions or decides to make an aesthetic effort, the classic question of *cui bono* is easy to answer. It is for the sake of the organization. Even though an organization, strictly speaking, can only influence itself, since all its operations are internal, its self-stimulation must take place via the external side of the signs it uses in its communication. And more: the effort must be directed toward the external side of the difference between system and environment. An organization cannot short-circuit its communication in itself without burning up. Its self-stimulation must take place via a 'foreign stimulation' by the parties it communicates with.

If these parties are aesthetically indifferent or unfamiliar with the word 'aesthetics', one would think that the organization could forget about aesthetics. But it is not so simple, since aesthetics works both intuitively and reflectively. In a variation of Niels Bohr's classic remark that the horseshoe over the door to his summer house brought him luck even though he did not believe in it, aesthetics also works for those who are blind to it. You need not be an aesthetician to find a car beautiful or a foyer pleasant. The phenomenon precedes the word, even though it only acquires a clear identity by virtue of language, just as rhetoric, according to Aristotle, does not create but presumes a difference between good and bad speakers.[46]

The category 'aesthetics' provides a subset of an organization's total battery of tools in its communication and, thus, a subset of the premise for its decisions. And both the organization's processes – communication and products – can be observed aesthetically. The function of aesthetics is to strengthen the power of communication to convince by increasing its receptivity, so the receiver is captured, fascinated and fixed. In the long run, this receptivity is supposed to create attraction. But in the short term, the method can be to repulse. An organization can move along a thin line between being advanced and, therefore, acceptable and advanced and, therefore, unacceptable. When it is struggling for survival and when its long-term goal consists only of short-term goals, they cannot draw much on the future. It cannot, like Stendhal, bank on acceptance in half a century, while being rejected in the meantime.

An aesthetic effort does not take place via empirical information or moral principles. It takes place in an interplay between constancy and variation in many patterns – sensual, cognitive, emotional, social. Since it does not take place in a social vacuum, it must calculate the expectations the public has as a part of its baggage, even when the public is transient and invisible. Like a politician, an organization must, therefore, often send out a message, see what happens, and learn from experience. To this end, it can purchase professional assistance in the form of experts in aesthetic communication – designers, architects, ad men, spin doctors, and rhetoricians.

Aesthetic tools have the strategic advantage that they do not presume knowledge or principles in the receivers. Therefore, they are suitable for communication in mass media, where a sound bite has been reduced from forty to twenty seconds over the last thirty years. In such a short space of time, an argument cannot be made, only an impression. It favours aesthetic tools that act intuitively or bodily and, therefore, communication with a mass audience is transformed from an objective to an aesthetic game. Many complain that politics is not about arguments but about the strategic manipulation of symbols – about signals. In addition, it should be noted that the strength of democracy is that it is decoupled from questions of Truth and, instead, directs its efforts toward questions of What Can Persuade a Majority. And the art of persuasion also has to do with aesthetics.

You can isolate extremes in the aesthetic interplay between reassurance and disquietude. At one end of the spectrum, pleasure can be created with tested means – sweet words, robust and flattering rhythms, clichés about romance, the beautiful, the luxurious, the exciting, everything that accommodates various conceptions of problem-free happiness. If you can continue these topics, communication acquires an advantage of speed – and the additional advantage that it works invisibly, almost intravenously.

If you consider aesthetic means as an exclusive matter for the art system, such methods arouse discomfort. You sense the intention and become mistuned. But it is simply due to the fact that you confuse aesthetics and art and, therefore, require that aesthetic communication have its own purpose and always be original.

An organization can be indifferent to such a requirement. An anonymous supplier of everyday goods measures his success or failure in money and, if the organization is pleased with its earning curves, it will brush off criticism from the cultural elite. Its only problem is that a reluctant elite can affect its image and, thus, by invisible roads, also its earnings.

At the other end of the spectrum, an organization can put its efforts into creating interest with aesthetic irritation – to create uncertainty and mysteries, to stymie expectations and work with unattractive effects. Here, the precondition is more ambitious – namely, a receiver who does not react intuitively but reflectively and who is able to block his spontaneous discomfort and use it as a spur to attraction, not repulsion.

We can summarize this way: aesthetic tools can be used strategically for short-term or somewhat longer-term goals to increase the *Anschlußwert* – connectivity – of the organization's communication. To manage this value has to do with modelling the relationship between constancy and variation. An organization can invest in becoming a constant in public communication, so it conquers a base from which it can create variation and continually fine-tune its communication in order to avoid routine and forgetfulness. Re-description requires description, just as renewal requires tradition.

What is aesthetic strategy?

Since all dimensions in an organization's communication can be used strategically, it is not only possible to speak of knowledge management and value management but also about aesthetic management. Management has to do with orchestrating many considerations and motivating specialists to collaborate for a common goal. This orchestration does not happen accidentally but out of a strategy. What does this mean?

The classic view of strategy as a series of means, and of means to means that are rationally directed toward a general goal has, since the 1970s, been undermined by theoreticians such as James March and Karl Weick.[47] They have shown with great success that organizations and their managers do not follow this model, so an organization is not a trivial machine in which a particular input leads to a particular output, governed by a hierarchy in which you only need to observe the pinnacle – the management – in order to be able to draw conclusions about what generally takes place in the organization.[48]

If the concept of strategy is still useful, the close relationship between goals and means must not only be loosened but also be able to be converted, so there are not just goals seeking means, but there can also be means seeking goals. However, the concept means, at a minimum, a handling of a relationship between goals and means and thus a realization of a state that is different from the current one. Without an orientation toward the future, the concept collapses – *regardless* of the fact that

1 goals can seek means or means seek goals,
2 the establishment of goals and means and the relationship between them can be weakly grounded or ungrounded (for example, ritually), and
3 goals and means can be indeterminate, so they can lithely adapt to a 'new situation'.[49]

Whether an organization will maintain its strategy in spite of everything or will flexibly adapt to what it considers inner or outer change is a choice that, in principle, is subjective and, therefore, contributes to giving the organization identity.[50]

A strategy need not be bound to a particular outcome. It can be open to the fact that reality turns out differently than expected. It can 'discover' a tendency that is already present and transform it into a strategy. But this requires that the tendency be identified, described, maintained and promoted – perhaps, with resistance from others who see the matter in a different way. Sudden strategies can arise around sudden opportunities, so the actual outcome is dubbed to be the desired goal. All these reservations do not prevent the fact that

1 a strategy is oriented in accordance with the difference between past and future,
2 a strategy makes a difference between the desired and undesired, success and failure, and
3 a strategy is unavoidable, because it provides the schematics that make it possible to decide what is constant and variable, central and peripheral, normal and unusual, worth remembering and allowed to be forgotten – and what is to be done in order to minimize the difference between status quo and a vision of the future.

An organization can just as little avoid having a strategy as an individual can avoid acting, because non-action is observed as action and because individuals inevitably act, that is, set up alternatives and decide between them. That there is a battle over words does not change this fundamental relationship. Whether a strategy is out of step, divergent, makes a virtue of necessity, or purports that what is the case is what is desired, an organization cannot avoid thinking strategically. If the strategic gaze disappears, the organization's coherence and orientation disappears.

Only by virtue of a strategic gaze can causes be selected and effects stimulated. Causes and effects are, of course, what they are. But, normally, they are so complicated that no one can follow them in their subtle circuit that binds the infinite horizon of causes with the infinite horizon of effects. These two horizons can only be connected selectively, so it almost becomes the *decision* that is the 'cause of causes', that is, the cause that a causal connection can be maintained at all.[51]

When there are a lot of possibilities for isolating causes and effects, the causal relationship becomes not only an expression of what really happens but also an expression of choice: how would you describe something?[52] This particularly has to do with complex systems in which it is difficult to follow the micro-processes of causality and difficult to decide which reality prevails. The choice of causes and effects is also a choice of a space for action. Depending on whether a child's awkward motor skills are explained by moral weakness, brain damage, poor discipline or other social interactions, very different interventions will be appropriate.

Strategic thinking does not only occur in one place in an organization. Even though management has the official responsibility for observing and deciding for the organization as a whole, its strategic gaze is met by other gazes with different backgrounds. Every organization is a battleground for different actors with different interests, viewpoints, and descriptions. They follow each other's movements with a view toward promoting their own cause and, thus, think strategically. The political system, both in society and the organization, is an arena for this second-order observation in which all observations are observed and all actions are acted upon, so the final outcome may be unexpected by all parties.

We will not be pursuing this topic further but shall be satisfied with remarking that, if the central element in an organization is the decision and if planning is a discussion of the premise for a decision and if strategy is a discussion of the premise for planning, any discussion of a decision has strategic meaning.

Aesthetics supplies a topic for decisions – for example, design – or a premise for decisions – for example, the choice of rhetoric. Therefore, it enters into strategic considerations of goals and means and requires collaboration between professionals and amateurs. Like knowledge and values, aesthetics is also a common topic for people who have different views of the same thing. Regardless of whether aesthetic tools are considered as

1. a matter for top management,
2. a matter for schooled competence or 'technostructure',[53] or
3. a part of the cultural store of 'undecided premises for decisions',[54]

they constitute an organizational topic. They are observed, evaluated, and changed. They work both intuitively and reflectively but need no reflection to work. Therefore, they are suited to influence a mass audience that has few, diverse, and hazy assumptions. And, therefore, they are so important for organizational communication that they are normally not left to chance.

Strategy is the opposite of chance, even though it can use chance and even though many postmodern theories in their eagerness to outbid each other in the heroic acceptance of contingency pretend there is no particular difference between strategy and head-or-tails.

A strategy is a plan of action. It requires programmes that can be conditional programmes, which are oriented in accordance with closed rules, or goal programmes, which are oriented in accordance with open visions.[55] In this scheme, aesthetic tools fall on the visionary side, because they cannot be bound to rules and require continuous renewal.

The external relationship between art and organization

To speak of aesthetic tools is not the same thing as speaking about art. The concept of aesthetics after Kant was limited to 'artistic beauty',[56] so both natural beauty and applied arts dropped out of the art system – the first to private enjoyment, the second to functional use. We shall go back to Kant and consider 'aesthetic tools' as a broader category than art, so art is only a segment of the aesthetic field.[57] Within this field but outside of art, we have aesthetic tools an organization can make use of. Applied art and natural beauty itself can be used pragmatically, as when an interesting view increases the status of an office.

The relationship between 'organization and aesthetics' in this book does not have to do with art. Even though the collaboration between artists and businesses – such as decoration, sponsoring, and creative dialogue – has received a lot of discussion in recent years, it is the least comprehensive and least interesting part of the relationship between organizations and aesthetics. We can limit ourselves to a few words about this relationship.

For art, it is strange to use itself or to be used for external purposes. Even if an artist is very preoccupied with money or religion, he must use aesthetic tools to reach his goal. In this sense, aesthetics takes priority over use. Even though there are no precise criteria for aesthetic quality, art is only useful if it is considered good, just as the physical sciences are only useful if they are allowed to pursue truth. Money and religion cannot measure a work's value or a theory's truth, even though they can provide non-aesthetic grounds for finding the work and the theory attractive.

If you are talking about art, you have to let external goals fall. Thus, art becomes the marker for a value in itself, even if both sender and receiver have pallid deliberations. Other things can indicate value as well. Historical antiquity can justify the fact that people keep useless things such as flint spearheads and thighbones in museums and memories of the past that people keep withered roses and crumbling baby teeth in their drawers.

Nor can an organization allow its external goals to be dropped. It is just as selfish on its own behalf as art is. Therefore, spokespersons for an organization rarely criticize art on official business. It is neither their job nor in their interest. There may be many reasons not to criticize a work – political correctness, politeness, subcultural affiliation, economic interest, or the well-known mechanism from *The Emperor's New Clothes*: fear of disgracing oneself. An American painter once told me at the beginning of the 1990s that the American art scene had been corrupted, because you could not criticize a work without being accused of criticizing the artist's political, ethnic or sexual orientation.

The mechanisms that condition the recognition of a work of fine art are outside the interests of an organization – unless it has specialized in art. Its relationship to fine art is use, so fine art is transformed into applied art. Its desire is to strengthen its autopoiesis by all means, including aesthetic, and therefore it invests in art that is recognized or on the way towards being recognized. But it needs no insight into the mechanisms of recognition, just as a hot dog vendor needs to know little about economics. You can imagine that a work of fine art has held up through a cultural conspiracy. But it would be a bubble, and it is in the nature of bubbles to burst. The people in the organization will follow these fluctuations and adapt to them.

Artists are suspicious of the demand for consideration, whether the demand comes from economics, politics or religion. Art has spent many hundreds of years casting off external straightjackets and is shy of allying itself once again not only to the pillars of society – economics and politics – but also to private forces such as morality and religion, which can unleash unexpected catastrophes in the public sphere. It does not want to be hitched to any wagon and shuns even the suspicion that it has sold its freedom and yielded to considerations. It prefers money with no strings, whether it comes from sales or filtered through public funds – grants from politicians but administered by colleagues on an 'arm's length' principle: that politicians must not control art politically. A direct collaboration with a private firm can be questioned, since the firm, like the artist, has its own egoism.

An artist can be strongly motivated by politics or religion. But it is no 'should' and does not make his works better. Sculptures that received official support from the former Soviet government may or may not have been produced by artists who believed in the government's ideals. But they collapsed, often literally, with the government's collapse.

What is it an organization wants to capture when it tries to capture art? If you take an aesthetic tool such as colours, they work in a dual fashion. They have a plastic function and an affective function. With their conventional signal value, they can attune people, so that red signals danger and erotic potence – dangerous lips and fast cars! – while blue means cold and nobility, gray neutral objectivity, and white innocence and purity. An organization will observe the effects of colours and use them to go with or against the stream. It will use the signal value of colours in its logo, its ads, and its uniforms, so a bank, for example, might use royal blue to indicate its impeccable conservatism.

An artist may be familiar with these meanings and use them as a starting point. However, often, he will use the colour differently, so it only signals itself and acquires a message-less signal value that casts off what is experienced as an oppressive cultural signal and symbolic value. Thus, the colour takes part in art's paradoxical attempt to communicate non-communicability.

In principle, such a goal will be alien to an organization, even though nothing prevents it from trying to add yet another paradoxical layer to aesthetic (non)communication and use aesthetics to signal non-use. Since people have a high sensibility to communication and since communication may seem simple regardless of its complexity, such attempts at an intensified communication will often function, even if it is unclear precisely what is communicated and how.

Despite the built-in egocentrism of economics and art, there is nothing to prevent them from accompanying each other part of the way. Each party has its own criteria for success and failure that are compatible for a time, because each party is strengthened by the alliance. The bee and the flower are alien to each other and harbour no desire to help each other, when they assist each other to survive. It cannot be precluded that art can teach business about creativity or that business can teach art how to conduct itself on the market[58] and that both parties may reap benefits from this.

There are many historical examples of art thriving within a framework that is dictated by alien considerations. Religious art is an obvious example. Political powerbrokers have also used art to stage and celebrate themselves. The decoration of the Sistine Chapel was not the poorer for the Pope having a religious agenda, and the ancient triumphal arches do not lose their aesthetic interest simply because they are political monuments. Caravaggio immediately altered a picture, when the church council objected to his first proposal.[59]

The alliance between church, politics, and art, however, is of another sort than the alliance between business and art. While the church and the state may have a mission that artists can accept, the mission of private organizations is poorly suited to motivate artists. Pure economic interest may set souls afire but is not the official agenda of art. You can, aesthetically, commemorate Jesus' death and a king's life, while it is more difficult, aesthetically, to celebrate being in the black in an accounting sense or a sales campaign for instant coffee. And even though a private organization may have a mission that states why its profits are essential, that is, what the world would lack if it didn't exist, and a vision that tells of its humane goals, a stubborn suspicion remains that such values are unserious – merely a means to an end called money.

To create an economic profit is not necessarily a goal in itself for a private business but is, at least, a condition for survival. Even though private organizations are to take on general tasks and even though the profit motive has officially become amoralized, the economic gaze has never been sanitized. The ancient hatred of merchants and odourless money still exists in the bones of society and can be easily activated. A suspicion of amorality, if not unscrupulousness, clings to money men, and the suspicion is nourished by the stream of financial scandals that find their way into the mass media, telling of examples of greed, megalomania, and moral blindness.

Beyond these scandals, which may be exceptions since they are mentioned in the mass media, it is a normal circumstance that life, love, and illness are not goals but means for business. Humane values cannot be pursued any further than the boundary of money, so what for ordinary people are the ultimate goals are observed with a different gaze by business and transformed into means. Food, medicine, and symbols of eternal love are only produced if they can be sold profitably.

There is no method by which a private organization can liberate itself from this mechanism. If it does, it ceases to be private. Not only politicians but business people must be cynics who look beyond the goals that normally captivate people and consider them in a strategic light – as tools to serve money or win voters.

An organization can use art directly, to decorate, or indirectly, to sponsor. An organization can invite dialogue between peddlers and artists and do it generously and without conditions. Artists can say yes to the invitation, because there are many artists and a competition for attention and money. If you are a process artist who creates works in dialogue with an audience, an organization can offer a suitable stage. And if an organization is very interested in innovation, it can see advantages in entering into dialogue with artists who are used to casting off everyday routines around sensation and meaning.

None of this raises practical problems, only slight theoretical puzzles. To use art means to observe a work according to criteria alien to art, so the work becomes a topic or an intersection of several gazes which are alien to each other and, therefore, do not necessarily conflict with each other – at least, as long as each party is cultivated enough to accept the gaze of the other.

The puzzles consist of the fact that there are no objective solutions to the interplay or the 'balance' among criteria. Balance, James March claimed, is a beautiful word but an ugly reality. In practice, however, the problem of solving such insoluble problems is not great. The solution is called *decision*, because a decision makes an end to uncertainty by 'cutting through' and 'chopping away' – *de-caedere* is the root of the word 'decision' – and is subjective by definition. An objective or 'technical' solution requires calculation, not decision. Decisions, therefore, are ascribed to politics, which is the domain for decisions that cannot be made but nevertheless are, even routinely. Thus, 'politics' is only a matter for politicians. A decision maker is inevitably a politician.[60] His task is to reconcile considerations that cannot be reconciled, because they are different in their natures.

Aesthetics also enters into a political game and is thus a 'dialogic project'. That everyone and anyone can make aesthetic judgements does not mean, however, that there is aesthetic equality. An organization's aesthetic profile enters into political negotiations that flow into a 'dominant aesthetics'.[61] But aesthetics that are dictated from the top by management and its experts creates another form of aesthetic community than if the profile is established in a process in which many parties can leave their fingerprints.

Religious and political organizations may share motives with artists, because they are directed toward general goals, while private organizations, being private, have an outsider's relationship to art. Their benefit in involving art and artists may be an uncertain augmentation of the value of their image and inventiveness in their communication. But we are not talking about true love – at most, a marriage of convenience in which the parties for their own selfish reasons come together for a period of time and then part to go their separate ways.

Nevertheless, there are *Hausse* (markets with rising prices of commodities and stocks) and good stories in spectacular alliances between art and business. Art constitutes a part of the 'creative potential' that is vital for surviving in any market. Often, the state steps in and, often, seminars are arranged in museums and business regions. With the breakdown of reason, which we shall look at later,[62] simple inventiveness is liberated from its tether, so it can be claimed that art in the twenty-first century will play the same role that science did in the twentieth. Alongside scientific reasoning, a mystical poetry arises, borne by metaphors, images and gestures whose source is buried in the body.[63]

The collaboration between art and business changes neither party in their essence but raises a practical question: whether they can each acquire tools to promote their autopoiesis? Its problem is that, as soon as the two parties have reached an agreement on the many advantages with respect to creativity, inspiration, interdisciplinary cooperation, and mutual fertilization, they have to get started in their particular metier. And, here, their paths part, because creativity pulls in different directions in a businessman and an artist, runs into various difficulties, and must accept different considerations.

More interesting than external cooperation are the aesthetic tools that are not imported from without but are built into communication, which keeps organizations alive and kicking. These tools are the topic of this book.

The inner relationship between aesthetics and organization

By focusing on the aesthetic dimension of organizational communication, the perspective is changed. It does not have to do with the convergence of different considerations but with the organization's considerations about itself.

We have seen that organizations are made of the stuff called communication. Since communication is served by signs that have two sides,[64] a sense side and a meaning side, organizations inevitably use aesthetic tools. This relation between aesthetics and organization is not external but built into the essence of communication. Here, the organization's considerations meet no other considerations to offer their own resistance. Here, it is about the power of the organization to set the stage, to maintain an agenda, and to motivate the parties with whom it communicates.

Aesthetic tools have their own inevitability, since all communication can be observed aesthetically. Communication cannot be a solitary affair. Even though it can be prepared in private, it is realized among many, and all parties are affected by communication's 'about' and by its 'how'. The receiver can at any time shift from the objective or social dimension to the aesthetic dimension and assess the style of the communication instead of its message or its social effect.

Even though communication automatically has a 'companion' aesthetic dimension, this dimension can be independently strengthened, so an organization consciously encodes its communication aesthetically, whether to make the public receptive or to avoid criticism by gently attuning the public.[65] We shall not look at works with the ambition of being works of art but at 'works' that are integrated into an organization's normal communication. Such works are not necessarily observed as 'works', but here they will be defined – demarcated – as works.

Summary: the distinctive character of aesthetic communication

The strategic interest in aesthetic tools comes from the fact that they can affect receivers in a way that evades conscious control and, at the same time, affects their willingness to engage with the organization. While the sender can be reflective, the receiver is often intuitive. But regardless of this difference, an aesthetic experience is lost in a darkness that makes it a stroke of luck when it succeeds. It cannot be changed, and it cannot be broken down into detail. If a person with aesthetic competence disappears, the loss is absolute.[66]

All communication takes place in a sensory medium. To sense is normally a spontaneous process in which you can sometimes control your attention, particularly if the irritation is weak, but you cannot control the sensation. Attention is under partial control, sensation is not. With open eyes, you cannot avoid seeing, even though you can undoubtedly fine-tune vision. Presumably, there is tremendous survival value connected with this forced openness. If an organism could itself choose what it would attend to, it would be bound to the past and its random attention.

The aesthetic effect of sensation has to do with pattern formation in the two media that are an intimate part of all communication, sensation, and meaning. It has nothing to do with information in that word's normal sense. To the contrary, the aesthetic effect is often very simple, analogous to the binary yes/no reaction of the immune system and can combine many types of binary reaction such as the attraction/repulsion of attunedness and the pleasure/pain reaction of the nervous system. Aesthetically, the *pathos* dimension is of vital significance.[67]

By activating such simple reactions, an organization can compensate for the fact that receivers of its communication normally do not have much knowledge or much capacity to process information. It can also compensate for the fact that it is not itself transparent and, therefore, risky to deal with. Its users are inevitably blind to what goes on in it. This blindness can be compensated for factually, normatively, and aesthetically:

1 Blindness can be compensated *factually*, when an organization implements campaigns that provide information about its means and goals. Such factual knowledge can be difficult to turn away but also difficult to absorb because the receiver cannot check from personal experience and because he cannot see what topics have been rejected and thus live an invisible life alongside the topics that have been brought out into the light. Even though it is often claimed that more information leads to more agreement, the opposite can also be the case: more information provides more occasions for disagreement.

2 Blindness can be compensated by *values* that can be constructed as common semantic fields for parties who have very different approaches to the same output – for example, experts, users, and leaders.[68] If an organization is able to ensure itself and those around it that it takes its values seriously, it can gain credibility and thus access to the vital resource called trust – a resource that Aristotle considered, perhaps, the most important factor in the art of persuasion[69]

   Here the topic is aesthetics, not ethics. These two areas have different principles and are neutral with respect to each other – neither necessarily friends nor necessarily enemies. Therefore, they can work together, not factually but associatively – as happens, for example, when an organization tries to connect its visual expression and its logo with values.

   Users of an organization's services are normally ignorant not only about how the organization functions but how its products are put together. Few can follow the process from the pig in the stall to the devilled ham on the display counter. Not only devilled ham but also cars, computers, medical care, and political decisions are provided by experts and by organizations who put experts into a relationship to each other and to their users.

3 Finally, blindness can be compensated for aesthetically, which does not create the same credibility but increases the attraction of the service and, thus, its *Anschlußwert*. With aesthetic tools, a 'beautiful appearance'[70] can be provided that penetrates despite any suspicion of the cosmetics.

Six aesthetic domains

How can aesthetics be used? An answer must clarify what significance aesthetics is to have as a premise for the organization's decisions – both their style and – possibly – their theme. In this way, the organization decides how its communication is to proceed, well knowing that no social system consisting of communication can keep tabs on itself all the way through. Because the supervision of communication must also be communicated, the organization at its outer edges receives an inevitable touch of spontaneity or blindness. In this way, it also receives identity, because others can see who they are, that is, how the organization communicates in unguarded moments. It always creates a small crisis to have attention called to your own style,[71] because it opens up choices, so you must find a standpoint to choose yourself outside of yourself – and at the same time within yourself – where else?

Unfortunately, the effect of an aesthetic effort cannot be calculated definitively both because the receiver is not a trivial machine and because the effect is time-bound. Every handbook on 'Aesthetic Success in 10 Easy Lessons' becomes a lie the second it is published, even if it had been true the second before. The absence of an aesthetic technology is the background for the cultivation of inventiveness or 'creativity'.

Aesthetic tools help give an organization identity, whether it wants it or not. How is this identity expressed? When an organization consists of communication, you can sketch out some of communication's paths and study how each path can be an attractor of special aesthetic tools, when an organization strengthens its communication.

Each of the following six fields is directed toward a receiver. But in addition to the official receiver, there is also an unofficial one, so an image or a commercial is not only directed toward customers and clients but also toward the organization's own employees. Each of the following six fields has to do with communication, whether it is in words and images or physical objects:[72]

1 *Image*. When an organization communicates with itself or those around it, the receiver inevitably has pictures of the organization. An important receiver is the mass media, because their picture of the organization is disseminated so that the ultimate receiver cannot check whether the image is true. Since the pictures circulated by the organization are part of determining the public's willingness to engage, the organization cannot leave them to chance. Image is a special domain for the presentation of pictures that can be considered aesthetically as works.
2 *Rhetoric*. Even though the organization can presume that its employees and its customers are motivated, it is surrounded by competitors whose

offers are comparable. Therefore, there is an inevitable distance between general and specific motivation.[73] That you would like some coffee does not yet say what sort of coffee you would like. And, therefore, the organization must assess its communication pragmatically – what words and pictures work and what falls to the ground as ash. Therefore, *rhetoric* is another field in which an organization inevitably uses aesthetic tools. Even the attempt at conjuring up a picture of the organization as a whole requires a rhetorical effort.

3 *Narratives*. When the organization simplifies its communication by directing it toward decisions and when each decision has to do with a choice between alternatives that are not self-evident, the organization is stretched out in time and acquires a historical development, a 'this is how it happened'. When an organization is to describe itself over time, the description inevitably acquires the form of a tale and, therefore, *narrative* is the third aesthetic field.

4 *Design*. An organization has a product, whether it is a physical object or a service. This product can be observed aesthetically, because it is inevitably designed. But beyond this inevitability, design is also a special tool that can be used both to make products different, that is, give them identity, and to build attraction into the product. We thus have *design* as the fourth field, whether we are talking about physical or social objects and whether the design is strong or weak, ambitious or random.

5 *Advertising*. Just as you must distinguish between the organization and its product, you must distinguish between communication *in* a product and communication *about* a product. Even though the product *itself* communicates, there must also be communication about it, so the receiver is not just attentive to the fact that the product exists but that the product is accommodating of the receiver's desire. This open processing of the receiver's desire occurs in advertising, which thus becomes the fifth field.

6 *Architecture*. Even though an organization can be unknown to the public, which is more interested in its products, it must inevitably be located somewhere. Its employees must be able to work and collaborate. Just as management is the symbolic expression of the whole organization, it is also a place where its decisions are made, in a magical way a part of its identity. There are virtual organizations that relinquish buildings and are content to communicate through their webpage, which is designed to maintain interest. But even virtual organizations require buildings and are, moreover, parasites on physically anchored organizations. The organization's buildings are also used to communicate and, therefore, *architecture* is the sixth and final field we shall look at.

To point out these six areas (shown in Table 1.2) does not mean that only they are accessible to aesthetic input. An organization consists of communication,

Table 1.2 Aesthetic identity

	Communication with signs and pictures	**Communication with physical objects**
Primarily aimed at surroundings	Advertising	Design
Aimed at system and environment	Image, Rhetoric, Narrative	Architecture

and all communication has an aesthetic dimension. Therefore, there is no end to aesthetics. These six areas are central areas, even though one could have brought in shop interiors, job announcements, dress code if special requirements are made, or gastronomic offerings if the organization appeals to discriminating palates.

Three of the six fields have the special feature that they can be formed in a general variant with ambitions of incorporating – swallowing – the rest. Image, rhetoric, and design can be generalized, so all communication is considered image-creating, rhetorical or designed. In order to avoid conceptual flicker, these fields will be considered 'in a narrow sense'. Image has to do with how an organization works on appearing publicly; rhetoric has to do with how the organization strengthens its communication with aesthetic tools, while design has to do with the formation of the organization's products. Advertising, narrative, and architecture do not threaten in the same way to overflow their riverbanks, even though they also permit broad and narrow variants.

An aesthetic profile?

Together, the six fields draw the organization's aesthetic profile. The question is how they are to be formed and how they are to relate to each other. Within each field, there is a question of *differentiation*. The organization's communication can be directed toward everyone and anyone but also toward specific groups that are presumed to have special desires or special pictures of what happiness is. The communication is formed differently depending on which segments of the population or what segments of the individual are being appealed to.

With its choice of aesthetic tools, an organization decides how it will appear to the senses and how it will arrange its meaning. This can happen in many areas, and it can be done with an overall or uniform aesthetic or by working with contrasts. An organization can seek to harmonize its aesthetics, so an overall style can permeate both large and small and communicate an overall identity. Or it can use aesthetics to differentiate, so differences and degrees are charged with symbolic meaning, and the size of a room, the shape of a reception area, or differences in inner and outer rhetoric makes it possible to draw conclusions about what meaning an organization attributes to something.

The important difference is harmony or disharmony or both. An organization can develop a strong, simple aesthetics that can be recognized quickly and which is suitable for communicating with a global mass audience with different cultural premises and different routines for decoding. With simplification, the organization gains impact and loses nuance. On the other hand, it can fine-tune its communication towards groups that have a common cultural premise, so it can jump over the banal (for that target group) and go directly to the sophisticated.

The most difficult task is to communicate with people who view themselves as sophisticated and unique, because it will not do to say that they may be unique in the same way and, therefore, not so unique at that. Here, indirect communication can step into its place – for example, ad campaigns that apparently have nothing to do with the product or have to do with very abstract things such as, feelings or have to do with the difficulty of communicating with a chorus of individualists, so communication takes itself as its topic.

The problem is not necessarily to commit oneself to one side of the difference between harmony and disharmony but to choose how the two sides can be apportioned. An image can be fine-tuned towards a particular group only with difficulty, since various groups in society encounter each other in the mass media. The organization's narratives and rhetoric also have problems in operating between watertight bulkheads. An organization cannot behave like a child who forgets that parents and teachers speak to each other.

While advertising and design can be targeted, it is more difficult to segment architecture. A multinational organization can adapt its buildings to national preferences or impose the same style without difference. Even though there is a spectrum of possibilities, when a building is built, the building must inevitably be built in one and only one way, regardless of how postmodern styles are mixed. An organization can be concentrated around the function of the building and let 'form follow function', so the building appears raw and unbeautiful but with an implicit message of a no-nonsense organization. Or the organization can participate in the competition for the most advanced expression, so reviewers on the television news and talk in the mass media's cultural columns throw a sophisticated lustre over the organization.

Should an organization streamline its aesthetic communication, so its projects and buildings, its visual expression, logos, shops and headquarters, its uniforms, and rhetoric all point in one and the same direction, so the various areas support and bolster each other and provide an overall expression that is easy to recognize? Or should the various areas be allowed to go their own ways, so each direction can open up a greater richness of nuance and accommodate special cultural prejudices? The answers to such questions are subjective and thus identity-providing. They cannot be answered abstractly but can certainly be narrated concretely, that is, without obligation to others.

We shall begin by following how an organization can try to construct a picture of itself as a whole. We shall look at the complicated relationship between image and identity

2
The Organizational Image

In the Renaissance, in Machiavelli and Shakespeare, the problem of the orchestrated surface moved to the centre. Machiavelli recommends that the prince learn how to orchestrate illusions, and Shakespeare plays with the metaphor of the world as a theatre – a mirror that shows reality but only 'as in a glass darkly' and thus as a riddle. In the Renaissance, a huge disruption begins in which Europe shakes itself loose from its feudal bonds and begins the road toward the world society in which everything fixed is dissolved into the market's impersonal and fateful relationship between people. In the interaction of strangers, the surface is not just something that is but something that is diligently arranged. Organizations also know the strength of a beautiful appearance when they orchestrate an image and thus conjure up an ideal from a claim that, if everyone acts as if a picture is real, then it is – or becomes – real. If aesthetics has to do with constructions connecting sensation and meaning, the attempt to orchestrate an image has a foot in the camp of aesthetics.

To use the strength of illusion has its price: a steady suspicion that the surface is only surface, so that there is no reality behind the beautiful appearance and thus a disparity between seeming and being. This raises a tantalizing problem: what is an organization's identity as opposed to its image? If an image is a picture, there must be something that the picture is 'of'. If an organization is an autopoietic system, it must be able to relate to itself, which requires a 'self' of a certain duration and robustness. In this way, we end in the philosophical problem of identity, in this case, of what an organization is.

In this chapter, we shall look at how both image and identity are created as transient constructions with or without an originator, and we shall at the same time lay a foundation for the analysis in the following chapters of the relationship between organization and aesthetics. The argumentation for involving aesthetics, not just as decoration but as a part of the basic description of an organization, is quite simple. If there were an objective identity and a compulsory logic, a logos, aesthetics would be without meaning. It could decorate and provide pleasure but 'only' as a surface for a deeper, compelling logic. Then, the question and determination of identity could be explained factually. But if such an identity does not exist, the case must be decided by other means than purely factual: that is, with subjective or social means that can be found in the ethical or the aesthetic dimension.

Normally, an organization is described in economic, political, and administrative terms. Here, the description must be expanded.

What is an organization? We have assumed that an organization is an autopoietic system of communication that distinguishes between those who are members and those who are not and which uses decisions as junctures for moving itself on by constantly opening itself up and closing itself off to uncertainty. This means that it is not out there in the world in any simple way as a physical object. An organization cannot be observed directly; since communication is invisible, you have to deduce its existence. You cannot point to it, only at physical things such as buildings and people – which are not a part of the organization but belong to its environment. You can see some of its buildings, read some of its letters, see some of its goods, and follow some of its decisions. If you are a member, you can, of course, see more than others but are still only a small part.

An organization only exists, if it can observe the difference between itself and its environment. Without this difference, the organization is dissolved and, without the observation of difference, it would not know what to do. But an organization has no sense organs and cannot observe itself. It must use people to observe. But to observe is not to communicate, so observations do not belong to the organization itself but its environment. Only when observations are described and reported do they become the stuff of which organizations are made.

The organization must know itself in order to continue itself. It must not only give itself a name but also a foundation for its decisions, formally or informally. Such a foundation combines past and future, because a self requires memory of what has happened and because a decision requires a vision of what will happen. An organization must bind itself to its past in order to open up its future. And in the intersection of past and future in the now, it must be able to describe itself and its own condition. If it cannot, it will again have no idea what to do. But every now is a transient moment and, in every moment, the organization must choose its past and its future, so it becomes possible to make decisions. Even though some premises for an organization's decisions are undecided and invisible, embedded in tradition and culture, others have been given words. The organization makes its past, present, and future present by describing them, so its identity consists of texts that are surrounded by subtexts and inter-texts and counter-texts.

So far, so good. Only there are many people in an organization who observe with various guiding differences and programmes within its labour-divided community. There are also people in the organization's environment who either use it or have a general political interest in it, and what they see has a direct consequence for their willingness to involve themselves. With different degrees of involvement and different impacts, each party constructs his own texts. This raises a new question – is there a text that describes the organization in an obligatory way as a whole and, thus, describes its identity?

When an organization is invisible, it requires more than the naked eye to observe and describe it. That must happen with semantic tricks. And since this is complex, both in time and space, a description must select and combine its elements. For example, it must decide whether it will describe itself in a flash-frozen now or in a time sequence, that is, choose between a structural and a narrative description. The organization's text is not a simple question of true or false, because its totality is not an element beside other elements but is an invisible or imaginary construction that requires an observer. Even though there are facts that cannot be denied, there are too many facts for all of them to be involved. You cannot get at the organization's identity by creeping around it at a snail's pace and pedantically noting what you see. Between its simple name and the infinite sum of other aspects, there must be a description that draws an accurate picture.

The whole is a simplification and, thus, a construction. This can be expressed differently: there is only rhetorical access to the whole. Even though you must presume that the organization exists as an empirical fact, this constant is only the necessary premise for descriptions to vary. Without a constant, there is no variation. But this has no consequences for which description of the organization is correct or whether it makes sense to distinguish between correct and incorrect. As every business scandal shows, there are descriptions that are grossly misleading. But, from this, it does not follow that only one description is correct.

A text does not write itself but requires a person whose observation is lost in his invisible inner self. A text is written with a starting point in invisible prejudices. This dual blindness creates a permanent uncertainty about the validity of texts that describe an organization.

Here, a distinction can be made between the identity that appears, when managers and their experts draw up their idealized description of how they would like to see their organization, and the identity that appears, when the organization's members each construct their own texts and let them clash until a temporary stability crystallizes – an *Eigenvalue* that most people can more or less agree on. But this difference is only between two texts that describe the organization, each from its own perspective, that is, a small part of the larger question of the relationship between many texts.

Writing a text can take place for deceptive purposes. But deeper than the relationship between reality and illusion is the fact that everything that is said about an organization is said by an observer who has a local perspective and interests, whether he is out or in, specialist or appointed to speak on behalf of the whole.

The work character of an organization's identity makes it into a phenomenon that is also aesthetic. It is this dimension we shall examine here. And by adopting an aesthetic gaze, we shall ignore the organization's knowledge, values, and culture and look at the creation of a text with the ambition of describing the organization as a whole.

We can summarize: in and around an organization, there are many people and groups that observe from the roles they are appointed to play and the interests that programme their sensation and understanding. Not all observations become descriptions, and not all descriptions become communication. Nevertheless, a complicated confluence of texts arises, because no one owns communication and no one can autocratically control its development. Silence need not express consent. And to make things even more complicated, everyone follows each other's movements with a strategic gaze, enters into alliances, and speaks with a forked tongue. To function in an organization also requires a talent for improvisation, so every role is quadrupled in an official function, some latitude for the unexpected, a personal style and – perhaps – a private agenda such as promoting a career or good friends.

The question of identity, therefore, may be put this way: can an organization create stability around its own self-description? Or: who can describe the organization in a way that is binding on everyone?

Beyond the question of whether it is possible to draw up an authoritative text, another question is lurking: whether it is desirable? While the modern question of identity had to do with the desire for stability and, perhaps, the tragic insight into its impossibility, the postmodern question of identity goes in the opposite direction – whether it is possible to avoid stability and thus avoid binding oneself to the past? Both questions are wrongly put, since they overlook the fact that stability and variation are two sides of the same coin. However, this is less decisive than the fact that question of identity does not necessarily have or must have an affirmative answer.

The question of identity bristles in every direction. One direction leads to complexity: how can an organization describe itself, when every second and at the same time, a lot more communication is going on than anyone can observe? Another leads to pluralism: how is a synthesis created out of opposing observations that clash within an organization? A third leads to power: who can force a text through, so that others are forced to neutralize their own text? A fourth, more gently, moves toward seduction: who can conjure up a text that others want to appropriate? And a fifth casts a glance at the paradox that unfolds in all discussion of identity: when an organization describes itself, it cannot at the same time implicate its own description. If its self-description is a part of itself – which it is – the organization is inevitably blind to itself as a totality. This is not changed by the fact that it can describe its own self-description. This just puts a new object in focus and again allows the description's presumptions to sink back into the blindness that surrounds all observation and description.

An organization is polycontextual and polyphonous. There is no agreement on the text. So, what is an organization's identity?

The authoritative description

It may seem futile to make identity so complicated. For it does not have to do with selecting from a capricious confusion of texts that are equally good or bad. Only if all texts had the same status would a problem arise. In practice, the difficulty is solved by virtue of cultural schemes for normal and deviant, acceptable and unacceptable, and by virtue of a hierarchy, just as many opinions about what happened on a football field are solved by putting in a referee whose word is law, even when you can see on television afterwards that he was wrong. Normally, there is no time for a thorough explanation, so the referee must cut through this and decide, so the game can continue.

Both in a football stadium and in an organization, most opinions are only private opinions without consequence, which are aired and die. They only acquire significance if they strengthen, take the stage, and acquire the power to influence official decisions. On the other hand, management must observe and act on the organization's behalf. It cannot be either private or consequence-less without degenerating. And even if it were only ritual, it is still a bottleneck through which decisions must pass before becoming authoritative. Since the capacity of management to collect and process information is limited, the organization accepts the thorns, as mistakes are called, for the sake of the rose, called tempo. Doldrums are worse than mistakes.

The problem of stability is thus solved by making a distinction – not necessarily between the quality of the texts, which is an uncertain affair, but between their validity. An organization has bylaws that express its purpose and sets forth procedures for its decisions, and it has a management that makes decisions on a running basis with greater or lesser respect for parties in and around organizations.

To decide is not to deduce from a given quantity of information. If it were, there would not need to be a decision-maker, only a computer. Nor is to decide to describe what happens. To decide is first to find and then to remove uncertainty and thus to cut through things and make a difference that propels the organization forward. When an organization makes its decision, it also makes itself. It shows who it is, even if it does not put the decision into practice.

Here, familiar difficulties arise. To inquire into identity is to ask which text *de facto* delivers the premises for decisions. For decisions are not just tested on their formal quality but, above all, on their power to influence the future, just as a New Year's resolution is not tested on 1 January but over the course of the month. The future is simply an unknown and invisible land, regardless of how eagerly you try to bind it with decisions. From your lips, as they used to say, to God's ear. This uncertainty that a decision absorbs is opened up again when the decision, like blood, streams out into the organization's finest capillaries, where it becomes elucidated, interpreted, distorted and, perhaps, sabotaged, so the decision-maker cannot recognize his decision in its effect.

A description can provide a formal or a real identity. It can be official, and it can have the force to make itself authoritative. These two things may but need not coincide. Normally, you assume that management's description expresses identity, because management makes decisions on the organization's behalf and can make its description authoritative. It can say 'we', even when the employees do not feel that way.

But what guarantees that management's description actually dominates? It would be borderline idiocy to claim that management makes no difference. Countless examples show that not only management but a single manager can inspire and motivate an entire organization or, by contrast, pave the way for muddle and apathy. But it would also be idiocy to claim that management automatically makes a big difference. No manager knows all the nooks and crannies of his organization; no manager can see what is going on at all times parallel to his own, and no manager can avoid normal illusions about what is going on. At the same time, no manager can defy his organization without placing himself in a vacuum, where his description and decision become impotent. Some organizations have a symbolic management to act as its external face and to say pleasant things that give the organization a beautiful face and are suitable for quotation and, perhaps, inspiration; while day-to-day management is left to more heavy-handed and less visionary folks. Here, we encounter the stubborn difference between seeming and being, between image and identity. It shows up in claims that an organization knows its own identity but can try to pretty it up with an attractive picture, so identity has to do with a sender's knowledge, while image has to do with what a receiver gets to know. We shall dig deeper into this difference later and discover how fragile it is. But before that, we shall look more closely at the problem of power, which we touched on in this section.

The problem of power

If management can impose its own description, it is due to its power to make decisions. Power has been defined as the ability to make collective decisions effective. Classically, it had to do with the power of imposing decisions despite resistance: management's classic problem was obedience and, thus, repetition. For modern management, there is often a loss of authority, if it must issue orders and demand obedience: management's modern problem is motivation and competence for innovation. Orders offend, while proposals recognize – even though the difference can be microscopic. Power's paradox is that visible exercises of power block the organization's stream of communication, so formal power should preferably be invisible and only in extreme situations intervene with physical violence, which is its 'natural form'.

When a manager is not competent to assess the competence of the employees, he can neither give them orders nor dismiss them. He is a part of the system, not its sovereign eye and hand. The hierarchical concept of power is an awkward concept, because organizational power is not concentrated in one point, so that you could be satisfied with observing that point and deducing what happens in other places within the organization. Power is dispersed into the nooks and crannies of the organization, so it requires empirical familiarity with the organization to follow the interplay between formal and informal power. Even when power is concentrated in one point, it happens as a sluice effect: power must pass through the eye of the hierarchical needle but is immediately spread out through the system again.

An organization cannot be governed as an object, since its actors themselves govern the government. Therefore, it is always an open question whether the manager or the organization leads. Systematically, a manager is a part of the organization and thus a nerve centre in its recursive circuit. Phenomenologically, he represents the organization and is thus present on its behalf.

Even though a manager is a symbol for the whole, and even though he has a special status because he is authorized to decide on behalf of the organization, he is a rat in the maze among other rats. He has a head start in that his description is official and backed up by formal power, while other descriptions circulate informally as gossip. When he speaks, people listen in a different way than when the rank-and-file make their opinions known. But he does not have what Hobbes called 'untyed hands' (Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 135). The hierarchy is not only the manager's tool for informing and governing the employees but also the employees' tool to inform and govern the manager.

Thus, a manager has responsibility for the whole but no automatic model monopoly. The symbolic construction about which many can agree is the organization's identity, its 'it's like this', is an *Eigenvalue*, which is crystallized and assumes a temporary form in a complicated network of descriptions in which chance and luck play a role. A whole semantic battery of words such as timing, panache, flair, or Machiavelli's Fortuna is available to describe this resource of chance that never seems to be wholly by chance. Faith in your own luck is a factor in luck.

An organization is a battlefield in which descriptions clash and actors are tested in their will and strength to maintain and develop a bid for a coherent narrative that connects past, present and future. This confusion of descriptions becomes further complicated, when each party has conceptions, perhaps erroneous, of others' will and ability and builds them into his own description.

If you could leave the organization's identity to itself, no management is needed. If all observations were equally good, the result would be anarchy, that is, permanent uncertainty about the premises that are to lay the foundation for the organization's decisions. Because even though a widespread idea of identity may arise, it would merely 'float' and would not be backed up by any power to decide. Management must ensure a certain consistency in the organization's schemes, so it can produce and absorb uncertainty in a binding way. Without the competence to observe, decide and act, the organization would be lost. More interesting than the manager as a person, therefore, is the need to decide to what he is subject. Decisions are so important that decisions are made on how and when they are to be made, which increases the chance that they are made.

That the idea of complete information is a phantom is no obstacle to decisions but, to the contrary, their precondition: without uncertainty, there is nothing to decide, so not-knowing becomes an important resource for decisions. If uncertainty could be procured with knowledge, neither decision nor motivation would be needed. Then, you could be satisfied with doing what is necessary.

Dealing with not-knowing requires an aesthetic effort. It requires narratives that can bind past, present and future in a way that entices to action. It requires rhetoric, because rhetoric turns up when there is uncertainty about which text is to lay the foundation for a decision. And everywhere there is a decision, there is uncertainty, that is, many texts fighting to become the authoritative text. To speak of identity requires schemes to distinguish between what is central and peripheral, that is, what the organization's centre of gravity is. But a centre of gravity is not a thing, and it is not open to science, only to rhetoric.

The burden of the lack of information is a source for 'the pleasure of decision'. To decide is to cut through things and do something irreversible, even if you, as manager, are more passive than active and, so to speak, emit more moonshine than sunlight. To decide is to construct and create, to carve your name into the tree of history and transform the merely possible into reality. The pleasure of decision is reflected here in the aesthetics of decision. While artists open texts, managers must open up texts that can also be realized, whether the method is to gain trust with unshakeable constancy or with flexible variation – or both. To develop and realize a vision requires strength, so managers who lead and seduce, and thus do not just administer, must have a large – often, catastrophically large – ego.

In this process, the organization overvalues itself and its effect and deals merrily with fictions such as rationality and identity in order to compensate for not-knowing. It localizes concrete mistakes, even when the complexity is so great that it is almost irresponsible to speak of responsibility. It uses standard labels, repetitions, metaphors and commonplaces to remove doubt.

In this way, the organization creates a 'genuine appearance of unambiguity', which has an undeniable aesthetic dimension and which is maintained officially regardless of whether insiders deal with it ironically, when they note the contrast between the clear rhetoric and the confused reality, between the modern tone of rational unambiguity and the postmodern tone of irrational ambiguity. Rhetoric, therefore, is not just semantic tricks but contributes a necessary protection against not-knowing, so the organization can identify and motivate itself.

With its management, the organization creates a simplified picture of itself. This makes it capable of describing and acting as a unity, even though it is a paradoxical operation: a part of the whole symbolizes the whole, including itself. Management becomes a symbol in the sense that it is a self-referential sign of the whole. Even when it is powerless, there is indirect power in its description, because it provides a necessary starting point for deviation.

Even though employees can criticize or rejoice over management's description, conflict can only arise if they cease to whisper and put their re-description out into the open. Everyone can observe as they please. Thoughts are duty-free, but there is a price to pay for describing officially. You can suddenly stand alone facing a wall of reluctance and conflict and make the hard choice that, according to Hegel (*Phenomenology of Mind,* pp. 229ff), separates the slave from the master: whether you will yield for fear of losing or risk death, go on to the bitter end, and take what comes. Even though there can be pathos connected with the role of 'solitary but strong', it requires stamina to live as an outcast and deem your momentary failure a delayed success.

From singular to plural

We started by saying that there are many texts in an organization. In the last section, we permitted ourselves the simplification of speaking about management's text in the singular. This is wrong. It varies with the audience and with strategic aims – whether the starting point is the heroic past, the desperate present, or the hopeful future. Just as in rhetoric, past, present and future are the centre for each their own interest and, consequently, their own picture. Things are put differently for internal use than for external, and the tension between the two descriptions can be used strategically, so the external is calculated for internal use and vice versa. It is then up to the employees to find the message, which makes them responsible for it. In this way, the sender can say what he wants to say and simulate that he did not say it. He can give a signal, as it is called. When a description is realistic, right down to the dirty details and when it is idealistic and calculated to motivate, it can be consciously unclear, because there may be a motivation for drawing a picture of failure and chaos.

If everyone has their own proposal for 'what the organization is', it becomes evident that an organization is not a thing but a topic that can be described in many ways. Its identity is a symbolic construction that can be challenged by other symbolic constructions with a different choice of the centre of gravity. Each party uses schemes that bring some things into the light and allow others to descend into darkness, selects causes and connects them with effects in idiosyncratic ways, and re-describes – 'distorts' – each other's descriptions. The outcome of this struggle for model monopoly cannot be clarified theoretically. Therefore, a formal description of an organization is insufficient. When many texts clash, there is only a narrative access to the outcome, to a 'this is what happened' – and even the outcome can be interpreted differently, because there are not only victories or defeats but half-victories and quarter-victories and delayed victories. The different criteria for success or failure are not compatible and do not permit objective weighing. There is no technical solution to problems that cannot be solved – and must be solved.

This can be expressed in a different way: the struggle over the organization's identity is political, because politics has to do with putting different eggs in the same basket and putting together 'package solutions'. Politics is, in principle, the domain of the non-objective but also the domain in which we get down to the nitty-gritty, and things are tested on their ability to survive. World history, as Hegel remarked, is world judge even if posterity has given up his belief in a higher reason that cunningly guides things as the actors struggle blindly.

What can be said with certainty is that something is stabilized. It is the same empty certainty with which it can be said that there is always weather of some sort or that a football game always has a result. No one has got out of bed in the morning when there was no weather. Survival is not about perfection but about alternatives, and even decisions that are not made have an outcome. The result is a narrative 'this is the way it was', which might be rationalized into the manager's hierarchical 'this is what I wanted' or the theoretician's discursive 'this was how it had to go'.

It is easy to achieve agreement about an organization's existence and its minimal facts. This creates the constancy that makes varying descriptions possible. Key numbers and goal descriptions are difficult to reject. But they don't exude much information. It is more difficult to achieve agreement about an organization's mission ('why we are here and what the world would miss if we disappeared'), its vision, which is its proposal for its own future, and its identity, which is its authoritative text.

It is also easy to agree that an organization's identity is the total sum of its communication, right from the Treatise on Its Coming-to-Being to loose gossip in the corridor. This sort of definition is difficult to reject but also difficult to use. Its counterpart is Luhmann's cryptic remark (*Observations on Modernity,* p. 88) that nature is silent and the observers argue. For remaining are the elements that are to be selected and put into a manageable context. We can summarize by pointing to ten factors that make the problem of identity urgent. There is:

1. a multiplicity of observers with their guiding differences and programme for description,
2. interpretation of the situation in which each observer can choose to maintain his official role, to supplement with private considerations, and to improvise,
3. a variety of forms of description, when discursive descriptions that are general and, therefore, ignore the individual clash with narrative descriptions that are concrete and, therefore, ignore the general,
4. reflexivity, when observers relate to each other's descriptions in simplified and thus distorted form,
5. strategy, when each observer is oriented toward his own normative requirements for solutions – his values – but also toward his empirical expectations of what is possible,
6. veiling, when each observer tries to make himself invisible and all others visible,
7. forgery, when each observer operates with excess information, deficient information, and misinformation,
8. illusion, when each observer must fill the holes in his knowledge with prejudice and illusions that thereby become resources for decisions,
9. time, when past, present and future can be used as the starting point for a description, which creates very different constancy/variation relationships,
10. scale of diminishing involvement from management to employees to customers, shareholders, suppliers and, ultimately, the general public.

From this filtered network, no simple identity appears with a demonstrable sender. It requires distance and, thus, a huge loss of information to speak about an organization as a simple whole, a name. If you say that 'Washington denies …', you ignore the spiderweb of lobbyists, each with their own agenda and position struggling for their cause and their career in the American federal capital.

Identity, vision, image: initial remarks

It would be a relief if you could call management's description the organization's identity when it had to do with the past and its vision when it had to do with the future. Decisions could then take place in the now, which is the intersection of past and future and thus connects identity and vision. Its image could then have to do with how other parties described it – employees, customers, mass media, and so on. So, identity could be the sender's position, while image was the receiver's with the little twist that the receiver can only grasp a fraction of the total identity.

Unfortunately, it is not that simple. An organization's identity cannot be read from a single or privileged description, and its image is not left to the spontaneous experience of an ignorant audience. It is not a by-product of the organization's normal communication but is processed independently and professionally, so it is a part of the organization's identity to create and process its image. Data on the organization's image in a particular audience affects the organization's identity.

Nor does it work to equate self-description and identity, on one hand, and an external description and image, on the other. The relationships are more intricate, because neither self-description nor an external description is unambiguous. As a system of communication, an organization is impossible to observe. It is invisible to itself and to its surroundings, and it compensates for this loss of visibility with a name, a text and a management. This may seem a hopeless manoeuvre. However, that is better than leaving to chance the rhetorical construction of a whole to the clash between many texts.

When someone says 'identity', you have to ask who is observing and how, so identity becomes a picture, an image, in a person or group. And when someone says 'image', you have to ask who is observing the organization and who is observing others' observation of the organization – for example, customers, and what effect such an image has on the organization's autopoiesis, that is, its identity. Different images contribute to the organization's identity, and a description of the organization's identity contributes to its image. Since identity is only accessible by observation, that is, by creating a simplified text, and since all observations and texts can affect the organization's autopoiesis, the concepts of 'identity' and 'image' run in an infinite loop over each other. They are not simple oppositions, and you cannot therefore consider identity as the constant and enduring, or image as the variable and transient. If you take one, you get the other in the bargain, so there is not one identity and many images but many of both. Therefore, we must look more closely at the relationship between identity and image.

Branding

We can take our starting point in the phenomenon of branding, which is a way of building an organizational identity. To brand is not just to create a single product or a single product series but a whole organization, (an attempt) to create a powerful picture of itself and communicate it both to itself and its environment. If the organization is ambitious, it will allow the same values to permeate all its communication – both with its own members and its environment. It will provide itself, and thus its values, with a visual expression that is easy to recognize, so it can work with a sophisticated unity of constancy and variation. You can talk about an aesthetic totalitarianism that can become too much not because the receiver notices the intent, which is no problem, but because he may be mistuned. A visual expression, a trademark in the broad sense, is connected to positive values that are inevitably abstract, if they are to mean the same thing to different parties.

The complex of trademarks and values, therefore, can preserve its constancy, even though its concrete meaning varies in different observers and at different times. A brand is supposed to show a 'here's how we are', whereby the organization stabilizes its identity as a constant but in a way that does not preclude variation.

A brand is a peculiar thing, hovering between ethics and aesthetics. With aesthetic tools such as a logo or, more generally, as a 'commodity aesthetic', a visual expression is created with which a set of values is associated. In an amazingly short time, experts in communication promise to make both a trademark and its values known to everyone. This is expensive but delightful.

The normal argument for branding is that organizations must compensate for the fact that they cannot compete in substance, since the substance is the same – airlines use the same machines, car interiors and bananas and diapers are not remarkably distinguishable from each other – and if they are, an advantage can quickly be gained. That is, a difference must be created where there is no difference, and this happens in the intersection between ethics and aesthetics: a visual expression is implemented consistently as a style that permeates not only all products but also the organization itself and contributes to a visible identity by being packed with meaning, so a trademark or a name or a design becomes like a strong sauce, concentrated and satiated with meaning and taste. The meaning can vary depending on whether the organization directs its efforts nationally, which provides a possibility for a local stock of meanings, or internationally, which requires more powerful simplifications. The contribution of imagination, simplification, and cool cash in this field can hardly be overestimated.

While a brand's identity was once for external use and, therefore, could be distinguished from the organization's identity, this relationship in many cases has been turned upside down: the brand takes over and dominates both customers and employees. To make a brand known to the public and to adapt it on a running basis to changes in taste, so it can vary without losing its constancy, may require enormous investment and care over many years until the trademark is more than a random sign.

The goal is to transform the trademark into a symbol, a self-referential sign that is spontaneously associated with its developed meaning, so it can release the commodity from its prison on the stock shelf or in the store, transfer it and transform it into money. A trademark does not claim but signals. It does not lie but can mislead. If a beer commercial can allow a man to display his three trophies – the animal that ate his wife, the animal that killed his friend, and the animal that stole his beer – it does not claim that beer is on the same level as love and friendship. But it creates a metonymic chain that allows the observer to draw this conclusion and make it difficult not to draw it.

With a brand, a commodity or an organization can construct a soul or a personality. The aim is to build a difference between function and meaning into commonplace mass products themselves, so strengthened meaning, that is, access to an imaginary world, compensates for the triviality of function. The organization becomes a symbol of itself, communicated by the trademark – most successful if the organization and its product take over a word, so a soft drink is a 'cola', a banana is a 'Chiquita', a disposable diaper a 'Pampers', and vacuuming becomes 'hoovering'. Commodity, trademark, function and organization merge, so the language of the organization is the easiest to latch onto, when we are to refer to a particular object or function.

Transferring meaning from function to symbol also compensates for a lack of knowledge of commodities and personal taste. You do not first and foremost buy an object but a name and a meaning that may not be visible to everyone but enough for the significant others. You choose between names and thus between imaginary worlds, that is, fantasies, when you choose between products. Not the object but its meaning becomes important just as Hegel claimed back in 1821 (*Philosophy of Right,* s. 190). The competition between organizations and their products can thereafter be conducted on a symbolic plane, so one image competes with another. For an image is always an image compared with others.

At the extreme, a product's symbolic meaning becomes more important than its functional meaning. Symbolic value becomes identical with use-value, so you can be delighted with a chair you cannot sit in and a teapot that cannot pour. While it is easy to copy technical innovations in competing products, it is more difficult to shake the symbolism a product has developed and can draw on as 'a fund of goodwill from which it can take future advantages'.

Branding is not just aesthetic control but control over a complex of symbols that bind a sensory expression with a meaning that can motivate both customers and employees. Even though, in theory, meaning originates from reality, reality loses in meaning until meanings close around themselves and create their own circuit. A toothpaste can only clean teeth, a car can only drive, but the imaginary worlds in which they are implicated can germinate into infinity.

That there is only rhetorical access to an organization's totality means that any description is challenged by others. Therefore, management and its experts must avoid leaving its description to chance. They must work on developing a description that is packed with attractive and fluid meanings, so you enter into an imaginary world in which you can express yourself, fortify yourself, and hide by being linked to the organization as a customer or an employee. Since the imaginary is invisible, there is only access to the imaginary world from the sense side. You have to buy in to be a part. You cannot pretend you run around in the latest fashion, even though you can certainly fantasize.

This requires an ambiguous grappling with meaning. On one hand, a brand must accommodate existing meanings – otherwise, no one would want to be connected with it. It must be 'rooted in the ordinary value system'. On the other hand, it has to shake up the existing relationship between constancy and variation – otherwise, no one would want to notice it. An organization will accommodate the audience's longings and avoid offending it in more than a passing way. Therefore, it must serve many masters, not to be good but to serve itself and care for its autopoiesis.

Therefore, the commodity-soul is the most empathetic soul that can be imagined. It opens up shamelessly to the public's desire. This happens in an interplay between affectionate accommodation, creative departures, and brutal control in which an organization tests the ongoing viability of its symbolic basis in order to explain what it can presume as a constant and thus where it can vary as improvisation. As if courting, the organization puts all its power into making itself interesting and attractive by sound and taste and smell and beauty and values that are difficult to reject. Commodities borrow their language from love with the intention of turning the relationship around, so the public ultimately borrows its erotic language from commodities, that is, use branded products to express who they are and what they feel.

Who you are is not just determined by personal experience. So, a vain person would be the first and not the last to discover how vain he is. Normally, you know that there is no cover for the way in which you describe yourself: there are always two – and often more – descriptions at play! Identity, unfortunately, is not determined by reference to solid ground. An organization has no metaphysical foundation, since a foundation is only compelling to someone who wishes to be compelled. Therefore, a foundation must be decided in order to be able to provide the premise for decisions, and it must be done invisibly, so its contingency does not hurt the eyes. In short, it must become culture. This mechanism also comprehends the trademark that works best hidden. This makes the brand into a field for two logics that run counter to each other – one that works to reveal and the other that works to veil.

Even for an organization, being is choosing to be – which opens up alternatives. Identity is a choice of identity and, thus, of non-identity. The consequence is that an organization must replace science with rhetoric. It does not have an identity that must simply be fine-tuned; rather, it must discover a foundation, protect it and be committed to it. The fate of the choice does not depend on good will or some metaphysical quality but on an empirical interplay of forces the impact of which unfolds in the organization and its environment. Both brand and image are something that the organization 'does' or attempts to find, a part of its strategic effort that can be judged as successful or unsuccessful and that can be adjusted on a running basis in accordance with what seems to be the requirements of the time.

A brand is thus a tool, not a goal in itself and not a duty. Just as when you are talking about eternal love, statements about a brand show something about a mood here and now, not something about eternity.

A therapy nomad who jumps from one therapy to the next, wanting to find himself, normally ends up demanding of others an acceptance of the self that is found, because it is not enough to be yourself, if others cannot see it and thereby consolidate it. In the same way, an organization wants to find its identity in order to create an image. It wants to be, in order to be able to seem, and it will let its seeming have an echo effect and strengthen its being. There is no unambiguous arrow from being to seeming, for an arrow also points back from seeming to being. Once again, we see that the clear distinction between identity and image is dissolved in a bottomless interplay among observers. An organization can only be observed piecemeal and divided. So when one party commits to its picture, pounds on the table, and declares it to be its identity and reality, another party cannot distinguish it from 'seeming'. Social identity is not clarified by pointing and not by science but by rhetoric – as we shall later examine.

It may happen that a manager sincerely vouches for the values that he wants to associate with a trademark. But no test of sincerity can decide whether the values are a goal in themselves or means to other goals such as revenue and career. And, perhaps, it makes no difference, since it is meaningless for an organization to speak Protestantly of inner faith. What is crucial is whether it perform Catholically the external deeds. But even this is difficult, since no organization can govern the interactions into which it enters. It only takes a little to be compromised.

Developing a brand is not just creating a robust centre of meaning but also preparing an acid bath to dissolve everything firm. What is decisive is not simply the quantitative: that different observers do not have the same interests, information and involvement. Nor is the qualitative decisive: that an organization is invisible. But to 'discover' or simply to 'find' an identity is a paradoxical process, since the finder is a part of what is found – and, at the same time, inevitably different from it, just as an artist both is, and is not, his work.

The struggle to create a powerful brand, with powerful impressions burned into the organization and its products and visible for its employees and customers, appears to be an ambiguous matter that hovers between a warm acceptance of supportive values and a cold test of what it bears for others, that is, how they are influenced. Only that which can be recognized with the senses is unambiguous. The rest hovers in the wind we call self-reflexive, when it has to do with the choice of premise, and culture, when it has to do with the invisible premise of premise.

Symbol of totality

Deep-down, everything an organization does is used as a symbol for it – as a *pars pro toto* that is pulled out of the whole, is made into a centre of gravity, and acquires the privileged status of a symbol: to be a short form that represents the whole. The ambitions of managers, the condition of the parking lot, the leisure activities of employees, and the way the telephones are answered – everything can be made into a sign whose referent is the organization; everything can be, as it is called, an 'ambassador'. Some parts are selected in advance to be symbols. This applies to the administrative director, the headquarters, uniforms and the logo. Even though they are only calling cards and even though their mode of presentation to the senses does not exhaust their meaning, their aesthetic expression is a part of their meaning.

While a sign is related externally to what is designated, such as the word 'cow' is related to the cow, the symbol's relationship is intimate. It swallows up its own meaning and eradicates its own history; whereupon it can represent in the word's true sense – be present instead. A flag is more than just a stick and a rag, and what you do to the flag, you do to the nation, so the symbol takes over the attraction and repulsion that are contained in what is symbolized. In this way, the symbol saves time and energy. You can be satisfied with desecrating a cross or an American flag in order to show what you think about such immeasurable things as Christianity or the USA.

With symbols, observers get intelligible access to the unintelligible. That which is absent – perchance, someone beloved or, in principle, a divinity – becomes present. The unobservable requires symbols. This makes the symbol into a very special sign. You can denote in many ways – a sign can resemble, like an icon; it can have a causal relationship, like an index; and it can denote by creating a logically arbitrary but socially binding association, like what happens with 'cow' and a cow.

The symbol adds an extra dimension to these three types of signs. Even though both sign and symbol operate spontaneously, the symbol's visual formation is more sensible than the sign's. While no one takes offence if the word 'cow' is maltreated, powerful emotions are stirred if the head of the Little Mermaid (in Copenhagen) is cut off or an employee is erased from a group picture.

We are talking about fetishism when the distance between symbol and symbolized disappears and thus the freedom to reflect. With a fetish, the relationship between sign-user, object and sign is inverted. It is not the person who symbolically seizes control of objects but the symbolic meaning of objects that take over the person. The fetishist is dependent and has a meat hook in his soul, because only through the fetish can he approach that which the fetish symbolizes. You can go so far as to talk about Fall of Man. And if you look closer, there is a Fall in all language, so language is an immense fetish.

By more modest measures, an organization has clear advantages in creating fetishes that enter into the public's vocabulary, so a trademark becomes the quickest way to talk about itself. If you interpret freedom and 'the real thing' through the pictures that Coca Cola makes available, an important part of your range of expression is monopolized. A strong dependence on advertising language is the downside of an impoverished language and poor reflective ability – that is, what is normally called stupidity.

It requires time to make a sign into a symbol. It requires two operations that point in opposite directions: one is to permeate the sign with associations; the other is to eradicate the memory of the learning process. When a logo is to be launched, it must be packed with meaning and made so familiar that the reading is automatic. This provides a double advantage: familiarity and absence of reflection. Both can go wrong.

The public may well see through the machinery that stands behind a symbol and that can be described in detail in protracted analysis. The symbol must be strong enough to function even though it is seen through – and, perhaps, like art, provide both intuitive and reflective enjoyment. An organization can gamble that the launching of a logo will arouse protest, because that bolsters attention, so the public makes itself heard as being for or against it. In this way, narratives are created that link the logo to a culture and to the public's self-presentation. Moreover, it is common knowledge among marketers, regardless of their field, that the public starts by complaining, then the shock effect wears off, and acclimatization settles in. After a short time, the same public not only forgets their protest but will protest if their objections are sustained. Many organizations are arrogant enough to believe that they do not need to adapt themselves to a predominant taste but can dominate taste and dictate fashion.

A symbol of an organization can be displayed, manipulated, distorted, and disseminated in time and space far easier than the organization itself. It can also sensually suggest that the organization is an intelligible whole. In order to be able to be observed, an organization must be manufactured symbolically – that is, through simplification, that is, through lies. But will it do to talk about lies, when it is impossible to speak the truth?

An organization uses symbols, when it is to concentrate itself. They enter into its narratives, which select and combine and schematize, so what is the good vision and the evil resistance, cause and effect, friend and enemy, becomes visible. Concrete events acquire symbolic value, so they are magically elevated above the everyday. Activities in an old cellar half a century ago are shrouded in mystery, because this was where it all started, and the objects that were once found in the cellar are framed or put behind glass. Often, these narratives are naïve. Often, it is the intent that they are to be received naïvely. But this presumes reflection. When they are used for symbolic control, their *naïveté* is not itself naïve.

The symbol's rich and easily activated background of feelings make it tempting for organizations. Just as, according to Antoine de Saint Exupéry, you cannot motivate people to build boats by bullying them but by getting them to long for the open sea, an organization creates the strongest trust by spontaneously, that is, invisibly and without reflection, associating itself with fundamental values. This communication occurs aesthetically through symbols that become points of intersection between ethics and aesthetics.

The use of brands and, more generally, of symbols shows the inner connections between trademark, image and reputation. But this does not explain the relationship between identity and image. We must dig deeper into the matter.

Identity and image: the suspicion of deception

The difference between image and identity seems simple. An object is what it is, but it may appear in different ways. Air and water have no colour; yet, they are blue. They are colourless but seem coloured. To use Descartes' classic example, the tower is round but looks square at a distance. A whole semantic apparatus stands ready to handle the difference between seeming and being and, thus, to prevent judging a book by its cover.

If an organization had an unambiguous identity that could be determined with scientific certainty and had the same robustness – and backing – as the identity of stones or trucks, the loop between identity and image would not be a problem. Seeming would depend on being in a transparent way, just as we can understand why a round tower looks square or a stick seems to bend in water. Thereafter, the organization's problems could be handled objectively, that is, as first-order control or control of objects.

If, on the other hand, identity is not given but a fragile construction that must always compete with other constructions and if this thing that 'has' identity is at the same time invisible, then we as observers must fall back on weaker forms of coherence. Questions about identity and image permit many answers, and it requires an effort, therefore, to win the battle of words and pictures. As a result, the difference between an organization's identity and its image has become a scholastic viper's nest in which both sides of the difference writhe and wriggle without being able to find peace and in which many other differences are put into play.

Thus, the difference is paired with another difference between depth and surface, so identity becomes the organization's essence and core, image its illusory appearance. But this raises the question of whether an organization even has a core and whether any party can claim that their description captures the organization's essence, so all other descriptions are merely illusions.

The difference between external and internal is also involved, so that identity is seen as the organization's self-description; while image is the organization seen from the outside. It is obvious that an organization's employees are normally unusually interested in and informed about their workplace. But since there are many types of employees, the question arises as to who in the organization has access to identity. And this question also raises uncertainty about what the organization's image is a picture of.

A third difference has to do with reality as opposed to ideal. While the organization's identity is its current 'this is how we are', its image is the invocation of a desired future introduced into the present in order to activate and motivate and, ultimately, to make itself superficial once reality approaches ideality, and the difference collapses. But again: who has access to a binding 'we' on behalf of the organization and who has the strategic power to impose a picture of the future within and without the organization? It is not the same picture of the future that motivates employees, shareholders, the state, and the public. The idea of a strong brand is nourished by the vision of a uniform description in which employees and the public put each other in a cross-pressure that fortifies the brand on a continuing basis. But the idea of this sort of integrated communication is most reminiscent of a theoretical fantasy.

To speak about identity presumes a privileged observer whose description trumps. In the old days, God was the guarantee that this sort of description was possible. Later, observers have contested what is real. A man falls from a scaffolding. It may be an unfortunate accident or poor safety. If you describe the fall as an unfortunate accident, you place responsibility with the man. If you describe it as poor safety policies, the man is acquitted, while the searchlight is pointed toward the organization, which can pass the buck on to the state and talk about 'vague legislation'. Every observer isolates different causes and effects, so that the observer apparently 'causes the cause'. And even if you zoom in on the purely physical, about which it is normally possible to reach agreement, doubt arises: what really prompted the fall? Who knows?

What applies to the physical world applies to an even higher degree to the social world. Semantics around trust explores the social difference between 'seeming' and 'being', which is pressing, because social systems – and, thus, organizations – live by virtue of descriptions that bind the invisible past and the invisible future together in the visible present. No physical analysis of a human being reveals whether he is an office head or a hotdog vendor. So, when we present ourselves, we must also represent ourselves, that is, tell where we come from. This opens the door wide to deception. A charlatan such as the Captain from Köpenick can lead people by the nose. A child predator can dissemble to achieve his goal. A manager can present selective or outright falsified data a few days before the scandal.

Even in the subjective world, problems pop up. Even though the little word 'I' contains a calming stability, its formal constancy disguises a disturbing empirical variance. Not only is every 'I' so manifold and so complicated in its reflection that anything can be said about it. When it is used, the *I* that observes is split off from the *I* that is observed, so the very use of the word mocks its illusion of wholeness.

Even though all impressions can be deceitful, the world would be inhabitable, if all parameters were variable at the same time. Therefore, constancy is established. Even though the physical world 'out there' is only accessible via sense impressions 'in here', it is construed as an objective world with a completely different inertia and rhythm than the subjective world of sense impressions. If you deal with people for a long time and in many situations, you attribute to them an essence and, even though the possibility for deception is present, it is rejected in practice. You assume that people are linked to their self-production and assume the risk of disappointment in the bargain.

A role is both a tool for veiling and unveiling. This opens up aesthetics and the beautiful appearance. Even though roles are often criticized for being passive stereotypes that over-emphasize stability, they are far more. They are communicative tools for self-presentation and dramatization, which permits rigid adherence to and flexible play with the expectations the role proposes. We are in the area of theatre in which illusions are played with. The difference between identity and image is blurred, when an individual plays – underplays, overplays – his role and makes strategic use of its schemes for what is normal and deviant, constant and variable.

The simple difference between seeming and being rests on a crumbling ontological foundation, when it comes to social relations. Who can express himself about identity with gravitas? Since 'the masters of deception', it has become normal to claim that a human being is not just invisible to others but also to himself. So, the solidity of his 'I' is an illusion. And what applies to psychic systems also applies to the social. An organization is also invisible.

That an organization has – or takes on – an image shows that it is worried about how it is observed. It observes that it is observed and attempts to control that observation. It knows that every motive is under suspicion and can be reinterpreted. It knows that everything exists in a beautiful and an ugly version, as rhetoric claims. It attempts to fall on the strategically correct side of this difference, that is, to seem beautiful, so it over-emphasizes its involvement in an imaginary world by which it activates the difference between seeming and being. Even though the control of sensation and meaning – that is, manipulation – is so normal that few take offence, the suspicion turns up, when the control can be seen. We ask instinctively 'what is behind it' and 'who says that'. We know that some people have an interest in controlling our senses and thoughts, and we also know that this control is professionally staged. We shall later look at how this operation is the starting point for a reconstruction of the difference between identity and image.

Identity as an effective illusion

We have seen that the simple difference between image and identity is lost in the cabinet of mirrors of descriptions, which does not just describe the organization but also each other. Since identity is bound to description and since descriptions can be oriented in accordance with many guiding differences and programmes, we are forced to the conclusion that an organization does not have an identity but rather 'identities'. There are facts that few will deny. But there are many of them, and they must be selected and deselected. Instead of the ambitious premise of a timeless truth that lies in the word 'identity' – one and the same, A = A, we get an evolution of modes of observing and description that are stabilized temporarily around guiding differences (which concepts are to be used), programmes (how the guiding differences are unfolded and linked with other differences), and topics (what is relevant and what can be presumed familiar and normal?)

Some 'modes' gain resonance for a time, are stabilized as 'normal', and keep 'everything from being said'. While it does not require arguments to use them, it requires arguments to reject them. For example, there is a certain agreement about when a group of managers has deceived shareholders, employees and the public and has described the organization in a way that conflicts with their better knowledge. They did not just forget but hid facts that they knew were explosive and were, thus, painfully conscious of. You can bore into the motives for this dual semantics, when the scandal is a fact.

An organization inevitably stabilizes around one or a few descriptions that provide an answer to 'who we are'. Whether they are fabricated or spontaneous or both is not decisive. They can draw on the past as the culture of the founding fathers. They can draw on the present as different views of what the central problematic is. Or they can draw on the future as one or more visions. They can settle down and gain an intuitive and almost bodily certainty.

Even though there are many descriptions, an organization cannot orient itself in accordance with them all. Even though it must be considerate, it must also step into character – and does so inevitably with its decisions (or lack of decisions). A decision is both determined by the organization's state and determinative for it. And when it is to be imposed, it must calculate that what for some is an almost natural consequence of a membership of a 'we' is for others based on threats of punishment. Organizations are framed for careers and thus for competition, so its resources of conflict are not allowed to lie dormant, unused.

The official identity is one side of a difference between normal and deviant. It exists, if enough people believe in it, experience its collective power to set an agenda, and avoid publicizing their unbelief. Therefore, it is interesting to ask what is being denied, when an organization says 'we are' and who it is 'we' are who have had success with the organization's description, so it may be placed beyond discussion. Who has participated in the writing of the history and who has encountered it as a fait accompli?

What Luhmann claims about the world does not apply to an organization: that it is silent, and the observers argue. The opposite applies: an organization is a polyphony of conflicting voices of which some are stable and gain *Anschlußwert*, linking value. The same holds true for works of art: even though, in theory, they can be described in infinitely many ways, they are in practice only described in a few. In an organization, there is, as in a courtroom or an election campaign, a struggle over words, because words create the world, when they become normal words. If the description of an organization has found its form, it requires an enormous effort to re-describe it. Often, opponents must resign themselves and accept that the race is run. If they try to transform the constants in a normal description into variables, they may discover that listeners cannot be bothered with more semantic nonsense, because new words unleash actions that are judged as futile. Perhaps, it was a miscarriage of justice; perhaps, it was nepotism; perhaps … But no one wants to take up the battle and open up Pandora's box. Therefore, they jump from the objective to the personal and label opponents as grumblers, troublemakers, or paranoids.

Identity is, therefore, a shared illusion that is robust enough to create reality. It has the same gravity as the agreement that appears in a large assembly in which the director asks: 'Are there any objections?' If there are not, it can be assumed that everyone agrees, even though everyone knows this is not the case. Some keep their reservations for a better time; others don't want to be bothered; and still others just want the meeting to be over.

An organization's identity appears in a tendency that, like a fashion wave, is drawn on the wall, when all its voices swirl up and everyone speaks on top of each other, until some voices break through and become carrier waves for the rest. They become constant and central, so the other voices are forced to consider the possibilities around voice, loyalty and exit.

If this sort of identity has settled into blindness, it is not just expensive but also risky for an organization to change names or trademarks. What had become habit is suddenly broken up into renewed consideration, so trust and loyalty enter into troubled waters.

Mass media

For an organization, it is not enough to ask who it, the organization, is. It must also ask how it looks to others, because it is dependent on its public. What it is also depends on is what it seems to be, so identity and image still run in a loop. But if you say image, you say mass media in modern society. They provide society's ongoing self-description and compensate – in fragments and partially – for the fact that no one can observe society. Everyone is referred to the mass media, when they are to 'orient themselves', because their own observation does not go far enough.

In the mass media, observers meet around topics that can be described in many ways – economically, politically, scientifically, and so on. When these guiding differences clash, their general reach is tested, that is, the degree to which they influence public discussion and thus make the leap from the special to the general. 'The general' does not mean the universal but that which sets the agenda for public discussion, so an offer of communication – an article, a suggestion, a letter to the editor – does not fall stillborn from the press but has *Anschlußwert* and is bolstered by being the starting point for other offers.

In the movement from the special to the general, there is a loss of information, because a public discussion cannot handle too much information or presume much background knowledge. Therefore, specialists always feel misunderstood.

This 'distortion' is simply due to the fact that the mass media protect their own criteria for relevance. Nor can they observe the world but must select and compose what is 'fit for print'. They have their own agenda, which is not just about information but also about their image and what they believe their audience wants to hear. Its size is the criterion for success and failure. Therefore, special messages and theoretical analyses are transformed into good stories around *topoi* such as the unusual, the dramatic, the personal and the touching. The media's interest in scandals, gossip and 'big stories' pulls in directions that are not automatically flush with what an organization feels it needs.

Modern society is not organized around personal experience. The relationship between organization and environment is regulated through the mass media. Therefore, organizations, like politicians and artists, need the mass media to become visible and attractive. The dependence is so strong that it is normally impossible to assess the mass media's treatment of a topic, because their view cannot be compared with personal experience.

This lack of experiential basis makes an organization's image into a precarious case, both when it is to be constructed and when it is destroyed. The organization can play on the fact that the public only encounters it in the mass media, and it can be framed by the fact that a TV programme that sows doubt about its credibility cannot be corrected, because the TV programme is the only source. The audience may have its doubts but can do nothing about it and must be left with the fact that it is good food for other mass media, if a mass medium treats a topic very one-sidedly.

When the mass media criticizes, a situation is created that evades the technology of morality and law. It has to do with reputation, which for an organization is the counterpart to morality's esteem. When the audience is scattered, it cannot be influenced directly, only via mass media. In medicine, people talk about 'phantom limbs', when a patient still feels pain, for example, in a leg that has been amputated. In the same way, people can talk about a peculiar 'phantom morality', in which offences, apologies, and explanations circulate in the mass media but in which it is uncertain how they are meant, whether there is anyone who is genuinely offended, and how the public will react. Nor can reputation be regulated through the law, when the public pronounces its sentence through other channels and other temporal relations than a court. The mass media makes the case by describing it publicly. They are no innocent messenger. 'The political consumer' is a ghost that only exists in the mass media.

If a case arouses interest and becomes 'political', bad is transformed into worse, because the political system is divided into government and opposition, which disagree on principle and radicalize trivial differences. When one party is for something, the other is against it. Regardless of the outcome and the division of viewpoints, the organization's image will suffer harm.

In modern society, organizations can poorly predict where the attack on their image might come. Both their products and their circumstances can be contested. The critique can gather around matters that have no legal foundation, so an organization, such as Shell with Brent Spar in 1995, can be criticized for a solution that was economically, politically, and technologically proper but with a chink in the armour, the environment. If an organization is drawn into the post-colonial clouds of aggression and guilt, its image is inevitably tarnished. If it tries to cool down the conflict by dealing with it legally, it will often exacerbate rather than solve the problem, since law may be deemed the tool of power and property against the powerless and poor. And when the case has settled, the public will remember that something or other was wrong.

Therefore, organizations must observe the observation of the media and, perhaps, develop a crisis plan, if the diffuse clouds unexpectedly condense, and a downpour begins. The relationship to the media cannot be left to chance, since no organization can be indifferent to how its public views it. Here, a web of experts arises, who ensure their own growth by taking on an impossible task: to control the love triangle between organization, mass media, and audience. When there are many experts in communication, uncertainty is re-created at an ever higher level.

For an organization, the ideal is not to bow to the media but to use them strategically. For example, a manager feeds them tendentious information which, like a boomerang, returns to the organization and puts cross-pressure on employees, when they encounter the same description from within and without. Quite elementarily, an organization must use mass media (1) negatively to avoid scandals, and (2) positively to bolster its image, so it can increase its sales and attract employees.

Reconstruction of the difference between identity and image

Even though the distinction between identity and image can be deconstructed, it is hard to replace and must, therefore, be reconstructed. We shall see how.

An organization will, officially, describe itself in a way that is weakly or strongly idealistic. A self-description is not just a fact but also a duty, so the organization will emphasize things that harmonize with its self-description and leave out others that conflict with it. There is always a slightly 'plaster saint' aura in an organization's presentation of itself. It would neither be able to handle nor tolerate itself, if it were to live as though every description were true – even though it is true that an organization can be described in many ways. An organization's identity is a text and, thus, a construction.

Such a construction can assume three forms. One has to do with keeping silent about information that is irrelevant but easily accessible, such as the colour of waste paper baskets or the time the mail is collected – information that is unknown, because it is irrelevant. Anyone can get it. The other has to do with keeping silent about information that is relevant but cannot circulate freely, because it has to do with strategic measures or personnel matters. The third has to do with keeping silent about information that is extremely relevant but considered embarrassing and, therefore, harmful. Only the initiated can get it. Whether keeping silent is innocent or supports a lie may have legal significance but must not distract us here.

When an organization describes itself, it creates a norm at the same time. It relates who it is and, thus, what the public has a right to expect. It creates an image that may not be legally binding but nevertheless has the character of a contract that, in relation to the public, only goes in one direction: the organization has made a promise and thereby obligates itself. This does not happen in isolation but in a society with laws and values, so there are – in addition to the promises the organization has made openly and tacitly – other cultural contracts that have to do with what is normal. What interests us here is the breach of promise, that is, embarrassing events that conflict with the organization's self-description and can be admitted or denied. That a breach of promise is denied does not mean that it is forgotten. To the contrary, it must be constantly remembered in order to be able to be denied, rejected, talked around, and so on. If what is embarrassing is forgotten, namely, that it is embarrassing, it can easily slip out into the open. Just as there are important anthropological insights in what is considered trivia, there is important information in what is considered embarrassing.

When the difference between open and hidden self-description is handled from the hidden side, since the public knows nothing – as yet, we can use this difference to give the words identity and image a precise content in which identity is the totality of the open and the hidden self-description, while image is the open description. Only someone who knows both descriptions can speak credibly about identity – which does not prevent the play of illusion: you can pretend that all the cards are on the table and all descriptions are accessible. How this problem is handled we shall look at later. The difference between open and hidden can be dealt with from without, as criticism, or from within, as self-criticism. What is normal, however, is criticism, since organizations have a tendency to forget, that is, to deny and thereafter to reject, that is, to abjure what is embarrassing.

In short: identity is the blind spot for an image. From identity, you can see not only why an image tries to close around itself but also 'what lies behind it'. Thereafter, it can be considered whether an image is an expression for a legitimate or an illegitimate deception, that is, whether it is to be criticized.

It follows that the difference between identity and image is not a one-time difference but depends on an observer. An image can be revealed from many angles, even though normal expectations as to what is normal and what are scandalous 'plaster saint' depictions in a culture are settled.

The difference between image and identity is fundamentally a question of trust and mistrust: whether you believe that the open description is accurate – not in the sense that it provides all information, which is impossible, but that it does not veil information that, according to widespread norms, is relevant and critical and would change the public's opinion about the organization, if it were publicly known: the public's willingness to invest, to buy, to use, and to apply.

An organization can orchestrate an image by keeping silent about information that is deemed so relevant that it is worth suppressing. This may have to do with breaches of the law such as doctored account books, embezzlement of public funds, child labour, or breaking environmental laws. Or it may have to do with breaches of promise that go beyond what the law requires – for example, a school's promise to intervene in cases of bullying. The silence occurs from a presumption that complete self-description would affect the public's judgement in a negative way. The organization attempts to control the way it is observed, so it can maintain a single self-description, well-knowing that another, contradictory self-description is also true.

The more the veiling, the greater the risk of unveiling. Double bookkeeping is always risky. The people who know both descriptions have a delicate task of 'holding their tongues', so they lie without lying. It is considered an outright political virtue to be able to handle these borderline lies with charm and dexterity, so trust is not jeopardized. Loyalty is also not telling what you know. Departing managers are often bound by confidentiality agreements to prevent them from revealing their knowledge of what went on behind the scenes. And this confidentiality does not just apply to ordinary dirty deeds but also the considerations that led to the construction of an image, because the simple insight into the fact that an image is fabricated can undermine it. If banks conduct a campaign that they are 'for you', it can destroy the effect, if it is revealed that they are also launching a fee policy that is only for shareholders.

This information that is withheld is certainly excommunicated but not for that reason inaccessible. It can be identified through a hermeneutic effort, that is, by interpreting information that is communicated without communication being the aim and which takes on the character of symptoms. It may be slips of the tongue, changes of style, refusal to express oneself, inconsistency. The old Kremlinologists used the rank order of officials lined up for the May Day parade in Red Square to draw conclusions about power plays. These sorts of interpretations open up new descriptions with a changed relationship between constancy and variation, so 'what the builder rejected becomes the keystone'.

Thus, the interplay of reflection has begun: when a new interpretation – a re-description – is presented to the organization, new information arises that influences the balance between different descriptions. New information is leaked, new defences established. Not only individuals but also organizations can be psychoanalysed.

Handling normal ambivalence

The handling of ambivalence is a leadership virtue, because ambivalence is unavoidable. For one thing, there is always the difference between the open and the hidden text – between what is said and what is done. This disparity is considered harmless as long as the open text is treated as a vision and 'we're working on it', so the conflict between identity and image is open. And, for another thing, there is a lot of information that cannot be communicated to the public – new products, plans for changes in structure and power relationships, personal relationships, and ongoing negotiations are deemed legitimate fields for silence, which in order to be truly silent does not only require a demonstratively closed mouth but also ritual chatter, which creates an illusion of information.

So, lies have many colours – from white to pitch-black. Not only spouses but organizations also pretend to be in agreement externally and keep conflicts for the home front or not so edifying pillow talks. Politicians indulge each other in verbal excesses, if they know it is only 'for external use'. An organization will routinely avoid mentioning conflicts, mistakes, incompetence, vanity, and that sort of thing in its official statements. This closedness is so normal that it is half-open, because the disparity is deemed a normal variation that does not dispute the organization's constancy.

We find a classic description of the difference between onstage and behind the scenes in Thomas Mann's *Felix Krull*, in which the astonished, young Felix sees a cabaret actor who, onstage, manages demanding female dancers in a virtuoso and sophisticated way, in elegant clothes and with radiating, smooth skin. Afterwards, he goes with his father to the changing room where the dazzling seducer is revealed as a pimply, vulgar petit bourgeois.

Nor do organizations have a duty to tell everything but rather a duty to keep up the mask. Not all information is useful to everyone. Even though truth is normally a good, it can easily be exaggerated. If everyone told each other everything, all relationships would break down. Often it is an outright moral duty to create a flawed but edifying image, so politeness requires assuming a mask that makes it possible to enjoy each other's company without burdening others with yourself. If you ask a colleague how he is, the answer is normally 'fine', because it is irrelevant to tell you about the weekend's annoyances. A doctor can suppress his knowledge of a colleague's gross misdiagnosis, because he considers mistrust in the medical profession to be worse than a single medical error. When an American general during the Second World War struck a patient at a military hospital, it was kept quiet, even by the journalists who witnessed it, because discussion would have harmed the army's reputation.

To reveal the difference between identity and image, that is, to communicate contradictory texts, can harm everyone in and around an organization. Therefore, the difference is not dealt with simply aesthetically but also morally. Organizations do not simply appeal to their employees but also to the mass media not to criticize 'irresponsibly', not because the criticism is wrong but because it is harmful. And depending on whether the observer is an employee, a consumer, a journalist, a union member, or a politician, he will decide what 'responsible' means, that is, where he places his deepest loyalty.

Even though the difference between identity and image is not a difference between 'the truth and its appearance', it can be reconstructed pragmatically. The benefits of the difference are so vital that, even when it is buried, it rises up again and sings at its own funeral. That it has no bottom in reality appears in its great dependence on context. There is no abstract answer to where the boundary between identity and image lies. Therefore, the difference can be put into play in many unexpected ways. It can be used to criticize an organization from without and from within; it can be used to construct a past or a future, and it can be used in strategic power games. It is easier for employees to see the difference between words and action than the ordinary public, because they have more information and a greater interest. But both employees and the public are so familiar with deception, from keeping quiet about small intrigues to the fatal silence of great scandals, that the ordinary attitude toward official self-descriptions is a certain mistrust, which is normally harmless and without consequence and with which people normally live, because there is no alternative. There are limits to how much people can be bothered to invest in a diffuse mistrust that has not become a concrete suspicion.

Myth, presentation and vision

If we schematize the difference between identity and image in temporal dimension, three modes appear in which it is useful for an organization. Quite fundamentally, an image is important, because it is a construction with the intent to motivate. It can happen in relation to different audiences and take its starting point in different temporal relations.

An image can be constructed as myth (with reference to the past), as presentation (with reference to the present), and as vision (with reference to the future). In all three instances, there may be great divergences between descriptions for internal and external use. You may wonder that an organization can stand itself, when it notes the difference between its image and everyday reality. But, morally, they are different situations. If a description of the past, present and future contains a veiling of unpleasant facts, it can be exposed as a swindle. If it is just an idealized description, it is considered with the same indulgent tolerance as advertising, which works even though people see through it, so it is foolish to criticize it. Both myth and vision are considered acceptable instruments in an organization's ongoing self-transformation, above all, because they normally appeal to values that are hard to deny. We shall look these three temporal relations:

Past: myth

To tell who you are, or want to be, is also to tell who you have been. Without the involvement of the past, both (the presentation of) the present and (the vision of) the future become unintelligible. Since the past is not directly accessible, it requires memory. And since memory is not automatically accessible to communication, the past must be constructed as a text, which is pieced together from other texts, whether they are based on personal experience or consist of historical materials such as letters, buildings, and objects. An organization may have a clear interest in making its past heroic, because it increases motivation. Founding fathers are often presented as 'larger than life' and become a resource, so the past help lifts the present into the future. A motivational description of the past flows into the narrative genre called myth and can be considered an aesthetic work.

A myth requires selection: some elements are brought out, others are pushed back, most are forgotten. Different elements acquire different meaning and intensity. It also requires construction: the selected elements are connected to each other, which once again requires a selection of causes and effects. Since the connection between cause and effect is never rigid, the myth is not a logic machine but moves from one juncture to the next. At every juncture, a choice must be made that drives the myth onward, so it acquires the character of a narrative that is not just a 'that's the way it happened' but also acquires an edifying spin. It has an interest that permeates its selections, so selection and construction are not two separate operations.

There is nothing enchanting about presenting a concise, that is, edited or outright censored description of the past. Only pedants torment their surroundings with a massive array of details or private conflicts. But from selection, there is a short leap to heroicization, which again opens up an unveiling in which incompatible facts are brought into the light. The boundary between myth and lie cannot be drawn theoretically, and consciously twisted descriptions can be legitimized in many ways. We are in the domain of rhetoric, that is, in an area in which there are always many versions of the same matter, each with their moral hue.

The difference between identity and image has to do here with the incongruence between different descriptions that use different values as guiding differences. Even though the difference between open and hidden values is dependent on the observer, and even though hidden values do not need to be depressing, image is connected with words, identity with action. This is simply another expression for the fact that actions weigh heavier than words, just as the sense of feeling weighs heavier than the sense of sight and can be used to overcome it. When Macbeth could not feel the dagger that he could see, he concluded that it was a figment of his imagination.

It is crucial that the different descriptions are not just short or long presentations of the same thing but that they are incompatible and that this incompatibility is kept hidden. The difference between identity and image is identical with the difference between open and hidden. The organization can indulge in double talk in the hope that the initiated can keep their mouths shut, which they cannot always. The fundamental problem is legitimacy, that is, whether there are good reasons for keeping information hidden, so keeping silent can be justified in a convincing way in, for example, a critical TV programme, when the hidden information has come to light.

Normally, the difference between identity and image is uninteresting. Normally, people assume that what is said is correct or falls within the permissible boundaries of idealization, so there is no point in activating the difference. Normally, every description contains problems, which are not worth the trouble of taking up. Only under special circumstances do people dig into the difference – perhaps, to indulge in the pleasure of the revelation's embarrassment, to promote one's career, out of respect for the public interest – or a murky mixture of three.

That there is a difference between descriptions is, as indicated, no rarity. You hear the organization's self-description, make your reservations, and do nothing more about the matter, especially if you have nothing at stake. Normally, the difference between identity and image is activated only as a vague psychological reservation. But the difference lurks in the semi-darkness like a snake that will strike as soon as it can smell a conflict between descriptions. When this inkling turns out to be fruitful, we call it 'just' an image.

Present: presentation

An organization can only survive, if its public has confidence in it and is willing to entertain its offers. In brochures, festive speeches, and the mass media, therefore, a picture of how the organization would like to be and, perhaps, could be, if everyone made the effort, is presented. The organization embeds its daily activities in a narrative that creates a context and connects the everyday to a higher purpose.

An organization, in turn, presents itself in a desire to motivate. This interest governs the presentation, so the result is an idealized self-description that does not mention current problems, just as a map does not allow for such temporary things as road work or weather conditions. On a road map, you cannot normally see whether there is fog, traffic jams or toppled trees. This does not make the map unusable. With its presentation, the organization tries to promote its autopoiesis by motivating all parties – customers, employees, investors, mass media, and so on. It tries to invoke trust and compensate for its invisibility.

Here, too, the difference between identity and image is a difference between descriptions – for example, the description that the manager on the podium gives at the dedication of a new building, and the descriptions that employees exchange with each other down on the floor. Here, too, different descriptions can live tolerantly, side by side, or be confronted in an open conflict, when the conflict is made public through a demand 'to do something about it', so the re-description is a declaration of war.

Future: vision

The image that is constructed and activated in the organization's attempt to change itself has another status. It can shape an idealized picture with the intent to make the picture into reality. If a manager – or someone else – forms a vision, a demand for difference-minimizing arises, which in practice decides whether the vision is considered as 'simply' an image or it is to be taken seriously. Again, it is the disparity between descriptions and the disparity between words and deeds that determines whether the difference between image and identity is to be activated.

A revelatory difference

In all three time descriptions, the difference between identity and image is rhetorical. Even though there are facts that are so difficult to deny that the denier stigmatizes himself, the difference has no ontological basis but depends on an observer and a context. In practice, it relies on another difference, namely, the difference between open and hidden in which the hidden acquires more gravity, because it reveals what is open.

This is due to the simple fact that an image only acquires its full meaning when you can follow the operations that lead to it and try to make them invisible. The operation that protects the difference between the open and the hidden embraces both sides of the difference and lurks inevitably in semi-darkness. Image becomes a subset of identity, because the party who veils and the act of veiling are different from the veil that is thrown over the organization. An image is a layer of illusions that is not random but has a precise goal. Machiavelli claimed that a manager – a prince (ch. 17) – must be capable of staging an illusion. From this perspective, image and deception go together, while insight into deception leads to insight into identity. The deceiver and his motive for deceiving are considered a constant, that is, as identity, even though nothing prevents the difference between identity and image from having many layers, so that behind the image is a new image just as carefully orchestrated as the first, so a critic falls into a trap when he triumphantly makes his knowledge public. Nor is there anything to prevent the difference between identity and image from being observed in a new light, so it becomes itself an expression of an image. The difference is thrown into observation's cabinet of mirrors and is, therefore, in theory, bottomless. In practice, things are simpler. Some descriptions stabilize as normal, others are rejected as bizarre or as private idiosyncrasies. A description can be precluded not because there is no more to say but because no substantial speaker can be bothered to speak on it.

There is no requirement for an organization to be described in a special way. To activate the difference between identity and image can end up stigmatizing the critic – he is disloyal, or paranoid, or irrelevant. Any description has its own guiding differences and its own style, and there is no special 'style that is a non-style'. Anyone can blame anyone for distortion, that is, constructing the relationship between constancy and variation in an idiosyncratic way. Since managers have responsibility, they normally see themselves forced to defend their organization. They assess whether the truth is useful or harmful and can feel entitled to speak against their better knowledge, while responsibility-free critics surrender to the pleasures of suspicion and unveiling. Managers have to live with the consequences of their decisions and, therefore, are often considerate, while non-managers can step into character as critics and, therefore, are often ruthless. To be a manager is also to be a strategist or, more candidly, to be a cynic and hypocrite. Since the difference between identity and image is impossible to avoid, what is decisive is not cynicism or non-cynicism but the quality and legitimacy of cynicism.

An organization must live with the fact that the difference between identity and image can be permanently activated. When the category of image is an unavoidable part of the vocabulary that is used to describe organizations, it is handled reflectively. The organization notes, for example, that, if it dismisses the category of image, this is thought to enhance its image. The unavoidability is due to the fact that modern society is not based on communication between persons directly affected, but is directed towards function systems organized as markets and with organizations as actors. Therefore, 'competition of impressions' becomes a necessity and, therefore, there are competitive advantages for the organization to give an impression that it is not out to make an impression. Without 'breaking through', you get nowhere. And, as indicated: it makes a strong impression to refuse to make an impression.

The struggle over image is also a question of time. In the hectic world of media, an exhaustive effort can seem pointless, since the public – the media – cannot relate to it. Some artists declare that the time for deep, long-lasting works is over, because no knowledgeable, patient audience exists – the public wants sports and pop culture. Therefore, the effort must be split up, so an artist does not only spend his efforts on works of art but also on marketing and orchestrating an impression, an image, so he can break through.

The problem of identity is to find the connection between descriptions, all of which can find support in the facts. From Catholicism's confessional to autobiography's piquant accounts of life behind the façade – and below the belt – to the couch of psychoanalysis, you can follow a fascination with revelation, so the search for the truth has to do with going from the open to the hidden description. The day side is less interesting than the night side with its inflamed and unmentionable vices and desires and dirty tricks, and the open is therefore under constant suspicion of veiling, that is, image. What lies behind it?

There is just nowhere from which we as observers can definitively reassure ourselves with reality. There is no reason to believe that the secret description, which cannot find words but is nevertheless regularly articulated, contains more metaphysical truth than the official description. It is one description among other.

So we can conclude that the difference between image and identity is relative in relation to the suspicion about an organization's self-description. This is a revelatory difference. It is used to point out a disparity, for example, between what an organization says and what it 'actually' does. In this disparity between two – or more – descriptions, a description is revealed as 'simply' image, again with the reservation that it can just as well be the revelation that is revealed and not the organization.

Therefore, organizations have drawers full of crisis plans, so they do not panic and make a bad situation worse, when a scandal threatens, legitimately or not, but can appear with the calm that can be the best bulwark against revelation, that is, claims that their official description is 'simply' an image – which is the same as an image problem.

The professional construction of an image

The technical problem around image is to explain and to influence how an organization is observed by an audience. Many organizations routinely investigate whether their activities are known and recognized, whether the effort is directed toward certain target groups or more diffusely toward 'word on the street'.

An organization appears in a particular way as a consequence of its daily operations. By virtue of contact – first-, second-, or third-hand – and buzz in the mass media and impressions on the street, particular impressions arise that the organization's management may consider good or bad. Whether they a reasonable or unreasonable must often be bracketed, since the public can be wrong but is nevertheless always right. On the market, the difference between true and false is subordinate to the difference between success and failure.

An organization can learn or refuse to learn from public criticism. It can adapt to or try to adapt the public. It can simulate having learned its lesson and making the necessary changes. At any rate, it must work on things and the public's view of things. On the premise of invisibility, there are two things, not one, that can once again be maintained from the difference between identity and image.

This creates a dual problem in which the two sides of this difference must be processed by completely different techniques. Even though it might be wished that the difference between true and false oscillated with the difference between success and failure, it must be admitted that things are different. Questions of truth and falsehood cannot normally be discerned by a normal observer. Their social fate is decided in the mass media.

This opens up a game with staged illusions. An organization can directly work on the way it is described in the mass media, decoupled from what is described. It can respond to an image and let identity take care of itself. This is risky and, perhaps, short-sighted. But it is not impossible. Stubborn insistence can be effective with an audience whose opinion is not formed by personal experience.

That social reality must be constructed by establishing constancy in communication, that is, by communicating symbolically, means that organizations that would like to gain trust can try to avoid the hard work of communication's 'about' side and be satisfied with working symbolically. This is done by processing sign-values and forming carefully designed information whose purpose is to create a short circuit from information to trust without involving such things as what the information is 'about' – that is, without taking the long road through the product or the behaviour that is the basis for trust. You try to influence trust directly in order to increase the receiver's willingness to take part.

Normally, the public cannot see with their own eyes whether apples are organically-grown, whether technology does what it promises, or whether the bookcases are produced by child labour. The senses must be bolstered with knowledge that can only be checked by an effort most people refrain from. Therefore, a symbolic screen can be set up between the organization and its users, and on this screen, you can read what the organization is – or would like to be. That which can be observed is laden with symbolic meaning, so the public is easily led from what is observable into an imaginary world. The same mechanism is used in advertising, which promises a magical participation in a land of milk and honey and delivers its messages as if it were of the greatest importance that laundry be whiter or cars faster. Fantasies and longings are not just created around the product but also around the organization.

The difference between true and false is, therefore, caught up in the rhetorical techniques of choosing words and orchestrating impressions.

Even though it is risky to lie, because facts have their own undeniability, a description can be made attractive in many ways. Thus, the truth becomes strategic or, if you will, a variable.

When an organization cannot be observed correctly, it cannot be described correctly. In this way, aesthetics is activated. Even though we are not in the land of pure fiction, there is no solid footing in simple facts. We are in an interesting inbetween place that has to do with the socially effective and where rhetoric, not science, has the floor: what is decisive is not the simple difference between subjective and objective but the social power to make a description authoritative. To manage an image has to do with manoeuvring in the hazardous waters between strategic facts and strategic fictions.

An image is not an abstract picture but a picture of … It represents in the word's dual meaning: re-present, that is, present instead of. The picture can take many forms. One you'd like, another you get, and a third in-between as a compromise you can 'make'.

An organization inevitably has an image as a consequence of its activities. It need not be in everyone's eyes. But it is observed by its users who have their own thoughts and translate them into words: quality or junk, careless or punctual, welcoming or arrogant, words or deeds. This sort of picture can spread by word of mouth and become something of a fixed reality by its own inertia, like the labels that, through ordinary talk and gossip, adhere to individuals. 'First impressions – last', as the advertisement slyly puts it.

From local networks, the picture can spring up at the national or global level, if the organization's activities acquire symbolic meaning; so, for good or for ill, it becomes more than just itself: it is transformed into an example. It is normally through coverage in the mass media – for example, if an organization is accused of polluting, a restaurant is reported for health violations, or a lawsuit commenced against a hospital.

The leap from the local to the national is alluring but also risky. It contains opportunities for profit but also for loss of information and of opportunities for testing. A large public normally only has access to the information that the mass media supplies them with. They cannot evaluate and, perhaps, adjust the description through personal experience.

Even though an image can congeal and become an inert reality, it can also – like anything else real – be designed and influenced. It can be taken out of the hands of chance and constructed – or 'manipulated' – and thus move from one type of chance to another. An image becomes a product among other products of the organization, so the word 'autopoiesis' – self-creation – acquires a double reality. It becomes a focus area, manned by experts who, as classic rhetoricians with a policy of going one better, suggest an image of themselves as masters of the life of signs in society. From the haphazardness in lay people's dealings with impressions, the organization's image is left to chance in the experts' competition to dominate.

Thus, the organization's image becomes reflexive. The organization's image is influenced by the fact that it influences its own image, so a second-order image arises from the attempt to control an image – both that it is done and how it is done.

Some waters are parted here. If you observe from the classical difference between being and seeming, you will talk about manipulation and routinely evaluate the effort negatively. If you find it more difficult to speak robustly about identity and, therefore, soften the difference between being and seeming, you will instead follow the interplay between different descriptions and evaluate the effect of the attempt to create an image. You will observe, not participate, describe, not evaluate – even though these differences are not entirely water-tight: observation is also participation, description is also evaluation.

An organization must count on big losses when it wants to create its own image. The public is not homogenous, so the organization's managers and experts must calculate that what convinces one observer – or group – scares another. Therefore, an image can be fine-tuned or developed broadly. It can presume the values of a certain group or appeal to fundamental values. Even though there is no canonical 'good taste' in modern society, there are pervasive values that cannot boast of truth but still 'weigh heavily'. An organization must have success here and now. It cannot wait for the future to prove them right. It can have its own point of view but must accept that sign-values have entered into the melting pot and flow freely into society.

An image has one meaning to managers that may plan to do something to change it. It has another meaning to the consulting agency that has the task of mounting a campaign and has techniques for carpet-bombing the public with advertising spots and informational material. It may promise to give a trademark a particular meaning to a particular fraction of a particular audience within a year. It has a third meaning to the employees who relate to an image loyally or ironically or both, because there are always many gazes and many narratives in an organization. Management has responsibility for the whole organization and is bound by its official image, while the employees are bound by their profession and are, therefore, freer to put into words the disparity between daily conduct and the standard battery of fundamental values that are incorporated into the organization's image: credible, open, competent, and so on. Finally, it has a fourth and fifth and sixth meaning to the public, which finds itself in declining proximity to the organization and its products. The same thing is different.

Transition to rhetoric: symbol and function

An organization only has access to itself by virtue of symbols. Both its identity and its image are texts that require symbols. Without symbols, there are certainly groups but no organization, certainly objects but no totality. Even though the word 'organization' has the same root as the word 'organism', an organism is no organization. And even though a beehive is a totality with a sophisticated division of labour, it is not an organization. Neither the organism nor the beehive as biological systems have access to themselves and cannot change themselves. Their change has the character of an evolutionary 'drive' that is unleashed by random mutations in themselves and their environment. They don't give themselves names and identity, and their complicated interplay is not communicated with symbols but with causes and effects, triggers and effects. Even though within biology people have begun to work with symbol-like mechanisms in cells and other systems, the crucial feature of the symbol is missing: the difference between what designates and what is designated.

Work with an image is often called symbolism, which is one side of a difference, the other side of which is called functionalism. Alongside its functional production of goods and services, an organization must also produce itself, so production runs on several tracks: it must produce goods and services (function), and it must produce itself (symbol). It must not just do but also say – and what is to be said does not speak for itself.

The difference between symbolism and functionalism is a single piece of a large and diffuse shift that is also described by other differences: from industry to information (Bell), from modernism to postmodernism (Lyotard), from work to communication (Habermas), and from reason to evolution (Luhmann). What is characteristic about these differences is that they do not only show a change in the centre of gravity from one pole to another over time but also a growth in both poles. This is not a simple either–or but a 'more of both'.

Upon closer inspection, however, the difference between symbolism and functionalism loses its sharpness. Symbols, too, have their function, and functions may also be symbolized. Both symbols and functions are structures in the organization's communication. Therefore, 'function' is not exclusively linked to production with its rigid goal-rationality; nor is 'symbol' exclusively linked to communication with its soft, fluid impetus. Physical objects and physical functions are not elements in an organization but belong to its environment. The organization consists of communication which, among other things, has to do with objects and functions.

In this way, the idea of functionalism changes content. The classical idea that functions are tested by their contribution to a system's survival can be expanded, so a system is oriented functionally, when it observes its structures in the light of possible alternatives. But if alternatives are to be compared, they must be able to be identified, which requires language. Functions are possibilities and only when there are no other possibilities is a system functionally stable. Thus, the sharp distinction between function and symbol is dissolved, because functions must also be symbolized, when they are to be identified and evaluated. True enough, this observation can occur in a process that does not give itself a name, that is, unconsciously. And, true enough, all processes are in the final instance evolutionary, since no system has access to itself as a whole. Self-observation happens inevitably from a blind spot. But this does not prevent systems that work with language and meaning from observing and modifying themselves and their environment by identifying functions and advancing alternatives.

In organizations, function and symbol meet each other in endless loops, because they are two sides of a difference and, therefore, refer to each other. They are both structures for unfolding meaning. At its own pinnacle, that is, in the present, an organization must not only be able to describe itself but also to choose itself. This happens with decisions. But how is a decision made?

In the classical theory of decision-making, the decision was considered as a rational weighing of alternative means to achieve a goal that could not be justified rationally. In this interplay, symbol and function meet. But the idea of rationality, understood as a strict and unambiguous solution to the decision dilemma, has slowly been undermined. Instead, other, softer descriptions of how decisions are made have arisen.

A corresponding ambition was prominent in classical epistemology to give human knowledge a rational foundation, so knowledge could be unambiguous and certain. Therefore, for Plato, rhetoric was an arch-opponent, because it operated in choppy waters in which means and ends were fluid and in which there were always many descriptions of the same things. Philosophically, too, the idea of rationality has regularly been undermined – often with rational means, so you had to realize – reasonably – that there was no reason. Whether this is an expression of reason's triumph or defeat will not preoccupy us here.

The critique of both organization theory and philosophy with their ideas of rationality have opened up new ways of describing decisions and knowledge. We will occupy ourselves with rhetoric which, since antiquity, has explored how it is possible to choose and to know in situations that are characterized by uncertainty, not-knowing, and many means and ends. Therefore, rhetoric is the next topic.

3
Organizational Rhetoric

An image is a picture, and a picture is a picture 'of'. But a picture can be many things. It can be realistic, impressionistic or symbolist. Which it is depends on the sender's purpose. For an organization, there is always an intent to draw a picture and, therefore, it is not enough without more that the picture looks like something, gives an impression, or symbolizes. The picture's success depends on its effect on the receiver and, therefore, the sender must be familiar with his receiver and his desire. Here, we encounter the pragmatics of communication, which since Antiquity has been explored within the rhetorical tradition. Its aim is not just to decide what is true or false but to influence an audience from an interest. Beyond the question of truth, it encounters the question of who the audience is, what topics are up for debate, and whether an appeal is to be made to reason, feelings or senses.

It is the thesis of this chapter that there is an intimate connection between management, politics, and rhetoric. To be the manager of an organization is to represent the organization as a whole and, thus, to be able to orchestrate the interests that exist in an organization, not just the economics, technology and law but also the interests of the parties who are touched by the organization's decisions. Every interest has its own reason and, if senders and receivers have a common interest, they can argue objectively. They have the same starting point, so the sender can propound a chain of inferences and count on the receiver accepting the final conclusion.[1]

For a manager, every interest and, thus, every reason is only one among many, and his enterprise is to weigh which interests are heavier and should be promoted and which are lighter and must be put on hold. Since the organization draws every interest in its own image, it is uncertain how the situation is to be described and what the relevant information is. Thus, objectivity disappears.

In the last chapter, we saw that an organization can be described by past, present and future. Every decision must, directly or indirectly, relate to all three time dimensions. If a manager is to make a decision for an organization as a whole, he must work together with past, present and future in a common vision. But a vision is not objective, and the evidence of its impact does not exist here and now. It must be realized and, thus, create its own empirical foundation. The evidence is out in the future and, therefore, management must conjure up this future and ensure that there are the resources and will to realize it. The decisive thing in not just the objective 'what is the case' but also the visionary 'what can be done' and, thus, how the backing – the motivation – for the vision can be created. Here, too, many interests must work together towards a goal that can be a cluster or a hierarchy of goals.

Management's reason for many reasons is not objective and cannot be. It is political – for we call something political, when it is to reconcile or prioritize many interests and, therefore, is inevitably not objective. Politics is the arena in which all interests meet all interests.[2] "Politics" is a balancing of interests that cannot be reconciled and must be settled by a decision. A political decision must cut through in a situation with an excess not only of information but also of interests – and, therefore, a politician must often be content to point out that an interest is 'compelling' for many.[3]

But how can a manager argue for a case, when he cannot be objective? He can back up his decisions with power and refuse to discuss it. But there are also other possibilities.

Since Antiquity, rhetoric has investigated how, in uncertain situations without strict, objective logic, one can nevertheless argue for a point of view and find its persuasive elements, so a particular audience – or many at the same time – can support it. Rhetoric assumes that the world can be described in many ways, and it has developed over the centuries a sophisticated knowledge of the tools you can use when you prefer one particular description and would like others on the same page with you.

If management is politics, we are inevitably led a step further: politics is rhetoric. And then we can abbreviate it: management is rhetoric, because management inevitably has a case and thus an interest. It is pointless to say that 'I am a manager but I don't care how the world is described'. A manager cannot avoid making decisions, because non-decisions are seen as decisions, and he has with the same inevitability an interest that he must defend in situations in which there are many cases and no one can prove his 'case'. So, management is politics is rhetoric.

Rhetoric is normally not considered an aesthetic discipline. In addition, it is too deeply anchored in economics and politics, religion and intimacy. But it is difficult to deny that rhetoric contains an aesthetic dimension that, in part, has to do with constructing a case, so it grabs and changes the receiver, that is, makes him think and act in a different way and, in part, has to do with using aesthetic tools such as rhythm, sound, meaning-space and image-formation. To communicate is to go public and achieve effects,[4] regardless of whether the public is a small circle of intimates or a large, anonymous audience.

A rhetorical problem

What then is a rhetorical problem? It is a problem that must find a practical solution without having compulsory logic at its disposal and without being able to refer to cultural routines.

A rhetorical problem arises when a matter can be observed from the perspective of many different interests – or *codes*[5]– such as economic gain, political power, scientific truth, or moral correctness. Codes appear side by side, not hierarchically determined and without super-codes to regulate their collision. Scientific truth cannot be measured in money or established with power. Aesthetic quality is alien to morality and education.

Any justification of why something is to be observed with a particular code cannot be rational. The same is true, when codes collide. Each of them indicates a basic value that, in the nature of things, cannot be legitimated further, since legitimation consists of referring to a value. And a collision between basic values cannot appeal to super-values, since that would imply that they are *not* basic values.

The use of codes, and the clash between them, creates problems that have no objective solutions and must have a solution. Nothing guarantees that society's problems keep nicely within a function system and allow themselves to be determined as 'purely economic' or 'purely religious'. Neither unemployment nor pollution nor immigration is a simple, monochord issue. And even if there is an agreement to define a problem as purely economic, there are normally many options as to how to solve it, depending on how the organization and its surroundings are described.

In an organization, there are always many codes at play – both in private businesses, which measure success and failure by profit, and in public institutions that perform a political function. To maintain a particular mode of observation leads to accusations of cynicism or ruthlessness or violence. When a manager has to balance on a knife edge, taking employees, media, politicians and other organizations into consideration at the same time, he must provide his organization with a strong, overall identity, he must seek assistance in rhetoric.

The requirement is 'balance'. How is the relationship between political, economic and scientific considerations to be weighed for health care policy? Is art to be supported economically, when the artists themselves have decided to be artists and refuse to compromise their artistic integrity, that is, adapt to the considerations of others? But 'balance' is an embarrassing relict that hides the fact that we are in the domain of the indeterminate. And it is identical with the domain of rhetoric. Rhetoric, understood as the art of persuasion in the absence of strict logic, tests what compromises are possible and what grounds *de facto* persuade.

A compromise is not rational, because it contains a collision between 'rationalities'. It is not an expression of a pure power relationship – in a pure power relationship, the strong party can dictate the terms. A compromise has to do with both arguments and power but also with the ability to persuade. It requires familiarity with the specific case, a sense of the public's mixed feelings, a respect for the party in the dispute, and insight into the balance of power. If, for example, artists want economic support from business, it does not help to make reference to the intrinsic value of art. Such an appeal will be met by a parallel reference to the intrinsic value of economics, whereupon the situation has reached an impasse. If art and economics enter into an alliance, the parties must convince each other that it is to their own advantage to take others' advantages into consideration. The question of whether the parties understand each other, whether they productively misunderstand each other, or whether one party is more underhand than the other we can let lie.

In such clashes, rhetoric unfolds whether the parties like it or not. The justifications for art and economics working together are often *analogy*. People start by claiming that business needs creativity, innovation and metaphor. They continue that these endeavours happen exclusively and only in the field of art. And they conclude, with a rhetorical leap, a shameless *non sequitur*, that art, then, is relevant to business. Not a word about the fact that art has no monopoly on creativity, not a word about the fact that aesthetic creativity works on different terms than organizational creativity, and not a word about the fact that different creative groups distance themselves from each other as soon as it must be decided concretely what inspiration, creativity, the formation of patterns, and so on is saying.

It is easy to see through rhetorical games, if you are fond of bursting balloons. The problem is just that you thereby undermine productive alliances. To see through rhetoric can be a kind of self-gratification – splendid but barren. There are no objective alternatives to rhetoric, when a solution is to be found to concrete problems with many dimensions. And these areas are *domains for management*, because a manager makes decisions that orchestrate many interests.[6]

When a situation is pervaded by many interests, each party will describe the situation from his own interest. Rhetoric arose as an attempt to investigate how one party's description could prevail. In this way, it placed itself outside the scheme of true and false, because its domain is the probable and the uncertain and because it provides good advice to all parties. Both government and opposition, both prosecutor and defence make use of rhetoric. People with a taste for Truth, therefore, do not care for rhetoric – even though they themselves make use of it. But in a democratic society, which has replaced Truth with the ability to persuade a majority, rhetoric is an indispensable discipline – even, and especially, when it is rejected.

A shift in the balance between reason and rhetoric

Behind the interest in rhetoric – and, as we shall see in the next chapter, narrative – is a modern mistrust of reason. Not that reason is not used – even an attempt to undermine reason makes use of arguments, and any interest has its objective grounds. But the old confidence that reason is self-evident, unambiguous and compulsory has disappeared. In the wake of the word 'reason', an objective agreement does not arise but a conflict between different modes of observation, that is, different 'reasons'. Claims about the world are neither given 'of themselves' or 'by the world'. They also depend on a choice of how one wants to observe it, that is, which difference and, thus, which interest is to form the foundation. The heart has its reasons, claimed Pascal, that reason does not know.[7]

A vital point is *self-reference*, which has to do with the fact that reason cannot give a reasonable justification of itself – *what* is reasonable and *whether* it is always reasonable to be reasonable. Another point is *relevance*, in which reason is particularly powerless: which topics are pertinent and how observations are to be selected and linked. A third is *beginning*: how an observer is to choose his starting point, so observation can get started at all. Newton could explain the movement of heavenly bodies but not their beginning, so he had to let God provide the first push to get the cosmic machinery going. And even though he could explain the position of heavenly bodies in the past and future, he could not explain where a leaf would land when it falls from a tree but had to be content with general laws that were certainly universally applicable but whose equations could not be solved in concrete situations with so many factors at play.

Reason cannot choose between modes of observation – perspectives – and cannot exhaust the concrete. Given that all men are mortal and Socrates is a man, it can reasonably be concluded that Socrates is mortal. But reason cannot explain why it is we are concerned with Socrates' mortality and not other things or what Socrates otherwise does with his life before his death takes him.

There is a cold and timeless beauty in pure logical constructions that conquer their compelling character by radically abstracting from everything specific. There is a completely different beauty at play in art, where everything can always be different. Therefore, you can, as Simone de Beauvoir once remarked, swing between enjoying the abstract patterns of ideas in Spinoza's *Ethics* and enjoying the description of Julien Sorel's struggles with his specific fate in Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*.

When reason is to justify itself, it winds up in a dead end, and it is precisely at this dead end that rhetoric and narrative step in to help. They are connected to concrete processes and can draw on cultural resources that they need not mention. They resolve the Paradox of Beginning by placing themselves in a tradition and its commonplaces, that is, by accepting the prejudices of the audience. By virtue of these limitations, the train can run and be on time. Rhetoric is not bound – or not *only* bound – by truth but also by the requirements of effect. It has to do with *strategic communication* or with how to do things with words. This double consideration of truth and effect, as both Aristotle and Cicero were quite aware, takes rhetoric out of reason's blind alley. It can relate to a reserve of *topoi* or common topics, and it can utilize a form of inference, the *enthymeme*, which plays on the audience's prejudice. And narratives make their contribution by describing and mapping concrete processes, which rest on presumptions that must be developed on a running basis[8] and which connects events into a pattern but does not require the connection between the individual events to be strictly logical or causal.

There are other ways of making connections than with reason. That things resemble each other is a way of connecting them, which is what happens with metaphors. That they appear together is another way of connecting them, which is what happens with metonyms. And that something is a part of a whole is a third say of creating a context. Even ruptures and oppositions can create connections and, when a pattern becomes visible by being broken, the reader can consider whether the pattern is to be maintained, so the rupture is visible or whether the pattern is to be expanded so the rupture becomes invisible. The relationship between constancy and variation is a source of both unease and pleasure.

Since Plato, reason has been touchy and has rejected other contexts than its own as 'merely' poetic or emotional. With the breakdown of reason, art and its poetic patterns have achieved honour and dignity, not only in their own field but also in the camp of the enemy. The power relationship has tilted: instead of reason rejecting foreign connections as dangerous and, for example, seeing it as a problem that induction is not deduction, it must suffer the injury that not even its own connections are compulsory and, therefore, have the character of a work.

Logic is a way of observing and guiding the gaze toward particular connections. But there are other connections, and no one – at least, not the world – forces us to be logical. Even though historical processes are not random, nor are they logical. They are not even scientific but contingent, that is, surrounded by other possibilities, which are open to intervention: to influence the situation and its outcome. And rhetoric has, since the beginning of Antiquity, seen it as its task to open up the past, so it can be described in other ways and to close the future, so one description prevails.

Rhetoric and narrative disregarded the demand, first, by philosophy and, later, by science for certainty and universality. Neither is tormented by a need for security or a fear of being pickled in prejudices. They take their starting point in the concrete situation, which is always already permeated by desires and interests, so it is possible to set tacit premises for their efforts. It gives them not only a tempo advantage but also a head start.

In the aesthetic 'always–already', a context appears and, by taking a context as given, rhetoricians and storytellers gain access to another complexity than that opened by science. By concentrating on the individual case, whether it is a dramatic *situation,* which must find its identity and its solution, or a dramatic *process*, which must find a conclusion, rhetoric and narrative can combine complexity and simplification in another way than that provided by science. While science simplifies by ignoring the concrete, rhetoric and narrative simplify by ignoring the general. It sets them free to follow a process with greater sense – and care – and to influence it with greater precision – and success. This makes it possible form them to penetrate into rich domains, where science dares not tread, namely, the everyday and history. There is no science of the everyday or history. On the other hand, rhetoric and narrative renounce the most precious feature of science: independence of time and place. But this loss can be borne: most people prefer their own Florence to the eternal Female.

Science and rhetoric/narrative are at right angles to each other. The complexity that science ignores, rhetoric uses as its starting point. A politician who wants to gain a following for his vision or a salesman who wants to tell an attractive story about his product cannot allow himself to ignore the specific desires of his audience.

The difference between science and rhetoric is so distinct that you can renounce polemics. It is not about replacing science with rhetoric, or the reverse, but about paying attention to their peculiarities. And if you fine-tune communication's patterns of sensation and meaning, you are struck by what a broad spectrum of influence you are subjected to when you communicate and how poor a part of it you can relate to consciously. The repertoire of unconscious communication is managed more attentively by rhetoric than by science, above all, because science wants to secede from the context of culture. That this secession is itself an aspect of culture we can merely note in passing.

Narrative ignores the endless complexity of what could happen and follows – fictively/empirically – what actually happens, even when its events are surrounded by alternatives. It works itself into dilemmas or cliff-hangers in which *a lot* of things could happen but only *some* things do happen. Rhetoric ignores what should convince and follows – fictively/pragmatically – what actually convinces. And since, as Aristotle says, rhetoric demonstrates the 'faculty of observing in any particular case the available means of persuasion',[9] it presumes that there are in every concrete situation desires and ideas of happiness that provide criteria for relevance. A rhetorician must know his audience and its motives – the whole dark and inflamed field in which passion is connected to action. And rhetoric has no problem, like Hobbes, in using everything that has power[10] and thus works, whether it is reason or emotion. Rhetoric can *set the context for* reason, while the requirement of reason regularly ends in what Max Weber called *goal rationality*: stating rational means toward a goal that is beyond reason and thus is neither reasonable nor unreasonable.[11]

Rhetoric explores techniques for describing a situation so that it appears in a certain light and points in a certain direction. It shows how to choose words and models and types of explanation, how to keep silent or to be explicit, how to underplay or overplay particular features and thus create the situation, not physically but communicatively: how it is to be described and what

Anschlußwert it is to have, that is, what should be done. While reason can explain what has happened, rhetoric can do something extra and just as necessary: namely, show how you can influence the description of what happened in the past, what the situation is now, and how the future will turn out. It contributes with *inventio*, inventiveness and re-description[12] – for example, what dilemmas or 'pairs of opposed commonplaces' you can set up, develop your presentation around, let clash, and go beyond – for 'the reputation of wisdom', as it is called, often goes to those who can dissolve an opposition – perhaps, by re-describing its poles. [13]

This effort connects rhetoric and narrative. They are directed toward a receiver and attempt to capture and maintain and, perhaps, bewitch his attention with linguistic tools – in a broad sense.[14] Here, the simple use of new words arouses pleasure – we are attracted, Aristotle claims, by what is new – and often only as long as it is new.[15] Science, too, can bewitch with new words. But this is not its most important effort and, if it only works as witchcraft, that is, metaphor, the receiver has missed the point and surrendered to the science-magic you can find in commercials.

The task is to gain public success by influencing people and getting them to observe in a special way. Rhetoric is a form of human engineering,[16] and its effort is neither objective nor subjective. No description can avoid the simplification of perspective. Every description is tendentious, because the choice of words helps fix the world to a single possible description and thus be open to particular possible actions.

Whether the destruction of the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001 is called terrorism, a declaration of war, an attack on democracy and Western values, or mass murder is important for the action's *communicative identity*. Every description leads thoughts and action in a particular direction. Reason cannot in itself spin a particular perspective or choose between perspectives. It cannot decide whether the destruction is to be described physically or politically. Even if you link knowledge and interest, reason's interest has no connection to the desires that create perspective and relevance in concrete situations.[17]

Normally, reason ignores the problem of description. It discretely overlooks the fact that it requires raw material that is already categorized.[18] Normally, this conceptual order happens automatically. We see a cat as a cat and pay no more attention to the fact that we are thereby activating a concept. But to be creative is to use concepts in an unusual way, and conflicts also have to do with which words are to be used. Both induction and deduction are based on judgements that have already been made. They are not concerned with how it has happened or what other judgements that could have been made. You can say other things about swans than that they are white. The word *abduction* focuses on the special form of inventiveness that Vico called *ingenium*, that is, a sort of genius that consists of the ability to see similarities and create connections.[19]

There is a pragmatic interest deep in rhetoric. A rhetorician has a case that can be won or lost, and it is no use to be right from the viewpoint of eternity, if you are not proven right in the here and now. The recognition that there has been a miscarriage of justice may lead to rehabilitation but does not wake the dead. This makes the rhetorician aware of specific motives and the balance of power, so he can influence an audience of flesh and blood. The success or failure of the rhetorician depends on whether he can produce a plausible narrative *about* his audience and *for* his audience.[20] For Aristotle, rhetoric is an *ability* – the Greek word is *dynamis*.[21] Its field consists of domains in which there is uncertainty and thus something to talk about. And the rhetorician is always 'interested', because he wants to transform uncertainty into his preferred variant of certainty. In order to influence observation, description, and action, his first task is to bring out the 'persuasive elements', well-knowing that, in *the now*, there is no difference between what is and what seems to be convincing.[22]

Rhetoric's criterion for success and failure is put together differently from that of science. Truth is one criterion among others and not what necessarily decides the matter. This does not mean that a rhetorician inevitably lies, since he may be quite aware that truth convinces. But it does mean that he considers what way he should describe and what he should discretely omit to describe. As we shall see, the rhetorical form of inference, the *enthymeme*, is constructed differently from the logical form of inference, the syllogism.[23] Other forms of inference than logic and causality are used, such as similarity, linkage in time and space, part-whole, and so on. In addition, the rhetorician may act as personal guarantor and consciously – but not necessarily openly – attempt to influence the emotions of the audience. While science puts the observer in brackets and avoids emotion, rhetoric does the opposite.

This is the background for the classical antipathy toward rhetoric, which goes back to Plato and has resulted in accusations of distortion and cynicism. These accusations presume, however, that there is a correct description. This is where Plato and associates have a weak case. This is where the modern mistrust of reason comes through. There may be normal descriptions but no description that is metaphysically guaranteed. Many descriptions struggle to dominate and, in this struggle, reason is no longer the master's voice but a voice among many others. Rhetoric is more modern and, if you will, more democratic than reason, because it redirects the demand for truth to a demand for success, that is, winning. Its justification for existence is the emergence of many, conflicting descriptions. It is tolerant in its starting point without considering every description as equally valid. And it is utterly pragmatic when it uses objective and subjective methods to convince. It is difficult to reject the claim that 'in classical writings on rhetoric, we have perhaps the most careful analysis of any expressive medium ever undertaken'.[24]

The art of persuasion presumes an absence of strong demonstrative logic. Only because there is uncertainty about words is an effort required to favour one set of words when it is to be determined who did it (past), what relevance it has (present) and what is to be done (future). Behind the public antipathy towards rhetoric is a tormented and unredeemable desire for reason and objectivity. If you assume that managers make reasonable, objective decisions on the basis of sufficient information, there is no place for rhetoric, only for the computing and processing of information. But just as it was the Devil's greatest accomplishment to convince the world he did not exist, rhetoric's first task is to protect itself from the accusation of being rhetoric – that is, veiling itself with objectivity and reason.

The claim here is that all communication contains a rhetorical dimension, so there is no automatic hostility between truth and rhetoric. Against Plato's rejection of rhetoric, we find Aristotle's claim that rhetoric is a tool that is inevitably used by all parties, so rhetoric is also at play – and especially at play – when it is rejected through words, which simply means that its tools are used and do their work on the sly, only tested by an intuitive sense of success and failure in the attempt to capture an audience. The theoretical repression of rhetoric makes what happens in the gap between sender and receiver invisible. But this repression does not happen in practice. Most people sense the strength or weakness of words and adapt themselves according to what works. The conclusion is that theory has not captured what every practitioner knows: that many practitioners – and this is true for managers and craftsmen, amateurs and professionals – are bad at explaining what they do and must stick to intuition.[25] There is a disparity between the sophistication of their *deeds* and the poverty of their *speech*.

After the collapse of reason, there have been many attempts to make rhetoric a new, standard model for the natural, social and human sciences.[26] Such attempts are mistaken. Rhetoric moves in areas in which reason is local, bound to context, and surrounded by alternatives, and it cannot, therefore, create a theoretical position from its criticism of the positivist model of truth – that there is one correct method for describing the world and that the world demands to be described in a language that reflects its structure. Rhetoric is certainly a technique but not a technique that can be made automatic and guarantee success. There are always many parameters at play, and not all of them can enjoy complete attention. In addition, reflection can alter everything: in the same moment the receiver notes the intent, he can be mistuned. If rhetoric wants to make itself into a swaying yet fixed ground, it runs into the problem of self-reference – whether its own claims (about context and contingency) are not themselves bound to context and based on contingency. If you will, you can call rhetoric a historical science. It shows what has worked but not what will automatically work again, since history does not necessarily repeat itself.

We shall start by looking at rhetoric's construction of the relationship between reason and emotion; then, we shall deal with three kinds of evidence in the rhetorical approach, namely, *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*.[27] That they are separate does not mean that their separation is radical. Each of them inevitably involves the other two, so ethos and pathos are also in logos and vice versa.

Reason and emotion

Rhetoric's central focus is not *logos* and not *ethos* but *pathos*. To emphasize communication's *pathos* dimension is not only to involve a dimension that has been underemphasized as a result of the Western predilection for reason and objectivity but to point out that communication is based on motivation. And motivation has to do with *moving* from which the word play goes on to *emotion* and *motive*. It is emotion that influences, not bare facts. Emotions are carrier waves for communication and, when they disappear, communication goes dead. A speaker – and, despite writing and TV and computers, organizations are still oral cultures – must know his audience and know what moves it. He must make sure that it is sympathetic and receptive,[28] and he must lay out his case in a way that not only informs and pleases but, above all, moves and thereby influences motives to act.

People can be moved by power and threats, so their own desires are suspended because their preferred solution is burdened by pain and privation. But in modern organizations, raw exercises of power are often a sign of an embarrassing failure – of the fact that they did *not* succeed in motivating. More effectively, it is to influence the way in which employees, clients or the general public experience the organization. Thus, 'to put words in their mouths' that smell so sweet and taste so good that, for example, employees want to use them or do not have better words themselves or seem to need to use them, if they are to explain why they have their jobs – until the words are repeated by managers and in the mass media and from political pulpits, so that they become the normal mode of description, and it seems striking and, perhaps, offensive to use others.

This sort of effort does not have anything to do with power but persuasion. It has to do with seduction to share a vision. Rhetoric's goal is to conquer the model monopoly that exists in the power of deciding how a situation is to be described, which circumstances will play a role, who is hero and villain, and which goals and means are acceptable.

In the classic scheme of reason and emotion, reason occupied much of the space as guarantor of the general and objective, while emotion was repudiated as private and irrational. The paradoxical ambition was to make the idea of reason into a vision that motivated without being emotional. In Kant's ethics, you can see this in his attempt to make duty into a motive that originates in an esteem for the universality of the moral imperative that is not infected by 'inclinations'.[29] At the same time, David Hume saw that reason in itself has no special power to motivate,[30] so Kant had to presume that there is built into reason a paradoxical 'inclination that is not an inclination' – that is, that reason can spontaneously motivate.

If we are to talk about emotion or, rhetorically, about *pathos* without labelling it perverse in advance, it must be liberated from two schemes: between the objective and the subjective and between right and wrong. These schemes, which are often merged into one, so the objective is right and the subjective is wrong, are blind to the fact that what is between the objective, which is determined by the object, and the subjective, which is determined by the subject, is in a third dimension that we can call *the social*. This has to do with what is applicable and normal in the relationship between people without it being able to be explained simply from objective conditions or subjective feelings. To the contrary, objective insight is directed toward social goals, and subjective feelings are part of social contexts. Embedded in the social is a host of prejudices and values that are often tacitly incorporated into the body as intuitive expectation, so you react with displeasure if they are violated. Whoever can conquer this social field, give it names, and link it to his cause has won the battle of the word and the deed.

If we are to reach the practical dimension in rhetoric, we must move away from emotion, which is directed toward an object – what you feel 'for' – and toward attunedness, which establishes a particular way of observing, regardless of what is observed and beyond objective and subjective, right and wrong. Even though attunedness is spontaneous, it is not invariable. It has its changes, and it can be affected by time, by yourself, by others, and by the situation. Spontaneity lies simply in the fact that attunedness is not immediately accessible and that its background and mechanisms are lost in a corporal and cultural darkness. Just as there is always weather of some sort, so you never wake up to a day without weather, a person is always attuned in some way.[31] But an attunedness can be adapted by involving it in artificially created situations. You cannot normally affect your bad mood directly but must take an indirect route. Whether it succeeds or not is an empirical question. But even a severely heart-broken person can be seduced into laughter and ease by a clever clown.

Rhetoric's central domain is to affect attunednesses and, thus, emotions. It explores the conditions for making a speech or, more generally, a text effective, which was called in classical times *persuasio*. What does it take for a text to vibrate with a sweet contagion, so the receiver is tempted to accept it and use it as intended? We must look at rhetoric's three kinds of evidence: *logos, pathos* and *ethos*.

Logos

Classically, rhetoric is the doctrine of persuasion. From Antiquity through the Renaissance, pedantic overviews were often produced on the tools a speaker could use to make his audience sympathetic and to affect its acceptance and feelings. They went from body language to voice modulation to literary tropes. The ultimate ambition was to make the audience as wax in the speaker's schooled hands.

In this interplay, a conflict arose between rhetoric and reason, which was also a conflict between convincing and persuading. Rhetoric used every means to persuade. If it could make common cause with reason, fine; if it couldn't, other means would be used. For Aristotle, rhetoric concerns those questions that

> we deliberate upon without arts or systems to guide us, in the hearing of persons who cannot take in at a glance a complicated argument, or follow a long chain of reasoning.[32]

While reason according to Plato was always the same, rhetoric was based on variations in the empirical situation. While reason was compulsory, rhetoric was seductive. We have seen that the opposition between convincing and persuading is not unambiguous. In addition, regardless of what you consider as reason, it must be presented to an audience and, here, you can throw it around or present it or *time* it so poorly that it has no effect.

It may not matter if you have forever and can try again. But, normally, you don't have that many bullets in your magazine. The judgement is pronounced, the woman says yes or no, the position is filled, the voters make their voices heard, and it is often irremediable, even though everything can always and in theory be redone. If you have a cause you are fighting for, it is worth considering how you present your case and who the receiver is.

Aristotle claimed that a speaker must know what moves his audience – which makes it possible both to accommodate and to outrage its expectations. Only when you know what the audience finds uncomfortable can you decide whether you want to avoid it or, to the contrary, to play on it. Correspondingly, an American film company would not dream of launching an expensive film without having tested the audience reaction. If the requirement is a happy ending, it does not matter that the film's literary source ends sadly. We shall look at four features of rhetorical *logos*.

Beyond reason and unreason

Plato noticed that, even if there is an eternal reason, it would be a problem to connect to it to specific things.[33] What description is to be authoritative cannot be explained by referring to the fact that there is a reasonable description. Which concepts are to be activated and which sense impressions they are to be connected with cannot be explained objectively. Rhetorical efforts are to be governed by considerations of the audience with its particular prejudices and desires. Only with knowledge of the audience can a speaker find 'in any given case the available means of persuasion'.[34] But this knowledge is local, not universal. 'For about statements about conduct those which are general apply more widely but those that are particular are more true', Aristotle observes. [35]

To find 'the available means of persuasion' with respect to a case is not, *in principle*, an objective task but not for that reason subjective. The schemes of objective/subjective and reason/unreason breaks down in the face of the Paradox of the Beginning. When rhetoric discovers the limits of reason, it leaps back to the situation at hand, which is filled with prejudices and desires, so it becomes possible to compare various descriptions and their effects. By virtue of its pragmatism, rhetoric can solve the problems surrounding communication that do not have an objective solution but must nevertheless be solved. This is true of the problems of deciding how a matter is to be described and how the clash between different 'reasons' is to be handled. The method is to disregard the general and concentrate on the singular: to describe a concrete situation, so it is spun to your advantage. It is not just about knowledge but also about inventiveness. This side of the matter has always been reason's weak side, so it has left *the logic of discovery* to the imagination and reserved to itself the task of clarifying *the logic of justification*.

The relationship between fields of knowledge

By going beyond the limits of reason, rhetoric can place different fields of knowledge in relation to each other. It can show the connection between theory and practice in an age – and this connection is always ideological, never objective. Therefore, rhetoric is more than an 'expressive art'. It is also 'an organizational principle that provides the framework within which we can reveal and arrange the significant parts of any human undertaking'.[36]

In the relationship between fields of knowledge, no single field can provide the foundation. Even though, for example, the ambition of philosophy has been to provide certain and, thus, context-free knowledge, *that is why* it is incapable of explaining how changing situations should be tackled. The interaction between experts cannot itself be a matter for experts but is instead a case for management. It is not accessible to objective insight but requires knowledge of another type, which may be called political or rhetorical.

Rhetoric's solution is to relinquish a theoretical solution and to leave the problem to the practical experience that inevitably finds a way to handle and unfold such clashes. In the metaphor of 'unfolding' hides the insight that an answer is a concrete process that could be a different process but which is 'what happens' and gets reality on its side. Therefore, narrative and rhetoric can supplement reason and prevent its breakdown from becoming fatal. Narrative recounts *what happens*, even though other things could have happened; rhetoric works to *make something happen*, even though other things could happen. Therefore, there is excitement about the outcome in a narrative and what the judgment will be, when the *pro et contra* of the case are laid out.

Aristotle spoke of *phronesis*,[37] or practical reason, which is found in specific persons. This does not consist in following a fixed rule or referring to 'first causes'. This is not *science*, and the people who practise it – for example, managers – do so 'by dint of a certain faculty and experience rather than of thought'.[38] Thus, the ambition of providing a timeless, technical knowledge has been abandoned. Instead, 'the art of the possible' arises – that is, politics, because politics has to do with weighing considerations that cannot be weighed theoretically. Politics, therefore, is an 'architectonic art'. It is the 'most authoritative art and that which is most truly the master art' and assigns all knowledge and all skills their place in society.[39]

In modern society, too, politics steps in when many considerations clash and must be calibrated.[40] Disagreement between experts becomes political in a particular way and, thus, a question of management. Management is not just about what is (present) but also about what was done previously (past) and about what can be done (future). Management does not result in knowing but in doing. Therefore, management and rhetoric belong together. But this 'doing' is inseparably connected to the fields of knowledge that, together, are called a *technostructure*.[41]

Managers have a responsibility for the whole, and specialists for their own subject area. Managers must, therefore, motivate specialists who may or may not know or care to contribute to the whole. But since the whole is invisible, it takes the form of a text that managers must manage. Therefore, a manager speaks in a different style from specialists. This leads us into the field of rhetoric. Rhetoric is not just a bag of tricks[42] but a symbolic action that has points of similarity to aesthetic creation – to create useful and attractive fictions, whose origins are lost in a well-orchestrated darkness and which, therefore, can circulate, so they become effective, to conjure up an imaginary world and saturate it with attraction, so it becomes legitimate, to determine which situation you find yourself in, so thought and action are controlled, in short, to seduce and motivate more than order and threaten.

It may have to do with power over souls but need not. Grown people do not allow themselves to change at the whim of a manager. But less will do. For an organization, it is not necessary for people to be sincere or happy, as long as they make their contribution.

Inventio

An important part of classical rhetoric is the doctrine on how one constructs a speech. Here, the first part is to procure the material for the speech, *inventio*. When the matter is not pressing because a case can be described in many ways, the sender must decide what he wants to focus on. And a decision is subjective, because it is not forced by the matter itself but chooses among its possibilities that have to do with how it is to be described and how it is to be connected with other matters.

When rhetoric points to a 'logic of innovation', that is, an *inventio*, it can only set the task, not solve it. This speaks for itself: innovation cannot be technologized. To create openings and alliances between fields of knowledge and influence the balance between them requires experience and vision. It is a 'non-objective', that is, political, effort. Even when innovation can be measured on a simple scale, what is technically 'better' can be compromised by the fact that it infringes on other considerations. Innovation must be linked with the status quo on a broad front, so it is not just about the fact that innovation is to be explained and thus banalized.[43] This link also requires a rhetorical effort, so the effect of innovation is not left to chance.

One important task is to make a topic clear by working with *image patterns* that capture the imagination and give it fodder to work with.[44] It can happen in such a sophisticated way that the inner dynamic in the images that are conjured up can be officially denied even as they continue to work, so words and images are played against each other, and the sender can initiate forces for which he can still deny responsibility.[45]

This competition between words and images can be a conscious strategy, but it can also happen unconsciously, so the sender is seduced by his own metaphors and carried away with their own inner flow. As in a work of art, the receiver is involved in an imaginary world with an aesthetic power that is not dependent on arguments but forms a background they can take off from. Arguments can be assessed as arguments always are. The power of pattern formation to have an impact moves down other paths and is not measured by its truth but by its effect.

To present a pattern that organizes thinking, experience, and imagination requires invention. This arises the same way a good idea arises for an artist or a scientist – not by chance nor through strict control. Invention is about the art of determining 'sayables'.[46] A strategy can develop an arsenal of concepts and metaphors and visions with a magnetism that makes it tempting to move in, to participate, and to explore.

Rhetoric as architecture of knowledge

Aristotle gave the word *architecton* a special meaning – it is not just the head man of a construction site but a person who organizes and thus connects fields of knowledge. He goes beyond simple craftsmanship and takes on a special responsibility of coordinating.[47] Since this cross-disciplinary effort is about innovation, one can talk about a 'rhetoric as invention' and not only about a 'rhetoric as expression'. Beyond the bare technique of persuading, it creates a common ground for first-rate but fragmented specialists.

The rhetoric of management is developed in the interplay between 'what is known' (and thus what is not known)[48] and 'what can be done' (and thus what is deemed impossible). Both ignorance and impossibility are important resources for action, because they cool down. In addition, there is their power to legitimate: what cannot be known and done is beyond any responsibility.

In the interplay between experts and users who each have their own interest, management must develop and maintain a language that all parties can be served by, even though the words have different meanings for each of them. Again, we are beyond the objective and in the rhetorical. There is no technical recipe for how you appeal to the egoism of specialists and tame it with the egoism of other specialists. Rhetorical model monopoly is a fluid resource that is always at play – always contested and always effective. Rhetoric knows that 'the situation' is not given but can be created in the situation. The moment is the time of rhetoric, in opposition to philosophy, which would like to work for eternity.

In this interplay, all dogmas collapse. Rhetoric is, in principle, without principle. Both confusion and clarity can be used to persuade. Both conflict and consensus can motivate, so their opposition loses its tragic dimension. A manager can advantageously open up a rich repertoire of conflicting values, so he can act flexibly according to what he considers the requirements of the situation. While the philosopher works in his study, the rhetorician is referred to the interplay of success and failure between living people. Rhetoric has to do with effect, not truth, even though truth may be an important source for effect.

In these uncertain waters, it is a matter of developing a power that is not violent but consists of *model monopoly*,[49] that is, the power to make one particular description dominant. Another phrase is *discursive construction*.

We must conclude our treatment of *logos* by looking at two classical rhetorical themes, namely, the *enthymeme* and the *topic*.

Enthymeme

Against the logical form of inference, the syllogism, Aristotle opposed the rhetorical form of inference, which was called the *enthymeme*. It was defined as a syllogism without a major premise, since a speaker can often jump to conclusions and need not mention what everyone knows. Therefore, the enthymeme is often called a 'commonplace' – a common experience that can be taken for granted at a particular time. Not only the major premise but the conclusion can also often be omitted and be allowed to hover in the air. 'For if any of these propositions is a familiar fact', says Aristotle, 'there is no need even to mention it; the hearer adds it himself'.[50]

However, there is a peculiarity about this mode of determining an enthymeme. If the syllogism's major premise or conclusion is omitted, simply because it is a commonplace, the logical and the rhetorical form of inference are not separate. What is special about the rhetorical inference is only that it precludes what at any time can be let in again. The form of inference is not wrong, merely hurried. The interesting question is whether there is a special rhetorical form of inference.

Another meaning of the *enthymeme* can be tracked down by noting that an enthymeme is used to deal with 'what is in the main contingent'.[51] This precludes the logical inference that has the character of necessity. That things can be different is due to the lack of knowledge, whether the lack is random or principled. An *enthymeme* is used when there is not knowledge but only probability, so the inference is not compulsory but has to do with experience, that is, practical wisdom or *phronesis*.

Rhetorical argumentation, therefore, acquires this form: 'given that things are as they are, it is reasonable to infer ....' *What* is 'as it is' does not only have to do with facts but also with cultural patterns, so culture becomes the supplier of undecided premises, not only for decisions but also for inferences. The rhetorical inference involves what can be taken for granted by a particular audience – though mistakes can be made. In situations without knowledge and science, the rhetorical form of inference is a possible resource, because it can provide movement in the doldrums of indeterminate possibility. It can open up questions about what a decision maker can be permitted to presume, suggest, and do in a given situation.

The *enthymeme* has to do with *practical logic*. This opens up a rich interplay for inventiveness or, if you will, manipulation. This may sound negative but is inherent in the matter itself; without full knowledge, there are many possibilities. It requires an inventive will to explain *what* is possible and *which* possibility can be realized. We are in the political, not the objective, domain.

This insight is radicalized, if we involve Aristotle's thesis that rhetoric has to do with providing convincing factors about a given case. Here, the question is not only what inferences are acceptable but how the case is to be described at all. When formal logic sets up general premises such as 'all men are mortal' and singular premises such as 'Socrates is a man', there has been a tacit decision that of everything that can be said of Socrates, it is his status as a man that is interesting. But why? Here, one must relate to the fact that '[n]ature is silent and the observers argue',[52] so no situation can only be viewed from one perspective.

What inference is to be drawn also has to do with relevance and interest. Here, formal logic ends and rhetorical logic begins: it has nothing against syllogisms but knows it takes more to convince an audience.

While logic focuses on the universal major premise and the compelling conclusion, rhetoric deals with the singular minor premise that draws out the concrete relationship. It is not the world but the speaker who decides which of Socrates' many characteristics are to be emphasized. While logic has to do with valid relationships and inferences, rhetoric has to do with a choice of persuasive perspectives. Rhetorical argumentation has just as much to do with which words are to be used as which inferences are to be drawn.

Choice of words is neither logical nor illogical. It is prior to and 'frames' the case that is to be talked about, so rhetoric is also about 'the illogical choice of logic'. This choice, however, is not arbitrary, since in all concrete situations there are bonds, that is, limitation, that is, tradition. This applies whether the time mode is past (forensic speech), present (ceremonial speech or what was earlier called presentation), or future (political advice).[53]

This opens up other modes of linking things together than the logical; that is, a richer set of instruments is at the speaker's disposal. Cause and effect also create a connection. That one case resembles another case, that something is a part of a chain, or that it is part of a larger context helps determine what sort of thing is being talked about. If these things are cleared up, the logical machine can begin to churn, because it has acquired food for thought. Only after a rhetorical stroke of genius has done its work is a platform created for plausible or even compelling syllogisms.

Rhetoric speaks in a situation in which logic is silent, namely, when the world is to be described and changed. It suggests or implies the frames, schemes, and scripts that decide which case we are talking about. It does not take its starting point in abstract principle but in the concrete example. With the enthymeme, rhetoric works culturally deductively; with the *example*, it works culturally inductively. An example – such as the two tailors in 'The Emperor's New Clothes' – can get a universal meaning, making it possible to learn something without losing its concrete meaning:[54] that is, to work with analogies. While the minor premise in a logical syllogism is *only* an example of a principle that is already established, the example in the rhetorical syllogism is the springboard for a universal principle that acquires flesh and blood and, thus, its own power to convince.[55]

While the sender is shaping his case in his own interests, he must often do something in the opposing direction: hide his effort. The more a sender can make it look as though his description derives from the matter itself, the more convincing he will be, because the gaze is directed toward the matter, not toward him or the arbitrariness of the words he is using. The lawgiver, says Rousseau, is often wise enough to give the gods credit for his own achievement.[56]

If a trope – above all, the metaphor – can be used to *understand*, it can also be used to *claim*.[57] To use a metaphor is to designate a matter idiosyncratically but also to create shifts and openings in the receiver's attention, so a noticeable pleasure and willingness to accept can arise, which need not be accountable to reason's bookkeeper.

Rhetorical argumentation is not an abbreviated or a mistaken form of logic but is based on its own principles. This claim can be supported by looking at the rhetorical *topic*.

Topoi

If rhetorical inventiveness is not to be arbitrary, it must work within limitations. It can be an interest that provides criteria for success and failure, and it can be the mass that are found in society as a 'reserve' upon which you can draw. Luhmann calls this supply of themes culture.[58] In classical rhetoric, it is called *topoi*.

A *topos* is a 'place', a centre of public relevance with which a speaker must be familiar, if he is to capture the attention of his audience. Therefore, you can also talk about *anti-topoi*, which are topics that should be avoided, because they are awkward or moot. A *topos* can be 'hot' for a time, so the sender can count on the audience's insight and avoid saying what he need not say or the reverse. This sort of common ground can provide a springboard for inventive variations. Without knowledge of what is familiar, it is difficult to know what will surprise. We find ourselves in a *cultural tradition* in which topics have stabilized for a time. But *topoi* are not tight or objectively 'compact'. They are proximate but not compelling and are generously open to re-description. Even a *topos* that is worn down to an *anti-topos* – a case in which judgement has been pronounced, the deadline past, the game played, and so on – can through an unusual effort be opened up again and become interesting.

Both *enthymeme* and *topos* provide the sender an advantage in tempo and motivation, because he can take his starting point in prejudice. The topic is important in this part of the rhetorical process in which a sender is to construct his material, that is, *inventio*. This is, as Cicero remarks, a 'drawer in which arguments are kept'[59] – and you can use this sort of drawer to choose *what* you want to take out and check to see *whether* you've got everything there.

Topoi are used to find rhetorical arguments. They are involved in the creative phase in which the sender is to assess what will seem convincing. He is to construct a rhetorical inference that is different from a logical inference in which the premises are already present. Topics are the doctrine of finding arguments.

In Aristotle, there are two types of *topoi* – general and special – that apply to the concrete case.[60] In English, the word is 'commonplaces,' which are common 'places,' which may therefore be banal, while the list of special 'places' is a sort of checklist for what will probably be relevant for a specific case. It speaks for itself that this sort of checklist must be revised on a running basis. The *topoi*, that Aristotle lists in his *Rhetoric*, will hardly convince in the twenty-first century. But here and now a *topos* can conquer its own inevitability. A libertarian politician cannot dismiss the *topos* called 'welfare', and a socialist cannot dismiss another *topos* called the 'market'. With another terminology, the special *topoi* are the schemes that mark out what is central and peripheral, worth remembering or forgettable. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle lists *topoi* for such themes as 'war' and 'politics'.

The general *topoi* are both formal rules of inference that can be used to order your material, that is, the principles for how you can argue, and 'commonplaces' that are difficult to disagree on but which can be given a strategic twist, so the audience believes that they are in agreement with the speaker and, perhaps, do not even discover that they have been drawn into an unexpected corner – the commonplace 'freedom' leads many places. While the special *topoi* create information, the general *topoi* contribute to creating order. They create openings and carrier waves and weak agreements that can be little better than nothing.

The choice of *topoi* will not be the same for everyone. Each party has his own interests and desires. It is not a choice between being objective and subjective but between different modes of being objective. For [Cicero], the special *topos* is a theme that only one party in a lawsuit, for example, will emphasize. The prosecutor in a murder case will emphasize the gruesomeness of the act, while the defence counsel will point out the circumstances the act in order to find factors to create compassion.[61]

Pathos

In the attempt to develop a technique for seducing others, many rhetoricians seduced themselves by claiming that, with certain modes of speech, the sender can cause certain feelings in the receiver. The dream of this sort of persuasive technique goes back to Antiquity, and one handbook in rhetoric after another guarantees persuasion.[62] As Aristotle puts it, if 'a speaker uses the very words which are in keeping with a particular disposition, he will reproduce the corresponding character'.[63] Certain words 'reproduce' a certain character.[64]

More generally, the sender must reproduce the feelings he wants to impose on his audience. To achieve the 'right attunedness', the style of the communication must express feeling and character at the same time.[65] This idea of influence rests on an assumption that the sender and the receiver have figures of speech that resound in them both, in common, so the sender by *imitating* a feeling can *create* a feeling. Vickers speaks of the 'self-reproductive power'[66] of figures of speech. This power to influence feelings became a test of the sender's competence. '[I]t is in the calming or kindling the feelings of the audience that the full power and science of oratory are to be brought into play.'[67] The speaker is to compel the attention of the audience and bend the audience to his will.

The more important the topic, the more the receiver must be influenced emotionally, so his will is changed. Relevance is not just about what is empirically objective but about what is socially effective. It is emotion, not knowledge *per se*, that motivates.[68] We are touched by a dog that is run over right before our eyes, while a report of the death of 1,000 people on the other side of the globe can leave us peculiarly cold.

Rhetoric's interest in emotion is not a scientific mapping but a strategic change. The whole battery of emotions – love, hate, vanity, ambition, envy, resentment – are not only subjective states and not only objective things but social conditions and buttons you can push and manipulate in order to achieve the desired effect. To change an emotion is to change the will. A feeling is not just a state in an individual person but a way of experiencing the world, which may be common to many.[69] Common emotions mean common understanding, not because emotion is understanding, but because they open up a particular mode of experiencing the world.

Even though you can knock wood against revivals of Hitler and Goebbels, appeals to emotions are not in themselves immoral. Every Sunday sermon contains an appeal of this sort, and all management does it. Communication is borne by emotions, as much as it is borne by interest.[70] What is rejected as the cynicism of rhetoric can also be considered as its dogma-less openness. Even a war criminal must have defence counsel who tries to see the case from his side and muster 'the available means of persuasion'.[71]

With pathos, you can try in the present to solve the problem of trust in the future. Quite prosaically, you can follow the process in a hospital in which a patient who is afraid of an operation is comforted by a nurse who, with schooled feelings and maternal charm, attempts to create confidence in the here and now. The task is to create an emotional basis, an attunedness, that makes it invisible that the present is not a reliable guarantee for the future or a glowing advertising image is not a credible description of how a product will function in an everyday situation. In the same way, the fragments of pictures, logos, names, musical phrases, and apophthegms that are woven together into a *brand* are supposed to arouse and to be borne by feelings.

Classical rhetoric wanted to copy real life, so nature provided the rules, while rhetoric just provided names. You don't have to study rhetoric to speak well. Rhetoric does not create emotions but imitates them. Whether you consider 'nature' as a constant or a variable, it makes rhetoric into an empirical or historical science in which the sender can observe what works on what audience and systematize his results. In the sixteenth century, it was claimed that rhetorical figures of speech first arise from necessity, which follows from a lack of words, and therefore are confirmed by desire, because they are 'pleasaunt and graceful to the eare'.[72]

It creates a loop in which language first expresses and then reproduces feelings. For a user of language does not vary words and subject matter freely in relation to each other. They are so closely connected that they invigorate each other – in both directions. It requires more than just naming, because the *mode* of the word and its physicality play a role. Classical rhetoric presumed a sort of natural contagion or empathy in which people who are passionate or can simulate passions convey them to the receiver. This theory from Aristotle was held well into the nineteenth century.[73] But the evidence that a rhetorical figure of speech was true depended, pragmatically, on the receiver's reactions. Therefore, in practice, 'nature' became a variable, even when it – rhetorically! – was made a constant.

A rhetorical figure of speech must refer to, express, and evoke a feeling, which is not only to be named (cognitively) but acted upon (emotionally). The sender must be an actor, so the art for the sender appeals to the nature of the receiver.[74] In Antiquity, it was debated whether the sender himself should be passionate in order to arouse passion. Quintilian coolly speaks of simulation.[75] In Cicero, on the other hand, 'the very quality of the diction, employed to stir the feelings of others, stirs the speaker himself even more deeply than any of his hearers'[76] This 'self-incitement' is a striking example of rhetoric's belief in its own power. All rhetoricians, Vickers remarks, are at bottom actors who put on masks and play their written roles.[77]

It would be simple, if every feeling had one particular expressive register, so there was a one-to-one relationship between a feeling and its linguistic and corporal expression. So, the sender, just by doing his homework, could influence his audience. In systematic handbooks in rhetoric, the attempt was made to classify tropes and figures of speech in accordance with their power – especially in the 'affect-oriented' 1600s, that is, the Baroque period.[78]

There are many problems connected to this idea of an emotional mechanics. The number of emotions is great, they can be refined linguistically, and they are unstable and reflexive. Only words and gestures are accessible to the sender, and nothing guarantees that the receiver is sympathetic and receptive or even *tuned*. In addition, even though words and gestures have a normal meaning, they also have a personal surplus of meaning that prevents the sender from being able to control the formation of meaning in a concrete situation in the receiver with a rich cultural background. Finally, innovation and variation are independent sources for evoking feelings and have their own pleasure. Since Aristotle, the metaphor has been considered as the strongest figure of speech in rhetoric, because it surprises and makes clear what is connected to the fact that the sense of sight was considered the strongest sense. Cicero put it this way: a good metaphor 'directly hits our senses'[79]

The reflexive relationship between sender, receiver and culture defies the ambitious claims of constant and unambiguous influence. Rhetorical figures of speech are 'polysemous',[80] so words and feelings end up varying out of sync.

For a speaker does not just stand there with tropes and figures of speech but also with styles at his disposal. While *the low style* uses everyday speech to inform, *the elevated style* attempts to strike the emotions directly. Longinus speaks of elevated or sublime speech, which contains a combination of 'sublimity and emotional intensity'.[81] It works most powerfully, when it has the quality of the moment, so it appears as though it is created by the moment and is not orchestrated – whereupon the technical question will be to orchestrate the apparent absence of an orchestration. When a speech becomes disorganized in order to imitate powerful and chaotic emotions, this disorder must itself be ordered. The relationship between the elevated and the low style is no simple either–or, since an *in-between style* can be distinguished, which combines *logos* and *pathos*. Correspondingly, a division of labour can often be noticed in a change of style, so a manager begins in the elevated style, whereas a nerd takes the responsibility of informing in a more down-to-earth way.

Since aesthetic communication is not based on information that can be confirmed or disconfirmed, the risk of misunderstanding becomes great. It is the case not only for rhetoric but also for advertising and architecture, for example, that the more precisely the sender tries to control the receiver, the more uncertain it becomes whether the encoding and decoding correspond to each other. Even if the sender is able to control the relationship between his words, his body and his emotion, he cannot at the same time control how the audience observes his performance. He may sense whether it is tense and excited, and he may be able to make corrections if he senses his words are falling flat between him and his audience. However, misunderstanding need not be fatal. Aesthetic communication can overcome a huge amount of mismatch without the parties experiencing it as a failure.

When the communication game becomes diabolical, it is tempting for the sender to fall back on what is natural, so a rhetorician must refuse to be a rhetorician in order to be one. 'True eloquence makes light of eloquence', as Pascal puts it,[82] while Quintilian claims that a speaker must convince the audience of the genuineness of his feelings with artifice.[83] For example, a speech must not be so sophisticated that the audience sees through the artifice, senses the purpose, and becomes mistuned. To be revealed in the use of artifice is to lose credibility.

Therefore, it was a rhetorical mantra that the speech must be 'natural', so the receiver does not sense what art he is being subjected to. One must not, we are told by [Cicero], tackle more than three themes – 'it instils in the hearer the suspicion of premeditation and artifice'.[84] When the receiver is to be made 'well-disposed or receptive or attentive',[85] the sender must know 'the means of winning belief'.[86] The argument for this endeavour was given by Aristotle many hundreds of years ago: we think differently, when we are well-disposed than when we are hostile.[87]

Pathos-management

The Baroque comprised three central themes, all of which are relevant for the relationship between management and rhetoric – namely, *centralization*, *transcendence* and *representation*. They work in a context that maintains *time* and thus change – or religiously: transitoriness – as a fundamental condition.

Centralization means that a central order is presumed – a constancy – that can counteract the disorder of time. From this postulate of order, you can indulge in asymmetry, dissonance, and disjointed perspectives in an obstinate quest for intensity and surprise.

It requires an interpretation to make the invisible visible, and this interpretation must be protected from inflation. If anyone can impose his or her own private interpretation, the order in reality is dissolved. This in turn requires social authority, and it requires a stage on which it is possible to play with serious illusions, so you can both disquiet with instability and quiet with stability.

This happens by cultivating what was called in Italian *il meravigliosi*, which combines amazement and admiration and which requires courage and inventiveness in its breach with the everyday and in the use of the preferred trope, metaphor – by which we come to the limit of what can be learned as technique. A brilliant idea requires a breach with expectations but quickly falls into a cliché, whereupon inventiveness must again be burdened.

Again, we see that it is impossible to reject time and chance. The receiver can, despite all art, remain cold or become detuned instead of attuned. And the risk of rhetoric is not removed through good but sheepish advice such as: the sender must choose the 'right' impression in relation to the taste of the audience and seize the 'right' moment.[88]

Here, we encounter the limit of technical advice, because aesthetic communication must accept a high degree of loss. No sender can follow the microscopic displacements, shifts, and twists that arise when the receiver understands and misunderstands and puts into context. In a great speaker such as Luther, who gladly provided rules for how a speech should be put together, there is also anxiety when the speech is to be delivered, because there is a 'requirement of spirit'.

While rhetoric in the Renaissance was represented as a straightforward tool,[89] Blaise Pascal tried to maintain the Christian principle that beauty and truth go together. But even with this principle in the back of his mind, he had to accept that beauty does not always accompany truth.

Rhetoric must ensure that a speech is received with understanding without difficulty and with pleasure, so the audience is willing to listen or, as Pascal expresses it, 'self-love leads them more willingly to reflection upon it'.[90] This requires familiarity with human nature in general and the interests of the listeners in particular. Pascal is especially attentive to the difference between heart and mind – between those who judge in accordance with their feelings or 'opinion' and those who judge in accordance with principles. These two types do not understand each other and must be influenced by completely different means. One requires seeing things for themselves with one gaze, the other to be convinced with a chain of arguments.

Pascal sets out two general principles. First, 'continuous eloquence wearies'.[91] The theme of tedium or *ennui* was central to the seventeenth century, and Pascal was very preoccupied with boredom and its counterpart, diversion. He considers diversion as an attempt to forget and, therefore, diversion itself must be diverted, so it does not arise as a consequence of monotony. If it becomes visible, the battle is lost. Here, he runs into reflection by which rhetoric or 'eloquence' is framed and which can make the receiver interrupt:

> he who wearies us out of season makes us languid, since we turn quite away. So much does our perverse lust like to do the contrary of what those wish to obtain from us without giving us pleasure, the coin for which we will do whatever is wanted.[92]

Both reflection and context means that 'there is no general rule'.[93] What works in one context does not work in another, so there is no bullet-proof rhetorical technology. 'I can never', says Pascal, 'judge of the same thing exactly in the same way.'[94] Above all, it is not enough to listen to the receiver's own claims about what moves him. Even if you know a person's 'ruling passion' and therefore can normally please him, 'yet each has his fancies, opposed to his true good, in the very idea which he has of the good'.[95]

It is, Pascal continues, 'a singularly puzzling fact'. Human beings are driven by a 'restless curiosity' and are afraid of calm, so they incessantly throw themselves into a quest for things about which they would be indifferent if they had been given them but where the activity would be viewed as pointless if the object were not there. Pascal's examples are hunting and gambling. It is not the hare you want, because you would reject it if it were given to you. But it is not just the activity, because without the hare, the hunt would not be interesting.

In modern times, the word *pathos* has negative associations. To have pathos is to be emotional in an unpleasant and complacent way. There are two things to note here: first, all communication has pathos, since it is feelings that determine what is experienced as relevant and irrelevant, attractive, indifferent or repulsive. And then, if the sender wants to fasten, fix, and fascinate the receiver's attention, he cannot allow himself to ignore pathos, even though in modern circumstances it has irony as its shadow and counterpoint. It has to do with the ability to arouse *admiratio*, which is both admiration and amazement. To pretend the dimension of pathos is irrelevant or less important is to sell your soul to pathos in an unarticulated and therefore primitive form. It is to avoid cultivating a means that in all circumstances is effective.

For an organization, the fundamental aesthetic question is how people can be moved, so they are ready to think differently. How to seduce them into a vision, so they accept it of their own accord and work to develop it? How to attune the receiver and thus arouse and shape these deep feelings? In an organization, these issues acquire an extra dimension, because it is not about fiction but about the everyday in which adults influence each other with crude or sophisticated methods and where only behaviour, not sincerity, can be controlled.

This raises a question that is not vital for art, namely, what trust the receiver can have in the sender and what credibility he carries. This question is dealt with in rhetoric under the rubric of *ethos*.

Ethos

The relationship between *ethos* and *pathos* is not simple. Aristotle claims that ethos, that is, the speaker's 'moral character' or credibility, may be the most powerful tool for persuasion.[96] In Quintilian, there are two different types of feelings: pathos has to do with powerful, quick feelings, while ethos aims at the more balanced and stable emotions. Only later, in the Baroque era, did ethos once again become an expression of a personal attitude in the speaker and, thus, a moral resource. At the same time, pathos was generalized to comprehend all emotions.

How is 'the speaker's moral personality' shown in communication? According to Aristotle, credibility must 'achieved by what the speaker says, not by what people think of his character before he begins to speak'.[97] Thus, the moral quality is a part of the 'professionalism', and it is as a technical construction that ethos contains its powerful force of persuasion. This 'construction of trust' in communication itself contains a central aesthetic dimension.

It is not possible for a speaker to avoid the prejudices that are due to the receiver's familiarity with his past. Even though rhetoric can be called the art of disarming prejudices, the sender must know the receiver and his prejudices. To the contrary, the sender can try to manage this cargo of prejudices by constructing an image as a resource of prejudices and 'pre-feelings' that can easily be activated visually – for example, by a logo.

Therefore, you can distinguish between the credibility that is constructed internally in communication and requires rhetorical artifice and the credibility that is presumed in communication and refers to the past.[98] Together, they create a 'terminal' ethos position that changes the original or 'initial' ethos.

Trust is not directed toward relationships in the physical but in the social world. We do not have trust or mistrust in the sun, the wind or the rain but in people, including ourselves and organizations. It is not reality but constructions we have trust in. Therefore, people and organizations acquire a *symbolic character*.[99] We construct pictures of them and, on the basis of this sort of *pars pro toto* (part used as symbol for the whole), we distribute trust and mistrust or decide to show trust in defiance of all odds. Since information is selected and assessed carefully, such constructions are risky, so trust can be extremely sensible. Small pieces of information can lead to dramatic changes. Once trust is lost, it may be impossible to restore.

This mechanism works reflexively. When the sender knows that trust requires a technical effort, he can expose the receiver to carefully designed information, the purpose of which is to create a short circuit from the message to trust without taking a detour through the product or the conduct that is the basis for trust. We have seen this mechanism at play in the last chapter on the image of the organization.

Rhetoric has a built-in desire to be able to manage trust and mistrust in a technical fashion – a calming tone, an outstretched hand, a direct gaze, a brand that with colours and shapes and sounds signals solidity. And modern organizations test scientifically how trust is created and developed in different groups, as a consequence of their normal activities and also as an independent shield that can protect against insight, so an enormous amount of resources are used in managing the difference between an idealized brand and a less than ideal reality. This description management is undertaken by people who have responsibility for the organization as a whole, that is, top-down by management and its experts.

When Aristotle defines rhetoric as a 'faculty' of 'observing in any given case the available means of persuasion', [100] he could just as well have said that it is a technique for creating trust. Even though he does not decouple rhetoric from the truth, the ambition of rhetoric is to reduce the individual to a trivial machine.

Ethos has to do with the sender's credibility, which is part of determining the receiver's willingness first to listen and then to accept. For communication normally has to do with something invisible, whether it is symbolic, psychological or absent in time and space. Just as we do not normally speak of what cannot be changed – for example, the law of gravity – we do not talk about what is right at hand. When we are under the same umbrella, I do not tell you it's raining. But if I do, it is not to report that it is raining but to teach you the word 'rain' or to advance a conversation, so the subject matter – the rain – is not the subject matter, but a pretext for another subject matter. The more invisibility, the more the risk and the more the focus on trust.

Trust is a machine for transforming time. It is a feeling here and now but also has to do with what is reasonable about letting the past be the guideline for the future. In mass society with its abstract systems,[101] trust is both a risky and a vital resource, which must be constructed and managed.

Position, title or image can contain a certain capital of trust. Without that capital, trust must be built technically into communication itself. This task was placed on rhetoric itself and encountered the problem that technique makes trust fragile, if not directly a source of mistrust. There is suspicion about communication that gambles on trust, because the rhetorical effort is not received by unguarded but by immunized souls who can get nourishment for their mistrust in the mass media and in talk on the street. This forces the sender into the endless task of finding new unguarded areas. He must work his way under some tough skin and find new vulnerable areas to influence – which makes rhetorical means a time-bound matter.

Rhetoric wants to increase the probability of communicative success. And unlike communication that concludes with understanding, rhetoric wants to go further and affect action. This makes success more improbable, both because the means can be seen through and because success or failure can be observed directly. And the question is whether rhetoric can preserve its actuality in the modern global society. Not everyone is convinced:

> Even in recent times, people have reacted to this increased improbability with forced attempts to develop a sort of technique of persuasion – for example, with eloquence as a goal for education, rhetoric as a special art form, and disputation as an art for dealing with conflict and imposing one's will. Not even the invention of the printing press has outdated these

> attempts but rather strengthened them. Success, however, was not achieved in this almost conservative direction but in the development of *symbolically generalized media*, whose function is adjusted to just this problem.[102]

The claim here is that rhetoric is out of date and that the willingness to accept proposed communication must be built into function systems that are oriented towards media such as money, power or truth. With such a medium, the sender can aim directly at a particular audience and its – expected – expectations. Many commercials, for example, offer savings and assume that such savings are deemed important.

Even though function systems presume a motivation, the problem of effect is resurrected, because there is a competition in every function system between parties who want to get their message through. The mass media, the internet, streets and walls are filled with appeals, so the receiver must protect himself from being overburdened, which leads to the usual creative spiral in which the sender redoubles his efforts for shock, erotic appeal, and alluring mystery.

In a function system, the power of the medium to motivate is presumed. The parties know the game and its rewards. However, this only leads to a common orientation, that is, a rough selection. Fine selection remains to be done. And for an organization, this phase is decisive. When a consumer has decided to buy coffee, it is decisive for the coffee producer that his brand is the preferred coffee.

Even though the sender can concentrate on the subject matter and allow form to follow function, modern organizations have given up the innocence of mediation. To communicate a matter is an independent matter alongside the matter itself. Both the product and the meaning of the product must be produced and calibrated so that the product strikes receptive forms of life.[103] It must be spiced with jokes and examples from real life, interwoven in narratives and surprise with images, tropes, pauses, and rhythms. It must engage and be interesting. To a blasé public, the requirement is fascination, that is, aesthetics. A new class of spin doctors, communication advisors, PR people, and assertion therapists have taken over the job for which Plato had such contempt and which Aristotle deemed so unavoidable – the rhetoric by which the classical Sophists sold expensive insight into the art of communicative success.

Trust in communication can be based on three conditions: personal acquaintance, social position, and rhetorical art. We shall focus here on the latter.

To bolster one's ethos by rhetorical means does not necessarily imply – *pace* Plato – beautifying bad taste with unctuous speech and cheap port wine. As Aristotle knew, aesthetic means are neutral with respect to good and bad causes, regardless of how they are defined. It is not, as it was written in the margin of the pastor's collected sermons: 'The argument is bad here, raise your voice'. Good cases must also be communicated, so they attract and convince. Not only are the same words different according to who says them, the same words are different according to whether the sender is clever or dull, excited or depressed.

We find a description of how voice can almost irresistibly affect in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. Here, one speaker – almost – lives up to classical rhetoric's megalomaniacal fantasy of making the audience as wax in his knowing hands. And we can follow how the communication functions along paths that are normally outside of conscious attention.

The scene is the tower of Orthanc. It is owned by the sorcerer Sarumen, who was once *primus inter pares* among sorcerers but, with an insatiable lust for power, has allied himself with Sauron, the dark prince of Mordor. Now his city has been conquered and destroyed with only the tower remaining, where he is summoned by the good sorcerer Gandalf. In a difficult situation, Saruman seizes upon his tried and true art and uses his voice to seduce.

It is difficult to demonstrate the rhetorical art, because it only works on the audience for which it is calculated. Just as we can hardly describe how art affects us, we can only, rhetorically, report that a speech worked and, perhaps, exhilarated us. In Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, we get a rhetorical *demonstratio ad oculos* of how Antony 'converts' the rabble from hatred to love of Caesar. In Tolkien, we must be satisfied with hearing the effect of the words – although his own words recall little of the effective sweetness they speak of:

> Suddenly another voice spoke, low and melodious, its very sound an enchantment. Those who listened unwarily to that voice could seldom report the words that they heard; and if they did, they wondered, for little power remained in them. Mostly they remembered only that it was a delight to hear the voice speaking, all that it said seemed wise and reasonable, and desire awoke in them by swift agreement to seem wise themselves. When others spoke they seemed harsh and uncouth by contrast; and if they gainsaid the voice, anger was kindled in the hearts of those under the spell. For some the spell lasted only while the voice spoke to them, and when it spake to another they smiled, as men do who see through a juggler's trick while others gape at it. For many the sound of the voice alone was enough to hold them enthralled; but for those whom it conquered the spell endured when they were far away, and ever they heard that soft voice whispering and urging them. But none were unmoved; none rejected its pleas and its commands without an effort of mind and will, so long as its master had control of it.[104]

Tolkien's presentation of rhetoric is more in line with Plato's than Aristotle's. It is implied that rhetoric is pathos-laden greasepaint put on a bad case and that its purpose is to make the receiver forget both the cause and his own will, so the sender is pure activity, the receiver pure passivity. At its height, rhetoric flows into hypnosis or a 'mild narcosis', as Freud described the art.[105] Saruman's art creates a pathos-laden alliance between him and his audience, so reflection is taken out of the equation and the receiver becomes pure, unslaked emotion – even though it is also through reflection that the receiver can place himself beyond its influence.

In Tolkien's narrative, Saruman's initial ethos is deficient and this compromises his magical voice. Even though the voice can make soldiers uncertain, there are others who remember what Saruman has done and with whom he is allied. With memory, the sorcery disappears, so past triumphs over present:

> So great was the power that Saruman exerted in this last effort that none that stood within hearing were unmoved. But now the spell was wholly different. They heard the gentle remonstrance of a kindly king with an erring but much-loved minister. But they were shut out, listening at a door to words not meant for them: ill-mannered children or stupid servants overhearing the elusive discourse of their elders, and wondering how it would affect their lot. Of loftier mould these two were made: revered and wise. It was inevitable that they should make alliance. Gandalf would ascend into the tower, to discuss deep things beyond their comprehension in the high chambers of Orthanc. The door would be closed, and they would be left outside, dismissed to await allotted work or punishment...
>
> Then Gandalf laughed. The fantasy vanished like a puff of smoke.[106]

First, it was the music that seduced, then the appeal to a complex of inferiority and blind faith.

Ethos or aesthetics?

Even though ethos has to do with values, it also has to do with impressions and, therefore, acquires the character of a work. Ethos is not just something that happens but is also something that is done. An organization's brand is a comprehensive staging that has a moral and an aesthetic dimension.

Despite a millennium of Christian indoctrination, appearance and charisma play a large role in the trust a person or an organization can arouse. People who are beautiful are presumed to be wise and honourable or, perhaps, worthy of addressing on other grounds. We bathe in the light that beauty radiates. Therefore, enormous resources are used to make sure that the first impression, which cannot be undone, has the desired effect. By staging yourself – your dress, your posture, your way of speaking – you can increase your credibility.

In *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, Liz meets a man with a way of radiating confidence that disarms her. Charisma may be a spontaneous trait. But a person can be chosen for a position, *because* he has the charisma the position demands. And since there are many advantages connected with charisma, it can be strengthened technically, so people who live from making an impression on strangers go to courses in self-assertion and acting and voice and media performance.

It is a matter of orchestrating an 'appearance of credibility'. Often, this choice is strategic and thus not an expression of personal conviction. Around every such choice is an open space of other possibilities, so credibility is not, as in the classical personality, an expression of something categorical but of something hypothetical. From a number of if–then considerations, one decides how to behave. If the goal changes, the conduct changes with it.

Classically, credibility is not something you can choose. To the contrary, it shows that you *cannot* (any longer) choose but must maintain your choice from an experienced necessity. A person is credible if you know that he could not live with a violation of the image he has made of himself. He has made the foundation of his choices invisible, so we are not even talking of a choice. A credible person refrains from choosing, when he chooses. At the moment he reflects, credibility is threatened, because it opens up choices – even if they are rejected. Simply opening up the space for choice implies vulnerability and suspicion.

Such innocence is difficult to maintain in modern circumstances, when it is normal to think in alternatives. No undisputed tradition provides any authoritative answer to questions of values. We live in a time in which motives are suspected.

The aesthetic ability to evoke trust and interest is called charisma. Originally, charisma was an expression for a priest's right to do his work in spite of personal scruples.[107] In our day, the meaning is the opposite – namely, the ability to make an impression through a personal expression, so mistrust is dissolved, reservations forgotten, and a joy arises just by seeing and listening. Richard Sennett considers charisma as impoliteness, because it replaces objectivity with aesthetics. But regardless of reservation, it is a fact that people function through their appearance, orchestrated or natural or both.

We have access to each other through sensation and must take the aesthetic dimension of sensation along in the bargain. We do not see each other's souls and motives but hear words and see bodies. The aesthetic is not necessarily a cover for falsehood and evil but an unavoidable fact that can be observed, manipulated and used for any purpose. Nothing has meaning and nothing works except through a surface that inevitably has an aesthetic surplus of meaning. Every church and every political party orchestrates sense impressions in order to achieve an effect. People and organizations do the same. However, everything beyond this sensual surface requires interpretation, because visible and invisible, part and whole, external and internal are not spontaneously coordinated. This opens a possibility for deceiving through sense impressions.

From here, ethos leads more in the direction of the sender's moral *habitus* than in the direction of aesthetics. Therefore, it shall not detain us more here.

The rhetoric of management

We must look more closely at the relationship between management and rhetoric and do so under the categories: formal power, the game of negotiation, the will to power, and the function of rhetoric.

Formal power

The classic tool of a manager for controlling others was *formal power*, which means the right to make decisions without needing to argue for and back up the decision with open or veiled threats of sanction. In relation to this authority, other points of view are reduced to 'ineffectual private opinions'.[108] And opinions one cannot express or that lead nowhere, one has a tendency to forget.

The asymmetrical model for authority has often been used to describe the relationship between manager and employee, so the manager, *qua* his position, has a general insight, while objections are psychologized as irrational resistance. The classical hierarchy allocated to the leader a sort of 'comprehensive authority'.[109] While his approach was general, the approach of employees was particular. He related to the whole, they to the part. Their 'reason', therefore, was local and hence suspicious. The manager's task was to find chinks in their explanations, so they could be riddled with holes but also to unearth their motives, so he could control them.

The problem with this asymmetry is just that, even though a manager has formal authority, he does not thereby have real authority. People who have specialized insight at their disposal and are expected to provide innovation cannot be controlled with formal power. If the formal power is not accompanied by a flair for securing alliances, competence, and motivation, it is not much more than smoke and ashes. This requires an integration of many strategies and, thus, rhetoric. 'Words differently arranged have a different meaning, and meanings differently arranged have different effect', Pascal claimed.[110]

When classical power, symbolized by the absolute monarch, is replaced by modern power, symbolized by a ritual (negotiation), the organization's strategy is not concentrated at a point. Many strategies see through each other and fight to dominate even though they have been seen through.

Rhetoric is unfolded when uncertainty and the need to make a decision meet.[111] A decision must be made, but there are many, uncertain possibilities. And this situation is the rule, not the exception.

To allocate to rhetoric an aesthetic function means that aesthetics is not only considered a doctrine on taste but is connected to the classical meaning of the word 'poetry', which means to create something new. This inventive innovation of forms of thought and will can neither be reduced to the cognitive dimension (true/false) nor to the normative dimension (right/wrong). What persuades may be the suggestive power in the presentation of a text, so the receiver of his own accord bends his thought and will to a foreign thought and will. The re-description of familiar things can provide a noticeable pleasure, because the world acquires a new sheen and new hope. The very transition from descriptions that have become routine, lost sharpness and freshness, to new descriptions that chafe and open can in itself contain a powerful aesthetic motive.

When many strategies meet each other, wars arise that find their solution either on the market or at the negotiation table. We shall look at the game of negotiation in and around organizations.

The game of negotiation

A manger engages in endless negotiations, because he is the point of intersection, where many considerations meet and must find their success or failure. And negotiations are the arenas for rhetoric, because the goal is not to prove but to secure backing. Formal power plays a role, when each party considers what sanctions the other party has. But informal power, which is connected with rhetorical competence or alliances, does the same. At the same time, there is often an invisible party at the table, namely, the public, so consideration of the mass media steps in as an extra spirit that hovers above the waters. Who can and who cannot tolerate their viewpoints and arguments being made public?

The will to power

An important factor in a negotiation is the strength of commitment or, to use an old-fashioned word, will, which is a goal for the persistence with which a party in a negotiation will maintain a theme. A will is not a thing. But it is not nothing. In an organization, it is the structure of communication that has to do with expectations. From this, it follows that it is not a given and that there is surprise at play, when you discover what you want by seeing what you do – and what it does to others. From this, it also follows that there can be official and unofficial wills that set different and conflicting goals.

However, the will is not just a trick in communication. It is also a psychological reality that expresses the fact that people with different ingenuity and force and consistency set themselves goals that they work to realize. That you can talk about will independent of its result is due to the fact that it can fail, because its efforts are too weak, its methods stupid, or its goals unrealistic. There are many addresses when it is to be explained why an effort succeeded or failed. You can point to yourself, to others, or to the world in general.

When a manager encounters conflict, that is, an open declaration of an opposite intention, he must clarify how strong a will lies behind it – whether the opponent simply wants to make himself known and no more or whether he will maintain his intent, create alliances, and mobilize the public.

In this game, the manager's will to power is tested, that is, the will to push his description through. And every effort is redoubled, because it is not just a position in communication but also a sign of itself: a manager creates his reputation and, thus, his own base of trust through his efforts, which are described and narrated until a label settles on him, a 'that's the way he is', which becomes the starting point for further communication. Regardless of what he does, a manager cannot keep his management style from being observed and assessed. As indicated, non-style is also a style.

The will to power is not just an aesthetic phenomenon. But it comes into being and takes shape in the symbolic game of organizations and it inevitably unfolds in a style that can be studied or spontaneous. A manager can choose to manifest an unshakeable will to repeat or an infinite flexibility to the other parties. He can choose a style through the metaphors he uses or does not use – whether it is the family, the army, the brotherhood or the boy band that is used as a model. And, through the aesthetic shaping of the organization, he can signal a democratic will for proximity and conversation or an aristocratic will for distance and authority. We have seen that, in all exercise of power, there is a game of orchestrating illusions.

Therefore, management is also about creating routines around the interpretation of signs, so you can achieve an effect with small efforts. It is again about the art of staging – for example, by showing that you command resources and do not shy away from sanctions, so the next time you need only imply. Thus, you can threaten without the threat being expressed openly and thereby avoid the de-motivation and risk that lies in an open threat. If you need only indicate, there is no longer compulsion. Your opponent is a part of the game and, thus, complicit – at the same time that hope and fear can circulate freely. Only when this symbolic power game breaks down does raw power, which does not suggest but orders, comes into the open.

The aesthetics of power has to do with a staging of physical appearance and style. Power can be elegant or clumsy, sophisticated or boorish. Since power is always power over something and since power never exhausts itself in the moment but refers both to the past and the present, the aesthetics of power concentrates around its presentation.

It is often uncertain whether it is the manager or the organization that leads.[112] The information that provides the premise for decisions, is not concentrated in a hierarchical peak but is spread diffusely throughout the organization. Often, it is only present as trust in the fact that it can be activated by experts.[113] But despite any attempt to deconstruct the manager as a person and despite the insight that a manager only exists because an organization exists, so that management takes place in a context it has not itself created, a manager as an individual can make an important difference, because his vision and will are interwoven with the organization's. To step into character as manager means to hold to a line, often with a total rejection of the uncertainty that precedes it, because admission of uncertainty can be self-perpetuating. That the manager's private considerations are open and enquiring is reconcilable with the fact that his public presentation is closed and dogmatic.[114]

There are simple strategies that only require a personal effort. In an organization, strategies are also 'organized' and require the coordination of interests. A strategy may be creative by invigorating resources and alliances that were invisible before. In every organization, there are empty strategic spaces that can become realities, when a person says the word and takes on the job. This is where the rhetorical effort begins. Because everyone must use others to realize their own values, common values inevitably arise,[115] which must be identified with sufficient precision – or a sufficient *lack* of precision, if haziness is useful. Often, community is only possible on the condition that you don't dig too deeply into the meaning of the watchwords around which you are gathered.[116] Therefore, what is common is shrouded by a *docta ignoratio*, a carefully managed ignorance, because open speech will bring out the wild dogs. But when what is common has the word, its meaning must be fixed. Here, too, the manager is crucial, because he is the symbol of the whole, so his own behaviour shows whether the common is a reality or an illusion.

Strategic association with others – voters, colleagues, the public – contains an unavoidable cynicism, because others are considered as a tool, regardless of the degree of freedom they are admitted or in what a sophisticated way or however indirectly the seduction takes place. A manager engages in double-entry bookkeeping with his words, because he must coolly consider costs and benefits and yet must appeal and motivate, that is, with rhetorical means to secure backing for his ideas.

Thus, we have come to the last point – the function of rhetoric.

The function of rhetoric

Countries such as the USA and France cultivate and enjoy rhetoric and measure their leaders by their rhetorical competence. In other lands such as Germany and Scandinavia, rhetoric is a term of abuse, because it is considered to be unctuous gibberish or putting lipstick on a pig. Therefore, the sophisticated 'I'm no speechmaker' method is used, where the speaker must first assure that he is unaccustomed to public speaking before he can begin his art. Regardless of whether rhetoric is valued or not, however, there is a difference between words that deliver and words that are forgotten. There is, as Nietzsche remarks, nothing 'natural' about the rhetorical access to language, since language is 'the result of pure rhetorical arts'.[117] That elaborate rhetoric is met with mistrust only means that the sender must choose the low or, perhaps, the in-between style but avoid the elevated style, if he wants to gain resonance. This only makes for a new requirement: to affect emotions by steady, invisible means. For the sender's task is the same, regardless of cultural prejudices surrounding rhetoric.

Even though rhetoric cannot provide guarantees, it can provide some useful rules of thumb. Only they bristle in every direction like proverbs. There may be advantages in precluding doubt and making your points in neon lights. There can be other advantages in producing an open text,[118] full of tendentious uncertainty, which the audience itself must fill in, so the *understanding* becomes their own and therefore pleasurable, while a direct lecture would have aroused resistance – which can also bolster the we-feeling, which can have an effect because the parties have no occasion to test what they are really in agreement about. There can be advantages in developing a rhetoric of unshakeable stability, in which the manager takes on the responsibility for absorbing and taming change, that is, repressing doubt, and other advantages in using a rhetoric of supple variation, where the manager's responsibility becomes more complicated: to meet doubt half-way and guarantee stability in change. To lead is not just to close off possibilities but also to be open to them and to consider the receiver as a 'center of independent intellectual energy, a remaker of language and a composer of texts'.[119] A manager must decide whether he will address the coolies who are to follow orders and act as prescribed or to human beings who work best in freedom.

The whole for which the manager has responsibility is not static. It is invisible and must, therefore, be conjured up. Rhetoric does not take a moral position on the different modes in which it can happen but supplies ammunition to all parties – both to praise themselves and to bad-mouth the opposition. Rhetoric always has two sets of descriptions ready, just as a party leader must prepare two speeches before meeting the voters after an election.

If a manager is to provide a text – a speech, a presentation, a paper – there are a number of questions he can advantageously raise. Classical rhetoric produced checklists of *topoi*, and you can, in this spirit, raise a number of questions. For example:

- What is the aim of the text? And what is its opposite, its 'other', which can either be a (re-described) status quo, a parade of horribles, or another strategy that is also possible and might even be tempting?
- Who is benefited and harmed by the text, if it were realized?
- Who are the naturally allies and the natural opponents? Should the opponents be bated, because this might motivate your allies, or should the opponents be converted and, if so, how?
- To what fundamental values can the text appeal?
- Should it present a road away from Hell (threats) or a road to Paradise (promises) or both and, if so, what should the relationship between the threats and the promises be?
- Should it be presented polemically, that is, with a steady eye on its ever rejected opposition, or should it be presented objectively, that is, by

conjuring up its own, inherent appeal?[120] And if the former: should the rejected opposition be presented as a powerful possibility or as a caricature?
- Should an elevated style be used, with big words, a low style with everyday words, information and appeal to concrete experience, or the in-between style that avoids the grandiloquent and the everyday?
- Should there be a division of labour, so a manager, for example, can use the elevated style to motive and garner attention, while others can provide objective input in the low style with the sales pitch in-between?
- Should the presentation make it easy or difficult for listeners to make a connection to everyday experience, that is, be presented as a continuation of routines or a break with routines. Routines can, like anything else, be described positively or negatively.
- Should the opposition between identity and image be activated in order to maintain the opposition between the new and the old description, so the new description appears to be more profound and truer?

Such questions have no automatic answer. Therefore, rhetoric is not a science or a philosophy. It is an aid to communication that not only focuses on information but also controls its *Anschlußwert*. Rhetoric can help invent linguistic strategies[121] open up the desired change.

What a manager actually does is his own business, and rhetoric judges him only technically: whether his reference has succeeded or failed. It offers aids but does not promise success and does not allow uncertainty to disappear.

Rhetorical rituals: necessary illusions

The use of rhetoric depends on whether an organization finds itself in a normal or a pathological situation. It may have come under the evil eye of the mass media and needs to legitimate itself. In this sort of crisis, it will inevitably use rhetorical means, choosing *topoi*, tropes and styles and determining how logos, pathos and ethos are to be weighted. The inevitability is due to the fact that both speech and silence are 'telling', so the organization cannot choose not to express itself. Even a 'no comment' has its own style.

More interesting are the normal rhetorical functions that an organization uses on a running basis to keep itself going. An organization must present, defend and change its self-image, which must be attractive and motivating. This holds true with respect to employees, customers, the public, and owners, whether they are private or public. The task consists of managing a number of necessary illusions that every organization must protect itself with:

1 That it is a whole, even though every organization is opaque, loosely connected, and only weakly controllable from without and within.
2 That its decisions are well-founded, even though they are not and never can be.

3 That its employees are motivated and competent, even though they are people like most people: partially motivated, although it is unclear by what, and partially competent, although it is unclear for what.
4 That its products have the right balance between price and cost, even though all products are either too expensive or too shoddy.
5 That it has a constructive relationship with the outside world and takes responsibility for social and environmental conditions.

We are not just talking about necessary illusions. The message is reported differently depending on whether it is for internal or external use, because employees have an unusual interest in and knowledge about their organization and its details such as names and localities. This inevitable schizophrenia, rhetorically, is only an expression of the fact that communication must relate to a specific audience with special interests and resources. Externally, co-workers are competent and products good. Internally, co-workers are never competent enough and products never good enough.

That these illusions are necessary is due to the fact that the alternative cannot be communicated except in crisis situations, that is, as a premise for decisions that are supposed to right the relationship. Here, a new illusion arises with the same unavoidability: that a restoration is possible and is actually at hand, so the problem is (almost) in the past, when it is reported. If an organization declared that its decisions were poorly founded and its products too expensive, it would create a strange atmosphere and a gigantic explanation problem, that is, unnecessary conflicts.

Information is normally interesting, because it is mirrored in a rejected possibility. It is raining, but it could have been dry. If there is only one possibility, communication is unnecessary. A special case is information in which the rejected possibility is not rejected for empirical but for organizational reasons. The possibility is not only rejected but condemned and impossible to say. Here, we are not talking about information in a normal sense. One could rather talk about *ritual information*, which is information that does not inform but must nevertheless be communicated. It is ritual information that a country will not devalue its currency, and the claim is maintained against better knowledge right up until the devaluation occurs. It is ritual information that I like my job and my relationship, since I would have walked away if I were dissatisfied. They day before their divorce, a couple defends their relationship; the day after, they can hardly comprehend they could stand it. It is ritual information that a government head rejects a proposal from the leader of the opposition. And it is, as indicated, ritual information that an organization constitutes a whole, whose employees are competent and whose products are bursting with quality at an inexpensive price.

Ritual information cannot be justified objectively. If it could, it would not be ritual information, because the alternative would be open. When a manager is supposed to be loyal, even when he has been fired, it is implied in the demand that he refrain from revelation and discussion and, instead, move into rhetorical loops whose meaning is to answer questions without information and without insulting the questioner by refusing to answer: the resignation happened amicably, he wants to spend more time with the family, he has confidence in the new management, and so on. In the same way, participants in negotiations must inform without informing and, since everyone knows the game, they are assessed according to their ability to handle this subtle double talk.

An organization must conjure itself up in a form that it knows is an illusion. Ritual information arises when the choice between a positive and a negative version is given in advance. A union defends its members' interests and protects them from accusations. A motoring association finds every limitation on private motoring unreasonable. A government body of experts considers it a violation of free speech, objectivity and national progress if there is a threat to shut it down.

You can talk about a professional lie, which has the special characteristic that no one is deceived. A lie that everyone knows is no lie. Nevertheless, it must be told, so a manager must assume a function and a gaze and make himself available for the ritual, and he knows that he will be judged on his ability to play the game, for example, in a critical television programme. The function of ritual information is not to open or to close, as both are risky operations, but to keep the situation up in the air, that is, to decrease friction.

An 'appearance made beautiful' is a scandal to the Protestant mind, which prefers the heart to the clothes. But it makes many things easier and is normally harmless. To drop the mask seasonably or unseasonably creates trouble and burdens an organization with unnecessary questions and unnecessary answers – unnecessary in the sense that no answer can persuade definitively, because it involves the invisible. If organizations do not manage these illusions, all its stock – economic, scientific and political – will plummet and harm both the honest and dishonest alike. You can distinguish here between different genres of lies that are handled differently and which constitute a familiar typology[122] – black, white, grey, social, professional, and so on.

The *function* of ritual information is to avert questions that are deemed unproductive or outright destructive. If a hospital knows that it has an incompetent chief surgeon, it does not help, and may directly harm things, to shout it from the rooftops. If a manager has been fired, he will not only harm his former workplace but also his future career if he wallows in the embarrassing details. Truth is kept in reserve; you do what is necessary behind the scenes and only act in the open if others break the rules of the game – or if it is worth it.

The *technique* of ritual information is to shirk off the binary true/false scheme of objectivity. A ritual is neither objective nor subjective, and it avoids the classical scheme of fact and interpretation. Therefore, rhetoric is indispensable. It can 'smooth over', like wrinkled and gnarled skin being covered over with make-up. Luhmann puts it this way: management's communication

> is helped by standardized labels, by repetitions of well-known things, by metaphors, by trivialities, all to misdirect attention from possible doubt. It creates a genuine appearance of unambiguity in order to prevent questions; or in order to preserve control over what it otherwise makes sense to communicate. As opposed to what the tradition of rhetoric sets the stage for, it is not about occasionally used tricks but about an inherent necessity in language itself, about thorough-going stimulation protection with a reservation for self-provocation.[123]

Like ethnic jokes: you can make them about yourself, but others must not.

We can take one example: a municipality promises immunity for welfare cheats, if they report themselves by a certain date. There will be no questions asked about the past. In a TV programme, the mayor is asked whether this doesn't reward criminals by letting them go unpunished and whether this does not violate our sense of justice.

The mayor cannot just answer yes or no. This would lay him open to criticism. Therefore, he must work rhetorically. He can invoke principles such as 'we must think of the future'. He can simulate ignorance such as 'we don't know whether any criminal activity has taken place, just because a man has changed residence'. He can resort to uncertainty such as 'it is always hard to prove whether welfare cheating has taken place'. He can develop an infectious positive attitude, so criticism rolls off his back and leaves an impression of a style that is remembered, when his words are forgotten. Finally, he can repeat himself and go in circles, well-knowing that a television news item is short. You see through the proffered surface and sense the intent.[124] However, even though you see through it, there is not much you can do about it, and one's interest is otherwise limited. Even though the mayor twists and turns like an eel in mud, his opponents are made of the same stuff and, besides, you cannot communicate with a TV set.

Another ritual for which rhetoric also provides tools is *aesthetic purification*, which has to do with archiving prototypes and ideal types – that is, a variation of the selection of *topoi*. A variant of this exercise consists of describing the organization and its different groupings as special types, some bigger and purer than they are, so the powerful words, in what Aristotle calls a 'language with pleasurable accessories',[125] can exercise their magnetism and become 'self-realizing'. A second variant has to do with reporting that everything is normal and in its place, regardless of what is going on behind the façade. A third variant consists of bringing in rhetorical jokers such as 'the silent majority' or 'public opinion' 'knowledge society' or 'old-fashioned employees' to contrast 'the new type'.

Even when it is reality at play, the game is decided in a struggle between phantasms. In all three cases, there is a fruitful grey zone between construction, lie, non-disclosure and selective use of facts. Motives, actions and consequences are purified, so they can take part in an imaginary world beyond the everyday, yet with a sufficient affinity to the fact that the purified description has its effect, even though it may not convince. It need only convince sufficiently to stop further questions.

Such a purification can motivate, because it accommodates a longing for legitimacy. In operas, arias are used to stop the action and express powerful, pure feelings that are taken out of the situation and allocated an unusual amount of time, so they can be stretched out like tropisms and become mixed with other emotions. Operas, therefore, are one of the most unrealistic things you can imagine.

Perhaps, this purification is 'inherent to language', because words do not just express complexity but also simplify and make it possible to grapple with complexity. Words are to be used by many and must abstract from concrete things. Thus, what is talked about is transformed – purified. Language commits a necessary betrayal of reality.

This betrayal can be used ritually. Even to talk about 'an organization' feigns a unity and a context that are invisible to the senses. In the same way, the organization's past, present and future can be constructed and conjured up, so the sum of the heroism of the past and the crisis of the present become an appeal to a new heroism that will create a desired future. Such descriptions are ritual, because you cannot imagine descriptions that frighten and de-motivate except to cheer up and motivate. Therefore, the aesthetic communication of organizations is *positive* in a way that the art system has left behind. If they are occupied with the hideous, in commercials or speeches, it happens under special circumstances and always with a quick reversion to the beautiful.

Transition to narratives

Rhetoric is supposed to influence the receiver's willingness to accept the products and texts that an organization produces. It is supposed to ease the flow of communication. This flow, however, does not unfold as a logical machine but as a series of decisions. This sort of series ends with the unfolding of an empirical process that has the character of a narrative. Therefore, we must look more closely at the organization's narratives.

4
Organizational Narratives

Communication can be developed around a theme in which the sender interweaves a filigreed pattern of signs that works physically (sounds), musically (tone structures), and linguistically (bearers of meaning). To present a pattern requires time, so every new element in the pattern relates to previous elements and is open to later elements. But the theme of the communication can itself be developed as a sequence of time. Then, we are not talking about an argument or a discursive presentation but about a narrative, and then we are in the domain of aesthetics. In this chapter, we shall look at the close connection between organization and narrative.

Narrative desire and the desire for narrative

Behind every organization, a desire can be traced. This speaks for itself: whether you start, lead or work in an organization or use its products, you must be able to answer the question 'why'. The answer points toward something of value, that is, toward an object of desire, whether it is a magnificent ambition or a humble aspiration to get through the day. Desire may be directed toward any possible target – objects, positions and conditions. Every target demands consideration, but there is no objective way of explaining how different considerations are to be weighted or balanced.

Desire can inscrutably work and become interwoven with other desires, so it is difficult to say which desire you are talking about – whether, for example, you are working for a cause or a career or both at once. And what for one is the burning goal of desire, that is, the future, may for another be a cool means, that is, the present. The desire to earn money or exercise power can parasitically attach itself to other desires and transform them into tools, so the voter's wish for a better society and the politician's wish for re-election dance around each other like a bee around a flower, where your own goals can only be achieved, if you help others achieve their goals. It is the peculiar logic of the market that selfishness is a deep social mechanism that creates integration without solidarity.

Desires are not mechanical motivators, and people are not desire machines. Desires are socialized by acquiring names that connect them with other desires, with schemes for acceptable and unacceptable, and with special outlets. By entering into desire systems, each desire becomes reflexive. It is strengthened or weakened by prohibitions. It relates to other desires, so there is a distance and, thus, a freedom to fulfil or reject or redirect them. And by being placed within a system, desire does not only enter into an ideology in which words go together like grapes in a bunch[1] but also in a temporal economy, because desire requires work and takes time.[2] The desire for love leads to other places than the desire for a career, but both monopolize time, so everyone must consider which desire is to have time and space and in what form. Only specialists are blissfully free of this sort of balancing, because they only want one thing in the purity of their hearts.

Built into desire is a sort of aggression, because desire puts pressure on its owner and its object. But there is also built in a sort of care that comprehends the desire itself and its object. It is expressed as gratitude and as fear of loss, and it involves the framework that gives desire a social foothold and form and becomes its 'home'. In this way, not only families and nations but also organizations can become centres for loyalty.

Desire has an inevitable relationship to *time*, because it is sterile if it short-circuits into itself. Money-grubbing, masturbation, intuitive certainty are rejections of the risk that lies in putting desire for wealth, love and knowledge into circulation where it can grow and become stronger. Desires are only productive if their object is not spontaneously at hand but requires postponement, so the desire must make a detour, often unpredictable and tangled and sometimes blind, before it is fulfilled or disappointed or compromised. Thus, it is bound to work requirements, physical and psychic and social.

The result is a complex of desire, work and – especially – enjoyment.[3] Socially, desires are directed toward the modern markets for particular desires,[4] each of which has its own semantics and symbolism. In the American Declaration of Independence, it is said that everyone has the right to pursue happiness. However, no right to find it accompanies this right. And when desires are stylized in symbolic forms, which happens in modern markets, they become in principle insatiable.

Simply by giving a desire a name, it is elevated into an imaginary world that is always at a distance from the concrete world, so friendship becomes an ideal and a fantasy that can survive the bankruptcy of all concrete friendships. Linguistic stylization is amplified on the market which with its compulsion for innovation constantly produces a dissatisfaction with the status quo, so the present is mirrored in an image of the future that may or may not be able to be realized.

Every market is an attractor of people who desire the same thing and, therefore, are on a collision course. This creates social dramas that can be considered as *universals*[5] – no society is without them. Siblings are rivals, lovers are rivals, politicians and merchants and experts are rivals, ethnic and religious groups are rivals not only because they disagree but, above all, because they agree about what is worth fighting for. These dramas are so much more inevitable that one's desire excites the other's, so mimetic desire[6] arises, which can be seen in children, when toys lying around unused suddenly acquire a powerful magic, when one child and not the other picks it up. Nothing is too small to be the grain of sand around which desire wraps itself, uses as a springboard, and strengthens itself with. And since no one can see through these games that develop, when friends and enemies give names to each other's desires and act on the basis of their idiosyncratic name-giving, there is an element of fate or, as in Machiavelli, of Fortuna in these struggles to make the world inhabitable.[7]

Dramas unfold spontaneously in symbolic forms, even when it is a bar-room brawl. They have models and examples. But they have no logical solution. Even though there are authorities in society, courts, whose function is to loosen up the cramps that arise when claim jars upon claim, so the *tension* around the judgement, and the joy or disappointment afterwards, shows that the decision is not a mechanical matter. Without a logical or a mechanical solution, solutions must be found another way. If you are not a party to the case, you can remain at a distance and follow what happens. If you are a party, you try to influence the outcome with rhetoric or violence. But, in any case, a dramatic process unfolds that finds a conclusion, definitively or temporarily, happily or tragically. The solution is called time, so world history becomes world judge. Antigone demands consideration for the family, Creon for the state. No objective solution is possible, and we must therefore as observers follow *what happens* and explain the meaning of the process.

When dramas unfold, are remembered, and are communicated, they take the form of narratives, so the narrative is the mode in which a social drama finds its unity. The narrative places events into a temporal context, so they stop being disconnected atoms. When considerations clash and no objective solution is possible, narrative is the mode in which we follow and relate to what happens purely factually. The narrative, thus, is a mode of handling *contingency, time, and complexity*. Without narrative, there is no drama, only an abstract conflict and a swarm of isolated events that may not even be observed *as* events. But before we talk about narrative, we must add an extra flourish.

A narrative has to do with desire. Without desire, no driving force, no project, and no collision. Many narratives relate daydreams of power, honour and feminine favours. If you read *One Thousand and One Nights*, you are struck by the extreme fascination with gold and diamonds, luxurious quarters, generous meals, and the favour of women, which seems to be an automatic accompaniment to wealth. Luxury does not only stimulate the senses but, above all, the imagination.

Another type of desire is also embedded in the narrative, namely, the desire to supply and receive narratives. There is pleasure and power connected with storytelling and conveying the world in the narrative to your listeners. Who wins the narrative of reality wins reality, because there is no common access to reality and because no one knows reality. To tell a story can be a stimulating experience, when it succeeds in seducing others, both *while* it happens and afterwards, when everything is over and the pleasure of the event is replaced by a chatty pleasure in talking about what happened, so you are sure that others do not miss the point. The receiver, too, can derive a 'narrative pleasure' from listening to a tale, being transported away by its plot, drawing out its threads, exposing its techniques, and using it – perhaps, in ways that are strange to the sender.

In the narrative, a world comes into view, so a new narrative is a new *world-making*.[8] A narrative is a way of appropriating the world. It has to do with the piece of the world that is included in the narrative, but it also has to do with ways of being in the world that the narrative sets up, so a rich store of narratives is also a rich repertoire of ways of living. A narrative inevitably becomes more than itself, because it also becomes a prototypical example.

A narrative, therefore, is also a way of changing the world. The same thing becomes different when it is narrated again with another perspective and other schemes of what is central and peripheral. Therefore, there are not just tales of battles but also battles about tales – of imposing a particular vision of the world in the narrative's indirect mode, which does not make use of direct claims but hides important points by scattering them throughout the tale's complicated patterns, in its invisible preconditions, and in its subtexts and intertexts, which the listener himself must develop to understand the tale. Just as the beauty of a work of art, both the meaning of the tale and the way it attunes the receiver is a 'dispersed quality'.[9] The receiver's own efforts mean that the message of the tale is delivered intravenously, almost as if it were his own. He is an accomplice.

We must look at what narratives are, of what their refinements consist, and why organizations inevitably use them.

What is a narrative?

A narrative requires:

1 *A triangle between sender, receiver and content*, whether the sender and receiver are absent or present. Certainly, Robinson Crusoe could keep a diary on his deserted island and, certainly, new information could arise while writing it and, later, while reading it. Nevertheless, it seems strained to say that he narrated to himself. We are only talking about a 'genuine' narrative here when it includes at least two persons and thus takes place as communication.

2 *A triangle between author, narrator, and the characters in the narrative*. Even if they are identical, they are temporally separate. The narrative can only begin when what is being told is over, so the tale's beginning is the conclusion of what is told.
3 *Three layers – text, fabula, and narrative*, where the text consists of words or pictures; the fabula is what – possibly, reconstructed – actually happened (perhaps, only in the imagination); and the narrative is a construction (selection) of the fabula from a particular perspective.
4 A related *content*, which is a temporal, often sequential connection between events that are caused or experienced by one or – as a rule – more persons.[10] A narrative is 'about' something and is thus *mimesis*, even if it is fiction. A fictive narrative does not allow the difference between narrative and what is told to collapse but allows what is told to take place in an imaginary space.
5 A triangle between *the sensed, the imaginary, and the attuned*, which we have discussed earlier and shall say no more about here.

The overwhelming majority of narratives are comprehended by these five points, even though there are experimental narratives that amuse themselves by breaking all of them. Above all, narratives can achieve boundless pleasure by implicating themselves, so they tell about what it means to tell a story and what happens between sender and receiver. A narrative can simulate that it is being told 'while it is going on', so the narrator – in the tale – is surprised by 'real' and highly unexpected events. These marginal exceptions shall not take up our time. We can observe a narrative as 'a symbolic presentation of a series of events, connected by a theme and related in time'.[11] The theme acquires its dynamic from the desires that are behind the characters' projects and brings them in relation to each other.

We can call what is narrated *information*, so the narrative is a way of handling information – to choose and reject, to connect and create contexts, well knowing that other contexts are possible. What the narrative informs about we can call *events*, which are fleeting things that are trimmed to size, fixed, and remembered in a narrative. A narrator must be able to *observe,* whether it is himself or his surroundings he is looking at. Otherwise, he has nothing to narrate. He must have *programmes* for observing, so he can distinguish between relevant and irrelevant. He must also have *memory* and for the same reason. All these things presume that the narrator is unstable. Otherwise, he could not be influenced and informed nor influence and inform.

An observation is not a narrative. It is too simple for that. It is a point, a demarcation of one side of a difference. If we expand the observation, put more differences at play, and collect them in a text about a single moment, we get a *description*. But a description is not a narrative, not because of a lack of complexity but because of a lack of time. Nothing happens.

To put two observations together creates no narrative. They are two atoms that are just as indifferent to each other as the dead in a cemetery. 'The king died' and 'the queen died' are not a narrative. But it comes close, because it is tempting to connect these two observations. And as soon as a context is created, regardless of how, we have a minimal narrative.[12] The context must not be of a logical sort, so one observation necessarily follows from another. All men are mortal, and Socrates is a man. But there is no narrative hidden in the conclusion that Socrates is mortal. It contains no temporal context, that is, no news value and no information. Only when we hear how Socrates uses his time is a narrative launched.

The narrative bond

Thus, the contours of narrative are beginning to be drawn. A narrative unfolds as a connection between pieces of information that are temporally but not logically linked to each other. Some connections are so irrefutable that they almost have a logical status – for example, a simple causal sequence. Therefore, despite Hume, we are not inclined to deem the sequence 'the ground is wet, because it rained', as a narrative. The information is minimal to anyone who has experience with water – and who has not? But is it enough that events are simply temporally connected, that is, follow upon each other? We must look more closely at the *narrative bond*.

The connection between the information in the narrative is neither necessary nor impossible – the former dissolves time, the latter coherence. The alternative to a narrative coherence is, in part, a necessary coherence, in part, no coherence. Since meaning, as we shall see, is identical with coherence, narratives are an antidote to loss of meaning – even a loss of meaning can be part of a narrative and, in that way, is again filled with meaning.

That which is neither necessary nor impossible is *contingent*, so a narrative, as indicated, is a way of handling contingency. It creates a pattern, that is, a context for pieces of information, so narratives become machines for remembering. The death of the king and then the queen are two events that can be connected in many ways. Therefore, there is information to relate, whether it was from grief or from laughter that she died. And when a pattern has unity, a narrative can simplify and, thus, ease memory. It is easier to remember a narrative than a swarm of events. What Roland Barthes called a 'passion for meaning' is so powerful that even perverse time-and-space relationships make sense. You can narrate something that has not taken place, travel in time, and posit a parallel space, split and construct time and space in fragments, and so on. You can make incredible efforts to find patterns not only in reality but also in narratives, so everything strange is tamed. Even paradoxes can be tamed by the normality of the narrative situation: that you narrate something to me, regardless of whether we are physically together or only together in the distance of a mass medium.

Even if the relationship between the events of a narrative is external, an inevitable coherence arises by virtue of the narrative. Even if we only hear about characters that are split into fragments and events that never mesh with each other, not even aesthetically, as repetition, rhythm or rhyme, we nevertheless find a meaning in the fact that these events are brought into play. A whole battery of connections is available. They stretch from the taut to the lax, they can be combined with each other, and they can be taken from different contexts, so physical, psychological and social bonds may be brought in. Coherences can be created with metaphors, similes, metonymy, that is, proximity, and with parts that are placed within a whole. The narrative can choose external action or internal reflection. Even loose associations such as memory or hunches can create a connection, and aesthetic effects such as rhyme and rhythm can do the same thing.[13]

The narrative acquires an advantage in tempo, because it does not need to specify what connections it establishes. The receiver must himself explain them along the way, and even if the narrator, or a character in the narrative, claims that there is a particular motive, everything in the tale may be unreliable. Even the determinate becomes indeterminate, so the receiver must close the loopholes. It may be called love, but is money 'really' the theme that establishes coherence? Many modern narratives have the direct ambition of exploiting the receiver's desire for coherence and testing how much disorder a tale can include without ceasing to be a tale.

Even though an external series of events is a narrative borderline case, a receiver will seek a symphonic coherence in the simple fact that the series is selected, described, and arranged, so the arbitrariness is apparent or paradoxical – that there is a coherence in the indirect claim of an absence of coherence. The narrative narrates that no narration can be narrated, and such communication of non-communication is a crude routine in the art system, which since Romanticism has done its badgering best to dissolve the preconditions on which a narrative rests, until there are only arbitrary sounds left, which is not especially interesting except for the happy few who are intoxicated with the sheer possibility that *it can be done*. Many narratives are parasites on the fact that we inevitably narrate to each other, so they happily narrate by not narrating.

The narrative as necessary pattern

To create a whole is not an accidental feature of systems that work with meaning. Meaning is the fact that actuality, that is, what is present, as communication or consciousness can be placed in connection with potentiality.[14] With meaning, actuality is surrounded by an aura of remembered or anticipated material that is activated spontaneously or through a conscious and often irksome activity. Therefore, we can understand and cannot pretend not to.

Meaning is coherence. It can be necessary (for example, deduction), arbitrary (for example, imagination), and contingent (for example, experience). At any rate, memory is not primarily a warehouse of stored data but, above all, rules or programmes for continuation. A rule can be a regularity that connects A and B, or a memory that does the same. A comprehensive but also loose programme can be a narrative that uses many techniques to create coherence – to name some of which at random: causality, similarity, proximity, part/whole, rhythm, and repetition.

Kant claimed that an 'I think' must be able to accompany all my ideas, that is, everything that is within my consciousness.[15] An idea requires an observer who, according to Kant, is programmed to create coherence with the help of the categories that he spontaneously uses to observe. Only with coherence does experience arise that is not just a heap of isolated ideas, so the understanding's guarantee is not in transitory ideas but in an 'order and context', which are both controlled and controllers in relation to these isolated ideas.

According to Kant, observers are fashioned in such a way that they do not see events in isolation but put them in relation to each other. This thesis can be expanded. In complex situations that evade simple causality, observers inevitably create coherences that can be observed as a passive pattern *recognition* and an active pattern *formation*. The word 'fact' covers both meanings: that you can be oriented by external reference ('that's the way the world is') and self-reference ('that's the way the observer is'). The narrative is the coherence that inevitably arises when observers are to relate to an over-complex world, where not only visible but also invisible relations are observed. The infinite space of possibilities is limited by following what actually happens, thus, the 'thread' of events. The narrative involves time in a way that is neither random nor necessary. Its patterns can shift like a kaleidoscope, so 'the necessity of the narrative' is not a particular pattern but only that: events are observed as patterns.

The benefit of the narrative – to create unity out of multiplicity – is so undeniable, so devoid of alternatives that Kant's 'I think', which takes place in the head of an isolated observer, must be supplemented and conveyed to communication: an 'I tell you' must be able accompany all observations, because the narrative is the way in which complex sequences of events are connected into wholes. It happens first as dialogue and later also as monologues. Not only do we create narratives, we are created by narratives. If Robinson Crusoe had not listened to narratives from others, he could not narrate for himself. And if he could not narrate for himself, he would have sunk to an animal-like existence:

> Narrative imagining – story – is the fundamental instrument of thought. Rational capacities depend upon it. It is our chief means of looking into the future, of predicting, of planning, and of explaining. It is a literary capacity indispensable to human cognition generally.[16]

Even though observation is a more basic operation than narrative, observations never appear in isolation. You cannot imagine an observer who can only observe one thing or one point in time. Observations are surrounded by and connected to other observations, both as patterns and as series. And an observer is not satisfied with observing but also observes his observations. When he connects them with each other, a narrative arises, even if the pattern he creates is not a narrative but a theoretical structure. Even a theoretician can narrate how he came up with his idea. Whoever observes in language can also tell about his observations – if nothing else, about himself. Even though it is possible to construct examples of observers who are cut off from communicating with others, these examples will always be marginal examples, that is, parasites on the normal network of narratives that are part of maintaining social systems.

What the situation is, how it is to be described, and how its events are to be connected is not objectively given. This is inherent in the fact that a situation is a cross-section of the world, selected by themes and action plans[17] or, if you will, by desire. This does not mean that it is subjectively arbitrary. Not all narratives are equally convincing, because narratives about the world are connected to the order of the world. Nevertheless, the narrative creates an opening: the manner in which it creates a whole does not only contain information about what is told but also about the narrator and his mode of narration, so you can oscillate between narrator and what is told and choose yourself where you will link up. What one person observes as determined by strict causality and thus without responsibility is for another an expression of choice and thus replete with responsibility. You can choose how you want to describe it. However, you can also keep at a distance and see what description actually convinces and has an impact and what the consequences are. There are many narratives about the attack on the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001 but not all have the same impact.

A narrative *produces* information when it *reproduces* information. It solders creation and imitation to each other, because it finds, selects, and creates coherence. Even relationships that have their unambiguous existence outside the narrative and thus are not created by it acquire new meaning by entering into it. Therefore, the narrative is not an innocent product of information but also a guilty producer.

We can summarize: the narrative is the way in which observers create unity in their experience beyond logical and causal necessity. The unity of the narrative is always contingent, because every narrative is surrounded by other narratives that observe with another gaze and, therefore, see other things. A narrative takes place in time and space and, therefore, is contingent. That it is loosely connected is due to the fact that the pattern of the narrative is not objectively given, so it is not 'compelled' by an external reality but is the very mode in which observations are connected to each other on a running basis *in status nascendi*. When different narratives relate to the same reality, they are not radically separated but can communicate. They have a perspective, a 'who is observing', and they have a theme, a 'what is observed'.

This creates a peculiar relationship between new and old narratives. In contrast to narratives that have become established as experience, perhaps as a bodily intuition, there are sensitive descriptions of new experience. If a new narrative confirms the old narratives, there is no problem. If a new narrative, on the other hand, breaks with the old, the receiver is free to reject or accept the new or neutralize it by making it into art. The ongoing incorporation of new narratives into experience's corpus of narratives shows that the narrative is not a random or external way of organizing observations. It is the *very form of experience*.[18]

Without familiarity with a common world, communicative narratives are not possible. Therefore, you cannot 'narrate' anything significant to a baby. But narratives permit understanding across cultures and epochs, because narrative is the form of human experience, because all experience contains common themes around body, thing, consciousness, interaction, and stages of life, and because narrative provides information, perhaps surprising, about how people react. While you receive a narrative, you are fed information and acquire ever richer material to interpret when each piece of information provided is to find its place in the information handed down, the now of the narrative is filled to the bursting point with memory and expectation. On the basis of these abstract constants, infinite variations are possible.

Organization, autopoiesis and narrative: the logic of the concrete

We have described an organization as an autopoietic system. In its continued self-creation, an organization must constantly create the possibility of connecting new elements to old. It requires structures that set productive limitations and thus normalize. But structures are not solid crystals that blindly impose their rigid patterns. They are imperceptibly changed by being used in changed situations. When they are set as constants, we are talking about an inevitable 'overestimation of constancy', because a necessary contrast must be created for variation that is created by the stream of new elements. In relation to the stream of water, the faucet is constant, even though it also changes.

To observe an organization as an autopoietic system implies that everything is transformed into variables. Everything in the organization is created by the organization itself and must be reproduced on an ongoing basis. Even the organization itself, that is, its self-description, is variable. But that everything is variable does not mean that everything finds itself in a total flux. This would be fatal. An organization must observe itself from a scheme of what is constant and what is variable. To say that everything varies is meaningless – in part, because variation itself would be a constant; in part, because whoever observes and describes variation must vary in another rhythm than the variation he observes. The word 'variation' must *itself* be somewhat constant, if it is to be able to refer to variation. Even though the constant also varies, there must be a difference between different time rhythms. If a manager initiates a constant variation, he is himself a constant guarantee for the lack of constancy that he initiates.

We can summarize the points so far by noting four things.

First, an organization is a perpetual flow. As a system of communication, it consists of transitory events and must continually create communication with a sufficient *Anschlußwert* to continue. Autopoiesis is an unfolding that is not strictly logical, strictly causal, or strictly random. Between all-too-taut and the all-too-lax connections, an organization must find gentle ways of creating coherence. The claim here is that *narratives* constitute a sort of in-between form.

Second, every transition from one state to the next is *contingent*. An organization cannot cover itself behind a logical compulsion or make a mechanical calculation of the optimal. It must open and close a limited uncertainty by making decisions, that is, by choosing between self-created alternatives on the basis of a self-created decisional basis. A decision is not objective – if it is, it is not a decision. A transition from one state to another is not a deduction but a fact, which is also 'something that is done'. This does not prevent an organization from getting stuck in routines, so it is easy to predict what it will do.

An autopoietic system is neither a small algorithm nor a small machine. This does not mean that the laws of logic or physics are suspended. But if an organization runs into a paradox, it does not need to solve it by logical means. It can let time pass, see what happens, and learn from experience.[19] And if the organization runs into a confusion of causes and effects, it need not despair but can commit to a causal chain, see what happens, and correct itself as it goes. It *creates* reality from what it *considers* real – for example, belief in witches had very real consequences for the poor women who had that label imposed on them. Both logically and causally, the organization must create openings that it can again close with decisions.

Third, an organization acquires an incisive relationship to *time*. An operation takes time, when it links itself with what happened before, so an autopoietic system in order to be able to choose must have a memory and a programme for choosing – where memory and programme go together, because memory is programmed. An organization avoids arbitrariness by choosing on the basis of what it has already chosen and letting the new choice strengthen or weaken the old.

The past need not be a 'present past' but can be blind, built-in routines. And the future need not be a 'present future', as long as an inner dynamic prevents the organization from sinking into apathy.

Fourth, an organization becomes self-referential. It inevitably relates to itself – and to nothing else – when it creates and re-creates itself from itself. The external side of the organization's communication – its 'about' – is only accessible as a condition in the organization itself, that is, as information. An organization cannot pull its environment into itself but must make maps and pictures of itself – even maps and pictures of which it must make maps or pictures, when it communicates about them. It can also only observe itself piecemeal and divided. It must describe itself in simplified form in order to act as a unit.

If you summarize these four features, you reach the conclusion that an organization unfolds narratively.[20] Its chain of decisions cuts through both contingency and complexity and, therefore, is unique and irreversible. The organization inevitably gets a story. Peculiarly enough, the theory of autopoiesis has not discovered that autopoiesis and narrative are intimately connected.[21] A narrative contains the four characteristics we have just dealt with. There is a thoroughgoing homology between organization and narrative. They are two sides of the same thing.

What is figuratively called an 'unfolding' of a system's autopoiesis gets the character of a narrative, when it has to do with psychic or social systems that use language and thus operate in the medium of meaning'. *Which* narrative is not given, only *that* the sequence is narrative. Every observer chooses themes and schemes that provide different beginnings and endings and different proposals for what is central and peripheral, constant and variable, acceptable and unacceptable. The narrative's orchestration of its themes appears in its plot, which is not only a sequence but also a mapping of the complicated clashes between desire and description.

A narrative unfolds a flow, because it has a beginning and an end.[22] Between these two points, which are arbitrary slices of time, it creates a self-chosen sequence that the receiver can follow slavishly or jump around in. This sequence can be reconstructed as an actual sequence, by which we reach the *fabula*, or it can be followed in an idiosyncratic sequence, which is the narrative and which is controlled by a special perspective.[23] The Trojan War lasted ten years, while *The Iliad* is content to tell about the wrath of Achilles and its consequences. And, fortunately, it does not take ten years to read about Odysseus' ten-year voyage home to his wife.

A narrative also unfolds a contingent context, because its conclusion cannot be derived from its beginning, even though the beginning was chosen with a view toward the conclusion, so a narrative acquires both a backward and a forward flow of time. Its forward flow of time can copy its backward flow of time as in a detective story in which the narrative has to do with figuring out what already happened, so the narrative's sequence forward is at the same time an unravelling of what happened before. Ricoeur speaks of the 'thousand contingencies' in a narrative in which the sequence is not binding but must unfold the 'paradox of contingency', that is to be 'acceptable after all'.[24] This especially applies to organizational narratives that cannot allow themselves to lose their grounding.

The narrative also has an inner relationship to *time*, when it links events together. Its elements must germinate and progress in time,[25] even when it is constructed as a flashback. Even though a narrative can inflate tiny events[26] or comprehend long time sequences in a short sentence ('Twenty years went by ...'), a narrative cannot be concentrated in one point. A description of a state or an event is not a narrative. If nothing else, the narrative must show what led to the event or what followed from it. A narrative consists of events, and the narrative's plot connects these events in a context.[27] Narrative and time are closely connected,[28] as Ricoeur would have it, while Peter Brooks calls narratives 'time syllogisms', that is, the creation of coherent processes in time.[29]

Finally, a narrative has an inner relationship to *self-reference*, because each of its elements must be connected to all other elements in the narrative's plot. A narrative is a whole 'of some magnitude', as Aristotle remarked. The hermeneutic or non-chronological dimension in a narrative is the continuous creation of coherence out of a series of events.

The relationship between plot and events is dual, because events create the narrative to the same degree that the narrative creates events.[30] There are events that stand alone and can be placed in many contexts – 'the king died, then the queen'. Along with connecting events, the narrative creates its own space for meaning that the receiver must (re)construct from the growing but still always scant information that the narrative supplies him with.

After a narrative, you have become wiser, as Hans Christian Andersen remarks in *The Snow Queen*. A narrative creates order, and to reconstruct its framework, schemes, and methods is the same as suggesting another narrative. A narrative must start and finish, if nothing else, when the stream of words ceases. And a narrative is met by the receiver's own hypotheses and syntheses that inevitably form meaning, because even the meaningless is filled with meaning. As opposed to nature, a narrative does not allow open time horizons backwards and forwards. That a work can have open fields that allow many interpretations[31] does not dissolve the closedness of the narrative and, thus, its self-reference, which must be completed afterward by the reader.

Autopoiesis is always a local affair. Even autopoietic systems of the same type always develop differently. With narratives, organizations gain access to a form of reflection that in a specific set or materials can impose a general meaning. The narrative develops *the logic of the concrete*. It takes its starting point in a clear sequence and attributes to it an exemplary meaning, while a theory goes the opposite way: it starts with the general and applies it to the singular.[32]

The narrative as compensation for invisibility and complexity

It is a running theme that an organization is invisible. Eyes and ears and mouths can only grab fragments. If it is to be observed as a whole, it happens in an inevitable abbreviation, so the whole is only symbolically accessible, that is, as a (self)description. Just as a human being only has fictive access to himself, an organization only has access to itself by fabricating a text that is inevitably surrounded by other texts.

When an organization is to show who it is, it is not enough to describe it. It must be placed in time, so it becomes visible *how* it makes the decisions that cannot be made but must be made. Here, the theoretical description, which can only make embarrassed demands of 'balance' between irreconcilable considerations but not concretely show how the organization deals with – or avoids dealing with – them, fails. If an organization promises 'security' and 'innovation', you can imagine a creative employee who time and again insults customers at sales meetings he insists on participating in. You can relate further how, after a warning, he persists and refuses to stay in the background with the result that he is fired. If he now pleads the value of 'security', the organization has shown its identity through the way it handles the conflict between two values: security is not a trump card. What cannot be solved theoretically can be unfolded historically. In the narrative, you see how.

Therefore, the organization comes 'to itself' in the stories that it tells and which are told about it. The narrative injects time into the organization's self-description, so the substantial claims in the brochures, the banal list of the organization's values, the fixed boxes in its diagrams, and the immovable key numbers in their accounts shift and are shaken off their rusty hinges. A narrative that

1 does not meet the requirements of an exhaustive explanation,
2 can presume a background,
3 only describes a simple sequence, and
4 can draw on the resource called *pictoriality*

can relate to a form of complexity that theories are cut off from. It can link together many events and sequences. Just as we absorb more pieces of information through our senses than we can describe, we can deal with resources of information and meaning in a narrative that are inaccessible to a theoretical description.

This can be put in another way. Participants in communication must continually explain who the sender and the receiver is, what the theme and the contribution is, and whether they will link to information (the factual), to communication (the social), or to understanding, which is invisible and only revealed in the way the receiver reacts. This field of possibilities cannot be organized causally, since the participants are not trivial machines. Nothing compels a particular way to continue communication. What happens is that communication simplifies itself into action.[33] And when action follows and relates to action, we once again have a narrative. An organization unfolds as a narrative. *How* it happens is not given. Herein lies the art of perspective.

Time, space and distortion

A narrative organizes time and space. It makes time shrink and become manageable. Even though narratives can be nerve-wrackingly long, they are shorter than the events they talk about and, above all, they ignore everything that happens *at the same time* – both in the narrative and in the time it takes to narrate. The narrative condenses time into a strong, fragrant sauce. The time that is consumed during the narrative and which forces the receiver to make his own present invisible, so he can follow the time of the narrative, is an investment that is expected to provide a profit. You are brought up to date about events that have gone on *at the same time* but in other places and therefore invisibly, so you can coordinate your own time with others. After vacations, many tongues begin to wag, and there are contests to provide the most exciting narratives.

The narrative also makes space contract, because it creates its own space, which is never a true copy of reality's space. While time is also carefully determined by the narrative, space can be geographically indeterminate. With its 'Once upon a time', the narrative leaps directly into a space that must be taken for granted and which is made more precise 'during the course of' the narrative. It leaps easily and elegantly over the Paradox of Beginning, pushes its problems in front of it, and allows them to find their solution or lack of solution along the way.

Time and space come into view from the narrative's perspective. It can be expressed pointedly: a narrative distorts what is told (the *fabula*). It is pointed due, in part, to the fact that narratives can be fantastic and thus are not accessible to empirical control. No archeological studies will be able to strengthen or weaken Shakespeare's tale of Hamlet. We know exactly as much about Hamlet as Shakespeare has allowed us to know and, if we want to know more, we have to guess, more or less intelligently. And, in part, the fact that no observer can impose upon us God's total perspective, which transforms time (*tempus*) into eternity (*aeternitas*), where past, present and future are present at the same time. A narrative always has a perspective, so there is no special perspective that is a non-perspective.

When the limitations of the perspective are unavoidable, it is pointless to talk about distortion. A *fabula* is also a narrative that simply tries to normalize itself as much as possible. But even though no *fabula* is an innocent picture of reality, it is possible to distinguish between reliable and wild narratives, albeit the standard is elastic: what is considered normal.

Between the chronological series of events of the *fabula* and narrative's non-chronological structure, there is a circular relationship, also when the *fabula* is only known through the narrative, as is the case in Homer's *Iliad* about which scholars still debate whether there is any historical background. A narrative does not consist of historical elements that exist in advance and which need only be added into a history-less deep structure. Every event is transitory and reversible and acquires, if not its own existence, then its meaning in the context of the narrative.

The distortion is due not only to the inevitable relationship between complexity and selection but also that narrative is a genre with special conventions. You cannot demand, my mother always claimed, that good stories are also true. In order to make a narrative good, elements must be reconstructed, coherence must be created, exceptions made, and events made bigger or smaller, so the narrative, like communication, becomes 'coordinated selectivity', which has no one-to-one relationship to the world.[34] The narrative is pressed from three sides – first, from the reality that is to be narrated, second, from the form in which it is to be narrated and, finally, from the narrator who expresses himself in a work. Therefore, narratives are compromises, both *produced by and a producer of* information. They do not just talk about their topic but also about themselves and their narrator.

Narratives about an organization are not arbitrary. They meet resistance from the organization, because they must presume that the organization is something real that does not permit just any narrative, that is, that defines the words. Even though an organization can be described and re-described and even though there are countless variants of how you can remember and forget, explain and explain away, the organization's narratives are not an area in which 'anything goes.' All narratives of an organization are subjected to a consistency test that brings it into a relationship with other narratives. There are events that can be interpreted differently but whose existence cannot be rejected. That a manager falls ill is a fact that can be interpreted in many ways – stress, incompetence, bullying, alcoholism, family problems, in addition to, of course, the official illness. Colouring and abbreviation and omission are possible, not free invention – unless you accept the loss of credibility, so the receiver, instead of considering the narrative as information about the organization, takes a leap and considers it as information about the narrator: he spreads loose rumours, lies, or is 'just' a narrator who can play freely with his words, protected by an aesthetic bell-jar that makes the words irrelevant, regardless of their aesthetic quality. Only because the organization's narratives relate to 'the same time', their differences are interesting.

The sophistication of narrative

By limiting itself to a concrete sequence, a narrative can handle great quantities of information. What it loses in stringency, it conquers in pictoriality, in being unburdened from the demand to make background assumptions apparent and in the enchantment that a good tale uses to fix its receiver. It can create a mild narcosis,[35] which makes the receiver receptive and conquers his imagination, so that it is difficult for him to extricate himself from the narrative. I myself have a hard time tearing myself away from even bad stories in books or television, because I *have* to see how they end. The narrative can be satisfied with setting up a trail and leaving it to the reader to work out the premises that create the coherence for its events. Because the receiver expects a context, he will create a context even between loose elements and open fields.

This unburdening makes it possible for the narrative to take on a different burden: to follow a concrete sequence. The receiver must take on its blindness, its perspective, and what the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer calls its *Vorgriff der Vollkommenheit*, that is, the requirement of (re)creating the greatest possible coherence for the narrative. He must prognosticate and 'postgnosticate', so the narrative is connected by inner cross-references that comprehend both meaning and sensation. If he is caught in this labyrinth, he assimilates it naïvely and makes the struggle to control it into his own struggle,[36] he becomes an accomplice in its coherence, which both is and is not his own. He begins to write along – to put faces on characters, fill in holes in the presentation, rework events, so they 'make sense' and undertake an ongoing interpretation that does not need to be conscious but can be worked into the way the narrative carries him forward. When you read a quick detective novel, you do not pay attention to this work. And no one doubts that Ophelia, Juliet and Desdemona are beautiful, although no one has seen them and it is uncertain what beauty is.

Just as we, as users of language, learn to handle personal pronouns and can thus leap between perspectives, between 'I', 'you' and 'them', we learn in narratives to shift perspective and incorporate presumptions without explanation. We leap into 'The Emperor's New Clothes' and take its enlightened absolutism along in the bargain. We understand without understanding what we understand. A society's myths overcome logical difficulties by conceptualizing them into a complicated system, so without being solved they lose themselves in 'benevolent illusions'.[37] In the same way, an organization's narratives can solve the problem by choosing points of view, themes, and motives by making the choice invisible and, instead, unfolding it in a narrative that strikes a theme, takes a particular perspective, and does not simply show what motives are acceptable but adds motivation by virtue of its own attraction.

It is not easy to tell a good story, and its effect is not eternal. Nor is it easy to tell a story with open places that the receiver can feel tempted to occupy. As opposed to fictive narratives, the organization's official narratives are not left to the receiver's free consumption. Management and its experts have their preferred narratives, which they bolster by retelling with cross-pressure from, for example, mass media and with privileged access to communication. Sometimes, managers attempt to use power and threats to strengthen their own narratives and repress others. But regardless of how much power is behind a narrative, it must be able to contend in the competition with other narratives, which also circulates in the organization. A narrative cannot be forced. If this happens, there immediately arises a new – and risky! – narrative of how narratives are repressed. To the contrary, the narrative and its seduction compensate for the fact that a manager does *not* have classic power over his employees, especially not if their work demands specialized knowledge, innovation and motivation.

The power in a narrative lies in the hidden, and this playful and easy effort to re-create the imaginary world that appears in its initial design is adjusted in the rest of the narrative. Since narratives do not claim but show and elucidate, they can get the receiver to lower his guard and flow along. In order to ensure the initial motivation, many narratives work with characters that elevate themselves above the everyday by virtue of beauty, talent, commitment, or wealth. They are stars, and the mimetic infatuation with the universe in which they participate lures the receiver into the narrative: he would like to take part in this world of power and beauty in which they live so effortlessly.

A narrative can be understood intuitively and with the same easy pleasure that can be achieved with *muzak*. Here, the narrative is deemed to be information that is to entertain and, therefore, is accepted without obligation at face value. You can read it and throw it away. The narrative can also be considered reflexively, so you hold it at arm's length and study its artistic tricks.[38] To follow how the pieces of the narrative fall into place can provide the 'noticeable pleasure' that arises when you impose your will on obstinate material. Or you can oscillate between following the narrative's apparent interplay between characters who observe each other's observations and react to each other's actions and following the technical interplay between author, narrator, characters and receiver – in which, for example, a first-person narrator must pretend not to know the conclusion of the story or his own development when he starts his tale. He must pretend that the narrative's present is his own present, even though the narrative takes place at a later point in time when everything is over, as well as the narrative's suspense. But when you are gripped by the narrative, take over its gaze, and overlook its techniques, you live within a world that is controlled by invisible schemes for what is relevant and irrelevant, who are the stars and who the water carriers, helpers and opponents, what is worth fighting for and, perhaps, even what should be done to fulfil the vision that the narrative is moving toward. The narratives of organizations often start with a lack or a rupture that is to be filled or healed. There is more narrative in crises and criminality and looming failure than in peace and harmony and sunny success.

When a narrative strikes its opening chord out of nothing – 'Once upon a time' – it puts the brakes on the desire for reflection by directing the desire into a world of suspense, where the resolution is always put off, so the desire is kept alive by slowing it down and burying it in the nooks and crannies of the narrative, where it both longs for and fears its conclusion.[39] A narrative activates the same energy that drives the autopoiesis of the psychic and social systems. Therefore, it contains more elemental drives than theory and discourse, which are alien to everyday experience. While it is a quality of a theory to include its own premises, a narrative can throw its receivers directly into deep end of the pool and make everyone swim. Instead of explaining itself, it can get the receiver to explain. It links up to a way of processing experience with which its receivers are familiar from their dealings with each other.

You can immunize yourself against narratives. But it is presumably impossible to do completely, because the immunization also takes place in a narrative. Life, as is well known, is made of the same stuff as dreams, and dreams are organized as narratives. You can also immunize yourself against art, *amore* and avarice, if you have those desires. But you can do an indispensability test and investigate how much you lose, if you cut yourself off from providing and receiving narratives. There is a good chance that you cut yourself off from living with yourself and others.

The plot

Since an organization cannot observe and act, people must observe and act on its behalf, that is, construct their motives from the organization's perspective, with the inevitable noise – or suspicion of motive – which that involves. Since psychic systems are invisible to others, communication is stuck with an irreparable ambiguity: deception is always possible, there can be double-dealing in every game. And since organizations are permeated by competition, the possibility is not just theoretical.

When organizations and people unfold their desire through each other, normal conflicts arise. Narrative's powerful technique is that it creates a simplification by focusing on the *character* and the *drama*. Each character acts on a stage on which there are also other characters, each with their own agenda. Each character takes steps against a background he has not created and with consequences he cannot see. Each action is tied to the order of the organization and, thus, of the world. It must be able to be understood in the context that the organization unfolds, if it is not to be rejected as noise. This prevents arbitrariness.

To create coherence out of the chaos of characters and desire demands a series of choices: of frames, schemes and scripts.[40] These choices find their unity in the construction of a plot – 'the intelligible whole that governs a succession of events'[41] or '[t]he schemes used for tying together actions and events through time and space'.[42] In an organization, there are many plots, each with their own powerful and far-reaching simplification. When they intertwine with each other, the result is impossible to predict or control. No one can follow the labyrinthine micro-processes in an organization, simply for the reason that many events take place at the same time. An attempt at micro-observation and –control would also create interferences that would have to be described by new observers and so on.

The *plot* is often brushed aside as an overemphasis on order – an artificial construction that ignores the fact that characters and organizations are fragmentary and incoherent. To this, it must simply be said that the alternative to the plot is not a better order but, rather, chaos – a confused collection of isolated events. *Every* coherence is an artificial simplification, even the anti-coherence that consists of replacing the plot with fragments – why these and not others? So, the alternative is plot or chaos, where chaos in a narrative is nevertheless never a true chaos but is always ordered with an intention. Even dealings with chaos must be narrated. Even letters scattered across a page are only chaotic within the ordered framework that the experiment constitutes.

Without a plot, no context and no memory. The order of the plot provides a symbolic simplification and thus a 'narrative pleasure', which follows the trail from Kant: to impose your will on an obstinate material.[43] A plot is not a mechanical context but 'causes causes' and is thus an effect of its own effects. Every observer is 'unforced' by himself and his surroundings by virtue of his binary programmes to observe – he has, for example, the power to say 'no' – and this freedom makes it possible to act and, thus, also to be able to tell about his action, regardless of the fact that it may not be fully understood. Even though the world is as it is, just like a text, it can be read in many ways – in theory, infinitely many; in practice, a few.

This order that a *plot* creates is not simple or chronological but inevitably reflective: parts are *parts* by virtue of the *whole*, they *part*icipate in, wholeness is *whole*ness by virtue of the *part*s it makes *whole*. This is reconcilable with the fact that different plots can be constructed in which the same characters play quite different roles. It opens up a 'dual hermeneutics',[44] which does not only follow the relationship between part and whole but also the relationship between different ways of creating parts and wholes. The archetype of such a narrative is Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet* (1957–60), which does not have the various plots deal with exactly the same events but allows them to cut each into other, so the same becomes different.

A narrative does not contain just the expectation of a movement toward a conclusion but also an 'anticipation of retrospection', so only with the conclusion do you understand the beginning. The conclusion is 'the pole of attraction of the entire development'.[45] Thus, the time sequence is turned around, so that the beginning of the narrative is a point in time that is *after* the conclusion – for a narrative is a description of a process, so memory 'converts' the natural process and reads the beginning in the conclusion and the conclusion in the beginning.[46]

However, there are also narratives that are told in an ongoing way, so a character narrates while he acts and is only capable of acting because he puts his ongoing efforts into a plot. It may happen that he already has a script or a role he wants to follow, so he acts as he does *because* the narrative is what it is and must have an ending that is already anticipated.[47] When daydreams are acted out in private, they often follow a form in which a desired process is visualized. The narrative functions as a standard for its own continuation, as it is written about Jesus in the Bible: he did this in order to fulfil the scripture … that is, a reflexive view of behaviour.[48]

It can also happen that the narrative aims at a goal, but it is uncertain what happens in the meantime, that is, in the narrative. *On s'engage, et puit on voit*, Napoleon said – you commit yourself and then see what happens. In an organization, too, it often has to do with getting started, planning as well as you can, looking at what happens, and abandoning yourself to inventiveness, ongoing measures, and luck. In fairy tales, you can see the fairytale luck that the hero has in choosing his people, so there is miraculously a helper with special abilities ready for every challenge, until the princess and half the kingdom is won.

But narratives can be intricate: a plot can be a plot in another plot that is not seen. A sophisticated author such as Ernest Hemingway often gives voice to a naïve narrator who cannot see what is going on, so the author's art consists of opening up and guiding the receiver's understanding through the narrator's non-understanding with the inevitable sources of uncertainty that this technique contains.[49]

A narrative normally connects a series of self-chosen events. Therefore, it contains information in its pattern, even when its theme and elements are well-known. Every theme contains an infinite potential for narratives that can reveal new patterns, expand on new ideas, and air new moral points. But a narrative can also become a parasite on its own tradition. It can have the ambition of disappointing the expectations its receivers bring to it. Gustave Flaubert wanted to write a novel in which nothing happened. When a narrative is told to someone on a particular occasion and with a particular goal,[50] it is normally possible to expect an answer to 'why', which applies to the narrative as information and as communication.

Narrative and dealing with values

Just as society does not have access to itself as a whole, because every observer *of* society is an observer *in* society, an organization cannot observe itself as a whole. Many things happen at the same time, and an overview is achieved by accepting a loss of information.

The requirement of an overview is directed toward management. But how can management observe an organization that it cannot observe? How can it exercise control on a running basis – that is, constantly, when it continually demands change – that is, variation? How can it gain access *in the now* to a past that is closed and a future that is open, so the result is a peculiar U-turn in which the decision opens up the past and closes the future,[51] so the past is robbed of its determinacy and the future of its indeterminacy, and the 'determinative direction' of time is reversed? And how can it motivate people with a special ability that management has just as little insight into as its customers and clients?

A modern answer is values, which are distinguished from rules by being more general and, therefore, more flexible in their adaptation to an ongoing change.[52] While rules contain precise scripts, because everything that is not permitted is forbidden, values have room for interpretation and innovation, because everything that is not forbidden is permitted. While rules are oriented toward the past, values are oriented toward the future.[53]

The problem with values is just that they are abstract. Even if they are made concrete in a statement, it is a problem how they are to be made a part of everyday action. For many organizations, it is easier to put together their basic values than to translate them into a visible, binding practice. Even if they shift focus from values to value conflicts, they encounter the problem that value conflicts do not have any objective solution.

Here, the narrative can kill many birds with one stone. An organization can gain access to itself by telling about itself, so its self-description is drawn out in time. In this way, it can demonstrate what it considers as its mission – why it exists – but also its vision – its proposal for what future it wants to realize. Even though the narratives of organizations create more complexity, because consideration must be given, above all else, to a text, their goal is simplification. Even though they suggest another world alongside the real world, their intention is to merge the two worlds into one, perhaps, with intermediate results: that a crisis narrative becomes a lever for a success narrative.

Narratives show what values mean in practice without taking a detour through definitions, which are often indeterminate and, therefore, unusable. When an organization sets up 'poetry' as a value, it need not write a philosophical aesthetics to explain itself theoretically but can in a narrative *demonstrate* its point. As in Aristotle, the problem with making abstract values concrete in everyday life can be solved by following the example of 'good men'.[54]

A narrative builds in values in the themes it grapples with and in the visible difference between success and failure, threat and possibility, hindrance and help, hero and villain. While theory does violence to everyday experience by stopping time and putting cultural blindness into words, a narrative can draw on everyday experience that unfolds itself in time and is precipitated in intuition and body.

In a narrative, management makes itself into a moral example, and it can act in a way that generates narratives and thus becomes mythical and filled with symbolism. This is relieved by the fact that managers as representatives of the whole are a strong focus for observation. Narratives are an important point of their symbolic effort, and narratives of themselves are presumably more effective than open declarations of mission and vision.

Unfortunately, there are no slavish rules or technologies for how you fabricate a good narrative. If good stories could be mass produced, they would lose some of the magic dust. All stories cannot be unusually good.

Organization and narrative

We shall look more closely at *narrative as a method for creating order* with the organization as a starting point, and we shall focus on narrative as a tool in an organization's self-description, not how it is described by others.[55] From this starting point, four decisions are made.

First, organizational narratives are historical, not fictive. The organization's narratives of itself are binding in a different way than fictive narratives, and they can, in part, be confirmed by personal experience.[56] A decision is cut (*de-cidere*, cut away) into time and creates scars that cannot be repaired, not even if the decision is reversed. It is not a test trial in a copied time and space that you can accept or reject but involves living human beings and their destinies. In fictive narratives, it is always interesting to increase the quantity of interpretations, that is, to make the narratives open. In an organization, the difference between an open and a closed narrative, on the other hand, is not a difference between better and worse but between two strategic possibilities: which narrative is expedient to use? When something goes wrong and someone is to blame, can there be a fight between those who want to open the narrative, so the attribution of responsibility becomes fluid, and those who want to close the narrative, so a rigid causal connection points to the 'guilty one'.

That a narrative is historical does not mean that it is absolutely true. The truth of the narrative contains the aesthetic element that it is a 'manufactured' truth. Even though its data can be checked and even though it may seem more or less probable, a narrative is always a proposal, surrounded by other proposals.

Second, they are constructive narratives. An organization's narratives have to do with past, present, and future. But the choice of these three timeframes and the relationship between them is strategic. The intent is not just to narrate but *thereby* to motivate, so employees, customers, and the public get a desire to associate with the organization and its products, even if they can only see the surface. With prototypes from literature, you can say that an organization's narratives look more like the novels of Balzac than Flaubert.[57] While Balzac described characters who eagerly tried to improve their situation, driven by will, desire, and ambition, Flaubert's characters vegetated. They drifted in and out of situations, more spectators than actors. They thought about doing something but gave it up, came too late, misunderstood. Without doubt, there are Flaubertian characters in organizations. But they are typically not decision-makers.

This hints at an answer to Daniel Bell's question[58] of why dynamic and innovative business leaders are often predictable and heroic in their taste in art. Their narratives are – and must be – epic and heroic in a way that the art system in its advanced form has left behind. Their private view of art is less important than their official compulsion to provide constructive narratives. Since a manager represents the unity of the organization, his work consists in being constructive – so, critique, failure, and unpleasant facts are either suppressed or transformed into something positive, that is, 'something you can learn from'. And when you cannot be destructive, you forget the need to be destructive or direct it in other directions – for example, towards your private life. Ordinary employees are far more open to critique and openly pursue their own careers.

Organizations are compelled to compete. Therefore, their narratives deal with winning or losing and those who do not care to or cannot compete are inevitably left behind in the cold. They do not 'represent' the organization. Of course, an organization can be paralysed and a person lose his spirits. But this is a sign of crisis, because an organization must drive itself, if it is to remain in the market. Its goal is to promote its own autopoiesis, which leads to a compulsion to grow. It is one of the reasons that modern society cannot control growth: all its organizations are geared for growth.

Third, the organization's official narratives are idealistic. When an organization tells about itself, it regularly happens in a form that is fraught with illusions, because the inevitable distortions take the form of idealization. The positive is put forward or moulded from nothing; the negative is hushed up. If the present is depicted in drab terms, it is to motivate people toward a better future. In brochures and festive speeches, in annual accounts and PR material, the organization talks about itself in glowing terms – elevated goals, irreproachable means, robust qualities, and finely honed skills. If problems are mentioned, they are normally in the past: they have been nipped in the bud or solutions already found.

Managers have a responsibility for the whole, not just a specialty. When they are to motivate specialists, shareholders, or the public, they have to know their audience, know what attracts and repulses them. 'Idealism', therefore, does not mean that a manager is an idealist but that he must motivate by providing a narrative in which employees and customers want to participate and retell – perhaps, not because it is true but because it would be wonderful, if it were true, and because it makes it easy to explain why you are an employee or a customer. Idealism does not have to do with the manager's inner person but with his function in the organization.

It can seem comic for anyone who knows the reality with its intrigues, loafing, waste, and other everyday things. But only by idealizing can an organization combine description and motivation, even though there is grassroots humour as the insiders can easily distinguish between façade and what they experience as reality.

Cynical everyday realism can be knocked over, if a narrative succeeds in suggesting something radically new and activate what may lie deep down in its employee base. The narrative activates dreams of stripping off the everyday and its tortuous view of itself, so you feel the rush of suddenly finding yourself in the middle of a sun-dappled and murky, benighted fairy tale in which indifferent people are magnified into enemies and friends, surrounded by a titillating uncertainty as to whether they really *are* friends and enemies.

A narrative opens up an imaginary world that attunes its receivers, even when it leaves them cold. A camera lens does not simply depict reality but gives what it rests on a symbolic extra meaning just by choosing it. There is a powerful symbolic inflation connected with being 'on', and it activates the human primeval willingness to allow the immanent to be fortified with transcendent meaning. By appearing in two versions as a concrete person and as an imaginary picture, you gain access to the transcendent and sense a touch of the power of religiosity. You become a bit 'bigger than life'.

An idealistic narrative is, thus, a lie that does not function as a lie and, therefore, is not rejected as such. In part, because it must be effective in setting goals that the organization is trying to reach; in part, because simplification can always be bought for a price, which is called distortion. A map is not a lie simply because it does not resemble the landscape.

You can distinguish between constructive and ironic narratives.[59] Constructive fairy tales want to *engage*. They want to build up the organization in a particular image and use it as a trump card. They set goals that are to be realized and that demand commitment and responsibility, whether the image traces the official self-description or a radically new image, that is, a counter-image of a new organization that is also the same and where this paradox of identity is resolved by stretching it out over time, so a transition, catastrophic or slow, can be narrated from one description to another.

The ironic narrative is the little story that does not require commitment. It is satisfied with noting local, time-limited reservations that place its narrator in relief – for example, as a wise and critical mind. Ironic narratives take part in the unceasing mumbling called gossip, which is the organization's tool for ongoing self-regulation. Within the walls, gossip flies like dust and rumours about motives and alliances and indecent behaviour. But it normally balks at stepping out into the open on the political stage and is content to be warmed in the glow of its own statement. While the official narratives focus on what has gone well, gossip digs down into what has gone wrong.

Fourth, narratives about organizations have a main character, which is the organization itself. *A story is told about the organization*, which presumes that there are characters that speak on its behalf. The organization can tell about itself just as little as it can sense for itself. But it has its own narrative at the same time that it is a framework for personal narratives – for example, careers. Employees can focus on their own desires without giving a thought to whether it benefits or harms the organization. But that a person uses an organization to promote his career presumes that the organization uses the person to promote its autopoiesis. An organization's managers are people whose success or failure depends on whether they are able to take on the organization's point of view. Even an organization that exclusively consisted of individual project-makers[60] would inevitably have to distinguish between personal and common projects.

An organization's narrative, therefore, is a part of its strategy, its attempt in the present to connect past and future by setting goals. A strategy is found – as a genre – someplace between the theatrical drama, the historical novel, the futuristic fantasy, and the autobiography.[61]

The product's narratives: an expansion of meaning

A narrative simplifies and pulls together, because its theme is presented in words that create their own space and, thus, determines what is relevant and irrelevant. Every word is an attractor and a 'repulsor' of other words, so the narrative can be content to follow its own wilful progression and ignore everything else.

If you change perspective and look at the narrative from a single one of its elements, we are no longer talking about a contraction but, to the contrary, an *expansion*. Each element is expanded by entering into a narrative and the space(s) of meaning that the narrative unfolds. You can speak of an *association-technique* that is used extensively to guide the receiver's thoughts and feelings. Not only the organization but also its products can be swaddled in narratives and, in this way, acquire a surplus of meaning, so you do not only buy the product but the whole world that surrounds the product and becomes a part of it, so the product and selected parts of its circumstances become one and the same thing. Therefore, we get dreams and fantasies along in the bargain, and the relationship between product and meaning can be turned around, so it is not the product but the meaning that is purchased – a relationship that Hegel noted all the way back in the 1820s[62] and which forms the basis of modern marketing.

If you look closer at how this happens, four methods may be noted. The product's *name* can in itself contain a narrative; the product's *manner of production* can be stylized and give the product depth; the product's *use* can be idealized; and the product's *place of origin* can bring it into the enticing proximity of meanings that are already established in the form of tourist clichés or pictures of nature. Often, retro-words are used to place mass products in a universe of nature and crafts and elemental experience:

1 The product's name can be enriched with meaning by telling about the product. If a new product is to have a name, comprehensive market research is often undertaken on how different words work, so the sound of the word, secondary meanings, and the meaning of individual letters are analysed – often in minute detail that presumably goes far beyond the goal. (If you go into the vegetable section of a supermarket, there will be references to little red farm houses where the air is filled with sunshine, and roosters crow at dawn, and images of fatted cows and rustic farmers create a space that the products have presumably never been near.)
2 The product's *manner of production* is also an important source for narratives. In this way, water in plastic bottles becomes spring water from the earth, from millennia-old grottos and glaciers far from the smoke, din, and smut of modern life. White-smocked scientists, engineers and farmers in checked shirts become symbols of and guarantees for a quality that the receiver is incapable of seeing through.
3 The product's *use* is regularly shown in commercials in which cars are transformed into offroaders in wild terrain, clothes cling to exquisite models, and the everyday products in the kitchen from wash powder to cornflakes are consumed by happy families in large, bright rooms where housekeeping is carried out with almost erotic joy.
4 Finally, the product's *place of origin* is also a part of giving it meaning. That a product comes from nature, almost directly, is a part of making it natural and, *thus*, good. For nature is not the setting for a brutal struggle for survival but is presented as an idyllic past. In the same way, tourist clichés are used about France, Italy and the USA or regions such as Jutland, Brittany and the Swiss Alps for placing products in recognizable and archetypical spaces that rub off on the product and allow it to borrow the warmth of the clichés.

Since we shall look more closely at these methods in the chapter on advertising, there is no reason to pursue it further here.

The organization's use of narratives: ten functions

An organization's narratives are a part of its ongoing self-description and self-reflection. They are told parallel to its other activities but in a constant back-and-forth movement: past, present and future are brought into an overall construction, which is both a product of and a producer of events. If you have chosen a narrative, you have also chosen a perspective and schemes for relevance.

An organization's narratives are never innocent. They are told by parties who are biased and have an intention. They stage themes without explaining why, which opens up motive analyses but also makes the organization into a battleground for narratives. Even though narrators blame each other for distortion, no narrative is absolutely true, solely for the reason that a narrative must inevitably simplify.

Narratives can make use of prototypes that provide them with a special aim. There are narratives about *decline and resurrection*, about *the hero and his trials*, about *scandalous revelations* of hidden sins, about *innovation that overcomes* tradition and resistance and folly. Since an organization consists of communication, it inevitably channels narratives about itself into itself with unpredictable results: narratives that are to defend can arouse critique; critical narratives can evoke criticism of the criticism.

Narratives are flexible ways of leading – that is, to seduce or to lead away – because they do not explain and account for but demonstrate. The fascination of a narrative's imaginary universe may make the receiver accept something he otherwise might not accept. And since managers are much observed persons because they represent the whole, they can also use themselves as a medium for narratives. They tell by acting, because their actions are already symbolic and thus more than just their own. But even though managers are privileged sources for narratives, they do not have the privilege of narrating. Anyone can do that and thus allow concrete processes to become symbols that absorb general meaning.

In this *staging*, a narrator can strike a theme and allow it to unfold in a way that can delight and seduce. The theme is both veiled and unveiled in an arabesque of words and images and sounds and movements, so what is random and arbitrary in the narrative's plot and sequence is almost forgotten. As in the different narratives around a divorce or a war, the same sequence of events can be organized extremely differently – different main characters and supporting characters, causes and motivations, different words about the same thing, different cross-sections of 'what happened', different ideas about what is self-evident and what has to be explained – in short, different coherences, each with their own *meaning* – which are only different and competing, because they deal with the same thing.

Every narrative takes part in a circuit of selection and construction that is modified on an ongoing basis, when narratives clash. Every narrative selects, describes and connects its elements, and even though it cannot create facts from nothing, it can create the meaning of the elements, that is, 'twist' or 'angle' them. Rhetorically, there is always a positive and a negative version of the same sequence of events. Every narrative creates a world, so what is important in Darley's narrative about his love for Justine is meaningless in the narrative about how Justine, as a part of a political plan, a diversion, is to pretend she was interested in Darley.[63]

An organization's narratives only cease when it shuts down. Until then, everyone tells their stories. But in addition to the internal narratives dealing with the relationship between stakeholders – management, employees, customers, mass media, and so on – there are official narratives, which organizations talk about themselves – for example, at anniversaries: about how they started, what crises they have survived, and how they grappled with them. Such stories are probably strategic but not a part of the daily strategic work. They contribute to creating a general meaning by providing a *mimesis* – idealized and idiosyncratic – of the organization's life, even when they attempt to appear neutral. When they approach the present in which the narrative and what is told are on the verge of crossing each other, they do not have more to tell, and they propose in all modesty their good and pious wishes for the future.

Every narrative strives toward its own death, toward the ending of tension and uncertainty, at the same time that it strives for its own life, because there is a sort of tragedy in every conclusion. Even if a narrative ends as a triumph, there is built into the triumph a defeat, a fall: the feast is over, life goes on. Yet, an organization has a different duration and a different time rhythm than a person. It strives for eternal life.

We can summarize by listing ten functions that narratives may have in organizations. The precondition is that narratives in an organization are 'real' within the limits that the narrative's inevitable simplification and glamorization impose:

1 With narratives, an organization acquires symbolic *access to itself* as a whole in the past, present, and future. Therefore, *strategy* becomes a form of narrative,[64] which opens up possibilities and closes them again in the choice of a preferred possibility. Anyone can narrate. But some narratives take root and are retold, and management has special resources to ensure that their narratives have an impact – which is no guarantee of success. An organization's narratives may very well congeal. But they are tested on a running basis by new narratives, because the narrative process never stops, when stories and counter-stories struggle for attention.
2 With narratives, organizations can *create progress* and must inevitably do so. The narratives of organizations are edifying or positive and thus distinguishable from high culture but not from the narratives of mass culture. They follow the model from mainstream Hollywood films: rift, crisis, and happy ending. They paint the present in black and white in order to create a drive toward the future, so the present is electrified by unresolved tension and promises of release.

   An organization's narratives of itself are applied art and must live up to other criteria than just aesthetic. They must not only be good stories but must motivate, regardless of what audience they are aimed at.[65] Even though indirect means can be used, so de-motivation *now* serves as motivation *later*, an organization cannot desire to contribute to the flight of employees and customers. It can mystify, tease, disturb, and put off. It can use irony, forked tongues, artifice, and staging. But its aim is and must be edification. Its narratives must, as indicated, be heroic and banal, measured by the standard used for fictive narratives, which are not responsible to any reality.

The classic fairytale model, therefore, is applicable to an organization's narratives. There is a subject who acts and an object that is desired, a giver and a receiver, helpers and opponents.[66] Depending on how these positions are occupied, interesting mutations can arise. Is the receiver, for example, 'society' or 'the organization itself' or 'the manager'? The answer to that question will result in three very different interpretations of the text. And who are the opponents, and what happens if traditional enemies are re-described as helpers, so the 'evil' boss, the 'cantankerous' engineer, or the 'anarchistic' NGO are brought in as important resources? A person can be labelled as a villain for objective or subjective reasons – without there being objective reasons for distinguishing between what is objective and subjective. Therefore, narratives can be used to test clichés, that is, frozen pictures of the point of view of people or parties.

3 With narratives, an organization can *create and stage* meaning in a way that involves time and contingency and which, therefore, can involve other coherences and other meanings than theory and discourse, which will typically dissolve contingency and stop time.[67] Even a theory that everything changes makes change into an unchanging phenomenon. A narrative is embedded in a culture and its implicit premise for what is important. But, within this framework, the organization can indicate what is important and where action is needed. It can provide schemes and prototypes that its employees are tempted to use, when they themselves are to tell about or interpret something. It can prime, that is, prepare the public and create a carrier wave for later actions – a campaign, a merger, or a change in management. It can isolate events and place them in relation to each other and, thus, distinguish in a lucid way between what is central and what is peripheral. They can enrich a product with meaning, which creates an aura around even a banal mass product.

In short: with narrative, the status quo is placed in a context of past and future in a way that is both unique and exemplary.

This creates an intricate relationship between freedom in the sender and in the receiver. While the sender seduces, the receiver must (re)construct the narrative from resources of meaning that are never identical to the sender's. The narrative supplies a universe of meaning that can be interpreted and, in theory only, there are infinite interpretations. When the narrative disseminates a worldview – an ideology – it can *itself* be read and seen through, whereby its ability to motivate is weakened. It meets a foreign gaze that does not read the text in the desired way but stands at a distance and uses it for its own purpose. The *ideal reader* of narrative theory – who is well-disposed, open, constructive, and has the same resources of meaning as the sender – is, as a rule, far from the real reader.

That a narrative is seen through does not automatically mean that it ceases to work. It can continue to provide prototypes – above all, if there is power behind it and the alternative does not seem credible. Many narratives about Man and Woman are routinely seen through without for that reason losing their force.

4 With narratives, organizations can *inform and motivate* without justifying. The strength of the narrative is that it can shuffle about enormous quantities of information without the burden of making it explicit, because it is served by the prejudices and presumptions, that is, the blindness, that is a condition for being able to observe quickly and which is active in everyday experience. If you are captured by a narrative, you do not notice anything other than the possibilities that the narrative itself sketches out. Therefore, it is often important for a narrator not to draw attention to the fact that it is 'his' narrative. The more visible the narrator is, the more visible is the narrative's contingency. Here, too, Rousseau's point is valid: a narrator must step into the background and give the gods, or the narrative's theme, the honour of his accomplishment.[68]

The motivation may be due to the narrative's information but can be strengthened aesthetically, when the narrative creates credibility by linking it to matters that are familiar, namely, constancy, and at the same time bring them out of a state of equilibrium, that is variation. A narrative must have some aspect of the unusual and thus be unfamiliar in some way in order to work,[69] yet not so unusual that it is not possible to refer to it. Voice, tropes and rhythm can contribute to creating credibility.

5 With narratives, organizations can designate *areas of effort* in which they are lacking (crisis or normal breakdown), and they can state how the initiative can be taken to solve problems (to *will*), how the relevant information can be obtained (to *know*), how the relevant competence can be acquired (to *be able to*), and finally how what is necessary can be done (to *act*), so a *transformation* occurs that is already anticipated and built into the very fact of calling a condition a crisis.

The last phase is the *assessment* in which the process is interpreted and enters into the organization's memory and experience, so it can iteratively be phased into new processes, perhaps, with a necessary twist. Many action films – James Bond, for example – are constructed on this scheme that is part of the very concept of working: desire, decision, competence, planning, execution, and assessment. It provides prototypes for a narrative of change.

6 With narratives, organizations can distinguish between *part and whole*, between individual processes and process that deal with the organization as a whole. This difference does not have to do with the motives of people to act, since individual and collective motives are interwoven and cannot be separated objectively. It is always possible to leap between selfish and unselfish. An organization can distinguish narratively between water carriers and stars, which is decisive for its success and failure.

A narrative can choose levels – whether it is the whole organization, a department, or a single person. It can choose periods – whether it is the lifetime of the whole organization, a particular period – for example, the Second World War, or a single episode – for example, a change in management. It can draw here upon the cultural resource that consists of the conceptual periods developed in society – for example, the 'inter-war period', '1968', or eras marked by a single powerful person.

7 With narratives, organizations can *sketch out their worldview* and state what they consider to be their mission and vision. This does not take the form of a claim – claims are easy to reject and almost invite a no – but the form of examples that are organized in accordance with schemes for what is important and unimportant, acceptable and unacceptable, what kind of loyalty is normal, relationships between managers and employees, men and women, what kind of service is to be delivered, what the relationship is between work life and private life, and so on.

In its narratives, an organization can position itself ideologically without openly putting its cards on the table. An ideology is a construction that organizes the relationship between differences such as individual/community, cause/responsibility, freedom/compulsion, equality/difference, and so on. It can be stated in concepts but can also be incorporated into a narrative that explicitly or implicitly shows what it considers to be freedom and compulsion and how respect for the individual is to be balanced with considerations for the community. The narrative can exercise control over the interpretive space by creating attraction around an ideology by other means than arguments – for example, charismatic personalities.

A narrative can show how Japanese capitalism makes employees into robots and dissolves the distinction between work life and private life, while American capitalism makes room for the creative loner, who ultimately – that is, in a crisis – is superior. The strength in such a narrative lies in the dramatic effect that hides its ideological schemes in the narrative's progress. A film can show pictures of enormous and anonymous corporate buildings and, thus, draw on the old images of towers with princesses locked in them that the hero is to enter and liberate.

By implicating a universe of meaning without mentioning it, the receiver's interpretive process is guided. Since everyone lives in many narratives that intersect each other, the narrative is a familiar form that is easily activated and easily activates strong, robust contexts.

8 With narratives, organizations can provide *specific content to their values* and make clear how they are to be translated into practice and how dilemmas and paradoxes can be dealt with. Even though clashes of values do not have any objective solution, they always find a solution that helps give the organization identity and can be elucidated, so everyone can follow the process and learn from it. Narrative transforms principles and conflict solutions into symbolic examples.

9 With narratives, organizations can distinguish between *closed and open domains*, that is, areas where the linkage is tight, the freedom to interpret is low, and responsibility consists of obedience and, by contrast, areas where the linkage is loose, the freedom to interpret is great, and the responsibility consists in being creative. While openness is a quality of fictive narrative, the difference between openness and closedness is only a strategic difference for a manager. He has no theoretical preference for one type over another but decides on a case-by-case basis which type of narrative is to be activated. In this way, he can create a space for ambivalence that, depending on the circumstances, can be considered as an expansion of the space for action or as an intolerable imposition of uncertainty.[70]

Closed narratives show rigid relationships with a clear connection between cause and effect, which precludes alternatives and absolves from responsibility. They can both be used to excuse and to localize responsibility. Open narratives loosen up and allow several possibilities, so an ambivalence arises and, thus, personal responsibility. They can be used to 'empower' employees but also to explain away and dissolve responsibility.

Propaganda is a closed narrative. Therapy is an open narrative. But upon closer inspection, this simple difference breaks down, because every narrative has a background in what is deemed normal. And if there is no agreement on normality, there is no agreement on what an open or a closed narrative is. Open narratives can also be used for propaganda, as one can see in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, in which the king motivates his few, exhausted soldiers by telling them how much future generations will envy them.[71]

10 With narratives, organizations can provide *prototypes* for conduct – the hero, the martyr, the loyal servant, the idler. They fabricate the templates that employees and customers use in their description of themselves. But in order to be credible, they require *compliance*. This requirement is first and foremost directed toward the organization's managers who have assumed the representation of the whole and who, therefore, must

as a part of their job live up to the role models that the narratives supply. If they do not, the magic of the narratives evaporates and all that is left are sad clichés that arouse more laughter than respect. Success for such narratives occurs if the public takes them over and uses them in their own descriptions.

Transition to design

A narrative is a work that is presented to others. Therefore, it is designed and, therefore, it designs its theme. Narrative is a part of the organization's design, which we shall look at in the next chapter.

5
Organizational Design

You can talk about design in two very different ways. On one hand, design can comprehend anything that has form, so the concept broadens and does not only deal with human works but also natural forms. On the other hand, design can be limited to the design of everyday utility items, particularly those with which you surround yourself and your home. Before we choose sides, we shall look at the background of the concept.

Background of the concept of design

The word 'design' takes its modern contours from Renaissance Italy, where it became a part of art theory[1] as one of the components of painting parallel to *inventio* – the choice of theme, colour, and composition. 'Disegnare' did not just refer to the final product but also the sketch, so its meaning spread to other forms of art. The sketch is distinct from the final product, regardless of what genre you are talking about. *Disegno*, therefore, was assessed positively as a creative principle. Even though design arose in the art system, which in the Renaissance also included architecture and crafts – for example, the art of goldsmithing – the concept among the Romantics was not only loosed from the art system but separated from it, so design was called applied art and, thus, was – in principle – at a distance from pure art.

In our day, the word 'design' has two meanings, a narrow one and a broad one. On one hand, it is *industrial design* – the styling of the myriad consumer items with which we surround ourselves daily. On the other hand, there is the *general design*, which is the 'design of everything' – cities, computer programs, organizations and action plans. Even behaviour is designed, so mothers can chastise their children with a 'what kind of a tone is that'. Even the word 'existence-design' has been forged, so it is not surprising that Otl Aicher's 1991 book *die welt als entwurf* was called in English *the world as design*.[2]

When the concept is inflated, it is endowed with a utopian dimension of designing a better world. For the intent of design is not to make something worse but to make it better. You can read in a design book from 1940 that industrially designed objects 'are of no real value unless they are easy first essays in the fundamental redesign of our world'.[3] We can eat with beautifully designed flatware but our teeth demand 'stronger meat'. The ambition is to provide a universal method that can produce ever new engines, cities, and environments.

A universal concept of design has lost its antithesis and, thus, its stimulus. Therefore, we want to use the word more narrowly: design of utility items. Therefore, we shall ignore a number of areas in which an organization designs, for example, shop interiors, packaging, marketing, and even the organization as a whole, which are designed and redesigned. Here, too, it is the case that there are no longer things that are not designed. Design's point of origin does not exist, because non-design is read as design. However, there is no reason to delineate a precise boundary in the fluid transition from industrial design toward the concept of total design. We want to start generally by looking at how design is experienced and what form and giving form are.

As an introduction: what design does

In a cafeteria, you pick up without thought the white plastic mug standing there, because you want a cup of coffee. Perhaps, you notice the mug; perhaps, you take it for granted, focused as you are on the coffee and the situation. If you take note of it, it is not a good thing: it is thin, it threatens to fall apart in your hands, it burns you, and it makes a poor impression, as if the only thing important about its production was to save material. The curves in its sides, the pattern on the bottom, and the edging are undoubtedly designed but not designed with any other consideration but to strengthen the mug in relation to a minimal use of plastic.

Nevertheless, the mug is designed. There is a relationship between the circle at the bottom and the circle at the top, it has the form of a segmented cone, and it has a particular height that makes it suitable to wrap your hand around and to hold a particular amount of liquid.

Thought has gone into its form. But the thought has only been functional and financial. From this also comes design, since it is not possible *not* to design. Every mug has an appearance. Only it looks as though the appearance is a chance product of *other* considerations. And we accept it, because a cafeteria is not a place we dwell in but a sort of culinary toilet in which quick and pressing needs are satisfied.

On the other hand, pick up a cup in a large department store or a specialty shop. Here, it is not just function but form that is in focus. That the cup is water-tight is a matter of course; it is not even given a thought. If there is a hole in the bottom of the cup, this does not affect the judgement of its appearance. The cup has a flaw and will be thrown away, to be replaced by another of its type. If all the cups have a hole in the bottom and the salesperson insists that all cups of that sort have it, we look at him as if he is crazy. We pick the cup up and note how it feels; we look at its form and at the transitions between the cup's various surfaces, whether the surface is velvety or grainy, whether the edge that is to be brought to your lips is soft or sharp, thick or thin, whether the cup is supple or angular, clean or embellished, whether the handle fits with the cup, whether it works together with the cup or simply hangs on it, and if it is a tea cup, we consider the relationship between cup and saucer.

If the salesperson insists that the large saucer is not a mistake but makes the cup easy to hold even when you stand up, so you can put a cookie on it, and the cup is a part of the English tradition for how tea cups are made, we are ready to reconsider our intuitive aversion to the 'disproportion'. We look at the cup in a new way.

In the whole process, our examination crosses between the cup's parts and its whole and between its form and function. If we choose a complicated thing such as, for example, a teapot, you can compromise on function, if the form is perfect, or the reverse. You can accept learning to pour from the teapot in a special way, so it does not drip or that the lid is so tight that moisture collects to block the free flow of the tea, and sends it out in small explosions. But these small inconveniences are accepted, if the teapot is a pleasure to behold. We are in the borderland between art and design.

Designed objects are not chosen in a vacuum. To choose everyday consumer items presumes use and, therefore, design can never be the first choice. Before design can be a criterion, the function must be familiar. Otherwise, it is not possible to see the limitations within which the design operates or to see design as a solution to a problem. You can imagine a person who at the sight of an unknown object exclaims, 'God, that is beautiful! What is it?' The person has not just observed a designed object but, to the contrary, a borderline case in which a form can impress, just as the form of a cloud or a stone can enchant.

Even though we can be informed about things and their function, this does not mean that we are informed about what good design is. The considerations about which cup is to be chosen does not follow a mechanical rule. No particular procedure decides whether a cup is acceptable or unacceptable, or which cup is 'the right one'.

This does not mean that the choice of design happens blindly, guided only by an intuitive feeling. The assessment of the function prevents it. But aesthetic quality cannot be discussed definitively, that is, in a way that is binding on others. Often, we must fall back on a less binding 'it seems to me'. We are thus approaching the criterion that Kant reserved for art, namely, feeling.

By observing design aesthetically, we calibrate the way the object attunes us, so we end up saying that 'this is too big' or 'the handle is wrong' without being able to say, when pressed, precisely *what* is wrong. If arguments are used, we do not surrender to the unforced force of the better argument. We cannot be convinced with arguments that a cup is beautiful, if we do not 'think' so, and we do not accept that we *should* find as beautiful. Arguments and allusions to what others believe are only reasons to engage in the lingering contemplation that Kant recommended,[4] thus refining our feeling. If you bow to arguments or to social pressure, it only means that you are uncertain in your taste.

Therefore, it is impossible to say whether words influence feeling. Since we only have access to feelings as we experience them and cannot distinguish between feeling itself and our experience of it, feeling is always good enough, and we grant at most only a little extra time for nuance and contemplation or to observe a designed object in another way. What we do is test whether the designed object fits into our personal attunedness – which is not constant – and into the lifestyle we want to pursue. Here, the aesthetic value of the object and its signal value play a role. With a choice of design, you do not just choose yourself but also indicate your affiliation with a group. When you choose a design, you cannot avoid committing yourself.

Here, the field of 'the varieties of beauty' is opened up. No design is binding on everyone. Even though 'good taste' may exist, it is only widespread taste, not true taste, and it is surrounded by other predilections. Taste does not follow the truth model, which distinguishes between true and false, nor the democratic model, where the majority is always right. Anyone can insist on his own taste and decide whether he will strengthen himself with the agreement or disagreement of others.

In the same way, an organization can determine whether it wants to focus on broad tastes and go after mass production or find a niche for the excellent or the bizarre. If it measures its success in money, the important difference is not good or bad design but sellable and unsellable design. Out on the periphery, we have design that is not to be used, because it is produced as a unique specimen – a designed object that only exists in a single example – perhaps, as a prototype that never came into production; perhaps, as art. Picasso's ceramics certainly have the form of platters and bowls but are rarely placed on the table.

In between the many anonymous and little noted events that fill an ordinary day without etching themselves into memory – getting dressed, getting to work, going to the bathroom, waiting – there are small and great moments in which your attention is awakened and you are aroused from your half-sleeping state. It often has to do with a break in routine. It can be great moments of success and recognition – getting married or promoted, winning an election, or making a discovery. Such moments have a strong inner value, also even though they point beyond themselves. If it has to do with beauty, you can consider the experience as an inner value or as a religious sign.

Some experiences can make time stand still; they do not point beyond themselves and are not a tool in any struggle for recognition. To experience such moments requires that you prepare yourself, so you can both lose yourself and get yourself back in a strengthened form. Design can open up this aesthetic dimension. It can provide a powerful experience of presence, because a thing steps out of its anonymous utilitarian context and draws attention to itself, accompanied by great or small pleasures.

Design can also be a tool for gaining recognition. You can buy a B&O stereo, because you think it is beautiful or to make an impression. But there is also an inner value in the aesthetic circuit between the sender and the receiver in which the sender focuses attention and talent upon a thing, and the receiver agrees to examine it slowly, compare its forms with other forms, and allow the moment's sensation and meaning to spread out like rings in the water of the soul.

Without this aesthetic basis, the status game would not even get started. Anyone can say that the wallpaper is beautiful. But to compare and justify and take the experience beyond sheer feeling requires practice, so the experience is not just a report of what happens in the observer, a simple 'it seems to me' but finds his place in an aesthetic context.

If you are not used to putting your aesthetic tastes into words, it can be awkward, almost exposing yourself, to justify your judgements. You do not insist and quickly hide behind an 'it seems to me'. Aesthetics offers itself as a language about special experiences that appear and are strengthened simply by being called aesthetic. This relationship is staunchly circular: aesthetics cleanses the experiences with which it justifies itself, draws them out of their interwovenness in everyday experience, and thus creates special domains for arts and crafts.

For a single individual, design is important because it can attune and arouse longings to sense and appropriate, so designed things are part of the narratives that we need to use when we are to describe ourselves. For an organization, design is important, because it can put a handle on these longings, isolate them, strengthen them, and use them as tools for strengthening themselves. But this double interest in design is tripled and quadrupled, because design is also used to tell about the organization itself, so it styles its sensory appearance in all details from logo to headquarters and on a fourth front to the marketing of its designed products, so marketing becomes the design of design.

If we concentrate on the design of everyday consumer items, there is a *rational* effort to work with function and an *emotional* effort to build pathos into everyday objects, so they radiate with a special light. An important part of design's appeal is to make objects tempting to the eyes and hands – for example, when clothing stores put their soft wares on display, so customers are tempted to touch them without knowing that it is the *point* for them to caress the soft cashmere and the rustling silk. They get an extra boost of pleasure by doing something they think is forbidden, because nothing stimulates desire like the forbidden. Luxury is the sensation of an especially pleasurable sort, in which sensation and meaning work together.

Things can be made tempting by being presented arrogantly and with an edge, so they radiate free aggression, or by being made chubby and cuddly, so they emanate an aura of the erotic.[5] Such things can create a mild shock, when they are seen for the first time, but also preserve a sort of magnetism, so their use provides us with a slight joy that need not say its name but remains noticeable as a lack when you use other things of the same sort.

Design is both cause and effect in this process. Through design, we can discover what attunedness we live in, what types of objects we prefer – dark or light, creamy or crystalline, simple or complex. Designed objects can enter wordlessly into our worldview, so we cannot avoid them – both because of the joy they provide us here and now and the status they provide in others' eyes, where it can be difficult to distinguish between the aesthetic and the social. Thus, we are bound to design with chains that do not rattle.[6] And we can become as sensitive as the princess on the pea, when we are filled with a metaphysical joy at the sight of a finely arched curve or suddenly sickened by the world when we encounter ugly things.

Through a change in your own mode of observation, you can follow your own story and inlay it in the social history of taste. You can tell a story about how you slowly learned to understand and love Baroque design or how you grew tired of Japanese design, royal porcelain and le Corbusier. You can fall into a reverie in your storeroom, contemplating things you once found beautiful.

Design as 'giving form'[7]

Design is willed form. As such, the concept has no cultural boundaries. Everything human beings touch they give form to and, thus, meaning, so objects are transformed into meaningful objects, that is, symbols of themselves with a place in a symbolic order. Just as there can never only be one word, there can never only be one piece of design.

We can summarize: with design, not only is a utility context indicated but also status. If you see a hammer, you do not just notice whether it is practical or impractical but also in the same glance whether it is beautiful or ugly, expensive or cheap. A B&O stereo expresses not only sophisticated taste but also power over things and the ability to afford luxuries.

The goal of fashioning is to increase the quality of everyday things – both their function and their form. That design exists does not automatically mean that a designer can be pointed to. The primary interest was the object, not the originator. Everyday utility items from history that now rest in museum shelves all over the world reveal no names. They are often beautiful to look at and have a nice feel to them – if you are allowed to touch them. Tools, kitchen utensils, furniture, weapons, and clothing were shaped and improved over generations until they stabilized into forms that were so closely connected to their function, the potential in their material and production techniques, and the human body that it seems as if they are globally related, almost natural. Knives and pottery resemble each other everywhere. Everything superfluous has been stripped off or reduced to ornament. If these modest, anonymous forms carry any social status, it is connected with size, material, and decoration. Not only the simple but also the extravagant seems to be an extremely necessary thing. Anyone can make and possess a clay pot. But a pot of gold, several feet high and finely engraved, is not for everyone. In fairy tales – *1001 Nights* or *Grimm's* – you can see the primeval joy of things that have an aura of well-designed luxury and connects the elfish delight in the beautiful with the dwarfish delight in the costly.

Design has one link to function and another to symbol. To use Umberto Eco's terms, it can be read *denotatively* as use and *connotatively* as meaning.[8] And meaning places a designed object in the midst of a culture in which a producer displays his ability and a user improves his life. Both blend their souls with objects and make them into external signs of an ability, a use and a status, so design is inevitably communication, even when it is not presented as a message but hides behind an improved function. There is information in form, so form lives up to the definition of information as 'a difference that makes a difference'.[9] And as information, design takes part in communication's triad of information, utterance, and understanding. Robinson Crusoe's fashioning of his tools on a desert island can be read as a sign *that* he was there and who he was, regardless of whether the reader is himself or another.[10]

With fashioning, the human mode of observing is transformed. Even though human beings presumably have sensed in the same way in all times and, thus, 'see the same', they nevertheless do not see the same because cultures use different schemes to interpret what they see, what is central and peripheral, banal and surprising, beautiful and ugly. For the ancient Egyptians, the things they placed in dark graves were not first and foremost beautiful but, to the contrary, durable.[11] For the people of Willendorf, their Venus may have been beautiful.

The speed with which we sense depends on what is normal and unusual, and the same holds true of the meaning we attribute to the sensed. We are not satisfied with seeing but instinctively make an extra effort 'to see as' when we fill the holes in our sensation with knowledge, which is not the same at all times. A stone-age man could not see that the two lights in the dark are a car, even though he sees the same two lights as everyone else. Nor would he know what is a luxury and what is ordinary to us. But this distinction is vital for design, because design makes a difference and creates a distinction. An organization can focus on luxury items and dismiss the poor, or it can focus on discount items and scare off the rich. Or it can, with design, present everyday goods as if they were luxury items. While everyday goods are produced in series that have a finite number of combinations, luxury items are produced as prototypes that permit an infinite variation.[12] The difference between normal needs and luxury needs is *itself* designed, so we get design squared. Since designed objects are not just to be produced but also to be displayed, an extra effort of design is required on the back of the former.

To fashion is to create improbability and, thus, order. If you find four stones lined up on the beach, you balk at the notion of chance and leap to the conclusion that someone has been there, something is ordered. To create order, like rhythm, is to create expectations. The four stones allow inferences. And once expectations are created, you can play with them even more, fulfil them or dash them, and create new expectations – perhaps, in layers, so general expectations are fulfilled at the same time subordinate expectations are dashed. An old genre such as the novel can open up new types of narratives. Morality punishes a dashing of expectations, aesthetics rewards it.

Against the background of the pleasure connected with fulfilled expectations, another pleasure that has to do with dashed expectations and which ends with stimulating what could be called *empty expectations* can be achieved: the expectation that 'something' happens, even though you do not know what, because all constants can be transformed into variables and because the very breach of communication's preconditions such as silence, distorted syntax, or *Verfremdung* is observed as communication. Just as people can takes things out of their context and normal use, they can liberate themselves from some of their expectations, just not the context that objects exist and people communicate.

In the interplay between tradition and innovation, design becomes a self-conscious effort that does not only have to do with improving function but also with creating beautiful and, perhaps, unusual forms and, in this way, to give designed objects a social and emotional appeal. The value of design is

- the value of familiar use (history)
- the value of aesthetic pleasure (enjoyment)
- the value of social distinction (recognition) and
- the value of novelty and deviation (titillation)

Even though forms can be produced by chance and stabilize themselves wordlessly, simply in the way things are used, the world is permeated by a conscious will to form. Design is everywhere, because anti-design is also observed as design. A modern individual is not allowed to forget who he is and what he does, because he is what he does.

To give something form reveals both a person and an object. Therefore, it is tempting to be a form-giver and tempting to generalize the concept, so that everyone becomes a small-scale designer. With design, you can produce yourself in a visible and simplified form, and you can deviate without becoming a deviant. For deviation is expected under the label of 'creativity' and is thus not deviation. Even though you may not be the master of your every fancy, you may get the honour and, at least, the responsibility for them. To be creative is to trust your senses and your intuition and follow their trail beyond normal boundaries. Here, there is a difference between artists, who produce unique items and can endlessly interpret failure as delayed success, and form-givers, who mass-produce and, therefore, must convince a private organization to do so, so their time horizon is short.

Giving something form is achieved in the transition from concept to reality. For a designer, it is a criterion of success that his works are produced and sold, even though nothing prevents him from becoming world-famous for his advanced and inspiring prototypes.[13] So, here, we are talking about a 'designer-designer', who is known by an inner circle of experts and not many others.[14] Success as a designer requires the recognition of the market and of colleagues, so two loosely connected circuits for success and failure arise, which can strengthen each other and play out against each other.

This simply says that, even though art and design are referred to the market, there are two different markets with different principles for success and failure. That they are mixed presumes that they can be separated. Design must please, because it is to be sold on other conditions than art. It cannot offend the buying public, unless they find it pleasant to be offended. Therefore, design has less tolerance for ugliness than art.

Form and difference

There is no material without form. Even when you reject a form, it is inevitably resurrected, because nothing – not even that! – is without form. Just as there is always weather of some sort, everything has a limited form of some sort. Even water always has a form, even when it takes its form from other forms. Even the colour red has the same form as what is coloured. Only infinity – for example, the world as a whole – is formless, because it has no limits.

In complicated networks, prediction and control become impossible illusions that must be replaced with ongoing planning and improvisation. You manoeuvre in a sea you do not master. Plans are realized partially and in pieces, when everyone tries to predict each other's predictions and control each other's control from uncertain guesses about motives, interpretations and resources. On the basis of a myriad of actions, systems arise that set limits, 'give form to' their parts and, therefore, are more than the sum of the parts. Adam Smith spoke of the invisible hand of the market. An organization also has invisible features and is *itself* invisible. This is inherent to the idea of autopoiesis: a wholeness that creates its parts must be prior to the parts and cannot be understood from them.

The prevalent use of form has to do with contour or diagram. Children learn about things as contours and do not distinguish sharply between objects and images. In the zoo, they are delighted at seeing the picture of a lion, when the lion is out of view. They can recognize a cow from the page but are easily confused by an oblique perspective, so a cow seen from the back or from above does not arouse the pleasure of recognition. As contours, the piece in the puzzle has the same form as the place it fits into, even though the piece is complete and the place is empty. And the placement of the piece is double-controlled by the contour of the piece in relation to other pieces and by the contour of the picture to which the piece contributes.

If you consider form as contour, every continuation of contour becomes a choice of direction and curvature, so a contour gets a rhythm and creates an expectation with which it can play. A line that is extended can contain an inexpressible tension between fulfilment and breach, so the contour is filled with a pulsating power and gives the eye a stimulating pleasure and a pleasant relief, when the line meets itself after ending its run. On the back of a form, new forms can be placed again and again. This is what happens with Catholic church doors in which forms are placed in forms, placed in forms in a larger form with three gates under a sun-like glass mosaic until the senses lose themselves in a chaotic cosmos where you can intuit God's omnipotence – only God can find order in what men experience as chaos.

At the same time that the boundary is marked, a difference between boundary and what draws the boundary and what we call the observer or – *in casu* (in this case) – the form-giver is also marked. Without this extra difference, we are not talking about design but, perhaps, nature's self-unfolding. While contour is in two dimensions and thus for the Eye, form-giving can be extended into three dimensions, so the Eye can see shadows and depth, while the Hand gets the opportunity to touch and, perhaps, grasp, because a 'front' and a 'behind' and, thus, different perspectives arise. You can make the *body* into the paradigm of form, since it makes a radical difference between internal and external – where this difference is peculiar and disturbing, because the body only has access to the external by virtue of internal operations.

A form makes a difference in *something* that can be called the medium of form.[15] The difference between form and medium is not a difference between structure and material but between loose and fixed linkages in which fixed linkages are not necessarily physically immobile. Alexander Calder's mobiles are also forms.

A form-giver can start – perhaps, hesitatingly – with a stroke of a pen that arbitrarily and irreversibly give the ink form on paper and in thought, perhaps, give a knife form in stainless steel. Thereafter, he can see how this feature can be connected to new features, so a chain of features arises that can filter in and out of each other in several dimensions, so some strokes of the pen are not only flat strokes on paper but show depth. Every feature creates a new situation and a new starting point until the form-giver is either satisfied or throws in the towel. The further down the chain he goes, the more limited his latitude becomes, because the weight of what was already done is increased. Whether the form-giver feels his way forward or works according to a plan is not decisive. But even if he works in accordance with an inner picture, he is regularly surprised, when the finished work is unfolded.

No difference can be the first. Differences are created on the basis of differences that have already been made. This is simply another way of saying that giving form requires an ordered world and takes place on the basis of earlier fashioning. Nothing is random and everything is conditional.

Even though the forms of nature are far more complex than those of men, it is only in culture that there are works that are produced and, therefore, communication. A designed form is a sign that connects visible with invisible – for example, clay with meaning and a logo with values. This requires observers who are equipped with sensors, with the ability to process information, and with memory, which again requires them to be unstable. An icicle that drips down from roof cannot remember what led to its stiffened form or what metamorphoses are expected in the future.

Where do forms come from? The first answer is that forms arise spontaneously and inevitably. This does not solve the form-giver's problem, which is to find the right form for a particular function. The second answer is that giving something form has a personal and a cultural background. No one can choose his background, so form-giving draws on the invisible resources of body and culture – in short, history.[16] There must be a problem, and there must be a spectrum of possible solutions that can be compared. A form-giver gives form against a background of given forms, even when he looks back – or forward – to the simplest forms. The third answer, therefore, is that forms come from the blindness and darkness behind the mindful moment that can neither be observed nor controlled. Like sensation, good ideas pop up from nothing, whereupon they can be tested and compared.

Even when form is a gift from a giver, it is also a gift to the giver himself, when it pops up in inspired series, perhaps, guided by an intuitive sense of a plan, perhaps, guided by the sheer logic of one feature that leads to the next. You can anticipate with sketches and reflection. But you cannot programme good ideas, which in modern society are new ideas.

Against this background, a form-giver can create his own idiom that is his outermost horizon and which he can neither choose nor justify. It is not at his disposal. He cannot get behind it but must follow his intuition and hope to be pushed to the limit, so what he wants and what he can do and what he achieves merge together – which is the Nordic definition of happiness.

Form in society

How forms arise and are transformed is left in the mysterious darkness of tradition. When many forms are possible, and none necessary, you cannot proceed logically to forms. You have to proceed historically and follow which forms have 'success in the social' and form a tradition as classics and how traditions renew themselves on an ongoing basis, because every new position quickly becomes banal and thereby a platform for new attempts to capture the future.

We shall not follow the historical rhythm in the dance between art and design but only note two things. In modern society, the ability to judge design – taste – is not dependent on rules, logic and deduction but depends on an intuitive or reflective pleasure. As Kant remarked, the judgement of taste does not proceed from a general principle to a concrete example but the opposite way: from the concrete to the general.[17] Second, a judgement of taste is not just a report of a subjective condition, that is, 'how it seems to me', but has an object and can be discussed. This precondition, however, is only a starting point and holds good as long as a common ground can be maintained. In the final instance, it is not possible to prove or disprove a judgement of taste. When arguments run in circles without convincing, we fall back on the classic *de gustibus non disputandum est* – taste is not to be discussed – whereupon we use differences in taste to mark identity and difference in a harmless domain. The struggle between Bauhaus and Baroque does not threaten society but, to the contrary, gives business a push.

Thus, we are beyond the objective and must be content to follow the factual: this is what happened. Design stories have to do with an open and hidden struggle between people with different agendas. The outcome is a purely empirical matter. There is a closed art system but no closed design system. Even though a piece of design may have a price, independent of its sale, it is typically produced for the market and must be judged there.

Art, too, is familiar with the clash between economics and aesthetics. But art, as art, is not functional. It is supposed to give form to new experiences continually and, therefore, easily offends the old, so a work of art has a latent period before it – perhaps – breaks through and moves from periphery to centre, from experiment to classic. Therefore, art can work with a greater amount of deviation than design. Even though both can shock, design has a closer relationship to sales and wants to surprise but not frighten. Art need not be beautiful or pleasurable. The opposition between beautiful and ugly crumbled away long ago, so both sides of the difference can be aesthetic tools.

Even though there are spectacular examples of unusable design, what is remarkable is how few there are. Design fights its fight in a market with an extremely wide variety, because it is a modern mantra that every person is unique. We surround ourselves with design, perhaps, just a simple piece that demonstrates a positive image of 'who we are' or would like to be.

To surround yourself with ironic design would be exhausting, because irony is a part of a social game – and where is the audience? But the positive image is also subject to the whims of fashion and boredom. Therefore, design is forcibly renewed, whether this happens as adaptation to an audience or as a preadaptive advance, that is, as a deviation with the ambition of making the public adapt. An old form can be decorated, and an old function can be re-thought and re-formed, so it is experienced as overwhelmingly correct, when the insight breaks through.

Even though there is a difference in principle between art and design, the boundary is regularly tested and crossed, which happens to all boundaries. The fur-covered cup at the New York Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) perverts its function and arouses a slight disgust when you imagine drinking tea through this putrid hair (Image 5.1). You can quickly see that the chairs by Gerrit Rietveld and Nina Saunders would be horrendous to sit in, so they are more for decoration than use. There are intermediate forms between art and design such as, for example, Poul Kjærholm's halyard chair, which has removed all mechanical hinges between body and legs and is so beautiful that it almost *has* to be good to sit in, even though it is not.

By contrast, objects can have qualities that make it so you bear with their ugliness – a moth-eaten armchair can be so wonderful to sit in that you could not do without it, and objects from your childhood home may be so replete with memory that they are close to indispensable, even though they

Image 5.1 Meret Oppenheim, fur-covered cup, saucer and spoon, 'Le Déjeuner en fourrure', Paris, 1936
Source: Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York.

are not the first thing you think of when the word 'beauty' is mentioned. There is an eternal triangle between form and function and meaning.

Modern society is pluralistic. It is not just easy but necessary to deviate. And there is a diminishing burden of deviation from objective to moral to aesthetic judgements. To deny facts is idiocy. To deviate morally can arouse contempt but need not break the circle of tolerance – and if you break with one group, there is another one ready for precisely that reason. Aesthetically, deviation is not just free but required. You have to be original, that is, 'peculiar but yourself', and it is forbidden to copy. There is more individuality in deviating than repeating, so modern society does not only reward deviation but eroticizes innovation. And since innovation does not take place linearly but explosively and since no idiom is compulsory, there is a fierce competition between ambitious designers, so no one despises a designer as much as another designer.

The demand for deviation is tamed by the demand for success, so the compromise becomes the American designer Raymond Loewy's MAYA principle: Most Advanced, Yet Acceptable. Accordingly, we are in the market, which is not oriented in accordance with metaphysical Truth or absolute Quality, but in accordance with success or failure. You observe what convinces, well-knowing that nothing convinces everyone always. World history is world judge. This creates a penetrating *temporality*, so *duration becomes the most robust evidence of quality*.

Claims about Truth and Quality are normally imprecise and always easy to reject. Since they cannot be decided objectively, you leap over to the subjective side, so a statement about Truth and Quality is weakened until it simply expresses an 'opinion'. Claims about quality take on an aggressive tinge, when the absence of objective logic is compensated by personal force. If the argument is weak, the voice must be raised or amplified with authority. So, designers slam their fists on the table and rage about no-talent colleagues and the blunders of the age.

Anyone can believe what he wants about aesthetic truth and quality but not about success and failure, even though there are tested ways of explaining away poor sales. Since endless quantities of design are sent out on the market, they are tested by their ability to maintain purchasing interest. By virtue of the dynamic of the market with its great variation, powerful selection mechanisms, and poor retention, most design quietly drifts into the sunset and is forgotten.

To produce something new is thus also to 'produce' something old, namely, what was new before and is now outdated. Every designer must strengthen his products socially, whether it happens through marketing, fashion-setting, event, or scandal. The 'international school' of the 1920s and 1930s with names such as Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe turned 'their back aggressively … on the past, its traditions, practices and habits, and the fact that a thing has always been done is their most decisive reason for not doing it now'.[18] Their aggressive attempt to start from nothing, however, was strongly dependent on the tradition they critiqued – not only because criticism requires something to criticize but also because their own contribution borrowed right and left from other parts of the tradition. It cannot be otherwise.

It is doubtful whether design can scandalize, even though it can certainly surprise. But the surprise is tamed by a blasé public's hunger for the new, so it applauds happily when their taste is offended.

You can, as a designer or some other creative mind, react in two ways when you are confronted with hectic modern life. You can step up your pace and attempt to run faster into the future than everyone else. The price of this pace is in the pace itself. It makes no sense to use a lot of time and great care, when the attention span of both the sender and the receiver is short. Instead of bemoaning the loss of cultural memory, a quick forgetting is accepted, which is neutralized by new works. The designer acknowledges being his own perfidious enemy, when he overtakes himself and ceaselessly focuses on the new. The product becomes a parasite on a design process that is cultivated for its own sake. It is pleasant to be creative.

Or you can stop pushing your own pulse up in an attempt to keep up with the times. You can allow the times to take care of themselves, immerse yourself, think through the essence and function of things slowly, carefully, and with a free-floating attention to find new forms. Of course, you hope that when you resurface into time, there are receivers who, even if they are not ready, can still be engaged.

If they are to be named, the first is called a young way of designing and the second an old way of designing. The more time and experience a designer has behind him, the harder he is to change and the more silence he can tolerate. So the choice is between an attempt at eternal youth, aesthetically speaking, or the acceptance of a personal identity that appears as style and which a designer can take over as his essence, because it can only vary on the premise of constancy. Thus, he surrenders the market to other protagonist who do not only have variation but genuine innovation to offer. When we are to tell the story of design, we inevitably use the conflict between generations to create an overview and drama.

The sensed and the imaginary

A piece of design is not just what it is. The American art theorist Arthur Danto claims that physically identical works are different, because they have different backgrounds and contexts. A designer cannot do anything other than give form, feature by feature, and watch the features unite in lines, contours, surfaces, geometries, and stories. But along with the physical work, which can be sensed, an imaginary world is opened up that puts the work in connection with rejected possibilities and with other works and attunes the receiver in a special way. The work's *meaning* consists of the threads of coherence that are drawn out in time and space from actual observation – to other works and other experiences. The work 'says something' when it is surrounded by an aura of references.

A designer seduces his audience into an imaginary world that they have in common or, perhaps, tragically, only think they have in common. Whether the seduction takes place through desire or fear, through pleasure or disgust, through the beautiful or the prurient is immaterial. What is crucial is that design *works*. You can be lured into the invisible world with the small tickles of which Nabokov spoke – tiny goose bumps on the back of your neck, tears that gather in the corner of your eye, a fascinated sigh at an exquisite detail – or you can slowly penetrate and appropriate the use-world of the work, which is not revealed at first sight. Design works intuitively and reflexively, as an eye-catcher and a repetition, as experience and understanding. The design we are fascinated by and, perhaps, surround ourselves with demonstrates what sort of world we inhabit.

Design is not imitation of anything visible but of something invisible. And while some swear to one type of design – perhaps, cool Bauhaus design or flowery Mediterranean design, there are others who combine the pure and the decorative, the sleek and the colourful, the creamy and the crystalline. Design can focus on visible effect or allow the effect to hide behind the absence of effect. But in order to be able to talk about design, the umbilical cord to a function must be maintained. It may be stretched and become thin. But if it breaks, we are out of the world of design and into the world of art.

All design automatically has meaning because it refers, at a minimum, to a designer. Even design that we do not understand, we understand as design, just as we can see that Japanese calligraphy is calligraphy, even though we cannot read it. By virtue of a production, a physical object is permeated with references to something absent – a producer 'behind' and an imaginary world 'in front'. It becomes an icon, a sign of itself and *thereby* of something else. And this world beyond the world that design opens up is not, as opposed to the religious world, purely invisible but visible–invisible at the same time, just like words and human beings.

Design is one of the places where religious longing is taken over and transformed into secular forms. We shall see later that commercials also make use of this double move. Design is, along the same lines as art, the habitat for a longing that, in the midst of the everyday, leads us beyond the everyday. A tragedy can uplift and a comedy depress. Design can show how things can comprise a care so competent and patient that it is uplifting to see them and a relief in taking them in your hands.

Eye and Hand

The debate about the relationship between form and function is an old one. One parameter has to do with the aesthetic, which we shall for the sake of convenience call the Eye, well-knowing that the ear and the skin also have their pleasures. The ear rejoices at the sound of a solid car door or the noble rush from an elevator, while the skin can delight in cashmere and silk, spongy rubber, and cold steel. But it is the Eye that catches the forms and the clash between forms, just as I once daily enjoyed the delicately wrought transition in the difficult juncture between radiator, front fender, front door and windshield of my now deceased Citroën DS.

We shall oppose the Eye with *the Hand*. It, too, has its pleasures that can arise when you pick up a designed object and use it. While the Eye is oriented by the desire the object arouses simply by being observed and, perhaps, even observed carefully and slowly, so you every so often can linger instead of simply going past, the Hand has to do with the pleasure you can get from handling an object every day, touching it, taking it in your hand and using it.

In both, there is a reward. The Eye has to do with moments that catch the eye and arouse pleasure or, perhaps, a series of moments in which you are pleasantly brought out of your self-composure and then pleasantly regain it. The Hand involves time in a more incalculable way, so the shock of love diminishes and is replaced by a joy of things that are beautiful to use and ultimately arouse a familiar joy that comes from fulfilled promises – perhaps, even in areas in which you made no demands, so you are surprised at what the thing can do, unexpected.

Eye and Hand do not go in tandem. If you maximize the joy of use, the pleasure of the eye does not follow automatically. If you create a pretty dress,[19] this does not automatically mean good design. Design does not just have to do with the joy of seeing but also the joy of using – and it cannot be satisfied here and now but is demonstrated over time. Nothing guarantees spontaneous harmony and dual maximization. Therefore, it is simply wrong that a designer can concentrate on the use and *let form follow function* or follow the pleasure of the Eye and hope that *function follows form*. Eye and Hand each has its own criteria, enjoyments and obstinacies. Neither of them is the swishing poodle's tail of the other. It is in their clash that design strikes sparks.

Another difference that does not collapse with the difference between Eye and Hand has to do with Intuition and Reflection. We have seen that a work can arouse an intuitive joy that arises by immediate consumption – in considering, listening, reading – and, which may be a goal in itself, protected against the gnawing critique of meditation and reflection and their puncturing of blissful innocence. We have also seen that other pleasurable benefits can be gained from analysing and reflecting and finding coherence that does not simply offer itself to the eye, yet has a spontaneous joy. Even though the pleasure of the Eye pulls toward the intuitive and the pleasure of the Hand toward the reflective, both Eye and Hand have their intuitive and their reflective pleasure.

Whether it is the same pleasure that is simply sensed differently or whether they are of a different species need not concern us here. We can

Table 5.1 Dimensions of design

Form	*Eye*	
Intuitive		Reflective
	Hand	**Function**

also ignore the question of whether the two types of pleasure preclude each other, so you cannot enjoy spontaneously a work you have dissected on smooth steel of the analytical table or whether they strengthen each other, if contemplation of a work can oscillate between spontaneity and reflection. We can be satisfied with remarking that, for logical reasons, the immediate pleasure must come first and that, most often, you do not go any farther. But, sometimes, you go into depth and some people live by going into detail and structure and can give words to their schooled insight, so it can be conveyed to amateurs who will supplement the joy of experience with that of insight. This provides a cross-list in which the field to the northwest is the Form Corner, while the field to the southeast is the Function Corner, as can be seen in Table 5.1.

The matter of design is not exhausted in this way. For design does not just have to do with allowing Eye and Hand to meet and then use their dual limitations as a spur. When there are two criteria, there is no simple or 'technological' method for achieving the right solution, so design already for that reason is more than a matter for specialists. While the burden and joy of the specialist consists in the fact that he need only take one into consideration – which can be difficult enough – a designer must take many. A design problem has no objective solution, and there is no manual that describes in four easy steps how you do it. Therefore, design is a field in which the hero is 'the creative person' and in which the loner and the name is fetishized.

Pure, decorative and metaphysical design

In the dialectic between form and function, no pole can eradicate the other. Function cannot be dissolved by form without the category of 'design' disintegrating. And form cannot be made automatic by function, since no function has a natural form linked to it. Form can

1 arise as an unintended by-product, so design becomes non-design,
2 be processed independently,
3 be a parasite on function, and
4 contribute to hollowing out function.[20]

For a form-giver, the constraints of form and function can unleash ideas, just as poets can use tight metrical forms – as it is called precisely – to master their material. Since the two poles can vary independently, it is quite simply wrong that concentration on form automatically provides a worse product.[21] To think through form can also be to think through function and, perhaps, re-invent it.

A function can be embodied in many forms. There are always degrees of freedom and, therefore, always design. When form and function are independent parameters, they cannot be maximized at the same time, and these necessary compromises nourish the idea that attention to form weakens function. There is a dual drive in the concept of design that makes it burst all boundaries and, on one hand, move toward pure and functionless art and, on the other, into the flowery, the sublimely superficial, the powerfully emotional and lavishly poetic, so the designed object becomes a labyrinth full of surprises. The limitations that function, material technique, and economics impose on a designer are not closures but openings – what Kierkegaard called the 'enlarging limitation',[22] which irritates and bolsters inventiveness, so it can break through its self-created problem and produce surprising solutions.

Even though the difference between form and function cannot be eliminated, one pole can dominate. There is design that aesthetically overburdens a banal function, and there is design that aesthetically purges everything deemed unnecessary for function – and, perhaps, even continues the purge to the point that function is obstructed. It is unaesthetic, an architect once told me, to have children, because it imposes considerations on a residence that cannot avoid making it ugly. But designers can oscillate between these poles, which are called in Spanish *seny* and *rauxa*, so that one and the same person can work in a cool, minimalist style and subsequently work to express himself passionately and fulsomely.

You can distinguish between *pure design* and *decorative design*, and you can let this difference be sublated into an idea of a *metaphysical design*.

Pure design

Pure design fashions its forms from an analysis of a function's essence and answers the question of what a chair, a knife, or a car really are, deep down, so everything that does not correspond to the essence of the object is cut away as superfluous. The maximum is to be achieved with the minimal means. The form is to be the framework for a function, at once anonymous and powerful, so a discrete design becomes 'impressive by being unimpressive', which is the content of Sullivan's slogan that 'less is more' but is most used about Mies van der Rohe, who also claimed that not the Devil but God is in the details. Therefore, simple geometric figures are often used such as the circle, the cylinder, the ellipse, and the square, which are so familiar that they can be quickly read and do not attract attention as unsolved mysteries – nor do they attract attention as pure geometry.[23] By purging the surface of flourishes and personal details and by minimizing 'friction resistance' from the hinges that connect the different parts of the object and which are extremely important for its impression, the object appears as the thing it is, not as the carrier of poetry in the form of flowers and ornaments and buds.

The starting point for pure design is a functional problem – 'the problem comes first', as the slogan goes, which leads to solutions that are often unimpressive as design, because the form is not processed independently. When the functional problem is solved, the object appears as it is and can, at most, have an unintended beauty. Many engineering solutions have a raw appeal but can also be as repulsive as a windowless factory building made of light-blue corrugated iron and a fibre-cement board roof, placed in the middle of a ploughed field.

A designer can consider it a success if he succeeds in producing a cup with such a pure appeal that it captures the gaze. Without the hook, there is no catch. After catching the eye, however, the cup must be able to retain interest, so the gaze is tempted to go deeper and find an answer to questions that have barely been raised – which is why the base must make a special sound when it slides along the table, which is why the curvature between the body and base must invite the touch of the hand, which is why the internal and external curves in the handle are not identical, which is why the index finger get the best possible support for holding the cup without touching its hot surface, and which is why the glaze tapers off and softens the transition between cup and handle. Not just Eye and Hand but also the intellect must find pleasure even in the invisible domain of meaning, which hovers around the cup and its aura, to find small traces that 'Kilroy was here.'

Both the amateur who drinks a cup of coffee with a friend, hardly aware of the cup as anything other than an automatic prop, and the professional who takes note of its configuration and its details must be satisfied with the cup. For one, the cup is inviting; for the other, interesting. As new materials and techniques turn up, the fundamental question of 'what is X' can be answered in new ways. Into the consideration of function, a consideration of materials is also added, and some periods of history have even been named for the most advanced material.

The examples are legion. When fire was domesticated, there were presumably wooden utensils that could no longer be used for cooking. When plastic was invented, wooden utensils disappeared – only later to reappear as nostalgia. Reinforced concrete changed the idea of construction and residence. With the induction stove, you could liberate pots and pans from round shape and make cooking utensils in forms that are suited to fish or asparagus and can discretely frame them and let them stand out.

Behind the slogan 'form follows function,' which is historically connected to the Bauhaus School, lies a postulate of harmony. Form 'follows' spontaneously and is, in a certain sense, unintended or 'organic', when the designer concentrates on function, just as every organ contributes to an organism without controlling or even being aware of the whole. Form is created by everyone and owned by no one. As such, the thesis is an expression of embarrassment – a postulate of unity where reality only shows difference. What saved Bauhaus was not the thesis but the extremely competent people the school succeeded in gathering.

The prosaic tradition of the Bauhaus moves on to Braun's design or the Danish design of B&O and Ole Palsby, which wants to purge and simplify the visual appearance of objects and remove any trace of craftsmanship or folklore.[24] But pure design is not non-design, just design of a special type that wants to signal perfection and, thus, imply quality. You can talk about more or less ornamental products but not about a radical difference between design and non-design.

Even though you may be afraid of the façade, nothing has no façade. Nor is it possible, if you compare it with rhetoric, to avoid speaking in a special *mode* in a speech. Even simple, speech without metaphors has a style that can be spontaneous or schooled. Even the rejection of design winds up in a new design. There are no ways in which you can speak without using rhetoric or produce without design. Just as it is the Devil's least art to simulate God, honest design can be the best cover for a lie.

Decorative design

Decorative design has a different aim. It wants to charm the user with poetic abundance, whether it is what Otl Aicher calls 'additive' design, which lays form on form, or 'quotation' design, which blends styles from many periods.[25] Decorative design can overwhelm the user with information, so the object becomes a labyrinth that cannot be comprehended in a single glance, or it can arouse emotions by allying itself with nature and the past and attractive patterns. Here, the message is that 'less is a bore,' so design makes itself impressive with an abundance of meaning and emotion beyond function. Philippe Starck, whose design is carried by a dramatic will to effect, twists his objects into Baroque forms and regularly achieves a weak shock, which some enjoy as entertaining and others despise as superfluous. A cup with pictures is neither worse nor better to drink from than a cup without. But its appeal can be changed dramatically.

By imbuing the designed object with uncertainty, what may be considered dullness in pure design is overcome. With transparency, design cannot only avail itself of effects that transparent materials offer but also create spatial structures that overlap each other, so parts of the object become part of two contexts that are not reconcilable.[26]

Personality can be added to a utility item, so it becomes a plaything for adults. With an ironic side glance, it can signal 'half seriously and half in jest', when it is presented, with children's colours, mystical shapes and strange finish, as a short-term solution to the problem of change. Thus, the idiom is emotionalized – for example, Nokia makes cute cell phones and tries to wrap their products in an aura of poetry. The intention is to seduce the user into a cuddly world that incarnates a deep longing for the baroque, the childish, and the soft.

While pure design liberates objects from their context, decorative design does the opposite. It can allow products to appeal by inscribing them into a narrative or a drama, as Philip Starck did when he created a bathroom based on a rustic model, *anno* long ago, when the water faucet was a pump, the bathtub a wooden barrel, and the toilet a bucket on the floor.[27] By connecting a high-tech bathroom with primitive functions rooted in an agricultural society that only very few are familiar with except as distant memories of boy-scout camp and wild-west movies, Starck created a world that was tempting to enter and tell others about. With imagination, a bathroom was transformed into a theatre, which also welcomed the public's stubborn, impossible dream of craft.

Just as an organization must tell about its products – and itself, it must also stage them and make them into cultural events, so design becomes an element in an overall *Erlebniskunst*, or art of perception. To conjure up a myth around a product and make it into a part of an overall scenario is a sophisticated way of weaving a product into the public imagination and anchoring it in a deep desire.

Decorative design appeals to a broad range of values that do not simply go together with function. The result is objects that can be interesting, poetic, fun, cool and passionate. This effect, however, is often short-sighted, so the producer must decide what time horizon he wants to work with: whether he is to focus on the quick sale of 'something soft and fun' or a long-term sales pitch for a product that does not have a career as short as a pornographic film.

Metaphysical design

The opposition between pure and decorative design is not absolute, and you can try to get beyond it. While pure design will get to the essence of the thing in a way that corresponds to the present and while decorative design will rediscover the power of objects to arouse emotions, there can arise beyond this opposition between function and form, which can almost be called the yin and yang of design, a design that breaks through and sublates the opposition. You can call it *metaphysical design*.

You must tread cautiously here. The label 'metaphysical' cannot refer to an objective quality in the designed object, only to a relationship between the object and its user. Therefore, it is not a quality that is necessarily durable. Just like the attunedness that a work arouses can vary over time, the quality we are looking for can also both appear and disappear again.

If you are to locate what metaphysical design is, you can use the expression *defiant objects*. While pure design wanted to express the essence of the object and decorative design the emotion of the object, metaphysical design achieves both by offering resistance, so it does not accommodate

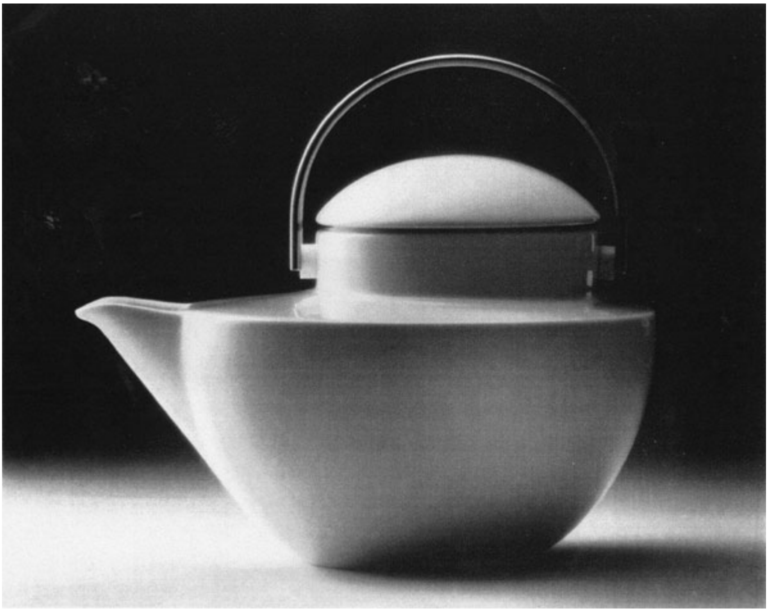

Image 5.2 Ole Palsby, teapot, 1989

the observer's expectations but breaks with them – perhaps, unimpressively, perhaps, fulsomely, so the designed object withdraws into itself and offers only its inexplicable, wordless presence. When a designed object is capable of inviting and rebuffing a receiver has just as much to do with the receiver as with the object and, therefore, is no objective quality. But the object's inexplicable and powerful presence provides an experience of its essence and an emotional impact, quite different from the nausea that Sartre allows one of his protagonists to experience at the sight of a dead and obstinate tree root.[28]

Metaphysical design provides a deep experience, because the closedness of things draws it out, isolates it, and provides it an aura of a perfection that is not of this world. And if you have had this experience once, it attaches to the object as a memory that does not allow itself to be washed away. I myself have had tears of joy in my eyes at the sight of a teapot that Ole Palsby showed me, while it was still on the drawing board – and I wondered what a teapot is for me that it should bring tears to the eyes (see Image 5.2). Inger Louise Bach's 'flatware shells' are metaphysical design, because through a simple twist they change the very idea of what flatware is. They make use of an organic form – the shell – and differentiate it by making it functional as knife, fork and spoon. At the same time, they bring food back from the

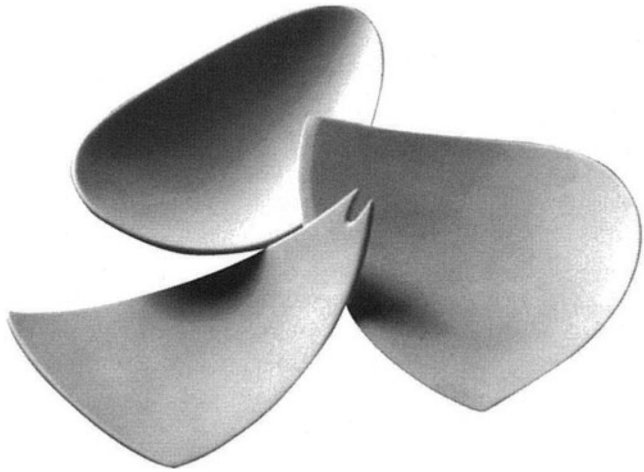

Image 5.3 Inger Louise Bach, flatware shells, 1995

distance at which normal flatware places it, so the pure form is organic and powerfully emotional in its almost obscene dissolution of culture's refined distance to needs (see Image 5.3).

For many, Charles Eames' design has the same metaphysical quality – a unity of purity and abundance – so Eames is often placed in the intersection between form and function. He is worshipped by minimalists such as Otl Aicher, because his 1958 aluminium chair, for example, takes its starting point in the function of 'sitting comfortably' and constructs it from a few industrially produced components. At the same time, it has a sublime unity of metallic hardness and flourishing curves, so it acquires rhythm, drive and swing.

Design as aesthetics and as ethics

Design's dual demand for form and function contains the possibility that the two dimensions are played off each other. This provides the basis for the peculiar mistrust of design that you can encounter in designers such as Otl Aicher and Arne Jacobsen and in firms such as B&O, whose major product, however, is design. The suspicion is that design works on the surface and allows the surface to veil function, so design becomes a sophistication that approaches pure swindle. In the same way, a consumer item can be bolstered with alluring pictures of a youthful and luxurious lifestyle, so it is associated with fantasies that are difficult to fulfil in everyday life.

That an object is beautiful is neither a swindle nor the opposite. Beauty is what it is and arouses the pleasure it does. The eye does not lie. But the pleasure of the eye can blind, so you can happily buy a pig in a poke and waste good money on bad things. So while the pleasure of the eye maintains the aesthetic here and now, the pleasure of use has a relationship to time and, thus, to ethics, because design creates expectations that make demands to be fulfilled.

In many fairy tales, princes and princesses fall for each other's beauty. Of princesses in particular, you almost never get to hear anything except about how beautiful they are, red as blood, white as snow, and black as ebony. But when someone falls for them, it cannot be taken for granted that they are also good at cooking food, raising children, or even getting along with. Some fairy tales, therefore, struggle with the problem that beauty and goodness do not always accompany each other, so the beautiful but evil princess has the evil driven out of her with special purification rituals that often include whips and cream.[29]

Design's ethical problem is that it can indicate functional qualities that may or may not be there. And this problem does not arise on one side of the difference between form and function but in their relationship. In itself, design cannot cheat. A television that has an expensive-looking appearance but contains lousy electronics is not a deceit *in* design but *through* design. On the other hand, a fake logo is a true swindle, since a logo is not only a question of design, even though the logo is designed. A logo has been carefully associated with promises that extend beyond the purely aesthetic. On a Mediterranean beach in the summertime, you can buy expensive designer watches for no money and then discover that you've got what you paid for.

Ever since our forefathers painted their faces, we have known that design can make things seem different than they are – more dangerous, more elegant or durable. Plastic can be covered with metallic paint, sturdy design can be imitated – or *almost* imitated in cheap materials; rubbish can be hidden behind an expensive-looking surface. Beyond the sight value of design, it can also provide a promise of use value, that is, durability, so design contains a *requirement of consistency*: that there is a connection between Eye and Hand, between the visible and invisible qualities of the object.

Here, too, there is a difference between design and art. You cannot say of a painting that its appearance deceives, since the painting is not to be used and, therefore, is not supposed to pass some reality test. A painting does not produce a surface that lies like make-up to get the receiver to draw inferences for which there is no payoff. In Romanticism, art was directly defined as a 'beautiful appearance'.[30] Just as with a logo, however, you can create a forgery by purporting that the painter is different from whom he is.

The conflict between form and function is a possibility, not a necessity. Just as it is not language's job to lie, even though it is open to the possibility, it is not design's job to blind with a beautiful appearance but to make things better by bathing them in care and talent. Aesthetics, too, has its 'better side', and only Puritans consider beauty as the sugar-coating around the pill, which is inevitably bitter. The Protestant religion, with its angst for images, has been merciless in its revelation of the 'bravely painted form' that covers up corruption and decay. Therefore, there is a special northern European tradition for viewing unostentatious design as 'honest design'. Pure aesthetic enjoyment seems to be a dubious matter, so design must be legitimated, that is, stand for more than itself. This 'more' may be a social commitment but also high-quality content.

'Good form' is good in itself, not because it has ethical, social, or even functional qualities.[31] This is true regardless of what you attribute to the empty word 'good'. Form contributes directly, and not indirectly, to the idea of the good life – again, regardless of what you may attribute to that concept. You can purchase consumer items merely on the basis of their design, whether it is to enjoy their appearance or to exploit a signal value. You can still encounter claims that there is a 'functional necessity' that automatically nourishes good form.[32] The question of 'less is more' or 'less is a bore' has no abstract answer. The Eye and the Hand each has its own pleasure.

Even Otl Aicher, who went on a crusade against beauty as diversion, form as façade, and aesthetics as veiled power and 'candy for the masses', also claimed that 'it is utter nonsense to keep on saying that (good) form is the inevitable result of function'.[33] Aesthetics requires a separate effort and has its own principles. When Aicher talks about his own contribution to the design programme of the Braun Group, it is suddenly all right to use aesthetic tools to 'to freshen up the visual appearance' or to get the organization to appear 'younger and more competent'. Aicher is a rhetorician, so the same thing is different, depending on whether he himself or others do it.

Collision of considerations

A specialist is in a fortunate situation that he need only take one thing into consideration and can ignore the rest. If design was only about Eye and Hand, it could still be reasonable to speak of design specialists, who simply have to play with two balls. But design must indulge even more considerations.

In Walter Gropius, design must unite the requirements of the artist, the technician, and the merchant.[34] Correspondingly, Otl Aicher observes that a designer must be a painter and a sculptor and an engineer and a businessman.[35] Industrial design must meet the *economic* requirements of profit, the *technical* requirements of production, the requirements of the *material*, and *cultural* requirements on the basis of what is considered normal and unusual, acceptable and advanced. Like other products – and persons, design must not only repeat but also be original. It must find its way through the eye of many a needle before it is accepted.

Every consideration has its specialists. Every consideration is legitimate and, thus, impossible to reject. An industrial designer may well feel squeezed economically, but he cannot ultimately consider economics as his enemy, because that is his condition for realizing his design. Even though he, like all specialists, overestimates his importance and his contribution, he is a voice in the choir. One difference between art and design is that design is to be considered

> not as a cultural patina, but rather as something with potential for profitability. It is not a question of companies doing designers a favour or giving up profitability for the sake of creative promotion. It is only when they shamelessly set out to do business that it will be possible to generate it, and thus create the fertile ground suitable for the aesthetic leap forward.[36]

In organizations, there is normally a robust pressure from economics, which has its own turbulent time rhythm, because the demand for a return on investment and revenue is followed up by a demand for tempo, so innovation happens at punctual intervals.

While economics presses to shorten the time, design presses to extend it. This is reconcilable with the fact that both considerations point toward innovation, which can be planned obsolescence but also a steady improvement, corresponding to a dictum which has been attributed to Sony: that 'our highest goal is to make our products obsolete'. Economically, the requirement is a flow of innovation, adapted to the seasons of the economy. But the innovation of design is a complicated process that cannot be forced into fixed deadlines. Whether designers are to be starved and stressed or spoiled and rewarded to do their best may be uncertain. When love of design is subject to strict economic requirements, the result is not the predictable prostitution but also mechanical design, so the designer is forced to repeat himself and milk his creative veins until there is no longer milk but blood. Even though some, like Mozart, may be stimulated by deadlines, it requires time to coordinate the complex considerations to which the process of design is subject.

Not only are many considerations to be calibrated, the many considerations must also have room to change. Materials and techniques are constantly changing and, between them and design, innovation runs in a loop. A designer can, from an inner logic, work out the design solutions that put pressure on existing techniques and materials. On the other hand, new materials may open up new design possibilities.

Many considerations mean a clash between many languages. If one language dominates, the design process is crippled. Put differently, design must elevate itself above and integrate irreconcilable considerations in an idiom that becomes the master language at a general level, a language of many languages. Statements in this language are inevitably subjective and, therefore, a person – the designer – is inserted as a guarantee for the finished product. He is celebrated as the sovereign and as a demigod who has the decisive word and can recognize himself in the finished result.

The leap from design to person is to veil the fact that design is a decentralized process in which the art is to avoid low common denominators and embarrassing compromises. Design language is rhetorical, since rhetoric steps in, when there is no strict logic and, therefore, no objectivity. Only specialists can be objective. Thus, design:

- Cannot only be assessed *economically*, even though industrial design is also an economic matter and is assessed on its chances in the market. Even though design can be aesthetically satisfying on the drawing board and as a prototype, its goal is to be realized. This requires that aesthetic and functional considerations are combined with economic ones.
- Cannot only be assessed *functionally*. No function compels one and only one form, so form, too, requires a special effort to seize and mesmerize and sustain attention, because there is a poetic dimension beyond function – and without this extra consideration, there would only be engineers, not designers.
- Cannot only be assessed *aesthetically*, because beauty is insensitive and cruel to all other considerations, even use. Even though design is giving form, many designers have a contempt for aesthetics and worship the engineer as their hero.[37]
- Cannot only be assessed *materially* or *technically*, even though design must always be realized in a material and always with a use of technique, so a circuit between technical, material and aesthetic innovation arises in which it can be unclear what is cause and effect.

'Not only' – but 'also'. The convergence of many considerations requires a *person*, whom we have called the 'designer', even though 'he' may be many people in a design department or a design firm, and a *structure* that can be called the 'organized designer'. It is no person but a business policy for how people meet and make binding decisions, so the design process does not degenerate into a coffee club, where everyone airs their private opinions without consequences as independent experts. In a design process, many specialists must develop a culture of conversation, so they can recognize their linguistic differences and use them as indispensable contributions to a common idiom. In this process, the authority can be in a responsible leader or a well-known designer can contribute by avoiding the convulsions of conflict. To lead is to absorb uncertainty.[38]

Design flows into a concrete solution, and often it is only when a proposal has materialized out of 'the cloud'[39] of considerations and it is clear to everyone that a fruitful discussion can begin. Since good design cannot be defined objectively, the decision is left to the experience that has precipitated over the years with design, so it is possible to see but not to say, for example, what a genuine B&O design is.

When a designed work is produced, it must be produced again, this time on the market. After internal organizational communication, external market communication follows. Market considerations are not alien to industrial design, since it is produced to be sold. The market is its fate. Therefore, market communication is regularly built into the design process – either indirectly by virtue of the designer's experience and reputation or directly in that the 'organized designer' includes focus groups that assess the quality and potential of the work on a running basis and PR people who let the news leak out to the public and have prototypes appear at special exhibitions where they function as portals into the coming mass production. Market and marketing considerations are new considerations that are added to the others and contain their own dynamic.

Design in organizations

Design does not just unfold between a sender and a receiver, because the receiver is cleft in twain – namely, an organization and an end user. Both use design, each in their own way. Many have tried to 'save' design from the grasp of business.[40] But this is pointless. Nothing prevents an individual from designing his objects and his life. The market is simply an unavoidable mechanism in the modern global society with billions of people who are unknown to, and dependent on, each other.

The production of goods is also the production of design. The dynamic of industrial design does not come first and foremost from designers, even though they operate in the symbolic space that has opened up with the dissolution of tradition and the separation of people. This comes from organizations that are to present themselves and their products on the market, a field with many actors who want the same thing and, therefore, compete. We are back to Friedrich Engels' remark that there is more pressure for innovation in an industrial need than in ten German universities.

If you look at design from the organization's perspective, the question is 'why design?' Why must an organization take on the exertion of design? The key words are, as usual, competition and internationalization.

The first answer is *economics*. For a private business, which measures its success by income, design is, on one hand, a product, neither more nor less, and, on the other hand, a special, perhaps exclusive product that has idiosyncratic demands. Perhaps, design is the crucial characteristic about company's products; perhaps, design has a special place in its history, so it is considered sacrilege to diminish the effort placed on design, even if it is unrewarding in the short term.

If a foolish jingle and an infantile slogan actually work, so you can ascertain a temporal connection between the scrap of melody and increased sales and, perhaps, even formulate a postulate of a causal connection, there is a strong temptation to put more demanding aesthetics on the sidelines.

The ultimate judge is the consumer, and his taste decides regardless of quality. Politicians may have contempt for their voters and designers for their customers, even though they acknowledge their dependence and keep quiet about their arrogance. Economically, it is of no significance whether consumers are drawn by a pure German design, a saccharine Japanese design, or a Latin American macho design.

The rhetoric of 'the consumer has the power' is just as overplayed in design as in politics. But from this, it does not follow that the consumer is powerless. As an individual, his efforts are limited. But as groups, 'he' creates the moment of truth in which sales numbers and voter numbers appear on the screen with their momentous weight. The consumer is celebrated as master at the same time he is made a stupid but absolute prince strongly dependent on his advisers, so power and information form a circuit without fixed bases. The facilitator in this game is the mass media.

The next answer is *identity*, and it is closely linked to the first. For an organization, design is also a tool for indicating its identity, increasing its visibility and its attraction, and thus promoting its sales. Since products from different firms resemble each other technically and materially and since a head start in these areas can be quickly overcome, an organization must gain its competitive edge by other channels. Here, design offers itself, because it can be identified quickly and non-verbally and because it can contain both attraction and meaning.

Design is not to be translated and can be modernized on a running basis, if it does not (any longer) provide the desired impression. Not only consumers but also organizations are mirrored in form and its meaning. Therefore, 'the metaphysical search for the sublime has been joined to the technological search for domination'.[41] Measured in relation to function, the difference may be marginal. But with design, commonplace products can gain a powerful identity and be recognized at first glance. Pasta is flour and water but can be shaped into as many variants as the imagination allows.

Many of the design world's narratives have to do with how an organization with a quick foray into design turned a failure into a success.[42] While technique and materials can be copied, it is prohibited to copy design – even though, in practice, this prohibition is difficult to enforce. Design is one of the 'places' where an organization can make a difference, so the demand for design is used for self-irritation, that is, to create a persistent uncertainty. The organization asks itself whether its products and their presentation, including the product's presentation of itself, are good enough.

The answer to this question is routinely 'no', and this self-criticism is the starting shot for growth. As with a small trader, an extra effort can always be made, and it is always possible to go to more trouble and push the imagination a bit more.

The invisible, the symbolic and the desired

From another perspective, there are three things behind an organization's use of design: the invisible, the symbolic, and the desired.

The invisible

We have seen that an organization is invisible, and we can go further and note that most everyday objects are also invisible in the sense that you cannot see how they are produced or what they contain. Production and use are separate. You deal with things every day in shops, with friends, and in public space, using them with eyes and hands. But it happens on the surface that you see and touch – perhaps, with actions in the invisible micro-universe via buttons that are to be pushed or pulled to trigger functions. Even though the function is given, technique and, perhaps, materials may be only known superficially, so design makes a decisive difference. Different cars can do roughly the same thing, and prices are in line with that. In the price class you have decided on, you can choose between different idioms and decide what you feel comfortable with – the bodywork's rounded or edgy forms, the interior's choice of metal, plastic or wood, the designed sound the door makes as it shuts, and the engine's raw or gentle roar. The car's finish, colour, and form are the way we encounter it. We can compensate for invisibility by demanding guarantees of durability and environmental friendliness, which requires trust. Here, we can be cheated. But design is not hidden and requires no guarantee. It meets the eye precisely as it is. It is produced as *Schein* and neither contains nor purports to contain any depth.

The symbolic

The effort of design is directed toward both the product's physical and symbolic production, so you get a repetition of Thumper's squeaky advice to Bambi on the ice: 'You have to watch both ends at the same time'.

In modern organizations, the symbolic dimension is not just an unintended by-product of the care taken with the physical product but is processed independently. Measured in visibility, symbolic value often has higher priority, so the product 'itself' is less important than its symbolic meaning. We purchase the coat's appearance more than its ability to protect against the wind and weather, so the object is transformed into a symbolic object.[43] Wealth brings us beyond the elemental, so housing, clothing, kitchen utensils, and means of transport do not simply secure a necessary survival. Things are 'for show' and with stiletto heels or a corset, make-up or an open sports car, you can accept considerable physical irritation in order to achieve the desired effect.

The 'desired effect' is not just a private fantasy. In order to be suitable as a fantasy, the impression must be incorporated and be able to be read in a collective symbolic space, even if it is just as a phase in a breathless mode with a subtle interplay between deviation and adaptation. Thus, a virtual or simulated world is created that has cast off the everyday and, from its imaginary hyperspace, reaches back into the everyday.[44] Physical objects are transformed into icons and symbols and fetishes, so you get vestiges of religion and its construction of a super-sensory world with sensory means. Biological need is mixed with a symbolic need for luxury and recognition.

You can doubt whether it happens so massively that the receiver has no other language available, when he is to express what he has on his mind.[45] But that design is a component of the self-production of modern men is beyond any doubt. Model monopoly is effective, because it veils the difference between real and imaginary, genuine and simulated. Compared with the image of a consumer item in an imaginary space, the physical consumer item in everyday life is usually a disappointment. But this disappointment is not unwanted, in part because it is so banal that it can hardly be uttered, in part because it drives the consumer to a new purchase, when the item no longer pleases him.

When an organization adapts to its customers' wishes for design, it adapts its customers to its array of design. It is often uninteresting to insert fixed points in this flowing circuit of causes and effects.

The desired

We have seen that the effort of design is doubled, because the designed object must be interwoven into desire, which is carefully denoted, directed toward special objects and refined, so everyone can find his place in the system of desire and be both different and identical, himself and like everyone else. Objects are personalized, when it is not a matter of raw function but a meaning that can be differentiated endlessly and quickly. While need is biological and directed toward a body, which is quickly satiated, desire is symbolic and directed toward a perfection that can never be realized.

The breakdown of aesthetic immediacy, which took place in art at the end of the 1800s, when the public was made uncertain of their aesthetic intuition, has been taken over by the technocrats of design. Control of desire requires plasticity, so desires can be media for ever new forms. If you have inscribed your desires into this symbolic universe, you are 'voluntarily forced' to deviate from and adapt to the same economic system as everyone else.[46]

We can let it remain unsaid whether the same desire is directed toward new things or whether desires become new desires in the process.[47] But it is easy to follow how new design ceaselessly makes last season's models pale, even though they can still be used. With small signals, obsolescence is indicated, so the strategy consists in ceaselessly confronting desire with its downside, frustration.[48]

Design contributes to semiotic chains that centrifuge away from the designed object. With the object, a set of claims about what the object can do is also produced, an 'ideology of bliss',[49] that can outshine the object itself. For at the end of this process, the designer ceases to be a designer and becomes a facilitator of an integrated design process.[50] If this role is overplayed, the question arises: what is an organization supposed to use classic designers for?

The input of design happens on many fronts. The first area is the product itself, which must itself communicate. The next is marketing. A third area is the inside of the design world in which prizes are distributed for excellent design, so not only the public but also designers themselves signal what at a given time point must be genuflected to as 'good design'. The difference between what designers praise and the public buys can be quite large.

A fourth area is the public symbolic space, detached from the designed product. The central example here is Benetton, which in the 1990s filled the public space with commercials that said nothing about the firm's ordinary wares but attributed to them a metaphysical meaning, so a chain of clothing stores was raised up above the everyday and made into a temple of contemporary problems, produced in passionate but 'mute', pictures.

Design and image

Design has become an organization's most distinguished tool for innovation, and under the label 'branding,' organizations compete with each other to express their commitment and identity through design.[51] Design makes it possible to unite global economics with niche production. Organizations can claim that they unite economics and 'humanity', because they are attuned to the need of consumers and thus reject that claim that they do not fulfil but create need. There are paradoxes at play, since all organizations want to elevate themselves above the anonymous mass with positive and easily-read images. Just as in art, there are gradually only chiefs, no Indians, only deviants, no normal. But paradoxes solve themselves not logically but temporally, although the price is acceleration: an ever faster flow of innovations, fashions, trends,[52] so only the paranoid survive.

Design between variation and constancy

We can summarize: within the frameworks that a designer must assume, he can freely work with meanings, so a piece of design becomes a symbol, a visible expression of something invisible.[53] Thus, design opens up an infinite field of variation in which forms can sprout up, be tested and – most often – be forgotten. Innovation is not optional, in part because the market demands innovation, in part because repetition takes place in a new situation, so it, *malgré soi,* becomes innovation. At the end of this hectic innovation, we do not meet chaos but *tradition*.

Even though modern society regularly breaks with tradition, innovation requires a background that, rightly or wrongly, is considered a constant.

Without constancy, no innovation is possible and, therefore, many innovators overestimate the power and the clarity of the tradition they are critiquing. Criticism does not contribute to the dissolution of tradition but its continuation. Criticism is an expression of and a desire for not only growth but also identity and recognition.

In every complex situation, there must be constancy, so it is possible to orient yourself. It can happen with language but also with form. Constancy makes it possible to create common expectations that may be artificial and yet binding – in short, *culture*. Many of society's leading institutions maintain and cultivate rituals in order to overcome uncertainty about what is going to happen. They create traditions, which are to be repeated, so they can function as a sort of order of succession and simplify the risky transition from past to future.

The paean to infinite variation comes from people who cultivate and must cultivate constancy. Therefore, old and new designs exist side by side in strange combinations, both in private and in organizations. Heirlooms are mixed with advanced design, high tech with rustic kitchens, chrome with velvet. Royal houses and parliaments, churches and universities, business headquarters, and the growing number of museums swell with memorials that provide the necessary support for a leap into the future. And the turbulent innovators of business present themselves to each other in the masculine uniform of commerce, the business suit, which must be impeccably traditional with only a few variations in detail such as tie, lapels, creases and cufflinks.

It is important for a designer to decide what needs he considers constant, beyond historical variation, and what desires only arise by virtue of language. Such decisions are normally left in the shadows of body and culture and appear with the self-evident power of intuition. A designer who wants to create a new idiom must inevitably be sensible to new possibilities and brutal in his insistence on its merits. What he uses as a carrier wave may vary – it can be 'the human'. 'the natural' or 'the demands of time'. All such labels are suitable as sponges that absorb arbitrary predilections and transform them into necessary advantages.

You can talk about 'necessary form'. But even though the word closes off options, the necessity applies only to function. A knife that cannot cut and cannot fit in your hand is not a knife. On the other hand, form only has a personal or cultural, not an objective, necessity. What is necessary is only form, not which form. Without the constancy of function, the variation of form would be impossible, just as the constancy of words is a condition for the multiplicity of meanings. Therefore, form is a part of promoting choice, which cannot be made objectively. 'Only those questions that are in principle undecidable, *we* can decide.'[54] So design does not only provide form to objects but also to people and, ultimately, to the world, which is inhabited by people.

Transition to advertising

Design goes beyond the object,[55] when it involves marketing to the public and image, values and narratives for the organization. This leads to what Baudrillard called the 'ecstasy of communication',[56] which has to do with speed and thus the need to make sure that communication – particularly, unsolicited communication – contains an eye-catcher, whether it is attraction, wonder, or disgust. Even complex messages must be presented in a simple format that lures an audience into their domain and tempts them to further communication. When products are to be presented to the public, design is not enough. More is needed, because there is no guarantee that the public is spontaneously looking for design. This *more* is called advertising.

6 Organizational Advertising

To *reclamare* or *advertise* is not just to shout and protest but to do it again, so you become obstinate and, perhaps, even cantankerous. But it is normally not by complaining that organizations advertise themselves and their products. The current meaning of the word '*reclamare*' should not be traced back to its Latin roots but only to the American word 'reclaim,' which means to claim something for gain, that is, to recommend and lure for an ulterior purpose. In the following, we shall look at the particular segment of the world known as the 'world of advertising', which is a segment of the communication between the organization and users of its products – with the extra flourish that advertising also has a hidden address to other receivers – for example, the organization's employees, investors and non-users.

Omnipresent appeal

Advertising is omnipresent and, in that sense, commonplace. This is due, in part, to the fact that modern society is split into markets in which sender and receiver are strangers to each other and, in part, to the fact that the actors in markets are organizations, which work to put themselves and their products in focus, so they can benefit by convincing the receiver that *he* will benefit from buying their products. Since every market contains a compulsion to innovation, the receiver must be kept up to date on his options. This is the objective justification for advertising. And the world of advertising is so large and advertising so expensive that the research into its means and effects is intense. This chapter makes no contribution to the empirical study of advertising but is a contribution to the philosophy of advertising – with a special eye toward aesthetics. Nor will you find any overview of different types of advertising in which, for example, there are differences and connections between advertising in the mass media and in shops and in which, for example, job postings are also used as advertisements.

An advertisement is an unsolicited approach. If the receiver had immediate interest in the message of the advertisement, it would be superfluous to spend money on advertising. He would himself seek out the product for which there is advertising. That the receiver has not asked to be informed does not necessarily mean that he is uninterested, whether the advertisement relates something new, something forgotten, or simply claims again (re-claim). Advertising appeals to the receiver's desire to buy and is based on the sender's desire to sell. They are full of lies that are so banal that no one bothers to reveal this.

Since an advertisement is to capture an inattentive gaze and the receiver is subjected to a bombardment of advertising, it must use an eye-catcher. It must seize his attention with a little shock. It must appeal to existing desires, titillate and excite them, and give them a strategic twist – perhaps, even a calculated loss quotient, when it aims at a particular audience. It must give old desires new names and objects, that is, give form to and cultivate them. And it must do this whether it has to do with sales ads, which encourage action, or image ads, which encourage emotions.

Advertisements for staple goods that have biological needs and everyday routines behind them require a different type of effort than luxury items, which require reinterpretation and detours. Here, the method is to link it to a desire for status or to other desires that can be purified and stylized and, in this way, become plastic media that can be shaped in the desired direction.[1] Sales ads and image ads can be used together, so an image campaign works as the background for more mundane sales ads – perhaps, placed in the individual shop.

Many advertisements have an idea that may seem powerful just by being dashed off on a napkin. Many other advertisements have mundane information that is presented with powerful signals of brand, place of purchase, and price, which is presented in a yellow blotch or an orange star to indicate shock. Advertising people often consider aesthetics as something they can 'add' to an advertisement – perhaps, to compensate for a weak idea, perhaps, to provide a signal, so beauty, care, and delicate details are used to say that the product is expensive and of high quality. Aesthetics is for connoisseurs, while everyday products must make do with less. Advertising people with a sense of aesthetics, therefore, must often twist their own arms and accept, as professionals, making advertisements that conflict with their own taste. For advertising is not art. Like Renaissance artists, they must accept the fact that the patron owns the advertisement and, therefore, has the power. The advertisement has vestiges of the 'craftsmanship' that developed prior to the liberation of the art system, where artists were dependent on their client and, therefore, encountered a number of pressing problems dealing with and adapting to the hand that fed them. The painters of the Renaissance, for example, encountered the problem that, if they painted true-to-life portraits, they risked offending their clients.[2] This relationship of direct dependence between sender and receiver is the exception in the art system but the rule in the advertising world, which therefore can motivate by de-motivation only to a limited extent. And only to the same limited extent can it make use of the ugly – unless it happens in an aestheticized form.[3] In the 1700s, people were aware that disharmony was capable of achieving a 'fine effect'.[4]

Companies produce thousands of products, often for a diffuse world market, while shops contain thousands of products from many companies. It is prohibitive to give every product the support of an advertising campaign. Therefore, companies can simplify by advertising for a trademark or for the company itself, so it is Nike and not the individual shoe that is at the centre. Every shoe is reduced to an example of a trademark, so the effort can be concentrated and the trademark nurtured by advertising that only promotes the trademark and does not provide information about price or address. Advertisement can try to impregnate a trademark with values, so it is not use, but meaning we purchase.[5]

The receivers of advertising are thousands of people who compete and innovate in order to be themselves, that is, different. Therefore, it prohibitive to fine-tune yourself to each one of them. Instead of adapting to the receiver, advertising can try to prescribe a certain lifestyle, so the receiver learns to 'live' a special trademark. First, the product is adapted to the receiver; then, the relationship is reversed, and the receiver is adapted to the product. This happens by constructing an attractive lifestyle in an advertising campaign that puts a distance to the everyday, so that from its distance it can intervene in and reshape the everyday.

A single organization or advertisement is not equal to this effort. Therefore, advertisements are not measured simply by their receivers but also by other advertisements – that is, to the whole 'system of advertising', which constitutes a particular universe that does not copy consumer desire but attempts to make itself a norm for what consumers must – and can – desire. As opposed to the everyday world in which people become fatter and fatter, the models become thinner and thinner in the advertising world.

We are in the imaginary world of advertising, which attunes the receiver beyond reason and morality.[6] We are in the aesthetic domain, where the world is stylized and filled with intense situations in which bodily perfection, erotic titillation, demonstrative success, and shameless luxury merge. The receiver also gets this world as part of the bargain, when he uses ordinary, everyday products that look very much alike, so their essential difference is the symbolic value that is conjured up with design and advertising. Opposed to the budding of functional equality, symbolic and emotional tools are used to create 'differences that make a difference' and motivate the receiver to choose one product above another of the same sort. You buy an idea and a narrative when you buy a good, because the good becomes the grain of sand around which the pearl of the imagination can wrap itself. By purchasing specific things, you can penetrate into a symbolic universe that indicates a 'taste' and a social distinction.[7]

Advertising models sensation and meaning and does so in one and the same movement, since all sensation provides meaning and all meaning requires sensation. We shall not follow how a brand is associated with values but limit ourselves to the aesthetic dimension. Only in theory do we have a well-defined distinction between ethics and aesthetics. A trademark may attune the observer with aesthetic means and arouse his desire by virtue of the universe of values that the advertisement produces and in which he symbolically puts himself and, perhaps, even adapts to. But how and when this happens neither can, nor is supposed to, be clarified precisely. Kant could claim that aesthetics had nothing to do with *Reiz und Rühring* – stimulation and emotion – which were individual feelings of pleasure.[8] Advertising is less scrupulous, since its function is pragmatic: to influence a purchase. It does not have a genre problem and uses whatever works, whether it is distinguished taste or raw desire. Since advertising aggressively innovates its tools, not only is the boundary between the aesthetic and the normative eradicated but also that between the tools of advertising and art.

Advertising is a normal part of urbane life in the mass media and in the public space. Adverts are placed along roads and railways, and even the sky can be used for advertising sausages. We are used to unsolicited tips on products we hardly need and can easily disregard them, protect ourselves against their appeal, or observe them in a sidelong way, so it is not the product but its mode of appeal that is noticed.

It is a game: dog eat dog. The receiver's 'external observation' can be drawn in and transformed from being the enemy of advertising to becoming its strongest partner. When advertising is noticed, regardless of the reason, it works, because it is not in the receiver's power to forget it. There is communication, and the receiver is not the same person. The words and images of the advertisement can spread out in the soul beyond the receiver's conscious will. The more it is objected to, the more it sticks in the memory, so the good or the trademark acquires the quality of familiarity, which in practice cannot be distinguished from trust. And 'to do business' in this context is the same as buying.

The primary aim of advertising is to disturb, to irritate. It must take place in the dual movement that it opens a wound at the same time it offers to heal it again. And it must claim that the wound is not its own product but is already present – which is difficult to claim, when it has to do with a new product that the public – for obvious reasons – cannot be missing. In an ad for B&O, it was once said that the company was selling dreams that the receiver did not know he had. This requires the irritation to be redirected to an abstract level, where the sender can presume that the receiver has immaterial values that are open to reinterpretation, so 'health' or 'beauty' or 'recognition' is re-created as a problem on an ever higher level for which ever new tools are put in your hands to solve.[9]

Therefore, the advertising agencies make an unceasing and 'creative' effort to surprise the receiver. An eye-catcher is a tool to catch the eye, and the more superficial, that is, luxurious the product is, the more powerful the eye-catcher must be. They may use icons of desire whom everyone knows and riddles which nobody knows or unknowns. A young body is offered as the ultimate goal of desire. If riddles are used they, and their solution, must be close to each other in time and space, since the receiver does not have any immediate interest and can easily lose interest. The routines of sensation are attacked from all sides with underplay and overplay, beauty and angst. All values are revaluated, so even death, rape, and war elicit stimulation.

The result is a familiar struggle for attention in which the receiver's sensibility is truncated, so new methods of stimulation it must be found. Therefore, an advert is a historical product, bound to a context and its balance between normal and surprising. Just as the torturer can peel off layer upon layer of hardy skin in order to find new sensitive places to torment, advertising professionals must be inventive, when they are to arouse the senses. But they have great confidence that they are able to create new worlds that turn conventions topsy-turvy and shake up the market. Books on advertising are often – consciously or unconsciously – advertising in the second degree – namely, an advertisement for the power of advertising.[10]

Advertising is so omnipresent that you can define nature as the place where advertising has not yet penetrated – for, like art, nature itself is invaded with open and hidden references to brands and trademarked goods. In every mass medium you encounter, along with the information and entertainment for which you have paid, another current of information and entertainment you get in the bargain. It is so familiar that you are astounded by a newspaper without advertising or, like Americans, become impatient if a film is not broken up by 'these messages' five or six times.[11]

The metaphysics of advertising does not emerge from a single advertisement but from 'the system of advertising' that every advertisement continues and contributes to, just as every single work of art both contributes to and continues an art system. Just as art works can refer to each other, advertisements can also comment on and 'convert' each other both as *positioning* in which a beverage becomes an unCola and as *launch pad* in which a company uses a competitor's campaign as a springboard for its own. Together, advertisements create a fictive space that is separate from the everyday but where the difference between the everyday and the advertisement is re-introduced to the everyday – in part, of course, because it is here we live, regardless of where we live otherwise and, in part, because the intent of the advertisement is to determine the everyday.

The self-reference of the advertisement is not a mechanism over which the individual commercial has mastery and can use or not. Advertisements are not just related to its receivers but also to other advertisements and, if they do not, they are observed as if they did. An ad cannot leap out of the universe of advertising, even though it would like to – perhaps, to become an even more authentic advertisement that hides behind its own absence. Just as anti-art ends up being considered art, despite its fervent wish to break out of the world of art, anti-advertising is once again an advertisement – or something completely different that no longer has anything to do with the world of advertising and is, therefore, irrelevant.

Unlike art, advertising has an open purpose, even though it can veil the purpose. It works out in the open, even when it keeps its tools hidden. An advertisement that never reveals a product or a firm is not advertisement. The distance between product and advertisement can be long and complicated. But the connection must inevitably be there. Regardless of how mysteriously an ad can play hide-and-seek to titillate the observer, there is meaning in the madness: titillation is a goal that has another goal, namely, to guide thoughts and desires in a certain direction. Even when the ad talks about something completely different, the receiver creates the necessary connection – with which the ad once again can calculate. It can involve communication's strong *will to meaning*, which can be observed, for example, when you are confused with someone else at some social gathering. You can talk past each other for a long time before the film finally breaks, because each party works hard to find meaning in the manifold senses of words and to open up aesthetics' rich battery of meaning mechanisms, so the meaning of words can be condensed and displaced and conveyed and converted.

Three theses: desire, imitation, compensation

You can explain the fascination of advertising in different ways. Three can be mentioned if only to be rejected: a thesis of *desire*, of *imitation* and of *compensation*. They are not outright wrong. But they are misleading, because they are derivative – and what they are derivative of we shall come back to.

Desire

The simplest thesis is that advertising stimulates a desire for a good that the advertisement presents. That we desire the beautiful things and interiors that we see in the advertisement, that we long for the slender, luxurious beauty put on display, always placed in the perfect moment that seems to freeze outside of time and without the turmoil that normally compromises the golden moments of everyday life.

We must tread carefully here. For, of course, advertising excites desire, because it is supposed to motivate a purchase. 'The illusion one falls for is like a mirror in which one sees one's desires and believes them to be real.'[12] Nor can it be denied that advertising can excite desire in a slightly pornographic manner, whether it is directed toward babies, food, luxury, or sex.

The claim is simply that the effect of the advertisement cannot be understood as simple desire, directed toward a simple thing. Such a desire would be fettered and unleash the wrong sort of conduct. And it does not apply only to the gaze that has more of an eye for the ad's beautiful people than for the things the ad is about. What is desired is not the object that is described and depicted in the ad. If it were, it would be the same as being fascinated by a picture of the Virgin Mary in a church and forgetting why she is hanging there.

Advertising must be like a surface of water on which desire can skip stones and be sent out into the world along the course the ad prescribes, so it triggers action, soon or later. The desire of the ad must not congeal around what the eye sees but be kept fluid, so it can be transferred to the 'same' thing in the real world. Therefore, the object of the ad is placed in an imaginary space in which *die Sterne begiert man nicht* – the stars are not to be desired. The desire that advertising stimulates must be redirected from the ad to the everyday, so the ad becomes a hinge between two worlds. This transition from advertisement to everyday contains a distinctive shift in meaning, which the ad does not itself reveal and which does not need to be put into words but with which everyone is deeply familiar. Only fools are disappointed that advertisements do not keep their promises.

The world of advertising is diligently put at a distance from the everyday, even when it borrows the props of the everyday. Advertising and the everyday each function according to their own principles, and their difference is irremediable, so it would be a wasted effort to direct desire toward the world of advertising. It is imaginary, uninhabitable. When you see the filming of a commercial, you may be struck by the pathetic difference between the models, who arrogantly or ironically take their extreme attitudes in the middle of the street, freezing or sweating, and the glamorous pictures that are the result of the effort of the photographer.

Advertising uses a special idiom to indicate when we are in ad land, so we do not confuse it with everyday life – yet, the idiom still brings these two worlds together. The idiom uses the fact that, when things are presented in the mass media, they are transformed and become more than things. They become symbols of themselves, so even a platter of pork chops in a newspaper ad acquires an aura of the elevated.

The dual concept of distance and closeness is assured by making the world of advertising extreme but recognizable. Just as poetry is read with a special diction, so we know we find ourselves in poetry land, the characters in advertising position and pose and parade themselves in a very unnatural and mannered way. But poetry must presume normal language in order to use it in a non-normal way, and advertising must presume a familiar world in order to give it an unusual sheen.

When the boundary between advertising and the everyday is established, it can – like all boundaries – be open to trespass, so even the 'everyday' can be a style, just inescapably transformed into magical realism. Even a cheap sale offer in an ugly throwaway contains a utopia writ miniature, like fingers running through the hair or a pillow smoothed out. The situations and interior decorating of advertising are filled with *mana*, a holy power that makes them glow with an inner light. And, once again, it is not within the power of a single commercial to break this enchantment. If it is removed, it reappears as a feature of the move that removes it.

Imitation

The second thesis has to do with imitation. Here, the claim is that advertising sets up role models whom we in our humble ability try to approach, so the ad lures us onto an eternal treadmill on which we, fascinated, toil for our own happiness, blind to the costs of this massive effort we make. The insuperable distance between the commercial's perfect world and the worn-out, messy and unstable everyday makes the work as endless as working for the soul's salvation – and accompanied by the same endless worrying. In an eternal loop, the ad adapts to the consumer's fantasies and adapts the consumer's fantasies to its own prescriptions. It is master and slave in the same figure.

The imitation thesis is wrong for the simple reason that commercials cannot be imitated, since they work on other principles than those of the everyday – above all, because they lack time and resistance. A commercial picture can coalesce into a cosmic tableau and, if you imitate it, you will feel ridiculous or broken or discover that it does not work, because the everyday refuses to stop and is filled with irrelevant irritations that the ad can discretely ignore. In advertising pictures, you can bring the Tahiti of the imagination into your bathroom through a hair shampoo. They produce dreams with spacious perspectives, for sale at a paltry price.

Nor can it be denied that advertisements sometimes provide exemplars to follow. Some people look as if they just stepped out of a commercial, and you can use ads to get ideas for how you should live, eat, dress, or tend your garden. Therefore, magazine 'features' and advertisements gradually take over each other's tools and end up as hybrids. An advertisement is an encouragement to purchase and, if you do, you imitate the world of advertising, which often shows the object in use. But imitation is not the secret of advertising, because the world of advertising has the peculiarity that it is to be imitated and cannot be imitated. Imitation is no simple matter. This is a consequence, not a constitution, so you imitate *because* – and the question is what is behind this 'because'.

Compensation

A third thesis must briefly be mentioned: the enchanting world of advertising allures as a reward for the pains and troubles of everyday life. In advertising, we give ourselves narcotically to a world in which people and objects are beautiful and in which everything difficult succeeds – beauty, work, wealth, love, and home merely require a technical effort, a purchase.

Here, the claim is that the world of advertising is beyond the everyday but also reflects back on it and provides direction. In a dual movement, you are invited on a hallucinatory journey in a daydream, draped around objects, which can then lend the flow of the dream to warm the everyday. You are reminded of Marx's thesis that religion is the opiate of the people – a rose that puts a mollifying lustre on the chains we bear in daily life – just without the objections that Marx also found to religion.

But if advertising is merely compensation, it would not function at all. The objective of luring us into the world of advertising is not that we should lose ourselves in it and comfort ourselves with it. To the contrary, it is to put a handle on us, so we can be steered in the desired direction, even if it is our ruin. If there were a powerful pleasure connected with hallucinating yourself into the world of advertising, this game of illusion would be reward enough, and it would be a mystery why organizations spend millions of dollars on this sort of thing.

Once again: there is no reason to deny that people can indulge in fantasies about the objects, interior design, and characters of advertising – pure fictions that are just as shiny, smooth, and impenetrable as the screen or paper we observe them on. It is not here that we find the entrance to the world of advertising.

If neither desire nor imitation nor compensation is the secret to advertising, then what? Another thesis is that advertising has the same structure as religion. This seems to be old news. Marx spoke of the fetishism of commodities and had to venture into 'the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world'[13] in order to understand what a commodity is, because it does not just have visible but invisible qualities as well. Norman O. Brown claimed that modern economics is a demonic religion.[14]

None of these analyses is particularly relevant to an analysis of advertising. However, religion can be used to penetrate the darkness of advertising and enlightening the murky place from which its world streams.

The world of advertising

A couple of years ago, I lived for a month in Italy near Florence. As a good tourist, I wandered through the city's museums and churches, where I encountered an infinite number of pictures of holy men and women. To be holy is to have one foot in heaven and the other on earth. The job of religious painting is to illustrate how you look when you are holy, that is, to show something that is invisible and, therefore, cannot be shown. The difference between the visible and the invisible must be shown on one side of the difference – in the visible world. To that end, a number of conventions developed within Christianity for how holy figures were to be presented.

Religious images are not produced for their own sake but to edify. Like the images in advertising, they are useful, purposeful images. Therefore, they must be able to be decoded easily and, therefore, their figures assume strange positions that you never see in everyday life. They kneel, pray, are affected, tormented and triumphant, always in a ritual and demonstratively elevated way. The church has created an idiom to make a transcendent world visible, parallel to and in contrast with the immanent.

Outside museums and churches in the streets of Florence, there was hardly anything but shops for name-brand and fashionable goods. Here, too, there were images of people in strange positions, frozen in rituals with intense sign value. As a rule, the figures were young and beautiful, engaged in some extreme sport, in a metaphysical dance with heavenly bodies and elements, in aggressive dramas, twisted positions, or with an erotic appeal so theatrical that you are almost embarrassed. They looked at me lasciviously, even when they were apparently deeply involved in their own concerns.

Advertising makes use of the same figures as religion – to create or nurture a difference that cannot disappear and yet must be minimized through ceaseless effort. Just as church images tell of the community of saints, advertising images conjure up a world that is not holy but a secular counterpart to the world of religion by effectively borrowing its tools. What is produced is not an eternal life in the beyond but an intense life here. It happens in both places by creating illusions. Just as the images of the church invite the concerned user onto an endless path toward an unachievable goal, the salvation of the soul, advertising images invite their concerned user on just as endless a path toward just as unachievable a goal, the perfection of everyday life.

More generally, you can note that many words such as friendship or love have the same structure. And if you follow this thought to its logical end, the difference between the visible and the invisible seems to be inherent in language itself.

Advertising is not knowledgeable in theology. But religion and advertising have sufficient points of similarity that they can act as metaphors for each other, both when they frighten with Hell and when they allure with Paradise. They work with myths that

1 set up an attractive alternative to the everyday,
2 fill the everyday with a lack,
3 invite ceaseless labour to minimize the difference, and
4 impose on their proselytes a series of deprivations.

In the monotone demonstrations of slender, muscular bodies in television commercials, a paradise of firm buttocks and rippling abdomen muscles can be achieved with just a few minutes of daily effort, so a fat and slovenly Hell can be overcome. But this ideal body is only found in the imagination and then comes time and age. So when does the effort stop?

Advertising develops a secular religion whose central tenet is the difference between the everyday and the world of advertising, which has a completely different surface, structure and dynamic even when the everyday and the world of advertising intersect at the juncture points that are the point of advertising. Both sides of the difference must be maintained, so the difference does not collapse. The permanent labour to minimize the difference is crucial, so religion's unceasing striving for salvation is a model[15] advertising can make use of, which it transforms into a series of purchases to make life perfect.

Even though the world of advertising closes in around itself, its closedness cannot be radical. Without points of intersection or hinges between the everyday and the world of advertising, the ad would lose its meaning – nothing to advertise for and nothing to motivate with. Therefore, there is a certain surface similarity.

Both in advertisements and in the everyday, there are cars and kitchens and people who reach out for each other. But even though they are 'the same', they are also different in principle and, by allowing the gaze to oscillate between the messiness of the everyday kitchen and the perfect kitchen of advertising, a difference is activated that both troubles and allures and which can motivate to action. In a precarious duplicity, the differences between the world of advertising and the everyday are maintained and rejected. The *boundary* is veiled and revealed at the same time. This clearly indicates that, in the world of advertising, the practical inertia of the everyday has vanished, so normal desires reach their stylized ending point without resistance: objects radiate, the erotic spark ignites, the family is happy, pain disappears, pleasure is intense, beauty is near, and life consists of nothing but magic moments, frozen in eternity. Even suffering has an elevated sheen of shampoo aesthetics, when it is invoked simply to bring it to an end again. At the same time, advertising only makes sense against a background of the illusion that you can approach and, perhaps, participate in this world. The difference between real and imaginary is brought into play in which both sides of the difference flicker and take over each other's meanings.

The products advertised are the hinge between the two worlds. They are symbolic transformers that transform the magical energy of the world of advertising and channel it into the everyday – even though everyone knows that this is not the way things are. This mistrust transforms the advertisement from an enemy into a friend. It domesticates mistrust by making itself extreme, so mistrust loses its sting.

The world of advertising does not operate with simple desire, imitation or compensation. Everything is doubled, because everything is found on both sides of advertising's difference. The aim is for the receiver to observe himself from the difference between the everyday and the world of advertising and be motivated, through fear or joy, to strive for the ad's image of the good life, well-knowing that it is impossible.

The difference between these two worlds must neither collapse nor become insuperably great. The modern worship of royalty and the famous is not advertising for products – at most, advertising for a luxurious and archetypical lifestyle. Here, the premise is that you can see yourself in the world of the royals and the famous but only become a part of their world through a fairytale-like chance. A life you can never live, yet you are fascinated by and can approach in small ways.

Even though different advertisements pull in different directions, they contribute to an overall advertising world that is a fluid attractor, accessible to ever new forms. When every ad struggles for its own product, it contributes, without wanting to, to the modern institution called 'the world of advertising'.

Advertising provides advice to receivers who, according to the ad itself, have no need of advice. For how can you tell people who already have good taste that purchasing this product shows they have good taste? If the premise is true, the conclusion is superfluous.

The desires in which advertising takes its starting point are not created by it. They exist as a resource – a medium that is accessible to design and naming. Nor is the world of advertising created by the single advertisement. This, too, is a cultural resource that acts as a background and sounding board for the individual ad. Every ad is able to presume that the receiver is familiar with the dual move of the advertisement, so he can both believe and not believe that, with a simple purchase, he can achieve a climax in which desire is fulfilled and annihilated with an almost explosive intensity. When the receiver is both familiar with advertising in general and, perhaps, with the brand in particular, the sender does not have to start all over again but can involve the receiver in a sophisticated play of meanings.

Everyone knows that washing clothes and cleaning the bathroom does not make you *that* happy. And if you complain that the toothpaste and the camera do not fulfil their lofty promises, it is you who is ridiculous, not the commercial. The world of advertising is a fantasy of how the world could be, if resistance and compromises disappeared. It is related to the wishing table of the fairy tale, the magic balm, and elixir of life, which provide eternal youth and vitality. For Freud, the wish fulfilment of the dream, magic, and religion are so obviously infantile that you can wonder that they work. But he provided the answer himself: in addition to being rational, we are also irrational and gladly squander our experience, insight, and logic in order to indulge in illusions.[16]

The world of advertising conjures up a Paradise that cannot be realized but can nevertheless motivate. Just as you can use film stars as role models and match your speech, your gait, and your habits to those of your favourite star, you can use the words and images of advertising as a resource, when you not only say but show who you are. In this way, the advertisement contributes prototypes for conduct and appearance.

From the feedback the sender receives from customers, colleagues, and the mass media, an adman can form his impressions and stabilize them as professional experience about what works and does not work. In the eighteenth century, David Hume and Adam Smith considered it to be empirical matter what was 'proper and approved' in a society.[17] In the same way, an adman considers it an empirical fact that there is a system of desire in society in a certain state and a certain aesthetic climate. He sends out his message, sees what happens, and takes it to heart. In this way, he can pretend within his black box that he is in contact with the world.

In a petrol station, you can learn that you can fill up a Ferrari, an icon, an unachievable car that attracts fantasies. If you sit in one, you are struck by a vague disappointment that can accompany fulfilled desire: is that all there is?[18] There is a steering wheel, four tyres, and a lot of instruments. You thought you were in heaven, but you are still on the ground, sitting low in an expensive car that is nothing but a car, even if an expensive one. Disappointment can puncture the fantasy. But it can also be productive and push the fantasy further down the same path. For it is no private fantasy but a social myth, inscribed everywhere in society, even in nature, where advertising otherwise stops. We have been educated at great cost to concretize our desire through the prototypes of advertising, which is bolstered once again through Hollywood.

Advertising is not monolithic. It dissolves into as many fragments as there are groups able to buy. Nevertheless, it makes sense to speak of a world of advertising. It is not reality; yet, it is a part of reality. It may be found everywhere in fragments that merge into a large narrative about a difference between two worlds, unfolded as magical realism and realistic surrealism. It is not private fantasy but a collective myth that contributes common schemes that open up to both adaptation and deviation.

Without a common language, no deviation is possible, and advertising offers an extremely differentiated universe in which anyone can find his niche, so you can warm yourself in the community by being unique.

To search for a coherent metaphysics in the world of advertising would be futile. Its imperative is to motivate to a sale, and its basic tool is a difference between an imaginary and a real world. But how the two sides of the difference are designed is an empirical question that only has local solutions, depending on the product, the public, and the imagination. Advertisements are as incoherent and fragmented as the desires to which they refer. Only in this way can they accommodate desire. If advertising were obligated to an ideology other than that of purchase, it would lose its pragmatic agility – to penetrate desires, map them, transform them, produce their objects in external form, and let desire and object short-circuit symbolically as the starting shot for their real marriage. So, advertising's appeal to desire also reveals the desire that is behind the advertisement – namely, the desire for profits and turnover.

The theme of the ad is outside the field of interest of advertising bureaus. They gladly work with sex and smoke, booze and perfume. They make themselves available to any cause, serve competitors, and are pretty much able to decouple themselves from ethical problems unless they do harm to their business. They take one campaign at a time and use it as a prototype for success or failure.

The rhetoric of advertising images

Most advertisements combine words and pictures, thus using media that work very differently. While a picture is read immediately and clearly, because the picture is sensed as a whole, a linguistic text consists of an ordered series of words that the sender controls. An intermediate form between picture and sentence can be a simple word-picture that, like a fanfare, captures the attention in a single moment.

Between picture and text, there are important connections that we shall look at later. But, first, we shall look at how an advertisement uses pictures – that is, the rhetoric of pictures. Like words, pictures can also be sent to influence the receiver. We can ignore the question of what an 'art picture' is supposed to do and be satisfied with ascertaining that an advertising image has a cool pragmatism.

The starting point is Roland Barthes' analysis of advertising images.[19] An image, as opposed to a (word)text, is analogue, not digital. And the question, then, is whether an image is coded. Barthes chooses to investigate the advertising image, because such an image is *forthright*. It has a simple intention.

Barthes analyses a Panzani advertisement (see Image 6.1), which shows a string bag with basic ingredients and brands. The image has three different elements – (1) a text, (2) an image, and (3) the objects that the picture presents. In addition, there is the context that the communication creates between sender and receiver but goes beyond the advertisement itself.

In the first element, the text can be read by anyone who knows the language. But what is the second – the image's message? For Barthes, it is a narrative of a small shopping trip. If you look at the goods that are found in the image, their message is 'Italianicity'. This message functions against a cultural background in which the sender can presume certain clichés about Italy – here, in connection with 'food'.

The advertisement draws on this resource, preconceptions about Italy as a country with a sophisticated culinary culture that does not just include temples of food but in which every housewife is a chef with a strong sense of the quality of raw ingredients. The message is that, with Panzani, you can get complete culinary service and that its canned goods and raw ingredients are at the same level – where the positive reader, which the ad always presumes, does not see the image as a string bag about to fall to the floor but as a net bag bulging over with its inner abundance. As far as the third element, the objects depicted, are concerned, they are in the first instance read as 'without a code'. They can be recognized at an elementary level about which almost everyone is in agreement.

Image 6.1 Advertisement from Panzani
Source: used in Roland Barthes paper on 'Rhétorique de l'image', *Communication*, no. 4, 1964.

This offers three messages: a linguistic message, which is coded, an iconic message, which is also coded, and a non-coded iconic message. The latter two messages are based on a simple presentation of objects that can be recognized as they are – 'literally', if you will. On the back of the literal message, the advertisement can place its coded message. On the presupposition that the receiver can recognize the objects the advertisement depicts, the sender can contemplate what objects he wants to depict (the rhetorical *inventio*) and how the objects are to be arranged. While the literal image *denotes*, the symbolic image *connotes*. Even though these are not two separate operations, first denotation and then connotation, it is the case that, without the elementary denotation – recognizability – any control of connotations will be impossible. The chain of elementary things is the medium that the connotative message must use to impose form and to hide behind. We recognize some things and, at the same time, we get an invisible message along the way. How the invisible message works can, in part, be experienced intuitively and, in part, analysed reflectively.

Why isn't Panzani content to show pictures of its products? This is due to the simple fact that pictures have many, fluid meanings. If a picture only showed bell peppers and onions, the receiver would have no idea what the meaning was. Therefore, the picture must be *anchored*, and this happens through the text, which does not only relate what is presented but also on what level the communication is taking place. That the interesting thing is not just the bell peppers and the onions but that they can be purchased and contribute to wonderful meals – which could also contain Panzani products.

The text exercises control by keeping the picture in a 'vice'[20] in order to prevent arbitrary or negative readings. Not only the picture as a whole but each of its elements has an aura of meaning that is tamed, specified, and impoverished, in part, by the text and, in part, by the context they create.[21]

That pictures are used in advertisements at all is due to their incredible effectiveness: we sense them with the same spontaneity that we sense things and situations every day. The spontaneity and comprehensible totalities of sensation provide a rich soil for planting messages that work intuitively and can spread to the soul by virtue of cultural programmes that connect the picture to a network of associations, that is, meanings. And since advertising photography shows 'things as they are', even though the sender selects the topic, the framework, and the perspective, the message of the advertisement hides behind a screen of normality or disarming naturalness. The denoted picture 'makes innocent' the artifice of connotation.[22] The more sophisticated the technique becomes, the more the communication can hide its intention behind an illusion that the message is *given*. The methods the picture uses to get its intention through constitutes a *rhetoric*. But, as always, the first trick of rhetoric is to create an illusion of its own absence.

An advertisement must capture, conserve and captivate. It must break the ice and open up an interplay between constancy and variation in which the receiver's desire is given but nevertheless receptive to shaping and precision, that is, instruction. It must create an affect in the receiver and make him feel something. The sender of an advertisement is an organization, a bureau, and a creative team that, together, attempt to guide the receiver's desire in a requisite direction.

Without familiarity with a cultural situation with its nostalgic and futuristic desires, its fantasies of happiness and its blocked desires, there cannot be advertising. And without a strong pressure against change and a great similarity in quality and price between different goods, advertising cannot become a powerful social institution that, in one movement, provides products a symbolic identity, surprises the receiver, and motivates to a purchase. Advertising is rhetorical, because it will find, in Aristotle's words, the convincing elements about something, which is here a good or a service.[23]

An advertisement begins with a quadruple set of moves:

1 it takes over a theme,
2 it invents an idea or an angle, so the theme can become a message,
3 it undertakes a coding, so the message can be read quickly, and
4 it combines its effects in a clear, comprehensive whole.

An advertisement that combines picture and text requires a combination of two time relations, because the picture is immediately comprehensible and effective, while the text is serial and takes time. By using an attractive picture and making use of the picture's difference in tempo, the receiver can be seduced into spending time on the more time-consuming text.

Advertisements presume a culture, understood as a supply of themes[24] available to common use and to which anyone can contribute and enrich. With the theme, a *framework* for communication is selected that, via logical, causal and historic connections, roughly guides what is relevant and serves to cut down the quantity of meanings to a manageable format. The relationship between warmth and chilliness acquires one meaning when the theme is central heating furnaces, another when it is tone of voice.

When the message is to be coded, it requires a choice between the oppositions that the theme makes available. If the theme is erotic attraction – which it often is in advertisements, you must choose among young flirtation, mother and child, established relationships, and so on. The possibilities are endless, which simply means that it requires inventiveness to shape the message, so that it intrigues without frightening, innovates without creating chaos, has a powerful eye-catcher, and so on. Here, the linking of elements is decisive. We shall look at some of the artifices that are used to create context – above all, metaphor, metonymy and asyndeton – and at the symbolic work that must be done in order to lure the receiver into the trap of advertising.

The artifice of advertising – some examples

An advertisement can undertake moves that add (*adiectio*) or replace (*immutatio*). This can take place in three ways: first, from a principle of similarity, which leads to *metaphor*; then, from a principle of proximity by which we come to *metonymy*; and, finally, from a principle of simple, coordinate accumulation by which we come to *asyndeton*. Proximity can also mean the proximity of an object to itself, so a part can stand for the whole or vice versa. None of these operations are logical or in any other way compulsory. Therefore, they can surprise and, therefore, they can require an effort, which once again rewards the receiver with some small pleasure. So the ad need not merely refer to pleasure – by buying and satisfying a desire – it can provide a foretaste of pleasure. Therefore, it is a normal requirement for an advertisement that it breaks with normal expectation.[25]

The function of the advertising picture is to create a context to which the receiver can connect. This can happen through a long-term effort, a campaign that slowly creates a platform of words and images, or it can happen by striking a theme or showing a picture that the public – or selected portions thereof – is presumed to have an interest. If the context is created, more sophisticated operations can be mounted on its back, because the sender does not need to waste effort telling what it is all about but can presume familiarity in the receiver. From a logo or a piece of design such as a cola bottle, a silent explosion of meanings can take place in the head of the receiver.

For example, an advertisement can work additively by showing a product in its context between before and after. Coffee comes from beans and ends as a dark drink, which opens up metonymy but also asyndeton: to create a connection between various elements. An ad can work additively by creating a montage of a product and other things that, together, suggest 'France' or 'luxury' without any casual or natural relationship between the elements of the montage. While it is normal to select a single element from a cultural theme, the ad can work aesthetically by overwhelming the receiver with many images from the context of which the product is a part. The reward of pleasure does not arise by seeing the product in a context with the nature it comes from and the pleasure it creates but by running amok in a fiesta of meanings.

While metonymy can count on a receiver in the know, who is familiar with the tangible connection between the coffee tree, coffee beans, and coffee, the metaphor must create connections between the visible and the invisible. Advertising images create connotations, which indirectly claim that their product stands for or actually incarnates values to which it is neither empirically nor logically connected. This can happen by putting the product into a *physical* context, which can be alluring nature or risky metropolis, a *social* context, which shows wealth and intense presence, and a *subjective* context, which shows people in situations of fulfilled desire. The image's abundance of meaning can be neutralized with a logo and text, so the interpretation is not left to chance.

The decisive thing is that a picture does not argue but shows. Thus the message is naturalized and the receiver himself becomes responsible for it. The text speaks, the picture shows. The text uses concepts, pictures appeal to the senses and to the proximate and distant inferences that the receiver can draw on the basis of what he senses, guided by cultural programmes and personal experiences. The time difference between text and picture can also be used to bring them out of their mutual harmony, so tempting mysteries and quirky surprises arise, creating small circuits of tension and relaxation, that is, pleasure.

With such artifices, an advertisement can be opened up to everything between heaven and earth – the desired and the forbidden, the nostalgic and the futuristic, the natural and the cultivated, the exotic and the familiar. Only the imagination sets the boundaries. And since the advertisement is a well-known genre, it can both play with itself and undermine itself and negate itself without leaving the receiver out in the cold. Regardless of how intensely an ad may criticize the state of desire in a society, directly or indirectly, everything ends in reconciliation: nothing needs to be changed except a local ownership, so a commodity undertakes its prescribed migration from warehouse to shop to private hands.

The rhetoric of advertising text

An advertisement does not work just through its language but through its entire setup – the relationship between pictures, typography, layout, and text. Even an ad that only uses text is also read as a picture. This does not prevent the possibility of mapping out some of its rhetorical tools by analysing its linguistic text.

It can first be noted that there is a special type of language that can be called 'advertising language'. Just as sports, the church, and the military have their special language within language, there are features that characterize the language of advertising and go together with its special function. Advertising language is characterized partly by its *constancy*, that is, its fixed features that make it into a special language, and partly by its *variation*, namely, its deviations from normal language use.

The task of advertising is to call attention to itself in order *thereby* to call attention to a product. Since it is an unsolicited communication, it must make sure it grabs attention. This happens with an 'eye-catcher', which may be an unusual way to present a sign. Sales ads use orange or yellow splashes to make a number sensational. Advertising language is not just an invisible medium but is, like poetry, also visible as form. Advertisements do not just use the meaning of words as tools but the words themselves, their graphic form, and their sound. Therefore, unusual ways of spelling or outright spelling mistakes help grab attention, foreign words can titillate and provide a charming resonance, word play can present riddles with a quick solution and, perhaps, provide a microscopic pleasure, and jingles and rhymes can make the text melodious in ways that promote the message, so you can sense even in the very music of the language how the old razor catches and scrapes and cuts, while the new razor glides smoothly across the cheek.

The distinctive character of advertising language is shown in the inventiveness with which it tries to irritate the unprepared receiver. For the same reasons, advertising avoids complicated patterns of sentences or makes them subordinate, because its first chore is to capture the receiver with a message that allows quick decoding.[26]

All the forms of rhetoric can be activated when the ad presents an ingenious collocation of words. We have looked at metaphor, metonymy and asyndeton, which are also used linguistically. We have also seen that ads certainly inform and, thus, appeal to *logos* but, first and foremost, motivate and involve *pathos*. An advertisement can choose a tone of voice, depending on whether its product is leading in the business, so it can choose an elevated style or whether it is the challenger and must choose the middle style.[27] In addition, other special forms such as *chiasmus* or an inverted parallelism in which a product is 'warmer in cold weather – cooler in warm weather', or *zeugma* in which abstract and concrete are juxtaposed, so an ad for a carpet appeals to the combined warmth from a carpet, a fireplace, and a tradition.

Most often, ads use what could be called addition, in which a cascade of additional qualifiers appear after the product's name with linkages such as 'is' and 'and' omitted. The description ceases to be an overall description, and the characteristics listed merge with the product's name. In the slogan 'Coke – the real thing', a name becomes a symbol of itself. Here, the ad works with a primitive word magic of the type described by Freud, where a 'primeval language' is presumed to identify not just oppositions but also words and objects. In a logo, too, sign and meaning are one and the same thing.

Arguments are not presented and hardly even claims, which can be rejected. Associations are created and nurtured, dressed up as the unfolding of inner qualities about a product or a brand. To avoid having the association weakened by empty words, the message is often presented abruptly or in staccato, so the points are carved into the linguistic marble.

The method may be to place the name or brand of the commodity at the head of the sentence, while the 'back weight' consists of the fireworks of predicates. Or to repeat the commodity's name, so the message is strengthened by linguistic music.

We shall look more closely at the form of rhetorical inference, the *enthymeme*, which is used diligently in commercials. This is due to the fact that the advertisement is fundamentally a positive genre, because its function is to recommend. What it criticizes is, at most, the sad state of affairs of being without the product. The positive attitude is a *pragmatic presupposition* for reading an ad, so even a critical receiver must put himself into a positive mode in order to decode it. Therefore, the ad can use the special feature of the *enthymeme* that it allows a premise to remain unstated. The hidden premises have the character of *platitudes* – unspecified fundamental values, which it is meaningless to reject and which the ad can clarify in a desired direction, so an indeterminate goal becomes determinate with respect to content and means. In the language of advertising as in rhetoric, everything has two sides. The ad chooses the positive systematically and thus tries to ensure a loyal reading of its text.

Words such as 'modern', 'effective' or 'quality' are such platitudes. And the essence of a platitude is that the relationship between a platitude and its opposite is asymmetrical, because the opposite is precluded. This creates a convergence of two tendencies that contributes to the effect of the ad. For one thing, no one wants to ruin his vacation, his car or his skin. For another, it is inconceivable that an advertisement would seriously claim that its product is the opposite of wonderful, interesting or exciting.

Platitudes do not require the receiver to be loyal. Their effect consists of the fact that the receiver must assume this pragmatic presupposition in order to understand the ad and because it is difficult to disagree – regardless of the fact that agreement can cease as soon as the platitude moves from the indeterminate to the determinate, which it inevitably does – if for no other reason, because *the form of the ad's communication itself rests on a presupposition of appeal*. The receiver assumes this premise in order to understand the ad, which saves the sender the trouble of stating what he is up to. In order to get around the reservation built into the premise of a 'commercial', the commercial can mask itself as an ordinary text, which again has resulted in the requirement that a newspaper ad be supplied with the word; advertisement; if it looks like an editorial text, so the receiver is not unnecessarily confused by genre-flicker.

The strategic choice of the positive side of a number of normal differences determines the advertising language as a genre whose fundamental law is suggestive excitement, so descriptions are only feebly masked as objective and, above all, activate the *pathos* dimension of communication. And the excitement is the same whether it is indicated absolutely with superlatives or relatively with comparisons or indicatively with *enthymemes*. Words with clear negative connotations are avoided – for example, 'cheap', and commodities are not normally 'produced' but 'created'.

As soon as this fundamental law is established, it can be used as a springboard for paradoxical communication, so it is apparently negated but where the negation presumes that the receiver reinstates the negated presumption. Here, an advertisement can try to increase its authenticity by pretending it is not an advertisement, by downplaying its appeal, or by double-coding its message with irony, so the desires of both the uncritical and the critical receiver are guided.

Finally, you can see how ads make use of a linguistic *opaqueization* or condensation. They do not shrink from paradoxical language use, where you save money by spending money, where something is exclusive to everyone, where people with good taste are taught what good taste is, and where the rustic is designed for the city.[28]

With linguistic tools such as these, advertisement puts its own forms in the medium of 'language'. That a word has a meaning means that the actual sensation of the word is surrounded by an invisible space of references, so the word is spontaneously connected with something other and more than itself. The formation of meaning comes from the normal meaning of words and pictures. But words and pictures have many meanings and, side by side with the conventional meaning, there is also an idiosyncratic meaning with roots in private experience. The same thing is different depending on sex, class, and culture. Advertising tries to control the formation of meaning by endowing a product or a brand with a precise, fixed meaning that can be explicit, that is, expressed verbally in claims, or implicit, namely, created associatively through pictures, emotions, and linguistic music, which are presumed to have value as attractors. Photo models are unusually beautiful because beauty attracts, so we involuntarily fasten our attention on them, and the advertisement gets dragged along behind.

Advertising texts are not satisfied with reference – denotation – but enrich their messages connotatively with a corona of ideas and images and strengthen it with hard rhythm, swooning beauty, and staccato titillation. Advertising language achieves its aesthetic effect by liberating itself from the normal demands of language. It takes liberties to achieve its goal, it dissolves boundaries to set its own, so new words, new combinations, and new modes of description can arouse a noticeable pleasure.

To create an idiom is to create a freedom you can limit yourself. Advertising crosses every boundary that can be crossed – the rules of logic, syntax, grammar, and semantics – in order to create effective complexes of meaning. It freely chooses among logos, ethos and pathos and also uses the interference between them. It directs chains of associations, following from Pascal's dictum that the heart has its reasons reason cannot know. Kinships, that the understanding judges as irrational, have their own reason and intent in the world of advertising. A name that is normally an empty marker is not just connected with what is mentioned but also with a dense swarm of described things. They are not linked together with the little word 'is', which activates reflection, but are appended as if names and traits were one and the same thing.

Like art, advertising wants to seduce, that is, direct the receiver's sensation, thoughts, and feelings. Both are hungry for innovation, and advertisements consider art as a resource whose tools and works can be freely exploited or directly copied. The great difference is the advertisement's goal: even when an ad informs, its point is inevitably to appeal; even when it rejects, its point is to confirm.

However long or short the time difference is between these changes depends on the advertisement's assessment of its audience. But the positive tendency separates art and advertising, even when they use the same tools. It cannot, logically, be the function of an ad to work against a sale. Its fundamental rule is to recommend and, for logical reasons, there can be no exceptions – although there may be circuitous routes and ploys. An advertisement for a commodity can dismiss a competitor's goods, and it can dismiss itself and its own recommendation. But this will unavoidably be observed as a sophisticated attempt to say the opposite.

Therefore, we can formulate a rule that an ad cannot dismiss its product, because it is not allowed to. Any attempt to break this rule is immediately observed as a sophisticated feint, so a breach of the rule is transformed into a confirmation, just as the attempt to go beyond the art system with non-art is channelled back into the art system. Or like an organization's lack of decision is observed as a decision about non-decisions. Thus, the rule does not only apply to the ad's relationship to its product but also to itself. In brief: an ad can refuse to be an ad but is not allowed to do so. This rule can be used as a springboard for advertising's creative association not only with its theme but with itself.

In the same way, modes of reading that are logically possible and, perhaps, obvious are ignored, *because there is an ongoing reflection that we are talking about an advertisement*. The Panzani ad that Barthes analysed is not allowed to be read as a shopping bag about to fall to the floor, causing catastrophe, loss and ruin. Even though the image sets the stage for such an interpretation, it is rejected, because the receiver knows that it is an advertisement. The receiver also knows that, when a reservation or even a criticism is expressed in an ad, a meaningless comparison is being staged. That a washing machine does not itself hang the clothes up to dry or that a mid-class car 'is not a Rolls-Royce' is no criticism, since no one expects it. It is rather hidden praise, since it is presumed that a comparison makes sense.

In short, the advertisement seeks effects by all means. Wherever there are conventions around which people congregate, an effect can be achieved by disrupting them – and rhetoric is not disruption but, to the contrary, disruption is a rhetorical means. It can violate the receiver or make him cooperate with and state latent premises (for example, that the 'exclusive consumer' is himself), or by capturing the receiver in his 'guard down', so he recognizes features about himself he did not notice before.[29]

Even when advertisements breach conventions, they inevitably have their own.[30] They must presume that the receiver is positively inclined toward the product, perhaps, almost as positive as the sender – that is, a common fiction that can be seen through without it necessarily having special consequences. And they must presume that they are ads, even when they play by their own rules and reinvent trite clichés – the all-too-direct appeal, the blonde on the radiator – so the receiver is left uncertain whether the message is serious or ironic. The uncertainty makes the reading more pleasurable – and, perhaps, ensures the ad's acceptance by many groups who read it differently.

The advertisement overcodes and recodes the codes of language, so normal meanings become a springboard for new meanings. An ad must presume that well-known words have well-known meanings and that things define their own space of relevance, so beverages but not sanitary towels are praised with words like 'ice-cold' and 'effervescent'. Advertising language becomes a language within language, that is, a *genre* with its own principles and formal requirements. And when advertising language is established and has closed in around itself, it can play with the difference between itself and everyday language and use everyday language without it being misunderstood *as* everyday language.

When an ad speaks in a normal tone of voice, it has a special effect – for example, objectivity and reassurance. When exaggeration is the norm, the normal becomes a deviation. If you read an ad literally or critically, you relate in the same way as when you criticize a fairy tale for 'not being real' or a sermon for being unscientific.

Like Niels Bohr's horseshoe, which brought luck even to people who did not believe in it, advertising also works on those who see through it and even think they are immune to it. For ads are stubborn and work across the difference between rejection and acceptance. They know that words and pictures flow into the receiver through other paths than reason and consciousness.

Often, the claims in an ad are not graduated; for example, it does not make sense to ask precisely *how* wonderful a commodity is. Assessments involve the sender who undertakes the assessment and the receiver who assesses the assessment, so there is a leap from the product to talk about the product in which *the product disappears from focus*. When an ad claims that X is wonderful, the receiver is brought into a fluctuation: he oscillates between X and the person who speaks of X, at the same time that he involves himself: whether he is or is not a member of the club who finds X wonderful and what he otherwise thinks of people who believe X is wonderful. Thus, he is deeply involved in the ad, even if he dismisses it as infantile.

Genre, self-reference, autocommunication and second-order advertising

We can summarize in this way: an advertisement is communication between absent parties, that is, a meeting point between a sender and a receiver who are invisible to each other. Its apparent goal is to seduce the public to buy, that is, benefit the sender. But this purpose in its pure form has no interest to the receiver. Therefore, the sender must build consideration for the receiver into the advertisement, so the advertisement tells the receiver how he can benefit himself.

This happens by informing, namely, with *logos*. Many advertisements are content to inform, because they can presume that the public is motivated – that people want to save, travel, or buy IT equipment. The stage is set for what might be called everyday or commonplace advertising. If the ad cannot presume interest, it must build in motivation and appeal to emotions, that is, work with *pathos*. It sets up a more dramatic staging of the text and images of the ad.

Because of the quantity of advertising, there is normally an imbalance between the sender's care and the receiver's indifference. Ads contain many pearls for swine. But an ad can fail for another reason: there is no guarantee that the receiver decodes the ad in the way that it is encoded and no opportunity for correction on a running basis. On the contrary, you must presume that, apart from the simple recognition of things and situations, there is a gulf between the sender's and the receiver's advertisement. The sender can hope that misunderstanding is just as productive as understanding and that an advertisement can be effective through intricate paths, so an ad that is consciously rejected can be accepted unconsciously and that contempt and cheap laughs help reinforce memory.

If you are to talk about trolls, you can try to capture with a particular snarl in the 'r' of the word 'troll', the essence of the troll – to express his bondage to the earth but also his vain longing to free himself and lift himself from the rocks and the moss and the murk up into the light and, therefore, his hatred and easily provoked aggression, so he swings between the jovial and the frightening. But what is the guarantee that the receiver will catch all this? In *Babette's Feast*, Karen Blixen had to introduce a culinary connoisseur, so the sophistication of the art of Babette's cooking would not be lost, because the poor Norwegian farmers would undoubtedly sense that the food tasted good but would have no idea what they were tasting.

The advertisement's communication is not simple. This may be ascertained by examining four paths: genre, self-reference, autocommunication and second-order advertising.

Genre

We have called the world of advertising closed – with the extra flourish that the closedness is maintained and denied at the same time. When the ad becomes a modern institution, the sender can presume that the receiver knows the genre – that he knows what an ad is and is familiar with its prototypes. Consequently, the receiver is no innocent victim, and only hardened moralists believe that you blindly imitate the world of advertising. The buffer of familiarity, routines in skimming, that is, reading-and-rejecting, ironic distance, and reflection work as self-protection, which once again can be processed by new advertisements.

Advertisements constitute a special genre,[31] because the receiver presumes that the sender has an agenda and, thus, an angle. With this key, the universe of advertising is opened up and, as the sender knows this, he can break with the genre and pretend he does not 'do advertising' – because he knows that the receiver will nevertheless judge it 'advertising'. If you see a picture of a large, ruddy-faced man lounging smiling across two pages of a magazine, you may wonder what is going on, until you see a logo and say 'aha' – the point is that this lump of flesh is supposed to function as an attractive prototype.

When you see the logo, you know whether it is his clothes, his teeth or his glasses that are the focus. Even though the receiver is not agreeably inclined, he knows that the ad is an agreeable genre that can break with all other expectations than that: to make an ad for a product.[32] An ad must only frighten in order to increase its attraction.

In this way, the sender can count on the collaboration of the receiver. The receiver is not a trivial machine that reacts like a karate chop to the knee – and yet. Admen like to claim that, when an ad steps over the line into the disgusting and perverse, it is not dangerous, because everyone knows the genre 'advertising' and takes it with a grain of salt. Advertising does not trigger a simple imitation. At the same time, they must necessarily claim that ads work – down simple or complicated paths. If they did not, they would be superfluous. They must present themselves as experts who 'know which cultural buttons to press in order to sell more'.[33]

An advertisement must use powerful codes that can be decoded quickly. Neither esoteric themes nor difficult-to-access presentations can count on success. To achieve a mass audience requires a renunciation of intellectual refinement. On the other hand, commonplace feelings but also playing with taboos can garner a wide audience. If you dress a male and a female model in underwear and write on his 'for her' and on hers 'for him', you can make a double score: both display nakedness and present the surprising message that men's underwear is for ladies and vice versa, so underwear is more to look at than to use. Correspondingly, if you show a young, well-dressed man lying in a pool of blood in the street and serve up the message 'Go out with style,' you can, with a mild shock, pretend a horrific event is entertaining, because it is not dangerous.

An advertisement can permit itself the luxury of saying nothing, because the receiver speaks along with it. An ad for Carlsberg's elephant beer can be content to show the bottle as the focal point between two slightly entangled trunks. Aesthetically, the ad becomes the message in the same way that an ad for the cigarette Silk Cut can be content with showing delicately-cut violet silk. The public is presumed to be able to sing along with the chorus and take the hint, because they know the key.

As the final step, the advertisement can pretend it is not a commercial at all and refer to experiences that are outside of the advertising world. 'Image is nothing, thirst is everything, obey your thirst,' we hear – an image ad, which does not only reject its own message but also pretends it is not caught up in advertising. By short-circuiting the ad in the ad, you can hope to achieve a greater authenticity. Thus, we have come to the next point.

Self-reference

Advertising is not just about products and the desire for them but also about itself. When the universe of advertising immunizes itself as a special world, it can relate freely to itself, implicate itself, and play with its own meanings.

Thus, advertising becomes self-referential. The relationship to other advertisements can happen as positioning, when the number two of an industry plays against the number one. The industry's leader looks toward the sky, while number two looks toward number one.[34] This can also take place simply as a tool: an ad or a campaign is presumed to be familiar, so another sender can save itself some effort by taking its starting point in it.

That the advertisement 'turns inward' does not mean that it no longer has anything to say. It simply means that other advertisements are also among the tools an ad finds around it. Their symbols are not owned by anyone but can be used to strengthen one's own communication or sabotage others'. In this way, an ad can work on two fronts and contribute to a sophisticated semiotic turbulence. But it can also play up against exhaustion from an advertisement and indifference to its promises.

When the advertising world becomes a common resource, a commercial can loosen the relationship between product and advertisement. A dimension is added to the space of meaning which opens up increased refinement. The advertisement uses itself to develop its own linguistic and aesthetic universe, which is neither bound to nor guided by the products' world, just as language is not bound by reality. Absolut Vodka's rebuses in which the bottle is rediscovered as an icon in urbane and artistic contexts consist more in the pleasure of recognizability than claims about the product. People have seen it before and will see it again.[35]

Whether the public grasps all the ins and outs is uncertain. The internal references can be catnip for connoisseurs. It is not the receiver but the sender who is playing with his own world, which he presumably knows better than the receiver. But the organization is not allowed to hover in ignorance of this subtle double-dealing, which is not left unmentioned at 'The Great Presentation'.

Autocommunication

The typical receiver of an advertisement must be tempted to buy and use. The advertisement can also break with this presupposition. Even though the normal format is preserved, with a sender and a receiver, the 'true' receiver can be displaced, so an advertisement via a detour through the public is addressed to employees, to strengthen their motivation, or to investors, to show confidence in the product, or to the public at large, to show a responsible attitude. We have earlier touched on this phenomenon called *autocommunication*.

Autocommunication is not about informing the world around us but about demonstrating self-esteem – to show that you are serious and on the ball. Even if the public is indifferent, advertisements are hung up on the organization's notice board to tell employees that the organization, its products, and its people *are present in the world of the mass media*, thus bolstering self-esteem. Job announcements can also indirectly advertise the organization by stating how the organization would like to see itself – and the message is directed toward new and old employees.

With advertisements, an organization's management can subject its employees to a cross-pressure, because its message comes in stereo, both from within and from without.[36] By showing how enthusiastic they are, employees can be pressured to live up to the new expectations[37] At the same time, they can be forced to explain themselves and thus work as ambassadors, when friends and acquaintances ask for an explanation. Even critical employees may resort to management's rhetoric, because they have nothing better themselves and because they would like to provide good reasons for why they are employed there. When customers become blasé to ads and can easily brush off their appeal, ads can compensate by addressing more audiences, including the organization itself. It can depict its employees in action and, thus, tell the public about its employees and its employees about its pride in their effort.

Second-order advertising

The problem of advertising is not whether it works precisely but whether an organization dares not to advertise, that is, the problem of alternatives. Many artists say bad things about reviews but think it an even bigger problem *not* to be reviewed. Whether and how a campaign works may be uncertain. However, does an organization have the guts not to do it?

Beyond the question of effect, the ad has become a fixed organizational procedure, a ritual. This signals competence to investors and to employees. It indicates that the organization believes in its product by investing advertising dollars in it. Advertising is a 'system of signals' in business life, and it may be contemplated whether its primary function is still to persuade the customer.

When advertising is converted from function to (status)symbol, its criteria for success or failure are doubled. Both its economic success and its industry success, measured in awards and prizes, become interesting. The advertising industry's self-staging is also mentioned in the mass media, so from this skewed angle it trickles down on both the agency and the organization. Therefore, it is difficult but not impossible to talk about an excellent advertisement, which has no effect. Just as an excellent piece of architecture can be imagined that is never built, creative admen can be imagined who never produce an ad. However, such an extreme position presumes that others can be inspired.

For advertising agencies, it is not just important to advertise but to advertise advertising. In books on advertising, there are routinely references to an endless series of 'unforgettable' campaigns that are the prototypes of success for the industry, while its failures go politely unmentioned.[38] Correspondingly, a special cult around not only the creative but the authentic is cultivated within the advertising industry.[39]

If you look at how advertising presents itself, then the following picture emerges.

Even though advertisements may break with all conventions, they cannot break with the basic convention known as financing. Advertisements are normally no better than their market – although the advertising market has also expanded into the internal market of the advertising industry. For while taste is private, sales numbers – and prices – are public. Therefore, no advertisement speaks ill of its patron or its product. The role of the ad is 'to glorify everything marketing does',[40] so advertising becomes applied art for which nothing is sacred except its own success. Anything can be used, anything can be abused – except its own interest. Advertisements regard warmth and honesty and loyalty with cold eyes.

Even though the advertising industry celebrates innovation as a breach of conventions, it is always innovation within the framework of the market. Admen who almost pathologically[41] worship breaches of convention must live with the fact that such breaches *themselves* are convention, so creativity is also banality. They deal with the irritation and chilling effect from this insight in the way that the market's conventions become their blind spot, so they can celebrate their own status as being unconventional and creative within an invisible bell-jar. When you work within a boundary you are forced to accept, you have a tendency to forget about it. It becomes an uncontested *framework*. And within this framework and its conventions, you can play the game called 'the disruption discipline'.[42]

The core contribution of the advertising industry is *the idea*, which is also the inventive re-description, the skewed angle, or the creative leap, that corresponds to rhetoric's *inventio*. By virtue of the idea, a difference and a connection are opened up between the everyday and the advertisement. A new world opens up, when playing the lottery is re-described from being about winning to being about dreaming of winning. In this sort of movement, the ad unites an idea that is conceptual, a 'territory' that is sensual, and a value that is emotional.[43] It places a product in a discourse and in a vision, which creates a sounding board for all later measures. Since ads and products are only loosely connected, a powerful idea is often separate and even distant from its specific configuration, which again can increase the ad's legitimacy: the idea is stronger than and prior to its own configuration.[44]

An advertisement does not sell goods but sells goods by selling symbols and meanings. Therefore, ads are an important source of information about a society's cultural state.[45] To buy a commodity is to subscribe to a culture. In the best case, an ad can capture its receiver with his 'guard down' – a truth about himself, 'stolen moments',[46] with which he is not yet familiar and which are not used to inform but to guide.

An ad can choose whether it wants to orient itself toward the public or toward the 'market' and thus be instructed, or whether it wants to make a brand into a reference point for the public and thus instruct it. Even though the advertisement, like politics, cannot speak ill of the public, there are strict boundaries for the degree to which the public can govern and make the advertising industry a slave of demography, Gallup polls, and focus groups. It is not enough to adapt, if you want to innovate, even though a breach with conventions must take its starting point in conventions, not just to negate them but to go beyond them. Like a rhetorician, an adman must know his audience. He must assume clichés such as the claim that individualism dominates in the USA and Europe and collectivism and consensus in Asia.[47]

Advertising values are not political. Health and democracy and sustainability are not matters for the advertising industry – unless they are to be advertised. Regardless of whether the product is alcohol, tobacco, fast food, or luxury cars, the advertisement isolates these products from their context and focuses on the campaign's success or failure. It ignores all other considerations but those integrated into the product and its sales, so the advertising market is just as cynical as any other market.

Campaigns or individual ads constitute the advertising industry's examples, its memory bank, and its reference points. The industry isolates campaigns and assesses their success or failure. It thinks in examples, because it has no method and cannot have one except abstract references to disruptions, creativity, and vision.

Even though the advertising industry does not criticize customers or the public, it presumes, however, that the public needs organizations, which again need ad agencies. Since the relationship between sender and receiver is precarious and embraces many parties, the advertising industry must emphasize the ad's causal effectivity or its symbolic ineffectivity according to the situation.[48] In the same way, the advertising industry must admit that all target groups are dissolved, that the receiver does not just identify and imitate, and at the same time speak authoritatively about what the public wants and how its desire can be kept fluid and easy to teach. This leads to almost blatant self-contradictions. 'Customers are sure of their taste and how they feel', a book on aesthetic marketing virtuously says – and, a few lines later, it talks about what is needed to 'shape customer interpretations'.[49]

Above all, the advertising industry must overestimate its own significance and exalt its own creativity, so its self-description is filled with success, enthusiasm, superlatives, and drama. It must glorify itself and the product in the same breath.[50]

An important difference is modern versus old-fashioned, in which the advertising business must stimulate organizations' fear of being outdated and their desire to be on the cutting edge. This difference, however, can be neutralized if 'old-fashioned' is replaced by 'classic' or 'original'. But organizations are continually invited to observe themselves and their products within the 'new/old' scheme, which opens up endless effort, that is, inflation of demands.[51] Innovation is described as rejuvenation and is linked to increased sales,[52] so organizations can radiate self-confidence, vision, and vitality, if 'they use advertising as a quick and powerful source for change'.[53]

Luxury and prestige

An important part of the idea of luxury is aesthetic: to pamper the senses. In the Middle Ages, the conception of Paradise was closely connected with the aroma of spices from the East, that is, in the direction Paradise is presumed to be located, so 'where pepper grows' was not Hell but an in-between place between heaven and earth. 'The aroma of spices is believed to be a breath wafted from Paradise over the human world', as it is put in a book on the history of intoxicants and stimulants.[54]

If you give the idea of luxury a thorough examination, it has to do with aroma and taste, about soft or rustling materials, of touch or room for the body to move around in, even when you are transported from one place to another or entertained. But luxury also has to do with something more: the prestige and power that is connected with lavish consumption, discreet or conspicuous.[55] The motive may be private narcissism. But there is no reason to think so narrowly. The necessity of being represented in public also plays a role. Just as Turkish harems were not the centre of wild orgies but for strictly regulated conduct, public luxury is more strategy than pleasure. In the cavalcade through the town of olden days, the good people were entranced with a luxury that bombarded all the senses, so it was both close and far away, while the distance between high and low was, symbolically, short-circuited by the scattering of coins. Popular participation in political luxury is in our day replaced by the TV audience's observation of political summits, royal get-togethers, opening ceremonies, and the Oscar film awards.[56]

To sense is nothing special. Anybody and everybody can do that, and most of consciousness is sensation. On the other hand, all sensation is not democratically distributed. There are domains of sensation that are difficult to access for economic reasons. It is called luxury – and luxury is one side of a difference in which the other side is what is normal. It has to do with ranking higher or lower and giving this social distinction a visible form, such as clothes, residence, transportation, and food. If a thing becomes normal, it ceases to be a luxury, as may be seen in the development of needs. When spices became ordinary, the upper class could no longer use them to indicate their status. They did not lose their taste, only the taste enhancer of prestige. That taste is only for the few means that it is exclusive: it shuts out; there is a great difference between the exclusion that hits losers and the exclusion that is reserved for winners. If smoked cod liver were rare, the upper class would praise its sophisticated aroma.

Luxury is thus a cocktail of sensation and prestige. In the struggle for recognition, not only are objects deployed but objects that offer themselves with a special strength to the senses and enjoyed not only for their own sake but also for their social meaning. Therefore, there are rituals connected with luxury, and they must be followed to the letter, so you can clearly show that you have mastered the art of enjoying elegance effortlessly. This easy association with luxury, from lobster forks to trademarks to vintage wine, becomes a part of a self-presentation that shows that you are able and capable of associating with the icons of consumption – the rich, the royal, movie stars, and the famous.

Aesthetic use – and, perhaps, enjoyment – of consumer goods thus becomes *an area of symbolic effort*. To participate in its rituals shows clearly, almost incarnated, that you are a part of an imaginary community in which enjoyment is intensified and developed socially by being placed in a system, as de Sade had one of his libertines say: 'We had best introduce a little method to our pleasures' madness: they are not relished unless organized'.[57] A series of movements was associated with the eighteenth-century practices around the taking of snuff and, in Europe during the same period, the unostentatious Chinese teacup was equipped with a handle and a saucer, so tea drinking could be made more complicated and, therefore, better suited to self-presentation: 'Cup and saucer henceforth received more attention as a pair, since they offered greater possibilities for self-display than either cup or bowl did on their own'.[58] The lobster fork and finger bowl were used at that time to separate the sheep from the goats in social life.

Such rituals may be written or unwritten, rigid or open to ongoing revision. They indicate a brotherhood of like-minded people, a 'we' and create a platform for control and competition.[59] You are both free and unfree when you have pledged your soul to a conception of luxury, for even though it has to do with your own happiness and distinction, endless labour is required. Whoever wants to be recognized is dependent on those who determine and award recognition – even if it is not a specific group but rather a diffuse Golden International, a global elite of business leaders, politicians and academics. A handle is placed on you, so controlled by an invisible hand you are pulled along, led from one desire to the next, if possible to your own ruin, as Marx remarked.[60]

Luxury is the privilege of the elite. But as luxurious needs are democratized and transformed into normal needs – to use spices, to travel, to eat meat – the boundary between luxury and the everyday becomes fluid. Every time a luxurious need is pulled within the sphere of the normal, the concept of luxury is displaced. New desires are developed side by side with extravagant modes of dealing with the old. The struggle for luxury is a struggle for social ascent and, in a market society, the idea of luxury with its built-in compulsion for growth is so deeply integrated into the idea of success and happiness that it is difficult to imagine a transition to more modest consumption patterns – unless the transition is imposed by a catastrophe.

The idea of luxury unites the visible and the invisible, objects and imagination. It has triumphed globally, because everyone uses it to indicate *what is special* – status and love, the high points of life, reward and solace. Luxury is the centre of uneasy dreams that drive human beings into the labyrinth of work and leisure and even beyond their limits, so they feel poor no matter how rich they are, because they intoxicate and torment themselves with great desires. The advertisement stimulates these desires by furnishing them with words, pictures, and things, so it shows something ever 'higher' such as pleasure and fear, salvation and perdition in one.

That the idea of luxury is victorious is shown, negatively, by the social unrest that arises around the difference between rich and poor. People define their want and their own misery through the concepts with which the language of luxury has equipped them. The upper class and the lower class agree on what wealth is but do not have the same success in getting access to it. They are separated not by disagreement but by access.

Even though it is possible to make yourself immune to material luxury, the opportunity is seized by only a few, because luxury and recognition go together. Classic values such as hospitality, magnanimity, and love are served by luxury, which becomes a quite 'normal abnormality', not an exception but a rule – which contributes to its death and resurrection at new levels. Great portions of the Western middle class have acquired the taste and the opportunity to consider themselves rich; advertising conjures up ever new pictures of luxury; and trademarks become universal codes that are accessible to anyone, so there is 'a flood of ever more the same'.[61]

The symbolic problem with luxury is that, on one hand, it must be exclusive and, on the other, visible. This can happen through sheer size – so, splendid houses, cars and gowns emit almost animal signals. It can also occur though easily convertible and easily read signs, which take up less room and can circulate quickly and contribute to an increase in the tempo of enjoyment. They are luxury's form of currency, which also relieves consumers from the burden of being connoisseurs. Brands are known and judge for them.

The idea of luxury is not disputed by its necessary intercourse with poverty. Luxury is cynical, and its opposition is built into it. Every market creates differences, even though the starting point – chance – is equality. If you say luxury, you also say the differences between rich and poor, because luxury presumes normal needs just as a party presumes everyday. Even though the market makes everyone free and equal, it immediately re-creates unfreedom and inequality. Not even a gigantic redistribution, motivated by experts of social equality, would dissolve the difference between luxury and poverty, because it is the strongest weapon in the human struggle to assert identity, that is, difference. Even though the French Revolution made the luxury of the nobility a scandal, this was just a hinge on which society turned to a new form of bourgeois luxury. As in the old potlatch ceremonies, where rival groups competed for giving and destroying valuable items, the winner is the person who consumes the most.

Disputing the idea of luxury and exploding its temples are isolated protests that have no 'people' behind them. And behind the protest against luxury, you can normally find the ordinary difference between luxury and 'the ordinary'. The great heroes of revolutions are also normally vulnerable to luxury and its pampering of the senses. People dream of luxury and use energy to conquer it privately, even when they are fighting it socially.

Economically, there is employment in producing both the necessary and the luxurious, so even the poor would be worse off, if luxury were forbidden. A market society is oriented toward growth and, therefore, toward luxury, because luxury makes *scarcity* permanent – and scarcity is the fundamental category of economics. But it cannot be defined biologically, and it can at any time be re-introduced on the positive side of the difference between having and lacking, so new acquisitions open up new scarcities. If anyone should get the crazy idea of forbidding luxury, it would unleash an economic *Götterdammerung*.

The superfluous is, as Voltaire pointedly expressed it, highly necessary. Not only does wealth presume that there is poverty – even though the poor in the rich world are richer than the rich in the poor world. The poor need the extravagance of the rich in order to find work, and society needs it to keep itself going. We are back to Mandeville's old dictum from 1715 that private vices are public goods.

Unless functional replacements are developed for luxury, it is difficult to see how the obsession with economic growth can cease. The concept of spiritual growth or growth in intensity instead of quantity has been tried without success. Countless priests and philosophers and Puritans have fought the idea of extravagance, which leads away from what they consider important and true. But the spiritual ideal of life does not fascinate. Nor does 'minimalist luxury' – which consists of space, environment, and time – have any great chance for success, because it does not participate in the modern movement from the public–heroic to the private–hedonistic.[62] In advertising images, private self-presentation triumphs over common, public wealth.

The idea of luxury has been confronted with another idea of intensity, which is supposed to be more psychic than physical, so desire instead of being directed toward material wealth is supposed to be directed toward psychic intensity. But this opposition collapses, because the cultivation of intensity is captured and absorbed by the cultivation of luxury. Examples are the cultivation of gastronomy, interior decorating, clothing, and design, which certainly focus on special experiences but are also prestigious areas for growth in consumption – a consumption that does not view itself as merely materialistic but as an exquisite place for self-presentation, so people present themselves through sophisticated treats for the senses, which have their source in physical things. But spiritual intensity requires physical equipment, so the immaterial rides on the back of the material, which has simply made itself self-evident and invisible for a consumption elite.

Without knowing it, the consumption elite are adherents of John Locke, who claimed that people come into being through labour, which both forms them as human beings and creates property as the external expression of their inner being, so people quite literally mix their soul with things, even though the mixing bowl in modern society is not only work but also leisure.[63] Both work and leisure become areas for self-presentation and create an extended ego, which in Freud's expression makes people into a prosthetic god. If the prosthetic disappears, the legs collapse, and no one is left standing. To contest these areas of self-presentation is to threaten a picture of the human being that has become a social force in the modern world, so enormous clouds of anxiety and rage would create darkness in the political space.

The idea that the essence of man is not a given but to be produced makes human beings plastic and receptive to growth. For the production does not happen in isolation but in a social struggle for recognition. The more production, the more self, and the more distinction, the more self. The ambition of being yourself, recognized both by others and yourself, merges with the idea of luxury. When you are happy with your home, you are happy with yourself. When you want to show who you are, you show your home and your car, your wine cellar and your travel pictures, your clothes and your art. Not to promote your career or not to refine your taste is a sin against yourself, a sin of omission, because you do not unfold your potential, which includes labour's public and heroic sphere and leisure's private and hedonistic sphere.

When organizations use aesthetic tools, the idea of luxury is part of the game: in two ways. In part, organizations themselves need prestige and a part of prestige consists in staging yourself with design and architecture and powerful communication, that is, what Veblen called 'conspicuous consumption',[64] which is not limited to the 'leisure class'. And, in part, organizations use fantasies about luxury as a carrier wave for their profits, so the appeal to purchase is supported by pictures of a life in easy luxury with pretty people, splendid things, and extravagant interiors. The advertising world is a fantasy that is neither identical with everyday earthly existence nor a heavenly feast but is a hinge between the two.

Organizations cannot do without luxury and its potential of growth and innovation. Therefore, they would not dream of criticizing the idea except as a starting shot for their own proposal of what a better form of luxury would be. Organizations contribute to this inflation of demands that continuously alter the boundary between the normal and the luxurious.

We can here see the close connection between advertising and luxury. When an advertisement constructs its world as a hybrid form between heaven and earth, it inevitably uses luxury. For through the medium of 'luxury', a secular Paradise can be formed towards which it is possible to strive, even though it is lost behind an ever receding horizon. Therefore, luxury is a basic idea of advertising, whether it is an image ad or a sales ad. And since the fantasy of luxury in ever new forms possesses people with a white-hot psycho-social power, there are immense profits to be made. 'Whoever controlled pepper would essentially control the purse-strings of a continent', it was said in the Middle Ages,[65] back when pepper was a sign of wealth and prestige.

What is a goal for an individual is a means for organizations. They use the system of needs to promote their autopoiesis, and they modify it – for example, by accelerating the pace of needs, so schnapps is quicker than beer, and cigarettes quicker than pipes or cigars.[66] What counts is not the things but the imaginary space they enter into or, if you will, the illusion of things. And this illusion is not an empty phantom but an effective medium that can build a cathedral of alluring fantasies of trivial, everyday things such as togs, toothpaste and tea. Things disappear behind their meaning, and the slight disappointment that may arise can be an incentive to penetrate even deeper into the juggling act. Thus, a dynamic of enjoyment is created, which unfolds through the body but acquires a surplus of meaning and attraction from the system of needs of which it is a part.

Of course, you can also make yourself insensitive to advertising or view it with contempt. But the effort of advertising is not random. A campaign is not thrown randomly out into the market and does not even trust the professional intuition of admen. It brings in its users before it goes out into the ether, and it is trained to accommodate desire in unexpected ways where vigilance is poor, so even sceptics are hit at their vulnerable spots. Even their vision of a good life gets palpable words and images in advertisements.

Transition to architecture

An important part of the ways in which organizations present themselves happens through their buildings, above all, their headquarters. Here, too, the interplay between luxury and prestige is afoot, because a headquarters is the symbolic expression of the whole organization and, therefore, a potential advertising pillar. As a conclusion, we shall look at organizational architecture.

7
Organizational Architecture

Even though organizations consist of communication, it would be perverse to claim that they did not also include things – everything from paper clips to telephones to cars and buildings. To say that these things are only communication is also oddly misleading, since we communicate 'about' a telephone on the condition that it exists as a physical object for both sender and receiver. In this section, we shall look at how architecture enters into organizations' use of aesthetic tools and how it is possible to view buildings as communication.

The house

Architecture is the design of houses, using the word 'house' in a broad sense, so a house is anything built for living, working, entertaining, celebrating, selling, keeping holy, or exercising power. And it is in this sense that the term 'house' will be used in this section. With this starting point, we shall ignore that part of architecture that has to do with urban planning, that is, the relationship between houses and the space around houses, such as squares, parks, and gardens. Initially, the interior design of houses will also be ignored – walls, hallways, furniture, light sources. The reason for this limitation is that the theme is organizational architecture, which takes aim at individual buildings or complexes of buildings. Only rarely do organizations behave as urban planners in their own right, no matter how much their buildings may dominate an area.

A house has a physical *identity*, which is the unity of its *form*, which makes recognition possible, and a *function*, which makes understanding possible. A house inevitably has a form, that is, a surface. From the form, you can normally infer its function by virtue of social routines – but not necessarily, since houses can be anonymous and thus difficult to interpret and since surfaces can be created to tease and mislead. But if you know what a house is for – to live in, work in or amuse yourself in, you have access to the whole and can put its elements into context.

Form and function need not go hand in hand. Normally, a house has a function, even though the boundaries can be played with – so function disappears into oblivion and the house dissolves into art, and even though function can vary: the user of a house need not obey the will of the builder.[1] Function and its limitations prevent the architect from behaving like an artist, even though many are tempted to play with the idea of being philosophers and poets. Traditionally, architecture is considered one of the fine arts. However, this classification goes back to the time before Romanticism, when art became separate and pure and the difference between art and architecture became clear. Architecture is not art but applied art. It has a pragmatic function and only when this is provided can philosophy and poetry be brought to bear.

Accordingly, we have introduced Vitruvius' three dimensions: *firmitas*, the house as a real construction, *venustas*, its beautiful or less beautiful form, and *utilitas*, its function. All three contribute to the physical identity and social symbolism of the house. Since a house comprehends many differences into a unity that cannot be calculated mechanically, its overall quality is not an objective trait. With claims about quality, we take a leap, so we jump from the house to the observer and let him, not the house, be responsible for the claim. Quality claims say something about the observer or about social routines, not about the observed. Therefore, the concept of 'quality' is not suitable as a fundamental architectural concept. As applied art, architecture has no single difference that bears its theory and practice.

A house creates a physical *limitation* of space with a view toward a social *unfolding* of space. By setting limits in space, structure is created in space.[2] Space is not just philosophical but also a fundamental architectural concept that has, within architectural thinking, maintained 'an almost unbroken attraction'.[3] Physical closure provides a springboard for social opening, that is, differentiation of conduct.

Strictly speaking, architecture requires a physical object, a house. Architecture that has not been materialized is fantasy.[4] But fantasies are also effective. Before a house is realized, it is present as a fantasy and, without this fantasy that can test normal limits, the house would never be realized. In addition, there are productive architects who are not mentioned in the history of architecture, while there are famous architects who have hardly ever produced a real building, because they have been so uncompromising in their principles that only architects, and not builders, have been inspired or tempted by them. On the drawing board or in the imagination, they have set new norms for how it is possible to conceive buildings. They are for connoisseurs, for architects' architects.

Even though architecture is applied art, the difference between pure and applied is resurrected in architecture, that is, on the dirty side of the differences, because there are architects who are uncompromising and, thus, pure in their demand for quality, regardless of what they mean by that word, while others are more than willing to compromise in order to get commissions. This opens up unequal careers with different criteria for success and failure.

We shall take the first steps toward the architecture of the organization by looking at how buildings are observed and experienced. There are some differences that leap to the eye.

Constancy and variation

Everybody knows what a house is – something to do with protection from wind and weather and unwelcome gazes, something about walls, apertures and roofs. Architecture is common property and a visual language. Even though not everyone gets the same inner picture when the word 'house' is mentioned and even though you can understand the word without an inner picture popping up, a house is a deeply familiar thing that is found in almost every culture. Everyone can point to examples. But around normal prototypes such as ranch houses, apartment blocks, town halls, churches, and farms, murky borderline cases appear. Is an igloo a house? A silo? A woodshed? Is a doghouse or a dollhouse really a house?

A house can have no doors and still be a house – for example, a castle keep, where the door is bricked up. It is just important that there once was a door. A massive edifice can stop having the function that we connect with a 'house' and move into the category of 'art work', which opens up other ways of observing it. But it can re-create a function by becoming a marker that is set up at the boundaries of a city or a municipality to indicate the transition from one space to another, from a rural zone to an urban zone.

Regardless of such insecurities, the concept of 'house' provides a common content – constancy – to a wide array of variations. On the other hand, concrete houses and their constancy, that is, their durability despite delapidation and modification, provides a foothold for the concept. Even though you can attempt strict definitions – 'a house demarcates an inner space from an external space and permits passage between them' – such a definition is impoverished in relation to the concept's wealth of differences. 'The house' can move back and forth on scales such as size, colour, and rigidity and through typologies of form, style and function; yet, we are not uncertain about whether we are talking about a house. We can combine and compare. If we see a house, we spontaneously put it into a system of differences. We can mention a few.

The first difference has to do with *the house as opposed to everything else*. Only by virtue of this difference is it possible to identify a house. This is not as simple as it sounds, because not all houses appear in isolation. Many houses are built together in ranks and rows, so it requires an effort to tell number 23 from number 25. And sometimes a 'house' is actually a complex of buildings conceived of and built together – for example, Amalienborg Castle in Copenhagen consists of four palaces, and turnkey contractors can transform an entire neighbourhood in one stroke. In order to experience a house, you must not just separate it from its environment but also re-introduce it to its environment, because both the house itself and its environment contribute to its identity. The same three-floor wooden house is different, depending on whether it is in an isolated forest or squeezed in between skyscrapers in Tokyo.

The second difference has to do with the *function* of the house – what it is for. There are houses for living and working, producing and managing. This difference does not have to do with a simple either–or or a scale between two poles but about positions in an open combinatoric. A farm is both to live in and to work in, and it can be closed down and transformed into an architect's office, so the work becomes different. You can be uncertain whether a house is a garage or a modern church, and how do you really distinguish a factory, a school, an old-age home, and a prison? Only when you know the function can you understand the composition of elements in the house and see whether it deviates from normal prototypes.

The third difference is the *size* of the house. Small houses can be welcoming, because they have a human scale, while large houses can evoke awe by virtue of their overwhelming institutional coolness. There is, Kant says, something contemptible connected to 'what we simply call "small"'.[5] On the contrary, there is respect for large houses that testify to power. 'What do these houses mean?' asked Nietzsche. 'Verily, no great soul put them up as its likeness … And these rooms and chambers – can *men* go in and out of them?'[6] Nietzsche's complaint was that everything had become small. The simple reaction to size, however, can be neutralized by other differences – for example, between vulgar and refined. What Nietzsche is indicating is that you do not just find yourself in a house, you also find *yourself* in it – both in others' eyes and your own. Even though a home has a private inner side, it inevitably has a public external side and offers it to view.

The fourth difference has to do with the *elements* of the house – roof and body, doors and windows, materials and colours. Here, too, there are prototypes that everyone knows and which, therefore, allow variations. Ask someone to draw a house, and he will probably draw a single-family house with body, roof, door, windows, and a chimney – maybe, stairs and a skylight.

A fifth difference is the *status* of the house – whether it is expensive or cheap, distinguished or ordinary. Under this rubric, you can also bring in the *condition* of the house, that is, run-down or well-tended.

A sixth difference is the *style* of the house – whether it is antique or Baroque, master builder or minimalism or retro-modernism. With wild decorations or classic columns and with marble or granite, a house can signal high distinction. Here, its location contributes – the elegance of the neighbourhood and the builder's ability to reinforce the house by squandering the public space – around the house and in its foyer and corridors. Decisive for the style is the *mode* of the house, the way its totality and its elements are shaped and put together and, perhaps, decorated, so symmetry or asymmetry and special exercises of style can be noticed by connoisseurs and by amateurs – and lead us over to aesthetics. Whereas an amateur sees what he sees and does not put what is seen in relation to other impressions, a connoisseur can determine whether a house is mannerist, because its windows have been placed in a particular way, which amateurs can see but do not notice and certainly do not place within a system.

These differences – and, perhaps, more – we notice spontaneously, that is, without necessarily putting precise words on them. Each of them makes up a code,[7] which can be used to determine – make a difference and set boundaries. We decode the house with a flowing attentiveness that is more sensory than conceptual, because normal differences have gone underground and been silently embedded in sensation. If a judgement is demanded of us, we may have difficulty finding the right words for the impression the house has made prior to the words, and we can use time observing with an especially acute attentiveness, so sensation draws in associations and gives them words.

The interplay between intuition and reflection is also found in architecture,[8] where reflection destroys the strength of the immediate experience, and intuition means loss of information.[9] When you walk into a house, you normally pay no attention to the architect or your own experience of the house but orient yourself in accordance with the house as a system of functions – doors that open into the foyer, which leads to an elevator, which two floors up opens into a new foyer, which leads to a hallway, which again has a door into the room where I have a meeting. The building is perceived as spontaneously as the physical form of the words you read in a brochure. I find myself spontaneously in the building's use-context, which does not mean that the house does not influence me, only that I am not paying attention.

The spontaneity of sensation is not without preconditions. What before demanded exercise happens now without burdening the attention, so we simplify by inserting constants in our sensation. Only therefore are we capable of experiencing variation. Constancy and variation refer to each other in an endless loop, because we can observe variation by virtue of memory's repertoire of constants and maintain constancy against sensation's endless variations. A code requires experience. Even though the difference between great and small is a physical difference, it is also a social difference that activates schemes around rich and poor, normal and unusual. And how well-maintained a house is does not need to be evident to the naked eye. In Sweden, there are wooden houses painted gray in a special patinated way, so the grain in all the planks appear with almost the same colour as the old, untreated wood. Only an experienced eye notices the slight sheen that tells that the house is very well-maintained and is not very run-down.

With such differences, a latitude of variations is opened up around the constancy called 'a house'. For a house is not just presented but inevitably presented in a particular way, depending on factors such as tradition, wealth, taste and desire for self-presentation. We can vary the adage and say 'like house, like master'. The poverty of the concept and the wealth of examples supplement each other. And the *mode* of the house opens up aesthetics. Even a house that ignores all aesthetics – for example, a barracks – inevitably makes an aesthetic impression. Here, the logic we have seen before applies: it is not possible to avoid aesthetic observation, not even for a house. A house has a form, ergo a surface, ergo an aesthetic dimension. Even if a house does not, aesthetically, have a sender, it inevitably has a receiver and *can, therefore, be ascribed a sender in reverse*. If a receiver chooses to observe the house aesthetically, the impression falls back on the house and, from there, to a sender, who may be unknown.

The amount of aesthetic innocence is declining in modern society, because things are observed as *artefacts* – made by people and, therefore, expressions of a decision that can also be evaluated aesthetically. Instead of aesthetic innocence that appears in the moment as intuition and historically as acquired tradition, a sweeping aestheticization of society arises – an ecstasy of aesthetic communication, which creates a need for an antidote to the abundance of aesthetic (in)formation, so aesthetics overflows into 'an-aesthetic'. that is, sedation.[10]

Aesthetics makes a difference, not just blindly but on purpose. It reaches reflexively back to the sender, so he does not just produce a house without aesthetic considerations but, *knowing that he does so*, he relates aesthetically to the house, even though he also rejects that sort of consideration. He is forced not just to observe but also to observe his own mode of observation. Somewhere in the construction process, the question of the appearance of the house pops up and demands an answer, which articulates aesthetic considerations – perhaps, as the rejection of those considerations.

Therefore, we consider houses as communication – and we shall return to how this happens. We are affected by them when we look at them and we relate to them, so corresponding to the design's difference between Eye and Hand comes an architectural difference between Eye and Body – between looking at a house and living in it. This influence may be traced back first to the house and then to its builder, which again may be split into *une compagnie à trois*: builder, architect, and user, each with his own ambition. Houses make an impression on users, who spontaneously feel oppressed or elevated, both within and without, and these impressions are anticipated and calculated and directed.[11] Houses are constructed to attune their users – and that this can succeed even though it does not succeed at first glance is also due to the fact that houses are not just allowed to speak for themselves but are surrounded by an aura of words,[12] which creates a common sounding board for the special experiences of users. Attunedness is not a passive concomitant phenomenon but a part of the 'meaning' of the house, and it comes from the building's sensory impression and its articulation. It is not impossible to talk quality into a house, just as you can talk interest into a minimalist art work.

Normally, we have an intuitive relationship to this attunedness, especially if we are daily users. We notice without noticing and do not reflect on the causal relationship between house and attunedness. At times, however, the impressions are so strong that they break through and force attention. An almost physical change can be sensed, whether it has to do with liberation or uneasiness, when we make an architectural transition from low to high, from light to dark or the reverse.

Beyond these elemental experiences, there are people who use an unusual amount of time observing houses and reflecting on their place in the landscape and cityscape, so they cannot help but take note of the building's effects and put their impressions into words. They are experts and the words are communicated to the general public, great and small, where they are mixed with the words that anonymous users themselves formulate, or they are taken over in final form by people who do not have the time to make a personal inspection.

Buildings make an important difference to an organization, because they are both function and symbol. They are the framework for daily work, and they make impressions and provide identity – and do so inevitably. And why should an organization sponsor an opera to which it has a superficial relationship, when it can achieve the same advantage by investing in a headquarters that does not just provide space but also makes an impression and gets mentioned in the culture pages of newspapers and magazines?

To dwell and to build

Before houses were built, it must be presumed that there were dwellings such as caves that offered protection against weather and enemies. With a little prehistoric imagination, it can further be supposed that important differences around 'dwelling' and 'being in' already appear in the transition to caves: whether they protect against wind and cold, whether they are wet or dry, small or large, light or dark, homey or creepy – or as the Germans would put it, *unheimlich*. After Robinson Crusoe had lived in his cave for a while, he began to call it home – 'I came home (so I must now call my tent and my cave)'.[13]

The cave gives space form by indicating a boundary between inner and outer and thus becomes 'the beginning of an inside space'[14] but also a principle for light and dark. And since a cave inevitably acquires a *mode* in relation to other caves, it contributes to creating a constancy – the idea of the cave, if you will – which allows variation and can be used for communication and imitation. You can search for a cave of a special sort or adapt a cave to your idea of what a cave is, so idea and ideal approach each other in this minimalist utopia that is built into dwelling and building. If a utopia is a non-place as well as a good place – and this ambiguity is built into the word itself – a house is also a utopian dream. After Robinson Crusoe decorates his cave on his desert island, he can after much labour exclaim: 'Now I began to be in some order within doors'.[15]

The cave is not just a reality but also an ideality, which takes form beyond the everyday but with a formative power that reflects back on the everyday, so it can survive its own defeat, just like the idea of friendship or love. A house that is good, because it is better than nothing, is bad in relation to what a house could be.

A cave is inevitably coded, when it is used. It is not just a domicile but also a sign for this function, so there is not just communication 'about' the domicile but so the domicile *itself* '*communicates the function to be fulfilled*'.[16] While a cave as a physical formation is what it is, it is a useful item in communicative structures. It does not just become the referent for a sign but it becomes a sign *itself* with an inner side and an external side, because a cave 'means' something. The sign's inner side is the cave, seen purely as 'a cave', while its external side are the references, seen as a halo of meaning – which radiates from the specific cave and embeds it in a language.

As indicated, a cave also provides its user a form. When you are in a cave, you find yourself there in a particular way. Even though the cave is not a part of the person – not an 'extension of the body' as a tool – it provides a structure to the everyday, when it becomes a centre and overtakes a function. The cave 'surrounds' me and, therefore, 'gives' me back to myself. You return to the cave, seek refuge, anchor yourself in it, and cuddle womb-like into it. And you can read your own state of mind, when you notice how a cave's attractiveness rises and falls, depending on how cold, tired, hungry or lonely you are. Robinson Crusoe approaches his cave with 'satisfaction' and finds everything around him wonderful, because he does not need to be a nomad.[17]

Even a cave, which is taken over from the hand of nature, is built in this sense. The point is hidden in the claim that '[o]nly if we are capable of dwelling, only then can we build'.[18] A cave is 'built' when it is used to mark a boundary between inner and outer. Thereafter, its natural curvature can be strengthened or weakened with screens and walls, so the cave becomes a template for a form of life – a true dwelling and not just a shelter, because it is 'designed for the different generations under one roof the character of their journey through time'.[19] Not only does the relationship between the functions of everyday life take shape in and around the cave – sleeping, eating, being together, relieving yourself. The same holds true for the relationship between gender and generations and between work and non-work. Robinson Crusoe can say that his cave 'became natural'[20] to him, so he felt strange 'upon a journey', when he was away from it.

Even though anthropological constants make it easy to understand the fundamental features of an alien culture's houses, there are variations that require local knowledge. The modern idea of a house as a 'home' is a relatively late construction. Up until recent times, the home was not an object of any special attention. It was a piece of street with a roof over it, and every social and biological function took place in every room.[21] But once intimacy became a normal requirement in the home, architects could choose to accommodate or frustrate this need.

We can summarize: a cave is not just a physical space but becomes a social construction as soon as it is put into use, is talked about, has feelings connected to it, or makes an impression on users and observers.[22] A part of this complex is aesthetic and does not just have to do with the way caves attune but also the way houses attune, their *pathos* dimension.

From cave to house

If we move from speculations about caves to speculations about the first houses to free themselves from nature and stand alone, they must inevitably have been built by the user and from materials available such as wood, stone, straw, hides, snow, and mud. They did not only protect against wind and weather but also against external dangers and inner fears. Even a primitive windscreen makes the world inhabitable. In this area as well, a division of labour must have arisen in which an ever more professional group that specialized in construction grew up to help self-builders and to be employed by an upper class, which marks its distinction by building large and with foreign labour, paid or unpaid.

From here, differentiations can sprout up with more and more specialized groups – masons, carpenters, stonecutters, glassblowers, and so on. But differentiation requires integration, so the division of labour reacts to itself by demanding 'specialists in integration' – in this case, architects with responsibility for the totality of the house. This presumably happens at the same time that houses begin to be used not just for private habitation but for official functions, so a city is different from a group of houses, because some houses represent its totality – economic, political and religious. These houses are used by people whose job it is to think and act on behalf of the whole of society, thus manning the state.

If the first city is a group of houses united by a common wall and a common administration, architecture arises along with the city. Large houses contribute to and demand a large society – so, not only war but the house is society's 'great communal labour'[23] and the source for the unity of the state. With houses, a group of people become united symbolically, so they constitute a society and not just a herd. With houses, the idea of immortality is celebrated. In its houses, a society becomes more enduring and visibly acquires another time rhythm than its members. Houses survive their inhabitants, and the person who starts building a house is not necessarily the one who finishes the construction. Since public constructions are not just houses but also tombs, theatres, walls, and memorials, we reach the limit of what our central category 'the house' can be.

All this is speculation and thus free. The oldest houses are not primitive housing, which disappeared without a trace, although they are reproduced at the periphery of the world, but the houses which have survived as ruins, and all of them have to do with power and the state – pyramids, temples, castles, political centres, and walls.

We shall not add to the history of architecture but look at the differences that bear the modern discussion of architecture. This will be the starting point for an investigation of how organizations use architecture. We shall start with a claim that architecture is communication.

Architecture as communication

If architecture is to communicate, it must have a linguistic form. This raises the question of what an 'architectural sign' is. A house has elements such as a roof, walls, windows, doors, and stairs. But it is also a totality of these elements. Each element can be analysed further, which leads to simpler elements such as geometric figures or physical details.

The advantage of this simplification is *generality*. Squares, circles, and triangles are found everywhere, and so are silicon, wood and oxygen. But the gain has a price. If you break up a house into geometric figures, or even further into molecules and atoms, you have probably isolated simpler, more general elements and removed yourself from architecture. You can say that a house is produced by atoms and molecules. You can also say that it has been produced by tile and timber. And you can finally say that it is produced by a roof, walls, windows, and doors. Only the latter can be called architectural signs, because they communicate the function they make possible, while a brick only communicates a vague, indeterminate function.

A sign is the union of a difference between signifier and signified. If we consider a set of stairs as a sign, what is signifier and signified must be able to be clarified. Here, the sign's difference seems to collapse, because stairs appear on both sides of the difference, so they designate themselves and thus dissolve themselves as a sign. According to Umberto Eco, if the sign were to have a real denotatum, architectural signs would denote nothing but themselves.[24]

This problem can be solved if architectural signs do not refer to physical objects such as a stair or a door.[25] A stair contains features that communicate a particular function, independent of their specific shape, independent of their specific use, and independent of the specific conceptions they arouse in the receiver.

In order to 'open' the architectural sign, therefore, you can claim that it refers to its own function, so stairs signify 'functioning as stairs', which again can refer to specific stairs. The function is common to all stairs, so the stairs are equated to a linguistic sign. While object words such as 'cow' signify the concept 'cow', which again refer to specific cows, functional objects such as 'stairs' signify a particular function, which again can be realized in different ways.

A concept such as 'house' does not refer to a specific house but to all conceivable houses. Here, the movement goes from the abstract to the specific. On the other hand, every specific house communicates its own general function, so the movement here goes from the specific to the general.

Since architectural signs are not concepts but incarnated in physical material, they enter into the special structure that Kant called 'reflective judgement', which characterizes aesthetic communication.[26] The starting point is not an abstract concept or principle but a specific example that becomes the starting point for a universal judgement.

Architectural signs have had an intimate connection with aesthetics from the start. As a physical object, a stair presents its function with a special *mode*, a special stairway contains a general meaning at the same time. Sensation and meaning merge in a specific object. By virtue of the opposite direction of linguistic and architectural signs, which also show the difference between theoretical insight and practical use, a loop arises between the two types of signs, so we flow between theoretical recognition and practical instructions, between the idea of essence and the idea of use.

Architecture is not a free aesthetic field, which need not hinder inventiveness. It must fulfil a need and is thus a service that fulfils an existing demand with varying materials, techniques, and aesthetics – which is so abstract and, therefore, plastic that the need for houses can become an endless desire to unfold and distinguish oneself in new ways. For an organization, its buildings are also a service in another way – they constitute an extension of the service the organization offers.[27]

Just as linguistic signs are conventional, architectural signs require a social context. The codes that are used to observe houses constitute a series of *topoi*, which a culture has established, so the codes are also used to deal with the difference between normal and unusual. They make the house into an issue or a topic that is common to all its users, including builder, architect, city planner, everyday user, and viewer.[28] Such *topoi* also have to do with what space is to be used for. That we eat in common but evacuate in private is not a biological necessity, and Luis Buñuel has shown in *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* (1972) how it could be different.

The architectural function is a cultural constant that has stabilized for a time and opens up inventive variations. To the irritation of those who cannot get enough change, variation can only appear on the basis of a sufficient constancy. Even a house where everything can be driven away, twisted around or changed, however, has a title number and some walls that are fixed. If you do not know what a door is or what a normal door is, you cannot assess the refinements in decoration or new proposals for what a door can be. An ignoramus can probably see a new door but cannot see it *as* a new door.

It is also true aesthetically that, without expectation, no surprise.[29] With variations, the sign is given a meaning that is both more specific – a door function of a *particular* type – and more comprehensive: the sign is placed in a cultural context that increases the quantity of information.

The function to which an architectural sign refers and which it opens up has in the first instance only the nature of a hypothesis. Covered doors, false windows or *trompe-l'oeils* are examples of how the architectural sign can be used to lie with: they do not function, even though they communicate function and even though their contribution to a house can be enjoyed aesthetically. An American house from the 1920s was plagued by ghosts, so its owner had ever new ghost traps installed such as stairs that wound up in a dead end, hallways that suddenly stopped, and doors that led to nowhere. The sign was there; the signified, the function, had vanished – hopefully, to the irritation of the ghosts.

Denotation and connotation

We can look closer at the difference between denotation and connotation. While the architectural sign denotes a function – moving from one floor to another or from one room to another – its particular configuration connotes a particular form of 'stairs' or 'door', which again refers to particular social conventions and historical periods. A house 'portrays' nothing[30] but denotes a manner of usage and can connote an all-encompassing ideology[31] – for example, Neoclassicism was for a time the preferred idiom of state power, while at a later period glass houses signalled openness, so the transparency of the material became a symbol of social transparency. A period can be characterized by its mode of building, its style, which gathers together function, materials, technique, a sense of beauty, and social conventions in an overall expression.

Thus, we are back to the expression – the meaning or signal value – that a house can have. For an organization, its headquarters is not just a functional machine but also a prestige project that can communicate an idealized picture of the organization to its surroundings. The house acquires a symbolic function as a part of the organization's image and is read as a union of something physical and something spiritual, corresponding to St Isidore of Seville's classic distinction between *urbs*, which are the stones of the city, and *civitas*, which is the spiritual city of feelings, rituals, and attitudes.[32] Everything in and around the house is considered as an 'expression' of a purpose, that is, as a choice and as a code, whether the judgement is that it succeeded or failed – and whether what was decoded was consciously encoded or not.

A house is inevitably aesthetically open in the sense that it can be decoded differently. This openness has two aspects.

First of all, it is uncertain what overall meaning a house communicates. As with all communication, understanding depends on both sender and receiver and with the distance between these two, in time, in space, and in cultural resources; houses are an uncertain mode of communication. Often, it is impossible to ascertain what the sender wants to communicate and, in addition, his intent does not otherwise compel the receiver's understanding. Misunderstanding can be just as productive as understanding. We do not know the exact intention of the pyramids or of Stonehenge, which does not diminish our interest.

Second, a house can be open in the way that its structures create ambiguous areas. It can use transparency to create overlapping spatial structures, all of which claim to control common areas, so the gaze oscillates uncertainly. It can create uncertainty about its entrances by having many of them or by hiding them. And it can have its walls and furniture vary. This does not prevent you from quickly learning to get around in such houses, so only the attentive eye becomes uncertain and makes itself uncertain, because it enjoys the accumulation and release of tension that is conveyed by uncertainty. Daily users ignore exactly what observers linger over, even though they can still be affected by it. A house cannot be as open as a work of art, because it is kept in a vice called use. While works of art can by *not* being functional indulge in an extreme openness, houses must accept a number of constraints and transform closedness into a springboard for openness.

Yet, however much uncertainty can be built into a house and however many elements may be moved around, the physical relationship remains: the house is where it is, with bearing walls and title number. Whether we are talking about an open or a closed house in Umberto Eco's sense[33] or in Richard Sennett's sense,[34] users are forced to follow the architect's directions, which can be received inattentively[35] or observed expertly. Houses can be used in many ways, which include treason and rebellion. The storming of the Winter Palace in 1917 was not a rebellion against the building's late Baroque style or against the architect Bartolomeo Rastrelli but against the building as a political symbol. And you can imagine that things were destroyed to great applause, because it was also the destruction of a hated regime.

Instead of talking about denotation and connotation, we can follow Umberto Eco and talk about the primary and secondary function of the house or an element in a house. While the primary function is its simple use – the fact that a chair is to sit on and a door to go in and out of – there is also a secondary or symbolic function, which can be more important than the primary.[36] An example is a throne, which is certainly to sit on but whose most important function is symbolic – to be the seat of a king, so its comfort is less important than its ability to reinforce the king and to let him appear in his visible character. In the same way, party clothes and underclothes do not just have the job of covering and protecting but also uncovering and emphasizing.

The primary function is simpler and more constant than the secondary. A house can be identified as a temple, even though its symbolic meaning has hopelessly disappeared.[37] For whoever can break the code, the form of the house can follow its function and thus strengthen the communication. Form does not just make the function possible but also makes possible a reading of how it is to be interacted with and can, moreover, make it even more aesthetically attractive. The house has become self-communicating and self-motivating. But we have also seen that form and function can vary each in its own way and thus take part in all sorts of relationships to each other. In the same way, primary and secondary functions can be lost, changed, and replaced.

The interplay between primary and secondary functions is the starting point for the production and consumption of houses. Regardless of how innovative an architect is, he must relate to the tradition and its codes. The International School from the 1930s wanted to create a new starting point but quickly became caught up in the tradition it wanted to break with, because it assumed old elements and because the new were inevitably integrated as a continuation of the old, its 'next step'. The relationship is not empirical but logical: the word 'new' is one side of the difference and must relate to the word 'old', even if it is just a reflection of the condemned side of the difference. It is also temporally logical: what is new becomes old and is overtaken by something new.

The struggle between criteria

When a house is to fulfil the ambitions of both the builder and the architect, it becomes a battle in an ongoing struggle. At the same time, it becomes a battle in a tradition that includes the entire world – past, present, and future. Large or small, houses are observed in the light of alternatives – both examples from the past and possibilities for the future. What has been done is a springboard for what can be done. And the future is about the desires of ordinary people for a slightly better house – size, location, light – and about the desire of vain builders and architects to make a monument to themselves by building something heretofore unseen.

This conflict is the engine of architectural evolution, which takes place as a struggle to improve functions and reinforce impressions with new materials and techniques, new dimensions and means, so boundaries are broken, and grotesque complexity is tested side by side with geometric wildness and outré simplicity. The boundary between architecture and art vibrates. But even new and ambitious houses become old and familiar. To keep from falling into the oblivion of familiarity, they must conquer spokesmen who will fight to make them classics, which are continually described and re-described and surrounded by an invisible aura of interpretations that relate to other interpretations, that is, architectural growth. To remember is not just not to forget, that is, to select but also to rediscover.

If a house becomes famous, it will gain an amenity value that does not derive from its function but interest in observing it. In art, a classic is not a work with a measurable quality but with a special status, so it can be impossible to decide whether quality or status attunes us positively. The same holds true of houses. They are reviewed in newspapers and analysed in periodicals, the builder can show visitors around in them, and when it rains on the architect, it drips on the organization, which has placed its 'amenity' on the stage. The architect and the builder each have their own stories to tell, and even though they do not contradict each other, they still have different plots, different protagonists, and different ideas of what a happy ending is.

Architecture as rhetoric

As communication, architecture is open to rhetorical effort. The 'sender' has a purpose for his house, so it has a pragmatic aim. Whether the sender is the architect, a private person, an organization, a city, or a state, he must work to increase the *Anschlußwert*, or connectivity, of the house, the desire of the receiver to observe and use the house. Here, a rhetorical formula applies: the task is to ensure a positive encounter between house and receiver, and this task must be solved here and now. The sender cannot forever view failure as delayed success. Even though he can accommodate an audience or try to make the audience receptive, it is *his* problem, if the proposed communication of the house is rejected. Even though the architect can criticize the audience for everything from inattentiveness to idiocy, the failure falls on him – although modern society's division into subcultures mercifully offers possibilities to protect against total fiasco.

The rhetorical effort is assessed by the effectivity of the house's message. Over the course of time, it has been refined and become a domain for an independent effort. This applies to both the rhetorical effort around the house and the house's own effort. Here, there are differences between linguistic and architectural communication. For while words disappear when they are uttered, the house remains. Its seduction of senses and conventions is an enduring matter.

While the goal of Antiquity's public buildings was to lay bare the same myths and events for as many as possible, modern corporate architecture often uses transparent materials to signal democratic openness. They build glass boxes with lamellae and logos to strengthen the illusion that organizations are visible and transparent. There is no architecture for modern democracy that works as a counterpart to Antiquity's religious and political centres and no sites where 'masks, dances, ceremonials, shrines, sacred grounds and cosmologies' are linked to physical objects and personal lives.[38] Between public and private life, there are workplaces, shops, and amusement centres.

Buildings that radiate authority refer to common rules and values and function as a 'formulation of the conscience'. The naked and abstract character of houses of authority, such as parliament buildings or company headquarters, reveals that the space of secular authority is empty.[39] Hence, according to Nietzsche, there arises a 'strange contrast between an inner life to which nothing external corresponds, and an outward existence unrelated to what is contained within'.[40] It is no wonder that irony becomes a modern attitude.

A house is read in relation to a triad of prejudices as to what a house is, schemes for normal and deviant, and directions for 'what you do', that is, how the house can and must be used. In this way, a house becomes a machine for seducing people into social relations, and its effect has to do with the way in which it seduces. You can talk about the architectural exercise of power, when a house forces the interaction of people into frozen forms, based on differences between gender, age, and class, or when buildings create a common stage, based on particular roles.

In old office buildings where long corridors open up into isolated rooms, it is easy to be alone.[41] Open office spaces with long distances to the toilet or the kitchen, wide stairs instead of elevators, and only a few closed rooms not only encourage but enforce interaction. While closed cells favour work, large, open spaces encourage cooperation. Every mode of organizing space creates habits, so a shift from one to another can cause irritation and even anxiety. To be raised and educated is also to learn to live in and interact with houses, so people who are used to living in families or having their own office may have a hard time adapting to collectives or office landscapes.

Regardless of what the ambition of the builder or the architect is, they produce a *Gesamtkunstwerk*.[42] a piece of art for all the senses. Whether by plan or by chance, all the senses are involved. You are not just in a house with your eyes but with your whole body, so you are surrounded by it. In high, white rooms, bathed in overhead light, you can be elevated and feel yourself expand, while you are oppressed if you find yourself in a large room with muddy, brown tiles, where light disappears and you feel relegated to an eternal waiting room in a rundown, old train station.

The Catholic cathedral is the prototype of a house that involves and guides all the senses in an attempt to create a particular attunedness. It is a *managed space* in which people are to sense both God's presence and absence, so the building becomes a hinge that conveys the transition between visible and invisible, heaven and earth. That churches were large is not for advertising purposes – which God has no need for – but a tool that allows space, light, fragrance, and sound to surround and elevate the senses. The resurrection was made visible through height.

Since aesthetics has to do with the mode of communication, not expressed through a claim but through form – (in)formation, the rhetoric of architecture is inevitably aesthetic. That it also communicates other things we can mention but otherwise ignore.

One central rhetorical tool is *style*, which is a way of making a difference, because the same function can be styled differently. Style is often considered an epochal or individual constant, but it has changed character, because modern society has developed a tradition for breaking with tradition. When innovation becomes compulsion, many styles live side by side, often in the individual architect or studio, and the concept of 'fashion' contains the idea of a shift that does not require any justification beyond boredom, which contributes to a quick turnover and a quick loss of meaning. Instead of favouring one style, modern society is open to fluid semiotic values even in the domain of architecture. The ancient metaphor of flow, *panta rei*, has paradoxically enough become a constant marker of non-constancy.

Style is a rhetorical tool that governs the effect of the house. Styles or blends of styles provide houses very different expressions that congeal over time into one or more *eigenvalues*, because their effect is not just left to the senses but are wreathed by descriptions, so Classicism and Baroque and Rococo and Postmodernism become cultural signs – clichés with a somewhat fixed meaning that opens the possibility for describing oneself as fascinated or irritated, cynical or ignorant.

Even though houses are experienced very differently by different individuals or by the same individual over time, these variations take place against a background of a certain cultural constancy. Therefore, an organization can use styles and calculate a *central effect* despite any dispersion in its assessment, also because deviation is a means for calling attention to yourself. Every style becomes a sign of itself, so different expressions can be compared and used as tools for an organization's self-presentation.

Builders and architects can try to calculate the public's reaction. And this is important for organizations that do not only want to communicate effectively and do not consider provocation a goal in itself. Therefore, organizational architecture has more to do with signal value than a declared opinion on taste and quality. Their houses are 'cultural signals with a particular emphasis on the expressive communication',[43] and they are normally pinstriped in their architecture, which may be exciting, preferably modern, at best bold, but not *outré*. Money used for expensive houses should not be wasted.

The rhetorical triad of *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos* can, architecturally, be translated into *logos* as the function of the house, *ethos* as its credibility, and *pathos* as the way the house affects the receiver, both experienced and inexperienced, both daily user and observer. We have seen that the view of a house is different for builders, architects, and the public.

Logos

When a house is evaluated for its *logos*, you ask yourself whether it fulfils its functions. The question can also be raised negatively: whether irritation arises, when doors cannot be closed, windows cannot be opened, stairs cannot be found, and passageways are confusingly labyrinthine. The function of the house is weakened, if it is difficult to decode and the interplay between individual and collective functions make unreasonable time demands. A house whose *logos* is in order can seem anonymous, because its functions do not annoy and intrude but are almost transparent, like words that fit their matter and, therefore, invisibly convey the subject.

As always with aesthetic communication, the opposite can also be true: a new solution, for example, to a foyer can both be unusual and thus conspicuous and, at the same time, obviously correct in its manner of conveying you from the house's foreground to its background.

Ethos

What does it mean to evaluate a house on its *ethos*? It has to do with credibility, which is divided into three directions: first, a relationship between the impression of the house and its physical quality, then a question of the status the builder and architect bring with them, and finally a relationship between building and organization.

A house can lose credibility, if its sparkling façade covers up poor materials and sloppy construction, so visible disintegration begins the moment the house is finished. When new materials and methods are experimented with, the problem may also be due to ignorance – for example, when Leonardo da Vinci experimented with oil in his palette only to see his painting of *The Last Supper* ruined.

A house can also lose credibility if its configuration and location evoke outrage. But the effect of a disruption of expectations can be weakened if the builder or architect enjoys great respect, so their imposing past puts critics under pressure: the critic himself risks criticism – and the modern audience consists of beaten dogs who have learned not to trust their intuition but to be open to and even enjoy provocation and offence.

Respect for the sender can put a damper on one's spontaneous reaction, so people acquiesce in granting him his most valuable resources, time and reflection. If an architect has an international career behind him with monographs, prizes, and general attention, critique can be dismissed as peripheral or returned to the sender: there are always malcontents who try to call attention to themselves. Time and habit also diminish impression and irritation, because repetition weakens aesthetic intensity and because irritation is counteracted with fulfilled expectation and *its* joys. A hated building can be transformed into a familiar icon, and even though it touched off a scandal, a new scandal can be set off after a while, if it is threatened with demolition.

Pathos

How a house attunes a receiver cannot be fine-tuned, and when the receiver reflects on his attunedness, it is open to uncontrollable interferences. Attunedness is no constant but depends on the receiver's prehistory – for example, how many times he has seen a house, what he has read about it, whom he is with, how willing he is to be open, and whether he has respect for the sender.

Nevertheless, the effect of architecture is not entirely unpredictable. Meanings stabilize themselves, and the sender can learn from his experiences, that is, how buildings were previously accepted or rejected by the public. He can also fine-tune one segment of the public – for example, architects – and be indifferent to how others react.

At the same time, 'general' public opinion is not just variable but also flexible, since it is determined down circuitous paths with many, twisted forks. It stabilizes in the mass media and is only affected to a small degree by the professional debate, where the great buildings and the great architects are debated – as a rule, polemically, so the frugal and the luxurious, the straight and the skewed are backed up or run down. A house acquires its identity through its difference from other houses in the past and the present, and since the house signifies itself, it informs at the same time not only about the functions it promotes and denotes but also about the way it has decided to promote and denote them.[44]

Therefore, a house is not only owned by its builder or its architect but also by the receiver and not just by the individual receiver but also the diffuse, collective receiver called public opinion. Only the building's physical, not its social, identity can be tightly controlled.

In classical rhetoric, it is the sender's first task to make his receiver receptive and willing to learn. Translated to architecture, this means that a house must appeal positively, either directly or by overcoming a negative reaction. Even a revolutionary house that breaks with all expectation wants to contribute to a change, so it acquires a positive place in a new idea of what a house is. At a minimum, the house must welcome the receiver, so he can decode it and receive it as desired. This can happen both as attraction and as repulsion. A house can invite the receiver inside, as is the case with shops and (some) public buildings. Or it can tell the receiver that he must keep away, as is the case with private homes and (some) public buildings. In cities, which are permeated with a global anxiety,[45] many buildings hide their openings behind walls and cover them with guarded gates, so you go into them through a series of doors with decreasing thickness and growing aesthetic appeal. They do not just indicate inclusion but also exclusion. Only the chosen are invited, the rest are rebuffed.

Unless an architect builds his own house, he cannot be more advanced than the builder permits. But he can make use of the fact that modern society contains a compulsion to individuality,[46] so some organizations will call attention to themselves as futuristic and use cutting-edge architects for their purpose.

However virtual an organization makes itself, it must have a house somewhere. For communication must have persons, persons must be somewhere, and this place is normally a house. Even though persons are structures, created by communication with its own means and for its own purposes, these ethereal figures are linked with people of flesh and blood who must have a roof over their heads.

The codes of architecture: identity and symbolism

We have seen some of the codes that are used when buildings are observed, understood, and interacted with. Each element of a house is a sign, so there are signs for its foundation, its walls and roof, its doors and windows but also for its hinges to connect the elements and for the house as a whole. At the same time, the building's signs can become a medium for new signs, so its aesthetics or mode is signified independently, even though function and meaning are also intimately connected in the finished building.

Here, there are similarities and differences between architecture and other art forms. In a poem, the appearance of the words does not mean anything special, so fonts can be changed without changing the poem – even though you must not underestimate aesthetic sensibility: to read an old poem in its original Gothic script may provide an extra meaning.

When it comes to the basic functions of a house, their appearance is less important. A set of stairs is a set of stairs. However, it does not follow from this that every set of stairs means the same thing. In a poem, on the other hand, the acoustic qualities of words help determine their meaning. Words are not only transparent windows to a meaning on the other side of the words. When you read a poem, you are supposed to speak the words. In the same way, the meaning of a stair is read from its particular configuration – here, a stair is not just a stair. And while the visual arts are two-dimensional, so the image on the surface may create the illusion of three dimensions, which inevitably congeals in an eternal now, architecture is inevitably in three dimensions in actuality and can be observed ceaselessly. Even if you paint a picture of a cathedral in the changing light of the day and the year, it is still only a snapshot. Even if you make a film of the cathedral, you are bound by the film's congealed depiction of the past, and if you develop an interactive CD-ROM, you are bound by the elements and sequences the medium provides the possibility of combining. The cathedral, on the other hand, stands there throughout the year, from all angles, in all types of weather, and in all types of light.

You can decode a house from the *distance* between the house and the observer. You can observe a house in *close-up*, then details are visible, while the interplay between light and shadow disappears. In sales brochures not only for houses but also for cars and other consumer items, the pictures shift from showing the whole house to fine-tuning its delicate details. You can also locate yourself in a *normal perspective* where the shadows and light appear and both parts and whole are visible. Moreover, you can locate yourself *far away*, where shadows are more colours than markers of space and where the whole appears graphically, while the details disappear.

You can also orient yourself according to the codes for the meaning of distances, which are found in all cultures, intimate, personal, social, and official.[47] Some distances are embarrassingly close, others indicate pompous inapproachability. These differences are not anthropological constants but vary with time and place. However, large public spaces seem to be a universal way of demonstrating power. The distances between persons that a building prescribes is a signal of acceptance or a critique of a particular way of interacting. A family room where you relax, prepare food, and eat opens up a different way of being together and builds on other social relationships than a dining room with a dumbwaiter and a bell for the servants in the cellar. And it is often claimed that huge tower blocks destroy neighbourliness, friendship and common interests.[48]

We shall not follow these threads but instead look at two codes, or differences,[49] that characterize houses and can be used as a springboard for assessing their meaning – focusing on organizations.

The starting point is that a house fulfils a function by physically marking a boundary between an inner and an outer space and thus gives shape to the inner space while the external becomes environment – the outside of the building's 'here'. On the inside, new differences can be instated, so the house fulfils more differentiated functions.

The first code has to do with *identity*, and its poles are *form* and *function*. With form, we can recognize a house; with function, we can understand it, that is, explain what the point of the house is, so its elements do not merely enter into a physical context but into a use context. As an object, a house can be described with mathematical precision and does not only encounter architects but children, dogs and spiders. Form is not only about the contours of a house but the configuration of its elements and the relationship between them.

The second code has to do with *symbolism*, and its poles are *meaning* and *sensation*. A house incarnates social meaning and does so in a way that does not make claims, that is, information, but displays sensed forms, namely, (in)formation. Even Robinson Crusoe's house on the desert island was built with a view toward possible strangers, that is, as a fortification. Aesthetic communication – even architecture's – operates on both sides of the sign's difference. The building's aesthetic meaning is inevitably incarnated, because the sender must incorporate his effects in stone, wood, and glass in order to affect the receiver and attune him in a particular way.

More generally, you can detect an ideology in a house, understood as fundamental assumptions about the order of the world, seen from the sender's view. This leads beyond the individual house to other houses in the past and present, that is, other solutions to kindred problems around building and dwelling, working and being together.

The first code: identity

The two sides of this code, *form* and *function*, find their unity in the third part of Vitruvius' classic formula, construction. As long as a house is only built with a view toward function, it can be a stretch to speak about architecture. Like art and design, architecture sprang out of anonymous forms that did not give themselves names and did not emanate from a form-giver. A later time may regard traditional buildings with a reflective gaze and be inspired by their idiom, which has over generations winnowed out the superfluous and discovered simple, robust solutions.

The architecture appears as a problem, when questions about the relationship between form and function are raised, so the two poles lose their self-evident relationship to each other and can vary partially independently. Thus, freedom, that is, possibility, arises, which requires choices and permits comparison. The generous space of *contingency* opens up, which creates a counter-movement in the attempt to close down, that is, veil arbitrariness in architectural choices, whether it happens through religion, reason, taste, tradition, or a breach of tradition.

Since attention to function logically precedes attention to form, it can be put another way: *architecture arises, when form is not an unheeded epiphenomenon of function*. When form raises questions that cannot be answered by reference to function, architecture's aesthetic work is engaged.[50] Obvious examples are colour and size, but questions about ornamentation and the texture of the elements – rough or smooth, dense or transparent – must also be answered beyond reference to the sheer function. The answers go beyond the simple relationship that every house has a form and, therefore, points further to another difference, s*ymbolism*. To this point, we have only looked at abstract form, while the specific idioms will be dealt with in the next section.

That form and function can vary each in its own way opens up extremes. The first is that *function is subordinate to form*. If form has become an independent problem, it can assert its own principles and go back and intervene in the function for which it was once the invisible servant. Some architects regard the functional requirements of a construction as 'limiting limitations' and see themselves as free artists who create pictures of houses and solve form problems, where the question of the use of the building is put into brackets. These are merciless aesthetes who can take their experiments far beyond what attracts builders and city planners and users. Like madcap fashion-creators, their purpose is not to provide everyday forms but to move the boundaries for what it possible. In the extreme in which use is taken out of consideration, architecture becomes disinterested like art – not because no one is interested in it but because its interest has to do with form, while the issue of dwelling is ignored.[51] It has been said of Mies van der Rohe's buildings such as the Farnsworth House from 1950 and the Crown Hall School of Architecture from 1956 that, in their otherworldly beauty and perfection, they are very difficult to use for the purpose for which they were intended. Farnsworth House is no place of refuge. When a house aims at aesthetic perfection, it ends up being an asocial building.[52] Perfectionism is inhospitable to the people who are supposed to use and enjoy the house. It creates a crystalline space as a contrast to the miasma of the world, so the buildings – and films – of the 1930s and the Cold War dreamed themselves away to a world of chrome, glass and steel.

Aesthetics is a commodity, often an expensive one. Renowned buildings from the 1980s such as, for example, Lloyd's of London or Hongkong and Shanghai Bank were also extremely costly. Here, we encounter the self-reference of architecture in which it short-circuits into itself and exports its *Eigenvalues* to its surroundings. Just as the economy has its status system, where there is high status for theoretical economists, who develop pure, unusable models in their ivory towers, and low status for practical economists, who work for the state or business and whose predictions are perpetually tested by reality,[53] architecture also has its own drive toward pure architecture, which becomes its own criterion, unaffected by reality, tradition, and function – or, rather, in constant opposition to them.

The other extreme is that *form is subordinated to function*. Architects can optimize functions as the distribution of the floor area and the quantity of light, so the form 'follows' as an epiphenomenon of the best functional solution, which thus becomes a standard solution with an ambition to be rational and objective.

Le Corbusier spoke of buildings that are built 'from the inside out'[54] and lets geometry become a solution to the problems of modern architecture,[55] guided by the great Planner with a powerful sense of order. Correspondingly, Walter Gropius spoke of a house that built itself, when every professional group went out of its way to make its particular contribution. Since only function is important, the idiom must be purified of everything that cannot be derived from function and dismissed as external decoration or 'aesthetics' – in which this anti-aesthetics inevitably ends up in a new aesthetics whose major proponent, Mies van der Rohe, accepted Louis Sullivan's dictum 'less is more.'[56]

By focusing on the essence of function and removing everything unessential, this architecture leads to minimalist, purist solutions in which buildings are made sublime with purely geometric figures, slender steel skeletons, and smooth surfaces, preferably of glass. The ideal is a feather-light, almost floating building, which is at once almost invisible and, at the same time, sharply delineated from its environment. Peculiarly enough, these sublime houses are isolated as works of art from an environment that can only disturb and irritate.

Purification does not automatically mean that a house defies its environment. When architects today claim that architecture essentially simplifies, cleans up ideas, articulates, makes clear, purifies, so you reach the inner essence of the thing, this goes hand in hand with a desire to harmonize new buildings with their old environments.

The second code: symbolism

With the second difference between *meaning* and *sensation*, we are approaching the specific choice of how a house is supposed to look. It no longer has to do with form in general but particular forms.

When an organization is going to construct a building, there are a myriad of considerations at play from the start. There is the size and location of the building, its function and interior design, its price and aesthetics – both in itself and in an interplay with its surroundings. If one parameter is fulfilled optimally and considered of high importance, there can be compromises with the others. A good location may compel compromises with respect to size and appearance, if an existing building is to be taken over. A rented space increases the organization's flexibility but prevents it from making thoroughgoing changes. An already existing building may tempt less radical solutions to save money, so you rebuild instead of building from scratch. But if the building is to be built from the ground up, the organization must decide how it will provide a lasting expression of its identity. For a building is a very durable consumer good. It normally lasts longer than people do, and an organization that would like to appear sophisticated is also sophisticated enough to know that the most sophisticated trend may be a one-day wonder that will lose its innovative value and thus its sheen. This favours a certain conservatism, even for the most sophisticated.

Thus, the building's value is multiplied. This has its price but also a use value and a symbolic value. It is used as a picture of what the organization wants to be. It may have to do with such values as solidity, transparency, and futurism, which is expressed physically, or other values such as accessibility, collaboration, and process, which are expressed structurally. In the configuration of the building, values get a sensory and symbolic expression. They are not read as claims but through form, namely, aesthetically.

The building that bears the greatest burden of meaning is the headquarters, because it has not only functional but representative functions. Like management, it is a symbol of the whole and, therefore, an object of greater attention than garages and storehouses. Since management represents the organization and is, thus, a part that is in place (present) to stand in the place of the whole (re-present), the 'place' of the decision is also in a magical way a representative part of the whole, the visible expression of its power. Many important political decisions are named for the city in which they are made. Therefore, a headquarters is involved in the symbolism of identity and totality. And, consequently, there is a descending line of aesthetic effort from representative spaces down through the hierarchy to the spaces that are only to fulfil functional requirements, so their aesthetics are not given much thought.

The attention concentrated on a headquarters is the reason that organizations couple their own prestige to the prestige of the architecture, so both parties are strengthened by the collaboration, when they ask celebrated names in architecture with high *ethos* to build their headquarters. It requires a fine balance between radicality and convention, which is best expressed in Raymond Loewy's old MAYA principle – 'Most Advanced, Yet Acceptable'. And it spurs architects to renew themselves perpetually in their mutual struggle for recognition – for it is fame that the organization buys and incorporates into its own image.

Whether the architects want it or not, they take part in a system that, like art, encourages stars, also when the stars bolster their status as stars by refusing to be stars. It is an old game that can be detected in the classic heroic figure in which the hero must not know he is a hero, because that would impair his efforts by creating a suspect motive: whether the hero only wants to make an impression on others. The more the hero knows he is a hero, the less he is a hero.

For architecture, the question is not whether the difference between stars and their waterboys is heated up or cooled down. The deeper question has to do with survival – whether architects will be used by those around them, who cannot relate to the technical details of architecture and, therefore, simplify by taking their bearings from status. Not expert insight but fame creates the necessary trust, the will to link to the communication that is built into a house. Fame is created, above all, in the mass media that regulate the relationship between function systems and simplify with *persons* and with *dramas*. An architect who can create buzz about his works and himself and, perhaps, even contribute to dramatic events has a good chance of becoming a celebrity.

As in every other trade, the architect must not only create his own product but also the demand for it. This requires marketing. For there can be powerful marketing in refusing to market, presuming that the necessary interest is present. There is something ridiculous about a person who complains over a lack of interest, just because no one bothers to notice him and he cannot be bothered to do anything about it.

We shall here focus on aesthetic criteria, which for an organization are also political criteria. Its choice of buildings is neither purely functional nor purely aesthetic but has to do with *signals*: what impression it will make on different groups of receivers from shareholders to employees to the public at large.

We are in the domain of applied arts. Anyone can observe a house aesthetically, also when an organization takes no consideration of aesthetics or relegates it to a low priority. Even though aesthetic judgements do not have any compelling logic and, therefore, regularly conflict with each other, not all judgements are equally interesting. They are not true or false in any simple sense but still have different weights. An organization, therefore, can configure its buildings to please a select audience and be indifferent to the rest.

The claim is not that organizations think or should think aesthetically. We are merely indicating that aesthetics is a tool – often, a powerful one – and that organizations cannot avoid aesthetic observation. Modern society has surrendered to the market and the importance of providing an appearance and making an impression, that is, orchestrating sense impressions to achieve a particular effect – what Machiavelli called the necessity of being 'a great feigner and dissembler'.[57] Every market is also an aesthetic market for an illusory but beautiful appearance. Organizations are not just assessed by their product but also by the product's circumstances of which some are aesthetic. Therefore, it is uncontroversial that houses are not just built for a function but also for a meaning, which takes form in the building as a wordless aesthetic message. Meaning is embedded in sensation, sensation is satiated with meaning.

If this meaning is to be elucidated, you can see how specific buildings work by virtue of the interplay between many codes. You can also isolate and purify the codes in order thereafter to examine their interplay in specific buildings. You can proceed synthetically or analytically. Across this difference, you can also proceed historically and see how idioms have developed, overlapped, and changed each other over time. We shall here proceed down the analytic path and isolate some of the aesthetic codes that organizations make use of; then, we shall look at how they can work together in a specific house.

That there are many codes at play opens up a bottomless interplay between understanding and misunderstanding, between public and private meaning, and between tradition and innovation. The 'ordinary meaning' of a building can stabilize and become an *Eigenvalue*, which every observer encounters as a prejudice he must take into account, if he wants to have an opinion about the building, deviant or normal. And a particular idiom can through its historical use take over meanings through which observation is inevitably filtered. For an American, it is difficult not to connect Neoclassicism with the national buildings in Washington, DC, just as it is difficult for a European to disassociate a particular form of Classicism from Nazism – for example, the *Haus der Kunst* in Munich, which was used in the 1930s to display *entartete Kunst*, degenerate art. Correspondingly, private experience can affect an experience of space, so high ceilings can be unpleasant, because they remind you of churches you were dragged to as a child, or pleasant, because they remind you of the beech forest where you had your first erotic experience.

The meaning that an organization embeds in its representative buildings normally have a positive history. For the organization, physical frameworks are transformed into symbolic resources.[58] It tells of greatness and power, control and beauty. Managers of sophisticated organizations sense discomfort if there is a disparity between their buildings, their social conventions, and their products. And even if they do not care, they may discover that their customers and guests do.

We shall look at some of the codes that an organization can use when it is 'to be housed'. We shall concentrate on buildings of great significance that, thus, garner great attention, because they make aesthetic communication most visible. The other considerations are not unimportant. They are just not the topic here.

The dimensions of meaning

The impression a house makes is a composite of many means, each of which has its own meaning in the context the house, in part, creates and, in part, participates in.[59] It requires an artificial abstraction to isolate a means and determine its effect. The isolated effect is not the effect that arises in a context with other tools. At the same time, cultural memory tells of alliances between architecture and politics, so the experience of buildings gets an additional historical meaning. A building may seem to be Nazi-inspired or look like an anachronism. These meanings constitute a part of the raw materials of architecture.

Architecture does not work with a simple guiding difference. A house is not just about space, not just about function, not just about construction or 'event'.[60] At this point, there is a rapprochement between art and architecture. Until Romanticism, art was oriented in accordance with a guiding difference between beauty and ugliness. But with the acceptance of the aesthetics of the ugly, this distinction ceased to be a distinction between art and non-art and simply presented two aesthetic tools you could use or not.

Since then, art has had no simple guiding difference. Instead, it works with a dual operation in which a distinction is made between art and non-art, whereupon a fluid framework of differences is activated that a work can make use of and be assessed by – cognitive sophistication, swooning pathos, sensory overload, and so on. In the same way, the part of architecture that is involved here has to do with the difference between house and non-house, whereupon a fluid framework of differences can be activated to assess the kind and quality of the house.

When many means work together, complex interferences that are inaccessible to theoretical treatment arise. Therefore, architecture, like design, demands examples. Only when the house is standing there or a mock-up has been erected can you follow the interplay and sense the overall impression. Like artists, architects often consider words as something that divide and prevent an experience of the whole. Therefore, an analysis of the means of architecture – not all of them! – will be followed by a synthesis in which a house and its symphony of means will be investigated. The example is B&O's headquarters in Jutland, Denmark.

Space

The first consideration has to do with *space*. For Mies van der Rohe, the architect's task is to shape space with structure. His work is not the house but the space.[61] Correspondingly, it can be claimed that space in the visual arts is a function of form, while in architecture it is the reverse. We shall here focus on the organization's space, abstaining both from a more general presentation and a historical overview.

A part of the spatial effect has to do with size. Everything that works, claimed Hobbes, is an expression of power.[62] And size makes an impression. You can lose yourself in speculations about a possible background in the contests of animals in which it is also about impressing and frightening with size, regardless of whether there is anything to it or not. The opponent does not know but dares not run the risk.

Authoritarian regimes normally commandeer large public spaces for buildings and their environment. Extravagance with space is an elementary expression of power, because size attunes the receiver by making him aware of how small and vulnerable he is. The tool can be used on the building's *surroundings*, which can be emptied, so the building appears trenchant, the building's *entrances*, which mark the difference between inside and outside, the building's *foyer*, in which you are received by the building, and the building's *representative space*.

In organizations, position can be read by space size, and there are often exacting guidelines for how space and other luxuries are distributed.[63] Moreover, the contrast between 'the richness and glory' of a manager's office and the 'ascetic and simple life' of subordinates is a normal phenomenon.[64]

Not only size but also the *process* of size has an effect, that is, contrast and transition between small and large. A house can work directly with size, so a large entrance leads into a large foyer, or it can have a small door that may even be difficult to see, which opens up into a shockingly large foyer.

Size is but one of the tools of space. Others are the shaping and breaking-up of space with walls and light, so the space gets its own musicality. By adapting to or breaking with the scale that governs the environment of the building, a building can acquire a trenchant quality, almost like a work of art. And it can attune the receiver by modelling space with materials, with transitions between rooms, with openings, with technical tricks such as columns and decorations, with light and shadow, and with colours.

In the *Chapelle du Rosaire*, Henri Matisse wanted to create a space that placed the receiver in a state of meditative peace. His means were contrasts – a white space, black/white contrasts in the ceramic pictures, and the glass mosaics with three colours: blue, yellow and green. A cross-shaped white room was formed by having unnatural light stream in and colour the air and floor of the space. For simple colours, claimed Matisse, 'act upon the inner feelings with more force, the simpler they are'.[65] The same ambition is behind the Catholic cathedrals to transform the whole space into a light-saturated material by virtue of the glow and colouristic power of tall glass mosaics.

You can distinguish here between space and place, which has to do with the building's own space in relation to the place – nature or city or both – where it is built. An architect can build a house that functions according to its own principles and defies the history of the place, both with respect to scale and style, or he can even make rupture of styles harmonize with existing houses, particularly if some of them are powerful icons. With a strong focus on its own tools, postmodern architecture gladly dissolves its connectedness with place.[66]

Space can be constructed functionally, so an office building consists of long corridors that lead into small cells. Space can be constructed symbolically, so it signifies special relationships between people – superior and inferior, individual or common. And space can be constructed aesthetically, so it takes into account the fact that they 'envelop our spirit'[67] and attune us. Space can receive and open up a world that is both imaginary and real, so architecture and music approach each other: both create another reality. They strengthen lives and seem recognizable as suppliers of a way of being – warm or cold, splendid or intimate. There is space that is immediately experienced as welcoming, space that is ruined by new windows or insulation, space that you slowly learn to appreciate, and space to which you are never reconciled, so the best you can do is forget it.

Time

The next consideration has to do with time, because an organization must decide where on the time axis between past and future it wants to be placed. Construction takes place in the present and is an event whereby stone is placed on stone. But historically, there are different modes of construction that, like flowers in a herbarium, have their own names and meaning. The history of style constitutes a stockpile of themes,[68] which are also tools for a desired meaning.

In the present, buildings with different historical depth stand side by side, so every city contains a repertoire of responses to how buildings can be built and how they work. With different ambitions and talents, they have grappled with the boundary between normal and *outré*, where time contributes with the inevitable transformation of new into old. An organization can choose to make itself discrete and conservative, perhaps because it guards its image with an impeccable but also impenetrable dignity. Another organization may express its self-description as 'modern and sophisticated' through futuristic buildings whose madness is tamed by the reputation of the architect.

The difference between past and present has many names in architecture. One of them is the difference between popular architecture and avant-garde architecture. On one hand, there are architects who want 'to design signature buildings',[69] that is, buildings that call attention to themselves by defying their environment – a fashion show of striking styles. On the other hand, there are popular architects for whom the 'popular' does not necessarily refer to the current population but, perhaps to a historical fiction, an ideal type of something deep and original, so buildings are constructed from a Romantic or a national myth.

On the Galapagos Islands, 'nature' is not the current state of nature but nature as it appeared in 1835, when Darwin visited the islands. 1835 constitutes nature's ideal point of origin that rejects any addition or subtraction. The idea of 'the people' is even more bizarre, because 'the people' is not even a past reality but a fiction that is at once past and future, nostalgic and ideal. Even though popular architects by their very nature must plead for user consideration, they can also claim that the popular is repressed by the people, so it must be purified and liberated through a therapeutic effort in stone, glass, and wood – or straw – where the tradition's anonymous *eigenvalues* are made into a model for the present. Imitation can go so far as to activate the principle of chance that you find in rural towns and medieval cities, where buildings are situated without any overall plan, so this planlessness ends up becoming a planning principle.

By contrast, the avant-garde builds without consideration for history or tradition. Tradition is exactly what is to be destroyed architecturally, so the new can assert itself heroically and break the resistance of prejudice, which is written off as as out of date. The avant-garde liberates itself from any other consideration but the consideration of its own radicality and creates isolated buildings that defy their surroundings and appear as crystalline or creamy works of art. Architecture approaches art, when it liberates itself from functional considerations, from geographical context and random inhabitants.[70]

Within architecture, the avant-garde also runs into the subtle problem that, in its breach with tradition, it also has to break with the tradition of breaking with tradition. Therefore, architecture, often in a division of labour, swings between extreme breaches with tradition and extreme conformity with tradition, between carnival and purity. But when the avant-garde has broken with everything, except its own demolition, there is finally nothing left to demolish, so its effort happens in a self-created vacuum, both in form and in society. Architecture must re-create its content from here, whether it happens by reinventing the essence of the house or reusing the tools of tradition but in an ironic or 'quoted' way, until this distant attitude – *noli me tangere:* don't touch me – also eats itself up and architects begin to investigate whether it is possible to be – that is, to become, to make themselves – innocent in spite of lost innocence.[71] This movement can be followed in postmodern architecture, which reinvents tradition not as an obligatory norm but as a reservoir of potential, accessible forms.[72]

Light and shadow

According to Le Corbusier, an architect has only two differences to work with – namely, light and shadow, wall and space.[73] Even more simply, he claims that there are only two parameters – namely, volume and surface, which are determined in accordance with a plan 'in light'.[74] Walls do not just delimit the house from its environment but also divide up the house. And every wall delimits a spatial volume. So that the house does not create a total inner darkness, there must be holes through which light can stream in exactly measured doses or internal light sources, so the difference between light and shadow creates depth, clarity, and particular modes of being in a place. With external light, reflective light, and internal light, space can be constructed, so light becomes more important than colour.

The general experience is that light lifts but also blinds. With light sources and light directions, a house can be demarcated and controlled, because light creates a difference between centre and periphery, which can be used to create but also to divert attention. This is well-known from Catholic cathedrals, which use light to elevate the receiver toward the heavenly as the universal source of light but also use shadow to create enigmatic space beyond the everyday.

The need for light is no constant. While northern Europeans want 'a place in the sun', so 'being in the shade' is the same as being overlooked or even locked away, the corresponding desire in the Mediterranean is to have 'a place in the shade'. With small windows, shutters, and narrow streets, southern houses can protect themselves from the light that northern houses longingly open up to.

While traditional houses normally have few windows, glass has become the preferred modern building material. It is durable and flat and, even though it is simple, it allows great variation. This happens in many ways.

First, because a glass house receives colour and images from its surroundings, so the house changes with the rhythm of the weather, the seasons, and the day.

Furthermore, because glass can open up a house, you can see through it. The house becomes light, almost floating, so the glass weakens the opposition of inside and outside and, thus, the feeling of being locked up inside a house. A glass space isolates the inner from the outer and exposes the inside and the outside to each other. The house and its environment flow together visually, while the external world, which can be seen through the glass, is devaluated in the senses: sounds are weakened, odours are gone, the wind and rain cannot be felt.

Then, because the half-transparent, half-reflective house of the day is replaced by the house of the night, which smoulders with inner fluorescent light that streams from the inside out and makes everything visible.

And, finally, because glass surfaces can be made into overlapping spatial structures, so the house becomes ambiguous and indeterminate.

The generous use of glass has its price. Having opened and exposed the house to light, it must be closed again with screens and shades, so it does not burn up. But this complication is often turned from a problem into an advantage, because the tools for protecting the house against light can make it more complex and disarm the criticism of glass houses being antiseptic and soulless.

When a house limits its space with surfaces, new differences arise. The first is *pure–decorative*, the other *order–disorder*. Here, too, it is not a simple matter of choosing one pole but of combining two poles in the house as a whole and in its various parts – so, for example, foyer, cafeteria, auditorium and work space can be distinguished each in themselves and in their mutual relationship to each other.

Pure–decorative

We looked earlier at this difference in connection with design and can summarize here briefly. Up until the twentieth century, almost all large buildings were decorated. Even cheap residential blocks had doors, windows, and surfaces filled with decoration – arches and faces, sandstone decorations, and various types of doorframes and window frames in addition to bay windows and cornices and gables.

In Antiquity, this had to do with materials, because durable buildings were buildings of stone, which could be made lighter by carving. A stone column becomes less heavy if it has grooves. It also had to do with meaning, because ornamentations make a building more complex and, in this sense, finer and can at the same time fill it with signs that connect the worldly house with heavenly powers.

Complication becomes an expression of wealth, so upper classes of every sort fill their houses with a myriad of details, sometimes only on the inside, other times both on the outside and the inside. The wealth of the house consisted of the fact that a powerful, simple structure could support and tame such great complexity without visually collapsing.

The sober and down-to-earth architecture of industrial society broke through in the twentieth century. In this way, the classic difference between pure and decorative is replaced by a displaced difference between simple and complex – often, in the way that simple surfaces are combined in complex patterns, so the boredom of the house is overcome by frameworks and bonds. This can happen on the surfaces of the house, so the frameworks continue their work on the building's windows and doors or it can happen entirely outside the building, either as protection from light or as decoration that help the building step into character. Instead of using twining, organic ornamentation, complexity is achieved by multiplying the quantity of geometric patterns – the rectangle, the circle and the triangle.

Another relationship between pure and decorated was created by postmodern architecture. Here, the Bauhaus tradition's principles of essentialism and 'less is more' – its 'romance with the square' – was replaced by the opposite principles of exuberance and 'less is a bore' (Venturi). Historical forms were generously linked with Mannerist tricks such as screens and flush ceilings, hybrids, distortions in perspective, and budding surfaces, so buildings ended up as labyrinths you could lose yourself in, filled with quotations. The temple motif, for example, was often used ironically to refer to architectural tradition. The model was Baroque, which broke with the requirements of comprehensibility, perspective, and harmony. Venturi puts it this way:

> Architects can no longer afford to be intimidated by the puritanically moral language of orthodox Modern architecture. I like elements which are hybrid rather than 'pure', compromising rather than 'clean', distorted rather than 'straightforward', ambiguous rather than 'articulated' … inconsistent and equivocal rather than direct and clear. I am for messy vitality over obvious unity. I include the non sequitur and proclaim the duality.[75]

Aesthetic disharmony may have to do with the ornamentation in which a house is masked and decorated. It may have a powerful aesthetic effect such as, for example, Coop Himmelb(l)au's Rooftop Remodelling project in Vienna (1983–9), where a classic building was remodelled with an insect-like roof construction of aluminium and glass. It was bold and spectacular, and it provided prestige to a quaint building, which compensated for the fact that it was impractical and expensive.

Venturi distinguishes between the iconic building and a building that is a 'decorated shed', overgrown with signs but is in itself 'sign-less' and indeterminate.[76] A house can by virtue of its own form open up an imaginary space. But it can also open up an imaginary space by receiving and passing along references like an advertising pillar. The meaning of the house can be built into the material or pasted with signs, so the house provides its own particular contribution to the abundance of signs, signals, and messages of modern space.

A house can be coded or double-coded; so, like Cézanne's paintings, it unites a classical simplicity, which makes decoding easy, with a great complexity, which makes decoding difficult – something both professionals and amateurs can enjoy. In this way, the house is a medium that itself has form and can receive other forms.

Order–disorder

It speaks for itself that a house is order. It pulls together elements in a way that is improbable, functional and, thus, ordered. In this sense, it is easy to subscribe to the claim that 'architecture is order'. But the difference between order and disorder can have another aim.

That a house contains order means that it is easy to read.[77] If you observe from one place, you can draw conclusions about what you can expect other places. Therefore, symmetry is an important tool for order and is used in public buildings such as libraries and hospitals that must turn an easily legible surface toward their users. By contrast, disorder means that you must put a lid on your impatience and accept that you have to get 'to the bottom of it' to determine what sort of building it is.

Both order and disorder have advantages and disadvantages. We have mentioned the advantage of order – quick decoding. The disadvantage is monotony, because the building does not invite further observation. There are no mysteries, no traps or temptations. With disorder, the risk is that the gaze will lose itself and never find the connections, while the advantage is that the house stimulates and irritates. Baroque works with displaced perspectives, with ruptures and functionless tools in order to endow its buildings with a powerful *pathos*.

The relationship between order and disorder can be displaced into a relationship between a house and its surroundings. In the Middle Ages, the church was the centre of the town. And while the church was order and, therefore, moral, the streets were chaotic and, therefore, dangerous. The space in and around the church had its special laws, so the needy should be helped and criminals could not be apprehended, while the city's other spaces were characterized by indifference or brutality – a place for 'a moral amnesia'.[78]

Rough versus polished

A house can have a special effect by cultivating rough materials, so stone, wood, and metal appear in a form that is diligently unfinished. Rock that is rough and unpolished, wood that is unplaned and unpainted, blocks of pressed straw, and sturdy iron joists that remain visible can all help stamp a house not only with raw strength and authenticity but also provide it with a simple and welcoming gesture. While, by contrast, mirror-smooth stone and painted surfaces can give it a cool and distant air of exclusivity.

The selection need not be exhaustive. An organization may consider what tools it wants to use, how they are to be combined, and thus how its buildings are to appear. But since a desired impression does not appear by mechanical addition or subtraction, the organization must rely on architects. You can make complex and simple use of simple forms and harmonic and disharmonic use of complex forms. Only when the many tools are collected into a clear model can you assess and discuss the building's impression. Pure, unadorned houses can be disharmonious – such as, for example, the Vanna Venturi House – and decorated houses can be harmonic – such as, for example, Versailles.

As opposed to the cultivation of simple geometry with its special appeal to northern European Puritanism, there is the cultivation of rich forms – Baroque, Mannerism, Rococo and *Jugendstil*. These rich forms can, in turn, be used harmonically or disharmonically. Rococo prefers harmony – symmetry, while Mannerism and Baroque cultivate the skewed and centre-less. This provides a dual cross-scheme (see Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 Uses of form

	Simple use of simple forms: Classicism	
Harmonic use of rich forms: Rococo		Disharmonic use of rich forms: Mannerism, Baroque, Postmodernism
	Complex use of simple forms: Modernism	

This scheme is not logically exhaustive, which simply means that there are exceptions. There is nothing to prevent a disharmonic use of simple forms – which, for example, occurs in Venturi's house. Nevertheless, there is a tendency that the use of simple forms goes hand in hand with a predilection toward symmetry, while the use of rich forms relates to a scheme around harmony as opposed to disharmony.

To this point, we have proceeded analytically and have isolated a number of tools. We shall now take a more synthetic approach and look more closely at a specific building in which the various tools work together.

The interplay of meanings: B&O's headquarters[79]

For many years, B&O's headquarters was a squat, unobtrusive building that surprised many visitors: how could an organization that designed sophisticated machines for seeing and hearing be satisfied with such an unsophisticated centre? Even though an argument could be made for contrast – an outer striving toward the heavens connected to an earth-bound inner, there was also a mismatch. An organization that emphasizes aesthetic quality must take its own medicine – or lose credibility. Therefore, B&O harmonized its headquarters and its products and even went further to develop a new store design, which, however, I have decided not to include.

Between 1997 and 1998, the new headquarters was constructed at the end of B&O's untidy row of manufacturing plants in Jutland, which stretches north–northwest and south–southeast along the Limfjord. This created an intense collaboration between the builder and the architect. The building was not isolated but the last link in a chain of buildings whose differences it contributes to. The building is U-shaped: the north wing – which contains foyer, auditoriums, meeting rooms, and cafeteria – is connected with the southern-exposed administration wing via a middle wing with space for marketing, development, and education. The back of the north wing abuts the factory buildings. Care was taken that the building did not tower over and overshadow a nearby Romanesque ashlar church or the city's profile.

The building is 'high-tech' with glass, tiles, and bricks and works in a sophisticated way with the relationship between surface, light, and transparency. In order not only to preserve local colour but also the earlier contrast, 'The Farm' was chosen as its name, and sheep are left to graze in the open grassy areas between the three wings – the building rests directly on the ground with no landscaping.

The entrance is located in the corner between the north wing and the middle wing. It is almost hidden from the outside, because the building is constructed into the ground. You approach the door down a narrow, tiled walkway and only close up do you discover the glass door that leads to a low antechamber. Thereafter, you turn a corner and experience a powerful contrast with the enormous, high-ceilinged foyer, where reception is located in the wedge that connects foyer and antechamber. In a panoramic view, the whole building opens up clearly, both the north wing with a running concrete wall, the middle wing's glass hallway, and the south wing, which you can see through the foyer's floor to ceiling windows. You can orient yourself to the building's three parts at once.

In the foyer, there are some chairs, a little reading material, and a grand piano (Image 7.1). Otherwise, the space is empty and bare with tall windows toward the 'farm area.' It is dominated by large surfaces of wood, glass, cement, and glazed tiles, where the interplay between the tiles, the furrows between the sheets of rough cement, the aluminium moulding that separates the large windows and the *shimmering* of the parquet floor ensure the necessary variation. The ceiling is drilled with a series of rectangular light sources.

If you stand at the perspective point in the foyer, you see in the north wing a tall, black tile wall that demarcates an auditorium, while a long and twice as high hallway continues down the whole of the north wing's length to the cafeteria, supported by a view up toward the ceiling, which appears as a long fissure of glass (see Image 7.2). At the end of the wing, there is a monumental cafeteria with long rows of black tables that create associations with monasteries or American prisons. Here, too, there

Image 7.1 Foyer in Bang & Olufsen headquarters, Jutland (© Copyright and intellectual property rights remain property of Bang & Olufsen)

Image 7.2 North wing of Bang & Olufsen headquarters, Jutland (© Copyright and intellectual property rights remain property of Bang & Olufsen)

are high walls of cement slabs, and the large window toward the south is covered in the middle by a white wall, so light only streams in from the bottom and sides of the south wall. In a way, the cafeteria's users are also protected from the gaze of the administration building on the other side of the 'farm area' – and vice versa. After the foyer's large windows, the glass in the upper part of the building is cut off, so the rest of the north wing toward the farm area is covered by tiles with narrow bands of window toward the auditorium and meeting locales with a band of window running along the ground.

If you leave the perspective point and go to the right into the middle wing, you enter a hallway of glass and aluminium, completely transparent. And the floor is made of a greenish glass, so there is also light coming from the floor below and, especially when the building was new, you experienced an almost physical uncertainty about walking. You had an uneasy sense of weightlessness and floating and almost dared not take a step lest the glass break. Since then, scratches have weakened the effect and thus the endless mirroring of floor, walls, and ceiling, which multiplies the space and makes its walls vibrate with uncertainty, when the light interferes between the glass surfaces, and an illusion of total transparency and the breakdown of the difference between out and in is staged.

The building's stairs are also made of glass, so you can see through them, and light can spread freely.

You come from the middle wing to the south wing, which is located on one long concrete girder, so the building hovers on slender feet. Out toward the main road, the north wing's façade is covered with red brick interrupted by a band of windows. Inwardly, it presents a large glass façade, so it is possible from the outside to observe everything going on both in the open office landscape, where tables stand in long rows separated by screens, and in the outermost tips, which is the haunt of management. Even though light is streaming in from both sides, the quantity of light from the north side's open glass surfaces and the south side's narrow band of windows is so different that the contours of the space and the objects are not obliterated.

The primary impression is a building that is certainly complex, yet makes use of cool, minimalist tools – glass, bare surfaces, open space, light, and buoyancy. Even though it is not a building that boasts, nor is it a building you feel at home in. It does not invite but seduces and impresses with discrete, almost secretive tools – above all, space and light and a certain chilliness. The combination of tiles, bricks, and glass means that the building focuses on the particular character of these materials and the contrast between them but also on the difference between rough and polished. Abstraction and materiality work side by side. The colours are either white or the natural colours of the materials: brick, basalt, concrete, and glass. From the outside, the building's glass mirrors the grass, the sky, and the clouds.

Just as B&O's design is not homey but sophisticated and polished and the starting point for a light, cool appreciation, the new headquarters is also at a distance, even when its generous use of glass invites everyone to observe all. It is not a moving, emotional design but appeals more to the head than the heart. It is not *pleasant*. We saw earlier that design for B&O is not a pretty face but intimately interwoven with function and quality. Here, it is frustrating that, even though B&O's headquarters is characterized by a rigorous care for details, it has already begun to crack a few years after completion, so many of the large surfaces of glass and cement have begun to be scuffed and fractured. At the same time, the *transitions* between the elements of the building, which are part of determining one's experience of it, did not have the flawlessness that B&O requires of its products.

B&O accepted the consequences of the modern requirement that not only the product but also the circumstances around the product are important for the overall evaluation of the organization. The product is placed in many symbolic spaces of which one consists of the buildings in which the product is produced. Therefore, the headquarters can be used to reproduce the organization's idealized description of itself, its 'this is what we want to be'. As compensation for the fact that an organization is invisible, its headquarters will be created as a signal and acquire a representative and symbolic function.

Consequently, B&O's headquarters was constructed in a manner congenial to B&O's products, and the principle of transparency was implemented – even to the point that there are no closed doors to the auditorium, so everyone can hear what is going on. Not even management can hide behind their closed doors – even though the principle that quantity of space accompanies position is preserved. The principle of openness is maintained so consistently that the discomfort of being exposed and the discomfort of being disturbed by noise must be accepted as part of the bargain.

So, B&O's headquarters cultivates the bare and the pure as a sort of ceremony implemented so consistently that the discomfort must be accepted as well, whether it is the discomfort of being seen, of being able to hear, or of being in a room that is 'unhomey'. The house functions more than it pleases and, as such, is a magnificent symbolic endeavour.

8
Conclusion

After so many words, it seems superfluous to add even more. But the old principle of essay writing says that you start by saying what you are going to say, then you say it, and finally you say what you have just said.

The ambition of this book has been to point out an area in the life and management of organizations that, in practice, gets an incredible amount of attention but, theoretically, stands in the shadows. While knowledge and norms are bathed in light, when the talk is about organizations and their decisions, the aesthetic dimension is pushed off to the periphery. The endeavour takes place in a diffuse manner, dispersed among many experts, and theory is only now deliberating about the fact that this is a unified phenomenon. It is not difficult to agree with Antonio Strati that aesthetics is treated like hot air compared with hard facts and soft values.

Perhaps, one of the reasons is that aesthetics can be difficult to talk about and can easily get lost in subjective feelings. But this can equally justify an effort to create a better language about aesthetics rather than to leave it simply as a private matter.

At any rate, the use of aesthetic tools by organizations is more than just an arbitrary whim and more than an affair for aesthetic experts. Everyone is exposed to them, and they are, therefore, a common cultural matter.

The intent has not been to impose a new 'should' on managers but simply to show that all communication has an aesthetic dimension. It appears in the communication's *mode* and has to do with how it is experienced and thus with what goodwill it generates. Regardless of any 'should', aesthetics is something that organizations inevitably do.

Nor has our intent been to talk about what is good and bad taste. Many aesthetes have a strong sense of good and bad taste in their baggage, and they have a hard time talking about aesthetics independent of their own predilections. When a designer talks about what design is, he normally smuggles in his ideas of what good design is – as a rule, his own. I have tried – no more than that! – to show what aesthetics is and what it can do independent of my own taste or what the predominant taste may be.

Finally, the intent has not been to provide a series of handles that can be put on aesthetics, so it can be used to guide and control. There is no doubt that aesthetic tools can be used. But instead of developing an aesthetic technology, I wanted to increase the understanding of the life of aesthetics in organizations.

When aesthetics is separated from knowledge and norms, the question arises about its dark side. If aesthetic tools are used contrary to knowledge and norms, they can be used to seduce and corrupt. So, greedy businessmen and power-mad politicians can use aesthetics to smarten up unsavoury matters.

I have only touched on this question in the book. I have from the start chosen to follow Aristotle, who claims that aesthetic tools – his example is rhetoric – can be used by everyone and for any purpose. There is nothing that cannot be misused. So, instead of following Plato and making aesthetics suspect and driving artists from the perfect state, I have treated aesthetics as a dimension that is inevitably built into all communication and its patterns of meaning and sensation. That it can be misused goes without saying, regardless of what you put into the word 'misuse'. But neither does it follow from this that it should not be used or that it must be eliminated. If you try to eradicate the aesthetic dimension from communication, communication is dissolved into nothing.

With aesthetics, you can build in attraction – or the opposite – into communication, and you cannot help but do so. Therefore, the use of aesthetic tools is as old as human beings themselves and, presumably, even older. Animals also use them *sans le savoir*, when they try to attract or frighten each other with colour and scent.

So aesthetics has come to stay. For language users, it is just as dangerous, just as unavoidable, and just as elementary as earth, water, air, and fire.

Notes

Preface

1. Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics,* 1174a17–18; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 1857.
2. Plato, *Symposium* 206d.
3. Bernd Schmitt and Alex Simonson, *Marketing Aesthetics*, p. 274.
4. Antonio Strati, *Organization and Aesthetics*.
5. On the relationship between organization and aesthetics in this traditional sense, see Antonio Strati, *Organization and Aesthetics*.

1 Organizational Aesthetics

1. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment,* Book II, § 23.
2. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* 1174b32; *The Complete Works of Aristotle,* vol. 2, p. 1857.
3. The reason they are called 'media' is their plastic or fluid character, which makes them receptive to the imposition of tighter and more fixed forms. An important difference, therefore, is the difference between medium and form, between fluid and fixed. Language, sounds, colours and physical material are media or resources for aesthetic form-giving.
4. Le Corbusier, *Toward an Architecture*: 'These forms, which are primary or subtle, supple or brutal, act on our senses physiologically' (pp. 95–6). Antonio Strati goes so far as to say that the sense experience is not psychic, *Organisation and Aesthetics*, p. 108.
5. Sigmund Freud, 'Ratschläge für den Artz bei der psychoanalytischen Behandlung', *Studienausgabe, Schriften zur Behandlungstechnik*, p. 171.
6. Antonio Strati, *Organization and Aesthetics*, p. 110 f.
7. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, § 57, § 67.
8. Niklas Luhmann, *Art as a Social System,* p. 38.
9. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment,* § 14.
10. Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, p. 128.
11. Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, p. 128.
12. Leon Alberti, *On Painting,* p. 93.
13. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 'Introduction', vi.
14. I am not concerned with the ethics that have been found in the artist's relation to his work, i.e. his attention, feeling of duty, consistency, etc., since we are not talking about that but about something in what surrounds art, its coming-into-being.
15. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, p. 28.
16. Cf. also Antonio Strati, *Organization and Aesthetics*, p. 32.
17. Martin Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 17.
18. Cf. Niklas Luhmann, *Organization und Entscheidung*, p. 112, on the dual framing of the work of art.

19. '[I]n the theatre the people who eat sweets do so most when the actors are poor', *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1175b13–14; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 1858.
20. Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems*, p. 140.
21. [Cicero], *Ad Herennium*, p. 40.
22. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, § 13. Kant calls taste 'barbaric' if it requires desire to achieve its pleasure. He contrasts the barbaric with the pure judgement of taste. According to this view, aesthetic communication in organizations is barbaric.
23. Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, p. 83.
24. Cf. Wilfrid Sellars, 'The Identity Approach to the Mind-Body Problem', *Philosophy of Mind* (ed. by Stuart Hampshire), p. 14.
25. Aristotle, *Poetics*, chap. 6, 1449b22-28; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 2320.
26. James Phelan undertakes a similar distinction between the intuitive and the cognitive reading of a text, cf. *Narrative as Rhetoric*, p. 173.
27. James Phelan speaks of 'the desire for mastery' a text and the 'desire to make texts yield up their secrets, to take possession of them', *ibid*., p. 180.
28. One example of this sort of theoretical construction that is extreme in relation to the works it deals with may be found in Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Duchamp TRANS-formers*.
29. Since the 17th century, *les connoisseurs* have emerged as mediators between artists and audience, after the patronage relationship between the artist and client was replaced by the market relationship. These art connoisseurs created irritation both among other connoisseurs and parts of the public.
30. In the 18th century, David Hume believed that only passion, not reason, can motivate people, cf. *A Treatise of Human Nature*, p. 458.
31. Talcott Parsons, *Sociological Theory and Modern Society*, p. 296.
32. The Wittgensteinian 'what is the case' is used instead of 'object' in order to note that not only simple things can be observed but also comprehensive complexes of physical and social relationships – for example, works.
33. Aristotle, *Poetics*, chap. 4, 1448b ff.
34. Antonio Strati, *Organization and Aesthetics*, p. 123 ff.
35. Theophrastus, *The Characters*.
36. As we shall see in the chapter on advertising, the relationship is more complicated. There is advertising that prompts people to buy here and now and advertising that fosters an attitude.
37. Niklas Luhmann, 'Generalized Media and the Problem of Contingency' in Jan Loubster (ed.), *Explorations in General Theory in Social Science 1–2*, p. 520.
38. G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, § 190.
39. G.H. Mead, *Mind, Self & Society*, p. 68 f., 153.
40. This is a truism, since attunedness is transformed into a feeling in the same moment it is observed and named.
41. Per Oluf Berg and Kristian Kreiner, 'Corporate Architecture: Turning Physical Settings into Symbolic Resources', in Pasquale Gagliardi (ed.), *Symbols and Artifacts*, p. 60. The interest in getting the message out, as we shall later see, leads to an interest in rhetoric.
42. Jürgen Habermas, *Moralbewusstsein und kommunikatives Handeln*, p. 119.
43. On 'themes', see Niklas Luhmann, *The Reality of the Mass Media*, p. 68.
44. Antonio Strati, *Organization and Aesthetics*, p. 30.

45. Antonio Strati, *Organization and Aesthetics*, p. 106, 121.
46. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1354a1-11; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 2152.
47. Niklas Luhmann, *Organisation und Entscheidung*, chap. 1.
48. Niklas Luhmann, *Observations on Modernity*, p. 104ff.
49. Niklas Luhmann replaces the idea of goal-orientation with the absorption of uncertainty, so the organization, instead of doing what it wants, sees what it has done and, *in this way*, clarifies what it wants (*Organisation und Entscheidung*, p. 184). It seems to be another one of the many strained attempts to get rid of the classic concept of means-goals rationality in which the baby is thrown out with the bath water.
50. Heinz von Foerster has pointedly formulated it this way: 'only *those* questions that are, in principle, undecidable can *we* decide' ('Ethics and Second-order Cybernetics', *Cybernetics and Human Knowing*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 14).
51. Morally, this may mean that it can be arbitrary, and thus without responsibility, to ascribe responsibility in the complex context of causes and effects, cf. Niklas Luhmann, *Observations on Modernity,* p. 91, 93.
52. Niklas Luhmann, *Organisation und Entscheidung*, p. 453 f. Cf. also Ole Thyssen, 'Luhmann and Management', p. 38f.
53. John Kenneth Galbraith, *The New Industrial State*, chap VI.
54. Niklas Luhmann, *Organisation und Entscheidung*, p. 197.
55. The difference between conditional programmes and goal programmes is developed in Niklas Luhmann, *Organisation und Entscheidung*, p. 261ff.
56. See, for example, G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, vol. 1, p. 13.
57. This point is also found in Antonio Strati, *Organization and Aesthetics*, p. 79.
58. Hence, books such as Hermann Demmel's *Art-management* are published.
59. E.H. Gombrich, *The History of Art*, p. 197.
60. In *Power In and Around Organizations* (pp. 224ff), Mintzberg defines 'the System of Politics' as the place where all considerations meet all considerations, so the political arena is subjective but, at the same time, the place where the mission and vision of organizations are established in constant negotiation.
61. Cf. Antonio Strati, *Organization and Aesthetics*, p. 75, 114.
62. Cf. Chapter 3 on Organizational Rhetoric.
63. Antonio Strati, *Organization and Aesthetics*, p. 153.
64. On this definition of the sign, see Niklas Luhmann, 'Sign as Form', *Cybernetics and Human Knowing* 6(3), 1999.
65. Cf. Barry David and Michael Elmes, 'Strategy Retold: Toward a Narrative View of Strategic Discourse', *Academy of Management Review*, 1997, vol. 22, no. 2, in which it is said that an aesthetically pleasant presentation can get an audience 'to soften or forget' their objections toward content (p. 433). Aesthetic tools are regularly under suspicion for supporting doubtful causes. There are reasons to remember Aristotle's remark that all good things 'except excellence' can be used 'unjustly' and thus cause harm (*Rhetoric*, 1355b4-5; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 2154). One may even doubt whether excellence is immune to abuse.
66. Cf. also Antonio Strati, *Organization and Aesthetics*, p. 98.
67. Aristotle speaks of 'speech [that] stirs the emotions', *Rhetoric*, 1356a14; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 2155; and, in Antonio Strati, aesthetics and pathos almost merge, cf. *Organization and Aesthetics*, p. 40.
68. Cf. Ole Thyssen, *Business Ethics and Organizational Values.*
69. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1356a11-14; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 2155.

70. Which is Friedrich Schiller's description of what art provides (*On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, p. 126) and the starting point for much criticism of commodity aesthetics, cf., for example, W.F. Haug, *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics*.
71. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence' and 'On the Phenomenology of Language' in *Signs*, pp. 36–97.
72. Communication with physical objects raises special problems that will be dealt with in the chapter on architecture.
73. Luhmann claims in *Social Systems* (p. 161) that, while rhetoric was once an art for ensuring motivation, this task has been taken over by society's functional systems in which motivation can be presumed. This is not entirely correct, since functional systems such as economics and politics only provide general motivation, so the art and tricks of rhetoric must still be used to motivate specially. With rhetoric, the loss of *reason* is compensated, so an organization can convince where it cannot prove and the loss of *visibility* is compensated, so an organization can rhetorically gain access to itself as a whole, cf. Niklas Luhmann, *Organisation und Entscheidung*, p. 189.

3 Organizational Rhetoric

1. Robert E. Sanders calls an argument a series of statements that are convincing if the major claim, and only the major claim, remains relevant through a progression of statements, 'Discursive Constraints', p. 149.
2. Cf. Henry Mintzberg, *Power in and around Organizations*, p. 222 ff., in which this relationship also appears in organizations.
3. This mode of thinking arose in the wake of the scientific revolution in the 1600s and finds an early expression in Spinoza's political writings, cf. *A Theologico-Political Treatise,* chap. 20.
4. John Lyne claims that 'there are moments of "going public" that pervade the reasoning process itself', 'BioRhetorics', Herbert W. Simons (ed.), *The Rhetorical Turn*, p. 49.
5. In system theory, every interest is located in a function system and allocated its code, that is, its basic guiding difference, cf. Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems*, p. 161.
6. Niklas Luhmann, *Organisation und Entscheidung*, chap. 6.
7. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, no. 277, p. 78. Pascal's point is that each party can only 'see at a glance' (*ne pouvant voir d'une vue*), no. 3, p. 3.
8. When a narrative – for example, a fairy tale – develops, it starts with a snap of the fingers, a 'once upon a time', and on the fly the reader must post-construct what is to be taken as given about the relationship of the king and queen with each other and their children, about powerful stepmothers and weak widowers, about wise stupidity and simple-minded wisdom. All this is not mentioned but is taken as granted, i.e. is left to the reader's pleasant consideration.
9. Aristotle, *Rhetoric,* 1355b; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 2155.
10. In his *Leviathan* , Thomas Hobbes enumerates all men's 'present means, to obtain some future apparent good' (p. 66). The list is generous and includes not only wisdom and strength but also beauty, wealth, affability and eloquence. The 'Sciences', on the other hand, are 'small Power', because they are not 'eminent' and, therefore, are not recognized by anyone (p. 67).
11. Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, p. 13.
12. Cf. Richard McKeon, *Rhetoric*.

13. Herbert W. Simons, *op. cit.*, p. 18 ff.
14. The connection between rhetoric and narrative is emphasized by James Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, p. 18 ff.
15. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1175a1, Book 10, chap. 4; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 1857.
16. Brian Vickers, *In Defense of Rhetoric*, p. 7.
17. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, 'Knowledge and Interest', *Inquiry*, vol. 9, no. 1 (1966), pp. 285–300. Even though the empirical-analytical sciences are bound to an interest, they have liberated themselves from what Habermas calls the 'irritating' influence of natural life-interests.
18. Which, presumably, is the reason that Kant considers the understanding's categories to be spontaneous. They are activated outside of the observer's knowledge and will, namely, as the basis for knowing and willing at all, cf. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, B 93: 'Concepts are therefore based on the spontaneity of thought', *Critique of Pure Reason,* p. 54.
19. The concept of 'abduction' was coined by C.S. Peirce. Here, too, the creative moment is emphasized.
20. That narrative can also be considered a rhetorical genre whose goal is to influence an audience appears in the title of James Phelan's book, *Narrative as Rhetoric*. Narrative also has a 'magic' that influences an audience (p. 9). The rhetorical element is that the world 'is created' by rhetoric, so our discourse on the world constitutes the world in which we find ourselves (p. 10). I shall not go into the problems with this point of view.
21. Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, 1355b.
22. Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, 1355b. Just as Hobbes finds it meaningless whether a goal is real or only seems real, it is, rhetorically, meaningless whether an argument 'is' convincing or 'seems to be' convincing.
23. In passing, it may be remarked that narrative has also been considered a form of inference. Peter Brooks calls it a 'temporal syllogism' (*Reading for the Plot*, p. 21), because it has to do with 'the connective processes of time'.
24. Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, p. 317.
25. Correspondingly, it can be seen that Plato's frontal attack on rhetoric does not result, as Cicero notes, in a theory of rhetoric but in rhetorical practice. Not only does Plato not know what he is doing, he does not *want* to know. This is because the deepest insight for Plato was wordless and thus inaccessible to verbal technique. Plato defines rhetoric as 'influencing the soul by means of words' (*Phaedrus*, 261a). Cicero, on the other hand, tries to unite philosophy and rhetoric through a claim that things (*res* and thus *inventio*) and words (*verba* and thus *elocutio*) are two sides of the same thing, cf. Brian Vickers, *In Defense of Rhetoric*, p. 33.
26. Cf., for example, Herbert W. Simons, 'The Rhetoric of Inquiry as an Intellectual Movement' in *The Rhetorical Turn*.
27. *Ethos* and *pathos* were viewed differently in Greek and Roman Antiquity. While *pathos* for Aristotle is an emotional urge, for good or for evil, and *ethos* is the speaker's character (*On Rhetoric*, 1369a5 ff.), *pathos* in the Romans becomes the great, unified emotion, while *ethos* by contrast becomes the balanced, tempered emotion, 'a chorus of feelings'. Depending on interest, one or the other can be invoked and both efforts require talent. You can focus on a balanced presentation that absorbs many considerations or a strong emotion that commands or precludes other considerations. *Pathos* is, as an emotion, also a passion – not something you control

but something that frames and supports you. An emotion that can be controlled or that can be strengthened with argument, is no passion.

28. Cf. [Cicero], *Ad Herennium* in which it is said that a speaker at once seeks to make the listeners 'receptive, well-disposed, and attentive' (p. 40). He must, as Aristotle puts it, make them think differently (*On Rhetoric*, p.1356a9-11).
29. Morality, says Kant, does not consist of anything empirical but 'is based entirely on the part of it that is pure', that is, universal principles (*Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, p. 57).
30. Extinguish all warm feelings, says Hume, and morality no longer 'has any tendency to regulate our lives and actions' (*An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, p. 172 f.).
31. The classical doctrine of the four temperaments, or astrology's doctrine of the connection between personality and star signs, is an attempt to isolate certain attunednesses and make them invariant features of an observer.
32. Aristotle, *Rhetoric,* 1356b2-4; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 2157.
33. In his dialogue, *Parmenides*, Plato lists a number of objections against his own doctrine of Ideas.
34. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1355b26-27; Th*e Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 2155.
35. Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1107a30; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 1748. Later, it is said that all things are not determined by law, so every specific action contains a surplus of possible meanings and thus uncertainty about how it is to be described (1137a28; *ibid*., p. 1796).
36. Mark Backman, 'Introduction' to Richard McKeon, *Rhetoric*, p. xx. This may be compared with T.S. Kuhn's claim that, in the relationship *between* paradigms, there are no objective arguments, so a shift from one paradigm to another has the character of a religious conversion. Here, rhetoric can add considerations about what more particularly happens in this sort of 'conversion', which rarely comes as lightning from heaven. Between the objective and the subjective, there is, as indicated, a social and, thus, discursive field that becomes invisible when you make a simple distinction between science and religion.
37. Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1140a24; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 1800.
38. Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1181a1-2; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 1866. Therefore, management is not a doctrine that can be conveyed to others but a practice that any manager must acquire. And, therefore, even good managers are bad at explaining what they do. They regularly lose themselves in commonplaces.
39. Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094a27; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 1729. What is stated here about politics can more generally be said about management, since management, as indicated, is political in its essence.
40. Therefore, Mintzberg claims that, in an organization, politics is the domain in which the rubber meets the road, that is, where all views meet and the talent of the actors to make their views prevail is tested Darwinistically, so the absence of truth and principles are not a hindrance but a condition for operating politically (*Power in and around Organizations*, p. 227 ff).
41. John Kenneth Galbraith, *The New Industrial State*, chap. VI.
42. Niklas Luhmann, *Organisation und Entscheidung*, p. 191.
43. 'Novelty explained is no different from the familiar, while discovery reduced to rules is indistinguishable from other actions guided by a precept or habit' (Mark Backman, *op. cit.*, p. xxviii).

44. John Lyne says that 'the reader is moved into new imagistic configurations', 'Bio-Rhetorics', in Herbert W. Simon (ed.), *The Rhetorical Turn*, p. 40.
45. The classic example is Shakespeare's presentation of Antony in *Julius Caesar*, whose funeral oration over Caesar's body adroitly turns the mood of the crowd against Brutus yet at the same time he maintains that 'Brutus is an honourable man'. He unleashes a stream of claims and pictures that do their own work at the same time that their tendency is denied.
46. John Lyle, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
47. *Op. cit.*, p. 2.
48. Niklas Luhmann, *Observations on Modernity*, p. 75 ff. Luhmann also claims that ignorance of the future coupled with the necessity of acting makes non-knowing 'the most important resource of action' (p. 95 f.).
49. Stein Bråten, 'The Third Position', in Felix Geyer (ed.), *Sociocybernetic Paradoxes*, p. 198.
50. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1357a17-19; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 2157.
51. *Ibid*.
52. Niklas Luhmann, *Observations on Modernity*, p. 88.
53. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1358b.
54. Niklas Luhmann, *Organisation und Entscheidung*, p. 438.
55. Here, we are talking about a special aesthetic mode of inference, which also appears in Kant – in which a judgement of taste does not go from principle to concrete example but the other way around – from concrete example to general judgement, cf. *Critique of Judgment*, *Introduction* § IV.
56. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, Book II.vii, p. 69.
57. The thesis that the metaphor is a tool for knowledge is due, above all, to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, cf. *Metaphors We Live By*.
58. Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems*, p. 163.
59. Cicero, *De Partitione Oratoria*, p. 313. Cf. also *Topica*, p. 387.
60. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1358a.
61. [Cicero], *Ad Herennium*, p. 61.
62. Brian Vickers, *In Defense of Rhetoric*, p. 323.
63. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1407b31-32b; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 2246. In Aristotle, the characteristic about-face can be seen in that he first attacks the attempt to arouse feelings and then explains how you do it and even places feelings over reason, cf. Brian Vickers, *In Defense of Rhetoric*, p. 18.
64. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1407b.
65. *Ibid*.
66. Brian Vickers, *In Defense of Rhetoric*, p. 308.
67. Cicero, *De Oratore*, p. 15.
68. The relationship between knowledge and emotion is a classical philosophic theme. In Antiquity – in Plato, for example, knowledge and emotion were one, while modern philosophers such as David Hume claims that knowledge cannot motivate in and of itself.
69. Cf. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of Emotions*, p. 35: 'The emotion is a specific manner of apprehending the world.'
70. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, 'Knowledge and Interest', Inquiry, 9(1–4) (1966), pp. 285–300.
71. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1355b26.
72. Dudley Fenner, *Artes of Logike and Rhetorike* (1584), cited in Vickers, *op. cit.*, p. 324.
73. Brian Vickers, *In Defense of Rhetoric*, p. 302.

74. Whether we are talking about the first and original nature or the second and acquired nature here makes no difference.
75. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, IX, ii, 26, p. 389.
76. Cicero, *De Oratore*, II, xlvi, 191, p. 335.
77. Brian Vickers, *op. cit.*, p. 309.
78. Brian Vickers, *op. cit.*, p. 331.
79. Cicero, *De Oratore*, III, xli, 163, p. 129.
80. Vickers, *op. cit.*, p. 307; cf. Also p. 339.
81. Longinus, *On the Sublime*, p. 231. This view stuck. In 1725, Jonathan Richardson said that the sublime must be marvellous. It must 'strike vehemently upon the Mind, and Fill, and Captivate it Irresistibly' (*Two Discourses*, p. 34). Therefore, the sublime is a rare quality.
82. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, no. 4, p. 4.
83. Quintilian, *Institution Oratoria*, IX, iii, 102, p. 507.
84. [Cicero], *Ad Herennium,* p. 31.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 23
86. *Ibid.*
87. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1356a2-5.
88. This is also maintained by Quintilian, who writes that 'decoration does not just get its effect from its own qualities but, above all, from the circumstances in which it is used' (*op. cit.*, XI, i. 7, p. 159).
89. For example, by Machiavelli, who required that the prince be capable of staging illusions, cf., *The Prince*, ch. XVIII. Indeed, 'a ruler, then, should be very careful that … he should seem to be exceptionally merciful, trustworthy, upright, humane and devout'. p. 62.
90. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* (16), p. 6.
91. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* (355), p. 98.
92. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* (24), p. 8.
93. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* (48), p. 12.
94. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* (114), p. 35.
95. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* (106), p. 34.
96. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1356a1 ff; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 2155.
97. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1356a 10-11; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 2155
98. James McCroskey operates (on an empirical basis) with three types of ethos: initial, derived and terminal, in which he first is the speaker's reputation and renown prior to the speech, the second is the reputation and renown the speech itself generates, and the third is the sum of the first two, cf. *An Introduction to Rhetorical Communication*.
99. Niklas Luhmann, *Organisation und Entscheidung*, p. 66.
100. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1355b27-28; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 2155.
101. Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, p. 83.
102. Niklas Luhmann, *op. cit.*, p. 221 f.
103. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Moralbewusstsein und kommunicativen Handeln*, p. 119.
104. J.R.R., Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, p. 754.
105. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents,* p. 28; Longinus remarks in, *On the Sublime* that, only with pain , do you put aside a sublime work.
106. J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, pp. 758–59.
107. Cf. Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, p. 269.
108. Cf. Niklas Luhmann, *The Reality of the Mass Media*, p. 14.
109. Niklas Luhmann, *Organisation und Entscheidung*, p. 319.

110. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* (23), p. 7.
111. Robert E. Sanders, 'Discursive Constraint', Herbert W. Simons, *The Rhetorical Turn*, p. 146.
112. Niklas Luhmann, *Organisation und Entscheidung*, p. 421.
113. A manager is subsequently a person who mediates between knowledge domains, here the more general decision domain and the domain for more specialized insight, cf. John Lyne, 'Bio-Rhetoric', p. 52.
114. Herbert W. Simons claims that researchers practiced the Talmud tradition and its either–or, when they prepared their texts, but become positivists when they presented them, cf. 'The Rhetoric of Inquiry as an Intellectual Movement', Herbert W. Simons (ed.), *The Rhetorical Turn*, p. 4.
115. On how this happens, see Ole Thyssen, *Business Ethics and Organizational Values*.
116. Luhmann claims that a common culture makes it possible to pretend people agree, even though they do not, that is, create useful illusions, cf. *Organisation und Entscheidung*, p. 244.
117. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Rhetorik. Darstellung der antiken Rhetorik*.
118. In Umberto Eco's sense, cf. 'The Poetic of the Open Work' in *The Open Work*.
119. James Boyd White, *When Words Lose Their Meaning*, p. 109.
120. John Lyne speaks of two types of strategies, the complementary, which goes with the flow, and the compensatory, which goes against the flow. If the world is considered evil and cold, can one adapt to or try to break with this state, cf. John Lyne, 'Bio-Rhetorics', p. 44.
121. John Lyne, *op. cit.,* p. 37.
122. Cf. Niklas Luhmann, *Organisation und Entscheidung*, p. 196 f.
123. Niklas Luhmann, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
124. Niklas Luhmann, *op. cit.*, p. 150.
125. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1449b26; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 2320. Aristotle also speaks of the effect of painting someone 'handsomer than he is', 1454a11; *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, p. 2327.

4 Organizational Narratives

1. We shall come back to this point, cf. p. 175.
2. Sigmund Freud, therefore, could define his basic concept 'instinct' from *work requirements* placed upon an organism, cf. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality,* p. 34.
3. G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 244, 262. Hegel speaks of the 'manifold, self-differentiating expanse of life, with all its individualization and complication' toward which work and desire are directed.
4. These markets are called functions systems in systems theory, cf. Ole Thyssen, *Business Ethics and Organizational Values*, chap. 1.
5. Cf. Victor Turner, 'Social Dramas and Stories about Them', W.J.T. Mitchell (ed.), *On Narrative* (Chicago 1980), p. 145, where dramas are considered 'a spontaneous unit of social process and a fact of everyone's experience in every human society'.
6. Cf. René Girard, *To Double Business Bond*, p. viii.
7. Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chap. 25 on the inconstancy of fortune.
8. Nelson Goodman, 'Twisted Tales', W.J.T. Mitchell (ed.), *On Narrative*, p. 115.
9. Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*, p. 93.

10. Cf. Mieke Bal, *Narratology*, p. 8.
11. This definition has been taken from Robert Scholes, 'Language, Narrative, and Anti-Narrative,',W.J.T. Mitchell, *On Narrative*, p. 205.
12. According to Donald N. McCloskey, a minimal narrative has three parts: a beginning state, an action and an inverse beginning state, while it is not enough to have a beginning state and an action, cf. *If You Are So Smart: The Narrative of Economic Enterprise*.
13. Freud's analysis of dream-work was also a method of finding meaning in the dream's apparent chaos. Condensation (metaphor), displacement (metonymy) and considerations of representability (pictorial) makes it possible to put the elements of a dream in many contexts. The same holds true for the generous mechanism that Freud made available: that the apparent meaning of the elements may cover an opposite meaning. Thereafter, there is no end to understanding, cf. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, chap. 6.
14. Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems*, p. 60.
15. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 131 f.
16. Mark Turner, *The Literary Mind*, p. 4–5.
17. Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2, p. 122–23.
18. Therefore, Habermas makes narratives or 'narrative presentations' the foundation for everyday concepts of a lifeworld, *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2, p. 137. Correspondingly, Mieke Bal says that what is considered 'normal' is used as a criterion for how meaning is given to a narrative (*Narratology*, p. 12). It has similarly been claimed about organizational communication that 'narration is its natural form', if by 'natural' one means 'unreflective' and 'present', cf. Walter R. Fisher, *Human Communication as Narration*. We direct this experience in the direction of the organization, even though it can also be guided toward existential themes.
19. Luhmann call this a 'natural' epistemology, cf. Ole Thyssen, 'Luhmann and Epistemology', *Cybernetics & Human Knowing,* vol. 11, no. 1 (2008), p. 8.
20. Peter Brooks claims that the narrative is the coherence we give when a logical and discursive explanation is impossible, cf. *Reading for the Plot*, p. 9. The narrative is thus one genre among many.
21. In Niklas Luhmann's *Organisation und Entscheidung*, there are only a few references to narrative, which does not take a central place in his hierarchy of concepts. It is mentioned that a narrative can avoid accounting for its premises and that the narrative combines the unique with the general (for example, p. 213). Often, the logical and causal relationship between elements is overemphasized.
22. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1450b23-33: '[T]ragedy is an imitation of an action that is complete in itself, as a whole of some magnitude to speak of; for a whole may be of no magnitude to speak of. Now a whole is that which has a beginning, middle, and end. A beginning is that which is not itself necessarily after anything else, and which has something else after it; an end is that which is naturally after something itself, either as its necessity or usual consequent, and with nothing else after it; and a middle, that which is by nature after one thing and has also another after it. A well-constructed plot [i.e. *mythos*], therefore, cannot either begin or end at any point one likes; beginning and end in it must be of the forms just described.' (*The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, pp. 2321–22).
23. Cf. Mieke Bal, *Narratology*, p. 5. The difference between *fabula* and narrative is relative; so, too, the *fabula* can be considered as a narrative whose perspective seeks to normalize itself. It is impossible to describe the interplay between things and people in a neutral language that does not have a framework of preconditions,

does not contain interpretations, does not adopt a perspective, does not use schemes to distinguish between the important and the unimportant, and does not let different events enter into a sequence that organizes time and thus creates a form of explanation.

24. Paul Ricoeur, 'Narrative Time', W.J.T. Mitchell, *On Narrative*, p. 170.
25. Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, p. XI.
26. An example is Natalie Sarraute's *Tropisms* in which she describes the psyche's tiny, fluid movements to and from characters, things and situations that are compared to the simple reaction patterns of attraction and repulsion of one-celled organisms.
27. Roland Barthes maintains this dual presentation with the terms *proairetic* and *hermeneutic*, cf. *S/Z*, cited in Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, p. 18. The same relationship is described by Ricoeur, *op. cit.*, p. 174, in which he claims that a narrative contains a chronological dimension, a series of events, and a non-chronological dimension, which consist of the coherence of the events. The relationship is also central to Peter Brooks' analysis of the plot as a dynamic coherence in a narrative, cf. *Reading for the Plot*, passim, for example, p. 14.
28. Paul Ricoeur, *op. cit.*, p. 169.
29. Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, p. 21.
30. Paul Ricoeur, 'A story is *made out of* events to the extent that plot makes events *into* a story' (*op. cit.*, p. 167).
31. Cf. Umberto Eco, *The Open Work*, chap. 1.
32. Immanuel Kant distinguished between 'determinative judgments', which applied to science and morality, and 'reflective judgments', which applied to the beautiful, cf. *Critique of Judgment*, p. xii.
33. Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems*, p. 164 ff.
34. Niklas Luhmann, *op. cit.*, p. 154. In this picture, communication becomes a 'completely independent, autonomous, self-referentially closed mode of processing selections' (p. 149).
35. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, p. 28.
36. Jean-Paul Sartre put it this way: the reader 'lends' the characters of the tale his feelings, cf. 'Why Write', *What is Literature?*, p. 31.
37. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *L'antropologie structurale*.
38. We are not talking about a hierarchy of stupid and clever readers but about two ways of reading. The relationship between intuitive and reflective reading or, as Umberto Eco calls it, between the semantic and the semiotic reader is discussed in Barbara Czarniawska-Joerges, 'Narration or Science? Collapsing the Division in Organization Studies', *Organization*, vol. 2(1), p. 21 f.
39. Peter Brooks has analysed the peculiar ambivalence in the narrative's inevitable rush towards its own conclusion from Freud's opposition of the pleasure principle and the death instinct, cf. *Reading for the Plot*, chap. 4.
40. On frames, schemes and scripts, see Ole Thyssen, *Business Ethics and Organizational Values*.
41. Paul Ricoeur, 'Narrative Time', W.J.T. Mitchell (ed.), *On Narrative*, p. 167.
42. Barbara Czarmawska-Joerge, *op. cit.,* p. 15.
43. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, "Introduction" § VI.
44. Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*, p. 284.
45. Paul Ricoeur, *op. cit.*, p. 170.
46. Paul Ricoeur, *op. cit.,* p. 176.
47. Peter Brooks, in connection with Jonathan Culler, Professor of Literature at Cornell University, speaks of the 'double logic' of the narrative in which the elements of the

narrative are produced at critical places from a requirement by the narrative (*Reading for the Plot*, p. 28). This is just a different expression for the fact that a narrative cannot only be told by others but also a 'self-narrative' or an 'auto-narrative', which is part of structuring a process while it is going on.

48. Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, p. 17.
49. James Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, p. 93.
50. James Phelan, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
51. On this U-turn, see Niklas Luhmann, *Organisation und Entscheidung*, p. 157, 216.
52. Luhmann calls this difference a difference between 'conditional program' and 'goal program', cf. *Organisation und Entscheidung*, p. 261 ff. He once called the former 'routine program'.
53. I discuss values and their use in organization in *Business Ethics and Organizational Values*.
54. Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, Book II, chap. 6, 1106a15-25.
55. Barbara Czarniawska-Joerges distinguishes between organization research that uses narrative as form, organization research that has to do with narratives, and organization research that considers the organization's life as narratives, *op. cit.*, p. 16. It is the last point that will be pursued here.
56. This is reconcilable with the fact that there are no structural differences between fictive and factual narratives, cf. Barbara Czarniawska-Joerges, *op. cit.*, p. 12. The realism of science is distinct from the realism of fiction in that it invites readers to investigate the source of its facts, cf. Bruno Latour, 'A Relativistic Account of Einstein's Relativity', *Social Studies of Science*, 18:3–44.
57. The opposition between these to types of narrative are described by Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, p. 178 f.
58. Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, p. 17.
59. Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, chap. 4, p. 73 ff.
60. – which is one of the possible constellations of stakeholders in Freeman and Gilbert, *Corporate Strategy and the Search for Ethics*, chap. 8.
61. David Barry and Michael Elmes, 'Strategy Retold: Toward a Narrative View of Strategic Discourse', *Academy of Management Review,* vol. 22, no. 2, 1997, p. 432.
62. G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* § 190, p. 229.
63. The example is from Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet*, in which the first volume, *Justine*, is told by Darley and has to do with his passionate relationship with Justine, while the third volume, *Mountolive*, has to do with the futile planning of a Coptic rebellion against the English in which Darley is an insignificant and pathetic figure.
64. David Barry and Michael Elmes, *op. cit.*, p. 430.
65. Different types of audience do not preclude each other. Communication with the public may have employees as the true target group and, in this sense, be 'auto-communication', cf. Lars Thøger Christensen, 'Marketing as Auto-communication', *Consumption, Markets & Culture*, 1/3, 1997, pp. 197–227.
66. The model is well-known and looks like this in its fundamental elements:

Project axes

Comm. axis	Giver	Object	Receiver
Conflict axis	Helper	Subject	Opponent

67. 'Telling stories is the preferred sense-making currency of human relationships among internal and external stakeholders', as D. Boje puts it 'The Storytelling Organization', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 36 (1): 106–26.
68. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, Book II, chap. vii, p. 68.
69. David Barry and Michael Elmes, *op. cit.*, p. 434.
70. Cf. Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character*. The theme is also treated in Ole Thyssen, *Business Ethics and Organizational Values*, chap. 8.
71. William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Act 4, Scene 3.

5 Organizational Design

1. On the central placement of the concept of design, see Wolfgang Kemp, 'Beiträge zur Geschichte des Begriffs zwichen 1547 und 1607', *Marbürger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft*, p. 219.
2. Otl Aicher, *The World as Design*.
3. Walter Dorwin Teague, *Design This Day*, p. 1; see also p. 190.
4. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, s. 12, p. 22: 'We *linger* over the contemplation of the beautiful, because this contemplation strengthens and reproduces itself ....'
5. I have used this description of Ole Palsby's designs, which are classically pure in the Scandinavian Bauhaus tradition but also well-known to be soft, so they invite a caress from the eyes and the hands.
6. An example is Easton Ellis, *American Psycho*, in which characters disappear behind their designer goods, so they become interchangeable and anonymous and can disappear without anyone discovering it.
7. Translator's note: *the Danish word 'formgivning' can be translated in a variety of ways – for example, as 'design,' 'styling' or 'fashioning.' It will be translated here throughout as 'giving form' – to emphasize the notion of 'design' as providing a form or shape to something, a meaning that is also present in the Danish word 'formgivning.'*
8. We will look more closely at these concepts in the chapter on advertising.
9. Gregory Bateson, *Mind and Nature* (New York: Bantam Books 1979), p. 110. In communication's triad of information, utterance, and understanding, therefore, you can indulge in the artifice of letting aesthetic communication start with (in)formation.
10. That a human being is shaped by shaping things, so 'cultivation' [*Bildung*] is both external and internal and so wealth is both economic and humane, was first formulated by John Locke. The powerful emotional meaning of property rights is due to their meaning as a bearer of personal and social identity.
11. Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present*, p. 22.
13. Cf. Jean Baudrillard, 'The System of Objects', John Thackara (ed.), *Design after Modernism*, p. 179.
14. Cf. Nigel Coates: 'Sometimes, the rift between what is built and what is right for the time is so broad that the effort must be concentrated into the gallery and the magazine' ('Street Signs', John Thackara (ed.), *Design after Modernism*, p. 100). But the Ulm School, for example, considered the fact that design is oriented toward the art world as degenerate, cf. Otl Aicher, *the world as design* (p. 90), in which Bauhaus is criticized for having more to do with museum objects than consumer items. Thus, the problem is hinted at here that designers and users can assess success and failure very differently. While designers orient themselves in accordance with static photographs or prototypes, users orient themselves in

accordance with how things function, which implies shifting circumstances and several senses. The difference between these two types of criteria may be pathetic. See Tom Mitchell, 'The Product as Illusion', John Thackara (ed.), *Design after Modernism*, p. 210.

15. To prevent misunderstandings: a medium is not the same as a foundation. Colours, not the canvas, are a medium for the painter, while the ceramicist first makes clay and then, perhaps, the clay's colour a medium. If you work with signs, a difference is placed in one and the same movement in the sign as physical medium and as 'meaning medium'.
16. The Italian designer Mario Botta, therefore, remarks that '[c]reativity is thwarted if it is not nourished by history and by the creator's own biography. … Memory supports the idea of design'. (Louisiana Revy, *Design and Identity*, vol. 36, no. 2, February 1996, p. 24.)
17. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 'Introduction', iv.
18. Walter Dorwin Teague, *Design This Day*, p. 213.
19. See Otl Aicher, *op cit.,* p. 150.
20. For Baudrillard, the marginal differences in form that make designed objects different are not just unimportant but challenge the very essence of 'technological being'. They do not just add surplus value but a 'parasitic value', cf. 'The Systems of Objects', John Thackara (ed.), *Design after Modernism*, p. 174.
21. Baudrillard claims that, in an industrialized society, you cannot imagine a designed object 'which does not lose some of its best technological qualities in the process', *ibid.*, p. 174. This is a postulate that can be easily refuted.
22. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony*, p. 211.
23. Otl Aicher from the Ulm School, who considered good design as style-less and wanted to preclude both form and aesthetics, also rejected the use of simple geometric forms, cf. *the world as design*, p. 54, 128. While the Bauhaus School had workshops for artists, Aicher wanted to expel art from design – a position, however, he could not maintain consistently. Correspondingly, Dieter Rams, who stood behind the design programme of the Braun Group, claimed that 'good design is as little design as possible', so the ambition becomes *simplification*.
24. Peter Zec, *Designing Success*, p. 29.
25. Otl Aicher, *the world as design*, p. 44, 150.
26. The phenomenon of 'transparency' is dealt with in more detail in the chapter on architecture.
27. Peter Zec, *Designing Success*, p. 40.
28. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*.
29. An example is Hans Christian Andersen's 'The Travelling Companion'.
30. Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, p. 128.
31. – despite claims of the opposite. It is claimed that 'ideally, companies will succeed in meeting ethical and social aims as well as achieving the business aim of making a profit by orienting their products on the demands of good form' (Peter Zec, *op. cit.,* p. 22). The connection is supposed to consist in the fact that good product forms are always accompanied by the development of better life forms. You can just place the claim in the context of war or prison camp to discover its hollowness.
32. *Op. cit.*, p. 22.
33. Otl Aicher, *the world as design*, p. 68.
34. Walter Gropius, 'Idee und Aufbau', p. 28.
35. Otl Aicher, *the world as design*, p. 68.

36. Capella, Juli and Quinn Larrea, 'Catalan Design: Seny and Rauxa', *Louisiana Revy*, vol. 36, no. 2, February 1996, p. 28.
37. Otl Aicher heaps a bucket of criticism on designers who worship form and style instead of naked, 'honest' design, *op. cit.*, p. 26. Only someone who has nothing on his mind is worried about style.
38. Cf. Niklas Luhmann, *Organisation und Entscheidung*, chap. 6.
39. 'The cloud' is B&O's name for the development phase of design in which a few people get together and work out a solution that is not yet obligatory.
40. Cf. John Thackara, *Design after Modernism*, p. 16.
41. Richard Bolton, 'Architecture and Cognac', John Thackara (ed.), *Design after Modernism*, p. 92.
42. Often, these stories are extremely simplified in their claim of a simple relationship between cause (design) and effect (success), cf., for example, Bernd Schmitt and Alex Simonson, *Marketing Aesthetics*, p. 201. The causal simplification has the nature of a precept, so books of this type are PR for the diffuse branches of design, advertising and communication, which offer everyone success on a market where not everyone can have success.
43. G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* § 190, p. 229.
44. Richard Bolton, 'Architecture and Cognac', John Thackara (ed.), *Design after Modernism*, p. 90.
45. This is the claim of Wolfgang Fritz Haug, *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics*, p. 52. What Haug ridicules in his critique modern marketing has taken over as a neutral technique.
46. Jean Baudrillard, 'The Systems of Objects', p. 176.
47. According to Wolfgang Fritz Haug, the modelling of sensuality has assumed 'anthropological power', so people's way of sensing is permanently changed, *The Critique of Commodity Aesthetics*, (New York: Polity Press 1971), p. 44.
48. Jean Baudrillard, *op. cit.,* p. 177.
49. Wolfgang Fritz Haug, *op. cit.,* p. 35.
50. Cf. Tom Mitchell, 'The Product as Illusion', John Thackara (ed.), *Design after Modernism*, p. 214.
51. John Thackara, 'Beyond the Object in Design', *Design after Modernism*, p. 19.
52. Frederic Jameson, as one among many, speaks of 'an ever more rapid rhythm of fashion and styling changes', 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society', Hal Forster (ed.), *Anti-Aesthetics*.
53. On symbols, see Ole Thyssen, 'The World of the Symbol' in Peter Nørgaard Larsen (ed.), *Symbolism,* pp. 148–58.
54. Heinz von Foerster, 'Ethics and Second-order Cybernetics', *Cybernetics & Human Knowing*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1992, p. 14.
55. John Thackara, 'Beyond the Object in Design' in *Design after Modernism*, p. 11 ff.
56. Jean Baudrillard, 'The Ecstasy of Communication'. Hal Forster (ed.), *Anti-Aesthetics*, p. 128.

6 Organizational Advertising

1. The achievement of advertising grows the more the products resemble each other, noted W.F. Haug, *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics,* pp. 30–32. In 1995, 2 billion Deutsche Marks were used on car ads alone in Germany, which corresponds to €300 per car sold, cf. Niklas Luhmann, *The Reality of the Mass Media*, p. 49.

2. Such problems were dealt with in Renaissance art books that were not addressed to the general public but to other artists, cf., for example, Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting* (1435). Here, artists are advised to invite the public into their studio and listen to their remarks about their works from behind a curtain, so a dependent artist could in this way acquire useful angles on what suited the customer's taste, Alberti, *On Painting,* p. 97.
3. That advertising nurtures an idea of aesthetics, which is obsolete in the art system, is because advertising is not just supposed to be aesthetically satisfying but to motivate a purchase. We are still in the area of applied arts. Even though an ad may violate taboos and shock, it must by definition be accommodating and motivate positively. Regardless of the fact that different groups must be motivated differently, so that an ad that offends one group may appeal to another, the aim of the ad is affirmative.
4. Jonathan Richardson, *Two Discourses*, p. 37.
5. G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, § 190.
6. Therefore, it is regularly remarked that advertising appeals to emotions, i.e., that they circumvent 'the cognitive sphere where criticism is more likely to arise' (Niklas Luhmann, *The Reality of Mass Media*, p. 44).
7. The basic text is Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinctions: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*.
8. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* § 9. Kant has the judgement of taste precede the feeling in order to be sure that it is not simply a private but an aesthetic feeling that has 'universal communicability' and is elevated above the sphere of desire.
9. This mechanism is described in Ole Thyssen, *Business Ethics and Organizational Values*, chap. 3, 'Growth as Inflation of Demands'.
10. Cf. Jean-Marie Dru, *Disruption*, for a panegyric.
11. Therefore, Niklas Luhmann divides the mass media into three parts: news, advertising and entertainment, cf. *The Reality of the Mass Media*, especially chapter 7, which deals with advertising.
12. W.F. Haug, *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics*, p. 52.
13. Karl Marx, *Capital*, MEW, vol. 23, p. 87.
14. Norman O. Brown, *Life against Death*, p. 220.
15. Augustine's and Luther's doctrine of predestination is religiously risky, because personal effort becomes meaningless. If everything is predestined, I can do as I like – which is also predestined.
16. Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, sec. VI.
17. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, p. 67.
18. Cf. Julien Sorel's disappointment after his first night with Madame de Rênal: 'My God, being happy – being loved, is that all it comes to?' Stendhal indicates the mechanism at play, when he writes the page before that, to speak 'adopting the conventional language of the novel'. Julien had nothing left to wish for. Before advertising took the world, novels could have an analogous function by conjuring up an imaginary world to which readers could model themselves. *The Red and the Black*, pp. 91, 92.
19. Roland Barthes, 'Rhetoric of the Image', *Image-Music-Text*, pp. 32 ff.
20. Roland Barthes, *op. cit.,* p. 39.
21. A more intricate relationship between text and picture is also possible, such as that found in comic strips. Barthes speaks here of *relays* (*op. cit.*, p. 38).
22. Roland Barthes, *ibid.*, p. 42.
23. Cf. the chapter on rhetoric.

24. Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems*, p. 163.
25. Cf. the title of Jean-Marie Dru's book, *Disruption: Overturning Conventions and Shaking Up the Marketplace*. The advertisement's unexpected combination implies a 'breach with linguistic conventions', which in one look creates a context that, in normal language, would discursively require a comprehensive effort to create.
26. As always when you work with advertising, you must add: the opposite is also possible. The conventions with which advertisements break are also their own, so there are texts that bring unreadable masses of text and other ads that break with advertising's tendency to luxury and show everyday types or even geeks.
27. Cf. Jean-Marie Dru, *Disruption*, p. 27.
28. Niklas Luhmann, *The Reality of the Mass Media*, p. 45.
29. Jean-Marie Dru, *Disruption*, p. 171 ff.
30. We ignore here the professional conventions of the advertising world about creativity, apparel, informal power relationships, and normal prices.
31. – which, again, has subgenres. We have previously distinguished between the everyday or simply informative ad, which presumes motivation, and the more dramatic lifestyle ad, which tries to create motivation. Another distinction has to do with advertisements 'below the line,' which work with ads in shops, and advertisements 'beyond the line,' which work with ads in the mass media.
32. This duality can be seen in Jean-Marie Dru, *Disruption*, which claims that the ad must break with all conventions and yet works undisputedly within the advertising world's conventions of success and failure, which function as his blind spot. I use Dru's book as an example of the advertising industry's self-description.
33. Jean-Marie Dru, *Disruption*, p. 209.
34. Jean-Marie Dru, *Disruption*, p. 26.
35. A whole book was written on this campaign, Richard W. Lewis, *Absolut Book*.
36. Cf. Mette Morsing, 'The Media's Role in Transforming Identity by Transforming Image: The Media Boomerang', *Corporate Reputation Review*, 2/2, 1999.
37. An example of such a campaign is described in Jean-Marie Dru, *Disruption*, p. 174: in an ad campaign, a gasoline company described how service-oriented its employees were, which forced the employees to live up to the new expectations created.
38. An example is Jean-Marie Dru's *Disruption*, which presents a method for those who do not believe in methods and often postulate a substantial causality between advertising and sales – for example, p. 64.
39. An example is Andy Law, *Creative Company*, which claims that it is not a business book but a narrative that cultivates the real, the genuine, and the authentic. In the same way, Jean-Marie Dru recommends that the advertising industry get rid of its reputation for manipulative discourse (*Disruption*, p. 129).
40. Jean-Marie Dru, *Disruption*, pp. 211–12.
41. Cf. Andy Law, *Creative Company*, p. 9.
42. This game is the supporting pillar for Jean-Marie Dru, *Disruption*.
43. Jean-Marie Dru, *Disruption*, p. 31.
44. Jean-Marie Dru, *Disruption*, p. 19.
45. Jean-Marie Dru, *Disruption*, p. 214. Dru also believes that ads are an expression of the culture's 'collective unconscious' (p. 1).
46. Jean-Marie Dru, *Disruption*, p. 173.
47. Bernd Schmitt and Alex Simonson, *Marketing Aesthetics*, p. 278.

48. In Bernd Schmitt and Alex Simonson, *Marketing Aesthetics*, the ad's causal effect is emphasized, so there is a straight line from the colour of a logo to the reaction in the receiver.
49. Bernd Schmitt and Alex Simonson, *Marketing Aesthetics*, p. 170 f.
50. Jean-Marie Dru speaks of how advertising's breaches are supposed to create renewed vitality and dynamism and bolsters the interest of consumers, so they become 'enthusiastic' and 'even more loyal' (*Disruption*, p. 74).
51. Cf. Ole Thyssen, *Business Ethics and Organizational Values*, chap. 3.
52. Jean-Marie Dru, *Disruption*, p. 121.
53. Jean-Marie Dru, *Disruption*, p. 124.
54. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Tastes of Paradise*, p. 6.
55. Cf. Thorsten Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*.
56. Hans Magnus Enzensberger, 'Reminiszenzen an den Überfluss. Der alte und der neue Luksus', *Der Spiegel*, no. 51, 16 December 1996, p. 112.
57. Marquis de Sade, *Juliette*, p. 6. However, the opposite principle is also asserted – that pleasures should not be planned in advance: 'Arising spontaneously from the context, they will be a thousand times more voluptuous', says Juliette, p. 647.
58. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *op. cit.*, p. 179.
59. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *ibid.,* p. 171.
60. Karl Marx, *Marx-Engels Werke*, Ergänzungsband I, p. 546 f.
61. Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
62. Wolfgang Schivelbusch claims that stimulants such as coffee and tea go through two phases, a public and heroic phase and a private, 'with a tendency toward the idyllic' phase in which the means of enjoyment is brought home to a sphere of intimacy, op. cit., p. 63. Correspondingly, stimulants can 'sink' from high to low status, as happened to cacao, which was first the preferred drink of the upper class and then went to the powerless, women and children.
63. John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, chap. 5.
64. Thorstein Veblen, *op. cit.*
65. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–12.
66. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *ibid.*, pp. 111, 159.

7 Organizational Architecture

1. A discussion of the concept of function in architecture may be found in Dirk Baecker, 'Die Dekonstruktion der Schachtel. Innen und Außen in der Architekture', Niklas Luhmann (ed.), *Unbeobachtbare Welt*, p. 74.
2. Pasquale Gagliardi, 'Artifacts as Pathways and Remains of Organizational Life', *Symbols and Artifacts*, p. 18.
3. Dirk Baecker, *op. cit.*, p. 71. Frank Lloyd Wright is cited here for the notion that space is the true reality of the house.
4. You can find books about architecture that has never been built – for example, Van Christ, *Paris des Utopies*, which present a historical series of magnificent plans for an imaginary Paris.
5. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* § 25, p. 50.
6. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 167.
7. A distinction can be made between a *code*, which is indicated by a binary difference, and a *typology*, which is broader and can include a historical sequence of, for example, styles without a simple or logical connection. Regardless of this difference, we will speak in what follows of codes for differentiating between different types of houses.

8. Cf., for example, Pasquale Gagliardi, 'Artifacts as Pathways and Remains' (p. 31), in which the claim is that the attempt to understand blocks the ability to be 'penetrated' by an aesthetic experience.
9. Per Olof Berg and Kristian Kreiner, 'Corporate Architecture: Turning Physical Settings into Symbolic Resources', Pasquale Gagliardi (ed.), *Symbols and Artifacts*, p. 62.
10. Neil Leach, *The Anaesthetics of Architecture*, p. 44. Cf. also Antonio Strati, *Organization and Aesthetics*, p. 4 f.
11. In the construction of the Jewish Museum in Berlin from 1992–2000, it was Daniel Libeskind's intent to create a building that was just as complicated as Berlin's history, and he placed within the building references to Schönberg's music, Walter Benjamin's philosophy and Jewish symbols. However, despite the use of these texts and references, it was his wish for the museum to be able to be appreciated without this background knowledge.
12. P. O. Berg and Kristian Kreiner: 'Potentially, employees and the general public may become indoctrinated to read the building in the intended way', 'Corporate Architecture', p. 64.
13. Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 110.
14. Umberto Eco, "Function and Sign: The Semiotics of Architecture," *Rethinking Architecture*, p. 183.
15. Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 82.
16. Umberto Eco, *op. cit.,* p. 183.
17. Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 123.
18. Martin Heidegger, 'Building Dwelling Thinking', *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 160.
19. *Ibid*.
20. Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 122.
21. Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*, p. 26.
22. Dirk Baecker puts it another way, displaced from house to architecture, when he claims that 'architecture does not only become situated but also constituted and constructed through communication', 'Die Dekonstruktion der Schachtel', p. 71.
23. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 474: 'War is therefore the great comprehensive task, the great communal labour'.
24. Umberto Eco, *op. cit.,* p. 184.
25. This expands the idea of what communication is, so Niklas Luhmann's thesis that a social system consists exclusively of communication loses some of its counter-intuitive nature.
26. Immaneul Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 18.
27. Per Olof Berg and Kristian Kreiner, 'Corporate Architecture', p. 54.
28. Dirk Baecker, 'Die Dekonstruktion der Schachtel', p. 71. On the concept of 'theme', see Niklas Luhmann, *The Reality of the Mass Media*, chap. 2.
29. This remark can be made more nuanced with respect to different sorts of expectation. You can expect that nothing will happen and, then, be surprised. You can expect what is normal and encounter the unusual. In special circumstances, you can expect to be surprise and still be surprised. This is not only applicable to horror films but also to professional interaction with one's own creativity. Here, the expectation is simply imprecise in relation to which surprise will appear.
30. Martin Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 43.
31. Umberto Eco, *op. cit.,* p. 185.
32. Cf. Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*, p. 11.
33. An open work – also a house – has according to Eco (in *The Open Work*) a combinatory structure and indeterminate effects (p. 12). Even though it means that the

house must be reinvented every day, there is no reason to exaggerate openness. Only because of the house's constancy can some of its elements be moved around, and the endless change will quickly congeal into a limited number.

34. In *The Conscience of the Eye*, Richard Sennett claims that an architect must create 'weak borders rather than strong walls' and build simple rooms that allow redefinition. This requires that obstacles be built-in, so there is a battle over what gives the space its character. Both Eco and Sennett do not want the boundaries of the house to be well-defined, so surprise is possible (p. 196). Therefore, Baroque becomes their preferred example.
35. Umberto Eco, 'Function and Sign', p. 196.
36. Umberto Eco, *ibid.*, p. 188
37. Martin Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 43.
38. Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*, p. xii.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
40. Quoted in Sennett, *ibid.*, p. 57.
41. Cf. the description of a workplace with long corridors, closed doors and 'a work-ethic atmosphere' in Janne Larsen and Majken Schultz, 'Artifacts in a Bureaucratic Monastery', Pasquale Gagliardi (ed.), *Symbols and Artifacts*, p. 283.
42. Cf. the discussion of Bauhaus in the chapter on Organizational Design, p. 197.
43. Janne Larsen and Majken Schultz, 'Artifacts in a Bureaucratic Monastery', p. 282.
44. Umberto Eco, 'Function and Sign'.
45. Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization: The Human Consequences*, pp. 47, 76 f.
46. Ole Thyssen, *Business Ethics and Organizational Values*, chap. 2.
47. Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension*. These distances in connection with Edward T. Hall's studies on 'proxemics' are discussed by Umberto Eco in 'Function and Sign'.
48. For example, by Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*, p. 60.
49. We dealt with this dual difference in the chapter on Organizational Design.
50. We saw in the chapter on design that there can be uncertainty about what is form and what is function. The Gothic arch, according to Otl Aicher, was not created as a form but as a happy epiphenomenon to the solution to a technical problem. Cf. Otl Aicher, *the world as design*, p. 101.
51. Kant's concept of disinterestedness is peculiar, since it is limited to *external* interest and ignores the interest that is contained in aesthetics itself, cf. *Critique of Judgment*, s. 2.
52. Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*, p. 60.
53. John Kenneth Galbraith touches on the status system of economists in 'The Language of Economics', *Economics, Peace and Laughter*, p. 37 ff.
54. Le Corbusier, *Toward an Architecture*, p. 214: 'The plan proceeds from the inside out; the exterior is the result of the interior'.
55. *Toward an Architecture*, p. 135. But Le Corbusier also says that the task of architecture is to move beyond the question of construction and that architecture is, therefore, an art (p. 9), whose task is to find the natural form.
56. Cf. Werner Blaser, *Mies van der Rohe*, p. 141: 'Nothing is superfluous … Mies's sense of proportion reveals itself in his amazing capacity to create things that produce and incomparable esthetic effect with clarity, simplicity and the most noble of materials'.
57. Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 62.
58. Per Olof Berg and Kristian Kreiner, 'Corporate Architecture', p. 43.

59. I ignore here the environment around the house, because this will lead too far into urban planning and development theories. Nor will the open spaces between buildings be included.
60. Dirk Baecker, 'Die Dekonstruktion der Schachtel', 1990, p. 70.
61. Werner Blaser, *Mies van der Rohe*, p. 7.
62. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part I, chap. 10, p. 66.
63. Cf. Michael Rosen, Wanda J. Orlikowski and Kim S. Schmahmann, 'Building Buildings and Living Lives', Pasquale Gagliardi (ed.), *Symbols and Artifacts*, p. 77 ff.
64. Janne Larsen and Majken Schultz, 'Artifacts in a Bureaucratic Monastery' p. 285.
65. Henri Matisse, 'The Chapel of the Rosary', *Matisse on Art* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1995), p. 196.
66. Frederic Jameson, 'The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism', *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,* p.38 ff.
67. Henri Matisse, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
68. Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems*, p. 163.
69. Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*, p. 87.
70. Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*, pp. 98–9. For Sennett, the attempt to make a building into a 'perfect object' is the same as making it antisocial.
71. In this spirit, Sennett asks the rhetorical question: what 'invention' can link strangers together, so social differences become as 'abundant and instructive' as nature's differences, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
72. Therefore, a distinction can be made in architecture between two forms of postmodernism: the eclectic, which we find in Charles Jencks, and the philosophical, which inspired by Lyotard and Baudrillard operates with small narratives, the sublime, simulacra and the like. While Jencks' postmodernism is inclusive, pragmatic and evolutionary, Lyotard's and Baudrillard's is hyper-real: it works with signs that refer to other signs, so reality is presumed to be dissolved. Typically, postmodernism in Charles Jencks results in a new classicism, cf. his *Post-Modernism*, p. 7: 'I favour a pluralism of approach, although it will become obvious where my own values and prejudices lie – with the emerging Post-Modern Classicism'. The 'classic' must, however, be understood broadly, so it also includes Baroque.
73. Le Corbusier, *Toward an Architecture*, p. 102.
74. Le Corbusier, *Toward an Architecture*, p. 102.
75. Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, p. 102.
76. Robert Venturi, Denis Scott Brown, and Steve Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas*.
77. One can here translate Kevin Lynch's idea of the easily legible city into the easily legible house. Lynch is aiming at 'the ease with which its parts can be recognized and ordered into a coherent pattern' (*The Image of the City*, pp. 2-3). Legibility depends on being 'pictorial'.
78. Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*, p. 19.
79. The building was designed by Jan Søndergaard and KHR Arkitekter.

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