# The Greek Square, or, The Normative Challenge of Aesthetics

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abstract    The article claims that organising and art has a common core: The normativity of practise. This normativity is presented through 'the Greek square', the 'geometrical axiology' of the good, the just, the true and the beautiful under the hegemony of the good. Although both organising and art are performing through an immanence that seems to give the dimension of aesthetic experience a certain autonomy, this very immanence can only exist as an immanent transcendence by revealing its transcendental immanence: The imminent urge for freedom inherent in every organisational process where the tension between management and leadership is kept alive. The alternatives are corporate totalitarianism, democratic despotism or a bureaucratic apparatus as *perpetuum mobile*. The article explores Kant's concept of the capacity of judgement as a way to move into the 'problem-domain' in which the normative transformation of thought into practise is at play, challenging both philosophy and organisational theory as the ghosts of post-rationalisation. Aristotle's concept of *deinótes*, the practical force of the good, seems of use here, in order to pose the question systematically: How can art contribute to the reflective approach towards a normative concept of organising, when organising is increasingly seen as an almost anonymous process cancelling any concept of *the* subject as the carrier of responsibility? The answer is given through an outline of a theory of creative virtues common to both organising and art. These virtues arise from 'the Greek Square', and they work through critical attitudes, readiness, and the quest for freedom.

## On Organising, Managing and Leading in the Light of Some Images of Organisation

Since the Second World War the images of organisation have changed considerably. The strategic model as an image enriched by the new science of cybernetics, in combination with the 'model-world', or operational, ideals of planning, dominated for almost thirty years, until business economists began to realise that even if there was a war between corporate unities, the consumers could not be viewed as inhabitants in territories which had to be concurred. They had to realise that employees could not be viewed as soldiers of an army, willingly agreeing to supply rule-based acting with the selfless commitment of an uncompromising loyalty – to a cause often approaching the tragic-comical. Consumers had to be seduced, not conquered. The knowledge and capabilities of employees had to be respected, and the initiatives and tacit knowledge of these potentially very able employees had to be nurtured, put into fruitful frames, and

not restricted by rigid job-descriptions and rapidly outdated manuals. Hence the theatre came into play as a promising metaphor, yielding much more space to the investment of personal capacities, and even to improvisation, i.e. innovation, that at the same time gave back to the art of rhetoric its former dignity. Through this organisational image employees could be addressed more realistically as a combination of actors and audience, and the emphasis could be laid on symbolic action, on the creation of meaning, as a means to the strengthening of corporate power. However, both loyal actors and loyal audiences are much harder to find in a setting where the dichotomy between 'us' and 'them' is removed from the deadly serious sanctions of war-games to the excellence of performance and play.
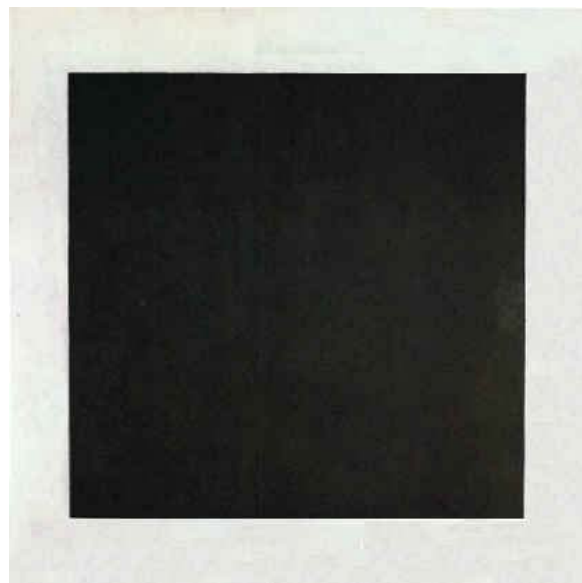


Kazimir Malevich, *Black Square*, 1915

Hence, sporting came into the picture, because the life of sport opens to both legitimate aggressiveness, to severe sanctions on the disloyal individual, and to the possibilities of strong leadership. Coaching, the new answer to the old claims of Taylorism, as the basis of a hyper-individual, dialogically focussed, 'dedicated', control through self-control, seemed at first to open an easy path from management to leadership – recently, in the capacity of the new 'wonder-technology' of HRM, coaching appears far more problematic. Soeren Kierkegaard's claim: 'Get into possession of your own character!', or Marcus Aurelius' 'Be the one you are!', could create the operational contexts of the new HRM-strategies. However, the sporting world did not deliver sufficient impetus to unite *pathos*, *logos* and *ethos*. Either new and intellectually more refined images were needed, or, if old ones were the only option, they had to be more sophisticated.

Then, the image of the church and of the family were introduced, both utterly traditional images that in their very essence were moulded on the total absorption of individuality. However, intelligent employees would often find this new wine in old bottles a bit too bitter.

So, just now, another metaphor has been dominating for the last decade, and is still increasing: The image of the 'state-society'. The organisation is a state with its own law, with its own *ethos*, and with both a *pathos*, and a *logos*, directed towards social responsibility in the capacity of the strategic platform for branding the corporate reputation. This is creating a corporate image that shall bind *all* stakeholders, and especially the most wanted ones: The intelligent employees, through the spirit of a competitive force softened and legitimised by its ability to appear through the discourses of 'values'.

It is easy to see that *management* belongs to the ontological regions of strategy, whether they form the whole horizon of an organisation, or only fill in some pockets in its body. It is also obvious that *leadership per se* can be grasped both as the attempt to transform management into self-reflective, communicative action, and as an activity legitimised by its very ability to found its own discourse on *normativity* of some sort. If one does not delimit leadership to mean the set of activities related to the handling of problems peculiar to the 'personal sphere' of the employees only, it could be grasped as the meta-conceptual context of management. This means that the still necessary functions of management could be handled as possible tasks of genuine leadership, and that the difference between leadership and management could be a normative one. I shall argue from this platform.

From this perspective the 'state-society' image of the organisation and leadership belong to each other. The manager could be a leader, because he has the option to choose between two roles, pointed ironically out by Immanuel Kant in his pamphlet 'Towards eternal peace' ('*Zum ewigen Frieden*') from 1795: Between the 'political moralist' and the 'moral politician'.

Now, however, we are increasingly witnessing the fact that even to be a moral politician does not suffice to be a genuine leader. A leader can only obtain leadership if he is able to *organise*. What does that mean? It means that leading must be a process of letting organising happen, so to speak, a process through which social relations of the firm are created in a flow (*fluxus*). In this context, 'a flow' can mean the following:

1. A spiral of transformations in the social relations of the organisation, moving through the election and destruction of structures, in which the knowledge of a certain normative goal is deepened, or even changed, through the processes in which it is realised.

2. The presence of a dynamical quasi-subject of transformation the character of which is relational, trans-personal, or even anonymous, and the identity of which cannot be interpreted, and hence, controlled, by any external authority. The individual actor is always an object here.

In the first case leadership appears as organising in the capacity of combining the original, double meaning of the word 'to lead' (*leitha*): To define the route taken by heading it, *and* to seek for the final goal. In this process organising can always be traced back to responsible individuals, in spite of the momentum.

In the second case the normativity of organising can never appear as such, it cannot smell of planning or of 'structuring', i.e., it must not show any trace of authority, not to

speak of power or control. It must present both structure and its permanent destruction in the image of an eternal, pseudo-Nietzschean postponing of normativity. It is forced to create social relations in the capacity of possible worlds of performance, and success must be the result of – what I once called – 'self-cesseity',[1] of processes in which a dynamic immanence is constantly emerging from your very own doing in the shape of true images of the obvious. Creating must in the capacity of *organising* unite *pathos*, *logos* and *ethos*, i.e., produce commitment, trans-structural flows and personalities, without leaving any transcendental position from which this enterprise could be seen or (re-)called. The mechanisms of these processes are often routines, rhythms of quasi-controlled 'intercourse' that convey an invisible re-establishing of power through seemingly sovereign manifestations of tacit knowledge.

This is the Janus-face of organising: The clash between the elegance, if not grace, of the perpetual movement of the corporate worlds, in which plenty of room seems to be left to self-realisation, criticism and freedom, *and* the inner solidity of a normativity the true identity of which cannot be confronted. Thus, the dynamic anonymity of organising becomes the new physiognomy, the new sun-tanned skin of power. But underneath the skin of the promises of an organising that is able to postpone power, i.e., that is direct or authentic enough to invoke the utopia where this postponement has become superfluous, behind the immanent transcendence of empowerment, the real flesh of power hides itself: The strategic-totalitarian dystopia of a hyper-functional de-valuation of all values, the pink nightmare of self-creating, organisational evolution, the micro-fascism of the piece-meal. Many social theorists, and even philosophers, of obvious good will appear to miss the real sense of this predicament.

Again, it seems obvious, that the masters of 'self-cesseity', the artists, shall be the new counsellors, if not even the 'dauphins', of the would-be philosopher-kings of this pink, corporate *polis*, if we do not dare to confront art with its inherent tension between immanent transcendence and transcendent immanence, too. In the following I shall trace some ways in which art can be seen in the light of leadership in order to transform its very contribution to the processes of organising, 'the performance', into a social-critical guardian of a transcendent immanence.

Art must be able to devote itself with an uncompromising criticism to the organisational image of the 'state-society', to commit itself to freedom of the individual without being programmatic. Thus art could contribute to the creation of old roles in new bottles: To design the face of the *trophé*, the real leader of the organisation, the identity that releases a de-centred caring, and sets mutual empathy free – to use the concepts of Plato from the 'Statesman'. An effort of organising that produces the creation of the social experience as transcendent immanence, as an urge towards normativity.

But like the artist, who can only fulfil his task through the creation of the phantasms of an immanent transcendence – or through the creation of phantasms of this phantasm – the leader can only be a real leader, if he is able to act through processes of organising that emerge in the quasi-autonomous momentum of the social relations. This means that the frame of norms, ideals, or values, in which he persists to act, has to be in a state of

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1    In my doctorial thesis from 1994: *Event and Body-Mind. A Phenomenological-Hermeneutic Analysis*.

'possible transformability' into action, i.e., they have to be in a state of always being an 'auto-actualisation'.

Aristotle posed the problem in his *Nicomachean Ethics* when he said, that *phronesis*, (*prudentia*), 'worldly wisdom', does not suffice to produce the act itself.[2] Something more is needed. He presented the force needed as a capacity in which the borderline – so terrible to philosophy to be its very cross – between theory and practise was already crossed. This capacity of having already crossed the borderline of thought and action he called *deinótes*. In Greek it means terribleness, harshness, sternness, but also natural ability, cleverness. Hence, we can conceive of this complicated concept as either a referential term, denoting that an (after all, hypothetical) force has made something happen which is identical to the realisation of theory or thought in some media – or at least is able to be interpreted in this way. Or, that a process is going on just now, even by doing away with this very 'now', a process that has already absorbed the subjects of action, and hence abolished the very dichotomy of subject and object into its autonomous 'becoming'.

The difference of management and leadership as intentional attitudes on the one side, *and* organising on the other, is *deinótes*. But in organisations *deinótes* must totally fuse into the invisible. It has to abolish itself as (strategic) effort, and disguise as 'self-cesseity'; i.e., it has to hide in the phenomenal world of direct experience, and in its interpretational contexts, as well. It has to be in the ontological realm of *aisthesis*, of the sense of the senses, it must appear as the immediately experienced result of our own actions. It must confront us as a personal art, as the results of our own *techné*, of our own capacities: Organising as the presence of leadership has to appear as individual competency, as that which I or *we are* doing.

That is where art comes in. When it succeeds, it is the mere presence of normativity beyond any representation, or demonstration. Art *is* the transformation of transcendental immanence into immanent transcendence. This transformation, the *deinótes*, is the common core of the practises of performing art, and of organising leadership.


## Further Deliberations in Relation to Organising and Normativity

I have now presented five senses of the term 'organising' in the light of normativity:

1. Organising refers to *the results* of managing, because most managerial activities produce organisational changes. To create new positions; to move a person from one position to another; to follow the steps of a marketing plan; etc. The results emerge as 'structure'.

2. Organising refers to *the results* of leadership, because most activities in relation to leading imply organisational changes: To incorporate or exemplify a virtue; to act in an explicitly normative way. The results emerge as structure, or simulate it.

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2    Aristotle defines '*deinótes*' in Book VI, xii, 8-9.

3. Organising refers to a *genuine process*, to a state of being 'always-already' between theory and practise, thinking and acting. As such, it is a concept of superior range, because it covers both.

4. 'Walking the talk', a state of permanent creativity, that works through 'self-cesseity', and that characterises both successful leadership and management.

5. Organising can also mean a performance that is successful, but suppressive, i.e., ethically bad, and a performance that is liberating, and opening towards new horizons of individual and collective autonomy, i.e., ethically good.

When organising refers to a performance that creates organisational changes without the employees noticing it, then it is close to seduction, and ethically wrong. Often art is used to legitimate this practise, but art does prototypically refer to an epistemological ideal of being absorbed in what one does. Actually, the ethical genuine act is, in both the traditions of the Gnostics and of St. Paul, characterised as an act that has no second-order context what concerns the actor herself, i.e., an act that lies beyond the application of any law (the *nomos*), or which even is a genuine gesture of the first 'institution' of the norm. Hence, organising can only imitate the 'self-cesseity' of art, if it renders it possible to the employees to experience the normativity as an inherent basis, or 'not compelling force', of their own behaviour.

Josef Albers, *Homage to the Square Into the Open*, 1952

But what is actually meant by the concept of *normativity*? It is complicated, indeed, because it often is used to refer exclusively to ethically genuine acting, and without any distinct marking of the epistemological or ontological context. But it would be too exclusive not to count criteria like 'economic efficiency' and 'technical efficiency' under the possible perspective of normativity – they certainly do not belong to the realm of the ethically neutral. But here I shall exclusively use the term 'normativity' to refer to criteria and hence to norms that are ethically good (a concept which, due to its nature, I won't define but only approach indirectly in the following). My point is, then, that the

results of both management and leadership could be evaluated ethically, and so can organising, because any criterion can. But there is still a *quiditas* that severs organising from management and leadership in the very gesture through which it completes them, it is *creativity*, the real sense of *deinótes*, and, hence, of organising. I shall return to that in the next sections.

There are three ways in which organising can be grasped analytically in relation to criteria per se: As the creation of a social, a technical and an economic rationale of the actions inside the firm. The ideal organising creates a unique action that cannot be deciphered immediately by the mind. It pretends that the perfect union, or synthesis, of all the elements of production can be reached – and this counts for both the ethical sound organising, and for the strategic one, desirous of power. But it has to have a reserve.

Art, as the realisation in material media or in bodily gestures by hand of an ideal of a 'supra-critical' intentionality, will combine other types of knowledge interests in creating a surface of phenomena that cannot be penetrated by experience. The immediate connection between art and organising is this impenetrability. But aesthetics can neither hold down the reflective power of employees, nor of the educated public, for very long. So the aesthetic experience has to present itself as such. That is, it has to present itself as a second- or even third-order experience. Thus, both art and organising have to let thinking into their workshops and laboratories. They must join philosophy: They have to have a cause.

'A cause' means both the phenomenon's reason for being at all, the union of necessary and sufficient causes, and a set of concepts to identify its ontological region. The cause of organisation must lay in a set of norms, and it has to be able to refer back to an 'organism', as well as to an *organon*, i.e., to both something natural and to something produced which, anyhow, can be the subject of analytical efforts. When organising is presented to its cause by a criticism with enough stamina, it shall present itself as either leadership or management. As management, if the cause is technical or economic. As leadership, if it is characterised by ethical normativity.

In line with this, art has its methods of retreat, too, but to both realms, that of organising and that of art, the final fortress on the road of retreat is normativity. Neither art nor organising can tolerate to be judged as merely 'technically' or merely 'economically' motivated. However, real organising is actualised normativity, i.e., the invisible presentation of norms through a performance that is experienced as nothing else but 'living the norm'. It is obvious that there is an *aporia* inherent in organising as performance or as 'self-cesseity', because as long as the norm is good, the illusion is acceptable, but when the norms are bad we would immediately speak about 'deception', 'seduction' and 'suppression'.

So, organising cannot be an ethically neutral concept, although it conjures up, or even lives by, the concept of *aisthesis*, of the impenetrability on the surface of experience. But neither can art. So the postulate here is the obviously contra-intuitive that the concepts of 'good and bad' cannot be territorialized by art at all, a fact that is reinforced, when art is related directly as a means to, or as an ideal of, organising.

Now it is time to give a picture of what could be meant by 'ethical' or 'good' normativity. The expression of 'giving a picture' should be taken literally, because normativity can never be based on a waterproof axiology, it stays a hypothesis of the universal framework on which the attitudes of genuine humanism is built.


## The Greek Square

To make a demarcation between art and other social phenomena is increasingly difficult. The same thing begins to happen to the practises of organising, and even to their ethically more refined versions, as they are articulated through the concept of 'leadership'. In this connection the question arises almost automatically: Has the good got its own identity in art and organising? Much art is very eager to blur the difference between aesthetic expressions and other semantic articulations of everyday life. And the symbolic instruments of organising come increasingly close to the value-bound, emotionally pronounced, communication of everyday-life.

In the Introduction to his *Critique of Judgement* (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*) Immanuel Kant presents us to a set of methodological distinctions which could be of use in discussing the issues here: The effort of demarcation, both what concerns art and organising. He speaks of 'a field', which means an area of potential knowledge characterized by being an area of possible, symbolic action. Such an area is able to be the target of concepts, even if they shall never come to function in an epistemic context. This common sense world includes both art and business science. In this field one will find – what Kant names – 'territories', characterised by the fact that we are able to get knowledge related to them. Music is such a territory, organisational science is another (Deleuze, I presume, took his concept of territory from Kant's book).

When it is possible to use concepts as constituting functions in a part of the territory, and, hence, to work within a sound frame of epistemology, it is called 'ein Gebiet' (*ditio* in Latin); 'domain' could be a proper translation. Probably P. Sraffa tried to establish a domain within economics, and I think that both Hume and Smith tried – rather unconscious – to construct one inside moral philosophy, but only Spinoza, Leibniz, and Kant, succeeded properly here, because of their pronounced sense of the physiology of the calculus, i.e., of the procedures of deduction. However, Nature as the subject of science, and Freedom as the subject of reason, constitute the only proper domains in Kant's philosophy. It is obvious that we cannot any longer construct domains within the social sciences, the last quasi-attempt was done by Jürgen Habermas in his *Theory of Communicative Action* (*Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*), and, it should be added, not totally without success.

On the other hand, neither art nor management are canonical objects of empirical science, due to many reasons, of which we only need to mention the ambiguity of the sense of actions, the dominating role of the event, and the utterly significant role of the 'context', seen immanently as language game, and seen transcendentally as 'everyday-life'. We are forced into some sort of normativity, if we shall relate analytically to them: We have to choose a perspective – that means, we have to be free enough to be critical.

We have to define some acts and products as art, and some actions as organising, and we are forced to make distinctions between good and bad art, and between organising per se and between its dual contexts, management and leadership.

We have only got territories, or, to use a concept from Edmund Husserl, 'regional ontologies'. Therefore we must make some extraordinary techniques of de-territorialisations, namely by hand of crossing territories through normative concepts.



Ad Reinhardt, *Black Series #3*, c.1964-1967

Let me call the frame of normativity that I think is indispensable in order to think a sustainable concept of the mutual interrelation between art and organising, 'the Greek square', because it is inspired by the way Greek thinking is able to unite the normative dimensions of reality, the good, the just, the true, and the beautiful. It is not, however, always that Greek philosophy succeeds in, or even wants to, realise this fusion. From Plato and onwards this type of concepts can be identified with Kant's notion of 'a regulative idea'. They are epistemic borderlines, and they neither appear directly as mental pictures of fully developed concepts, nor as operational definitions. They are neither transcendental nor fully immanent. One might use the tern 'condescendence' in relation to them, i.e., they are a fusion of the transcendent immanence and the immanent transcendence without posing a third, i.e., an out-side.

The first corner of 'the Greek square' is *agathon*, *bonus/bonum*, or *virtus*, the good.[3] The good exists as virtue, i.e., it has to be realised through managerial acts that are proper acts of genuine leadership, and art could be an instrument here in sharpening the imaginative forces needed to realise the good in different situations. Social responsibility, empathy, the ability to be present, care, awareness of others, and

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3   As I am speaking about the 'Greek square', its corner-concepts will be given in the classical Greek terminology.

generosity, are leadership virtues of the good that demand aesthetic excellence to be implemented in the organisation.

The second corner of the square is the true, *he aletheia*, *veritas*. This concept is twisted into the institutions of science, and very complicated, but in relation to business science, generally, or to organising, specifically, it relates to far more than research knowledge of management and innovation, it is about the importance of every new type of commodity for the new type of society. Art is very important here in producing a new sensitivity to the possibilities of production technology and of human technology, i.e., a sensitivity to the new opportunities of organising, because of its unlimited right to imagine consequences.

The beautiful, *kalon*, *pulcher* in Latin, is the third corner of the square. Beauty can be defined in many ways, underlining the historical consistency of experience, the excellences of form, or the balance of form and content; but the point in this square is that beauty is a sort of empty place. It is nothing, if it is not filled in by the powerful content of one or more of the concepts in the other corners. As Plato states in *The Phaedrus*, the beautiful is the only level on which, or the only phenomenological form in which, the realm of ideas might manifest themselves. And this could be understood in a way that sees beauty as mere surface, as pure immanence, as the fusion of images and simulacra (of *eikon*, *eidolon*, and *phantasma* in the original Greek terminology), in the capacity of the only spontaneous side of experience.

The last corner of the square is justice, *dikaiosýne*, *justitia*. Justice is the core of genuine leadership and of the ethos of good organisations. It could actually be the driving force of organising, its *nisus*. It works through mutual relations like recognition, righteousness, equity, trust, and loyalty. It upholds a fruitful tension between right and duty. In art justice is often conceived of in a metaphysical or quasi-metaphysical setting, besides the masterpieces of social or even utopian indignation. But justice is also the twisted and infolded (*complicatum*) sense of the works of art that fraternize with the ugly, or exhibits art's own destruction as form by denying the exclusive character of any experience of beauty – or, the beauty lies, like in many 'installations', in the tension between the power to destruct its own form, and its inability to accomplish it totally. The driving force of justice is *kritiké*, criticism. And criticism might be the common ground of art and organising what concerns the care for justice.

Finally, we might say that the centre of this square is *eleutheria*, *libertas*, freedom. We are able to imagine a situation of perfect balance in this square, with a circulation between all corners, but initiated and brought to rest through the hegemony of the Good. Here beauty will find its place, as a passage in a movement that makes us come increasingly close to freedom. However, we shall not forget that the classical Greek concept of freedom was far from the later concept of individual autonomy beyond the social community, even if versions of this thought figure began to emerge during Hellenism.

Now the question is how these normative anchorages can be seen as platforms of organisational action? How are we able to think the passage from theory to practise at the ethical level, and how is ethical knowledge transformed into an organising in which

the concrete demands of the situation and its contextual framework are reflected properly?

## In Search of *deinotes* by Way of *Urteilskraft*

Now, let me put this question: Is there a common ground that might unite art and organising, i.e., that make use, not only of analogies, but of real conceptualisations, across the territories, appear as more than convention or a lucky punch? Let us look at one candidate for this common conceptual ground: the philosophical tradition of the already mentioned, epoch-making book from 1790, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, which set the agenda for hundreds of years to come, not only what concerns the thinking of the essence of art, but, paradoxically, also of the essence of communicative action.

The concept of *Urteilskraft*, or 'the (critical) capacity of judgement',[4] is a complicated one, presupposing the distinction between three fundamental fields of practises possible to man: the ability to know, the ability to feel pleasure and pain, and the ability to desire. Science origins in the first capacity – knowledge; morals origins in the last one – desire; and aesthetics origins in the one in between – the ability to feel pleasure or pain. To these abilities, or capacities, there correspond three mental faculties: intelligence, reason, and the (critical) capacity of judgement. Their domains are nature, freedom and art. The capacities are totally separated from each other, which means that the capacity of judgement cannot contribute to knowledge or morals. However, the capacity of judgement is based on what Aristotle in *De anima* called *koinè aisthesis*, in the Latin translation, *sensus communis*, articulated through a 'general voice'.[5]

The origin of common sense, and hence, of the three critical functions of reason, autonomic thinking, empathy, and harmony with one-self, is aesthetic. This is the inherent *aporia* of Kant's book. However, it might not be unwelcome information for us – even to the ones that are not social constructivists – because implicitly a strong band is tied between art and a general concept of social action. They have the same core.
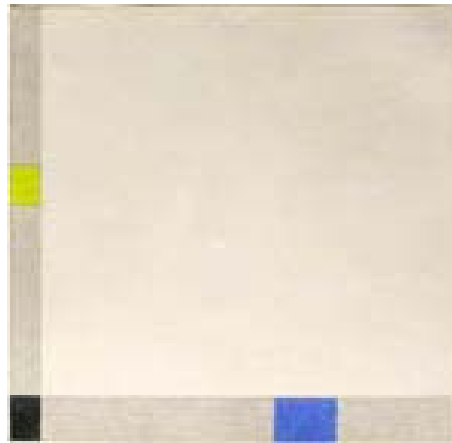
The capacity of judgement is described by Kant as the ability to apply general principles on concrete cases, and vice versa, i.e., to infer general concepts from experience – the principle of both serious moral action and artistic performance. Here art is perhaps special in taking off from the concrete phenomenon reaching the general level through a displacement that is reinforced through a process of post-rationalising which might be totally legitimate, because it works. However, this ability to apply general concepts on events and acts comes close to the ability that Aristotle baptized *deinótes*, even if it does not reach it. For the capacity of judgement has to be applied too, in this linguistically anticipated movement oscillating from concept to action and back again, by creating

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4     I am tempted to translate *Urteilskraft* as 'the critical capacity of judgement', which would be, of course, an interpretation more than a direct translation.

5     The concept of *koinè aisthesis* shows the original meaning of *aisthesis*, i.e. 'aesthetics': Sense produced through the senses. Aristotle discusses whether there is one superior sense that unites all senses, or an *a posteriori* effectuated synthesis.

and destroying our boxes of sense. But *deinótes*, this proto-dialectical dynamic, this conceptualising force, is the core of *organising when it is seen as genuine actualisation*.

It is thus very important to understand that organising cannot be seen as the species of the genus *deinótes*, until something further has been included in the capacity of judgement. This 'something' is *creativity*. We owe much to Gilles Deleuze because of his emphasising of the trans-empirical, artistic core of thinking.



Burgoyne Diller, *Untitled (Study for Second Theme Grey)*, 1961

The capacity of judgement is the ability to detect the meaning that one self – in company with others - ascribes to the world. This condition of speech, of writing, and of thinking, the fact that we have to explore the meaning of our own activities by actualising them in some media, I have named 'translocutionarity'.[6] It is the ability to overcome the 'natural alienation' built into the use of language games and the use of medias by exploring it: That we must use a world of sense belonging to the others, in order to be able to think, act, and create. This is also the first principle of art: To make a perfect illusion within the ontic dimension, a soft self-betrayal through hardly distinguishable, ontological 'scares', in the perfect, and impenetrable surface of *aesthesis*, i.e., in the skin of 'experience'.

But the point is also that the capacity of judgement can be developed into a *normatively pronounced* meta-concept of the ways in which we transform our systematic deliberations about our practise into concrete acts, but without the capacity to apply any rule-governed principles. The capacity of judgement becomes, in other words, the container for all the concepts that refer to our abilities beyond discursive articulation. Thus, it becomes the perfect 'conceptual container' of the plethora of practises that constitute organising.

Such concepts have been studied since the classical Greek era, but especially during Hellenism, and both in the art of rhetoric and in the art of poetic. Let me mention six

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6    In *Event and Body-Mind*, op.cit.

concepts through which the critical capacity of judgement can be related to the vague domain of creativity, so important as a common domain for organising and art: *Euresis*, i.e., innovation; *euphyia*, (*ingenio*), i.e., genius; *dechomai*, (*recipio, suscipio* or *capacitas*), i.e., capacity; *phantasia*, (*imaginatio*), i.e., fantasy; *epibolé*, i.e., intuition; and *anchinoia*, (*acutezza*, or *argutezza*), i.e., acuteness of mind.

It must be evident that these mental capacities, so celebrated by business economics in the alienated form of 'individual competencies', have to be developed through some sort of synthetic effort, and in reference to some meta-concept – even if this cannot possibly have any a priori characteristics – in order to serve the claims of normativity.

To me it is obvious that the capacity of judgement is *the* capacity through which the basic essence of art and leadership can be developed, *if*, and only *if*, we emphasise the close relation between the pronounced aesthetic sense and the moral sense that Kant often hints at, but which he obviously does not want to fully conceptualise.

This is already done by Aristotle in his ethics, when he presents us to 'the wise man', that is able to invent the ethics out of which he is acting by using *deinótes*, the creative power of reason. But a concept of reason that is not instrumentally thwarted, but bound to the Greek original of the latin *ratio*, i.e., to *logos*. *Logos* is a concept that is able to unite 'the theoretical and practical reason' of Kant beyond any dogmatic distinction in the art of rhetoric. One could say, and with right, that the syllogism of rhetoric, the *enthymema*, which C.S. Pierce later named 'abduction', and J.H. Newman bound to an 'illative sense', is the core capacity of the power of judgement, because you have to involve memory, create experience, manifest your character (ethos), and triumph in the use of logic in one and the same move. *Logos* is bound to experience and hence, it is in its essence ethical, because an *ethos* is the result of the active use of one's experience in the service of doing the good.

The enthymemic quality of the critical capacity of judgement, the ability to use example and metaphor, is centred in the proto-practical capacity – which defer considerably from person to person – to use analogies. The capacity of analogy might be the starting point for a logical derivation of the common core between art and organising. We could name the capacity of making analogies as 'the sensitivity to events', or, in Greek *kairo-pathos*, namely a 'kairo-pathetic attitude', the sensitivity to *kairos*, i.e., 'the right moment'. Behind this ability lies the Aristotlean *epagogé*, the ability to make relevant generalisations.

It is important to relate the capacity of judgement to creativity and criticism, that is, to a concept of forces, to *deinótes*, and not to make a total reduction to the concept of *phronesis* (wisdom). This is because the relation to aesthetics is lost in the concept of *phronesis* (unless you press it) that does not underline the creative, transforming role of experience. Attention is due to an effort, the knowledge of which artists and leaders share. So, new leadership virtues like empathy, organisational fantasy, and value-directed imagination, might all be deduced from the capacity of judgement.

In order to conclude this part, the critical capacity of judgement can be seen as the quasi-epistemological core that unites art and organising in the image of leadership, and

hence makes the analysis of their practises worth a while. We must now dive into the realm of creativity, in order to explore the intrinsic relations between art and organising further.

## Art, Organising and Creativity

The simplest way to define creativity in our line of thought is by saying: Creativity, at any level and to any degree, is the direct result of the capacity of the person or the group to conceive of, to actualise, and to administer freedom. By letting creativity relate to freedom, the conclusion is already drawn that creativity in its essence is normative. Normative attitudes drive the creative effort.

However, freedom cannot stand alone as the basic category, or *theorem*, through which we deduce creativity per se, and its different, concrete forms of practises – whether they are spontaneous or reflective – from the square. Two further categories are needed to stop the inherent egoism or hedonism, as well as the attitudes of superiority and ruthless autonomy, lying latent in freedom.

The first category is *criticism* (*kritiké*) as an attitude towards thoughts, terminologies, methods and theories delivered to us from historiy. The second category is *readiness* (*etheloduleia*) in relation to ones own body, to ones own mind, and to the forces of eventING in organising.[7] Finally, *deinótes* is necessary as the category that functions as the catalyst of these three capacities in transforming theory into practise, thinking into acting. We could in this connection speak about 'creative virtues' as individual and collective, sense-driving capacities of normative organising. A virtue can in this context be seen as the centre, or inner hegemony, as the *hegemonikon* of the individual basket of thematic capacities.

The investigations of the decisive factors of creativity made during the fifties and sixties in California at the Institute for Personality Assessment and Research conducted by D.W. Mac Kinnon using the experiences of leading artists and scientists, have supported the view that creativity is very dependent on personality, character and individual motivation, and much less on 'general intelligence'. E.P. Torrence has in this context isolated 84 qualities that characterise the personality of creative individuals. The interests of official, educational systems in such operational categories that facilitate the prediction of creative behaviour, and, hence, the choice of apt candidates, will more or less coincide with the interests of private firms.

Besides 'creative virtues', concepts like 'creative spaces' and 'creative media/materials' could be introduced to analyse creativity as a mode of organising. I shall, however, not concentrate on these aspects here, but let it be enough to mention six creative virtues that in my opinion form the quasi-axiomatic frame of creativity, because they, on the one hand, cannot be reduced to each other, and, on the other hand, cannot be reduced to all the other conceptual options of the capacities or qualities of creativity.

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7    The concept of *etheloduleia* origins in the dialogue 'Symposium' (184 C) by Plato.

Because the concepts of these creative virtues have a pronounced epistemological context based on more than two thousand years of philosophical investigations and analysis – demonstrating the mastery of transforming experience into concepts through anticipation, analogy and almost mere *creatio ex nihilo* – they are able to transcend any empirical-psychological attempt to form theories of creativity, because these attempts are bound, not only to use them, but to draw their shallow gains of knowledge from their immense depths.

Each of the following concepts can, in so far as they are understood as virtues, refer to attitudes shaping the relation of a human being to herself and to the world. They are *not* operational, they are pre-operational, because they are normative. The claim here is, of course, that these creative virtues are common to organising and art:

*Acuteness* origins in the Greek *anchinoia*, but in Latin it has two different senses, the one *acutus*, in Italian *acutezza*, 'pointing', 'cutting', the metaphor of the spear (of Mentor?); and *argutus*, in Italian *argutezza*, the light tone, the *fulguratio* of Leibniz, the sudden, bright thought. Both senses are plaited into acuteness, the capacity to break with tradition – which it acknowledges to owe almost everything – in the very name of this tradition, transcending dogmatism, organisational totalitarianism, and the realm of the obvious, into freedom. Acuteness manifests itself through the logic that exploits the capacity to understand, attempt, or even create, the lacking premises of deductions. It elaborates on the enthymeme, the syllogism of rhetoric by – as I mentioned – developing ways of ratiocination called 'abduction' by Pierce, or 'the illative sense', by Newmann.
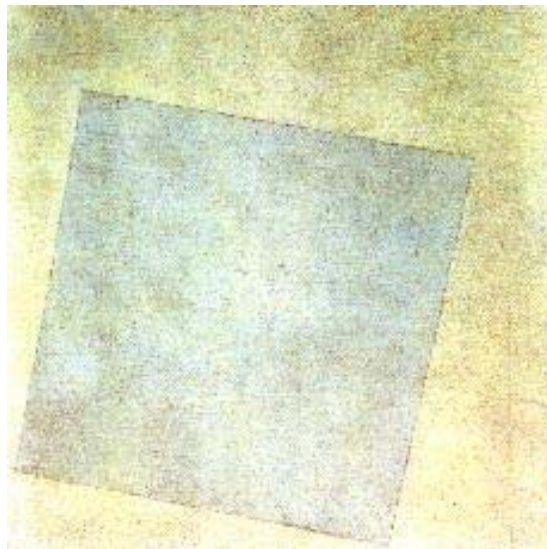


Kazimir Malevich, *White on White*, 1918

*Sovereignty* as a virtue is the happy ability to want to do that which you are able to, and to be able to do what you want to do. The Greeks called this capacity *euphyia*, in Latin *ingenium*, the natural gifts in combination with the ability to use them, in relation to obtain the good life. Sovereignty is about the ability to say both Yes!, and No! and

about doing the right things, at the right moment. Hence, sovereignty is related to the capacity to understand and interpret the other person. It is bound to the imaginative *maieutics* of Socrates, and far from traditional 'therapeutic practises'. The sovereign person creates the frames for human relations, stimulating the self-creation of other people; and she is the master of congenial interpretations of faces, actions, shapes, and texts. Only the sovereign is able to be a true emphatic organiser. The sovereign person is, due to the nature of this virtue, a real humorist, because her direct access to spontaneity, and her inspirational authority, need a gesture of distance to their most successful expressions. Intensity has to be made relative: There must be a tiny patch on the leg of the Armani-dress, and the supreme conductor must be dressed in a penguin's coat.

*Ideation* is a concept that is used in the discussions of developing basic concepts within geometry, kinematics and dynamics. It refers to the role concise, conceptual images play when we attempt to develop measurements of physical figures and processes. In this connection, ideation can refer to the core of the processes of calibrating from which innovation rise, and which are all characterised by anticipation. By 'anticipation' we understand the visual capacity to imagine an object, a place, a person, or a situation, as if it were experienced directly. In organising the so-called 'visions' and 'missions' of organisations are examples of the attempt to conjure up ideation. Ideation refers to the capacity to use social experimentation in organising, by taking advantage of the unforeseen or spontaneous results that emerge from more deliberate sets of actions. The experimental stuff of *ideation* is our own experience, the individual as well as the collective. The phenomenon of 'the thought experiment' is a way of using *ideation*, because it might demonstrate the fact that conceptualisation could be followed by the creation of a method of actualisation. However, the '*ideator*' must certainly know the difference between the model and plan on the one side, and the forces of becoming on the other, through the momentum of which organising as an intentional preparation can be nothing but the hope of a little help from our friends.

*Deliberation* expresses the ability of a human being to view relations in a light that transgresses the narrow-mindedness of corporate governance, the tepid reservations, the exaggerated prudence, opportunism, and the blatant pragmatism of managerial practises. Deliberation is the core of mental revolutions, even if it has an ear for the evolutionary rhythm. The Greeks related one aspect of deliberation, *eubulia* (meaning literally 'well-advised'), to the ability to lead and organise at any level. Deliberation is the virtue of the real organiser, of the philosopher-king. To deliberate is to think fundamentally normatively, to think from the perspective of ends. Hence, deliberation might imagine the good in the shape of the just, or the just in the shape of truth, or the true in the shape of the beautiful, even if the good always must have the last word. Deliberation is a creative virtue bound to the capacity to change normative perspective, it is able to be a real conversion of the mind. Hence, it is forced to manifest itself as both self-guidance and as pedagogy. Organising, then, becomes the changing of minds, but allied with Concordia, not with bio-politics.

*Improvisation* is the strongest, most rule-governed one of the creative virtues. This is because it is so close to the phenomenon of play. Play is a species of the genus 'game', the differentia of which lies in its simplicity, in its unconstrained compulsion, in its

obvious, algorithmic character, in its both direct and indirect corporeality, in its dissolving of a chronological-hegemonic time, in its anonymity of origin, in its weight on community, in its principal freedom of finality (it can be repeated forever), in its openness to negotiation, in its faithfulness to historical consistency (to the experiences of the ones that played it before), in its intimate relation with laughter, and hence, in its expressional register of happiness (not to be confused with humour or irony). But improvisation is more than play, because they both compete about the right to be the real organiser of the *moment*. They both claim that the moment has duration, that it lasts, and that this lasting, this *dia-stema,* this 'time-in-between', is the play or the improvisation itself.

When *improvisatios* wins the game, the *duratio* is directed towards itself. It becomes identical to the process in which it fulfils the task of creating its own form and content. Improvisation can be organised or spontaneous, like Bach's 'Inventions', or like the momentary creating of a new tactic of battle. But real organising can never be the result of organised improvisation. That is why the phenomenon of jazz does not suffice as the image of the reservoir of improvisational practises. Real organising must destroy its organisational improvisation through an *emotional logistics*. It must not be contend with the ability to break up repetition inside the very patterns of repetitions themselves. It must be a new beginning beyond beginning, i.e., something beyond the concept of being finished.

*Susceptibility*, the active sensibility, is that principle of aesthetics bound to wondering – the *thaumazein* of Aristoteles' 'Metaphysics'. It is the challenge to the intelligence of the combined senses, to the *sensus communis* of *De anima*, to the 'body-mind'. In Greek the concept of *dechomai* covers the content of this term, and its complexity is testified through the different Latin translations: *recipio, suscipio* and even *capacitas* – my favourite word for 'competency', expressing the subject-object-play within any ability: We are 'worlded' when we meet the world. The Platonic concept of eternal 'place-ness' and 'space-ness', *chora,* is characterised by *dechomai,* by its will to accept the realm of phenomena, by its sensitivity to the regions of ontologies, and by its ability to open to territories, as well as to de-territorialising, and to domains of thought. The creative virtue of susceptibility is the capacity to keep ones identity by letting a project obtain *its* identity through oneself. It's the capacity of *housing*. This generosity is the core of organising.

The following figure could, among many things, show that normative action in an organisational setting easily can be related to modes of being a leader, and combined to attitudes, that normally are ascribed to artists. Especially the vivid interplay between the capacity of judgement and 'readiness' – that to such a high degree demonstrates the unity between the cores of organising and art – is vital to the inner logical 'flow' of the norms of 'the square' into the practises of organising. *Etheloduleia,* to be open to the messages of 'a god', an expression used by Plato in the 'Symposium', points to the readiness, to the ability to become an object herself, to be a part of the *fluxus* which she initiates, so important in the organiser.

The creative virtues, in the capacity of normative attitudes, can be fit into the normative framework in the following way:

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the square

the good,      the true,      the just,      the beautiful

freedom

the capacity of judgement                   readiness
(*kritiké*)                                 (*etheloduleia*)

the normative attitude
(*phronesis*)

the articulatory power
(*deinótes*)

creativity

acuteness  sovereignty ideation  deliberation  improvisation  susceptibility

aesthetics

organising

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If organising should be able to actualise normativity, i.e., to emerge from 'the square', creativity should be normative too, because organising does only use repetition in order to create difference: A world of differences already hostages in a future that is constructed through the act of setting them free. Being the centre of the square, freedom is the point zero in which every referential gesture ends, and from where every axiology goes into another loop. Freedom as an attitude releases us from the claims of sense, and hence from the supervision of deontology, deontologies that since long have been used to destroy the pathos-ethos-logos-unity that they always invoke with complacent spectacularity.

We might come to witness that the virtues of leadership little by little shall mutate into virtues of creativity sustaining an urge to genuine organising that in the performances and products of art was the lucky melting together of content and form. But this does certainly not mean that the ethical claims to leadership are transformed into 'auto-aesthetic' ones by creeping into the skin of organising. The *etho-poiesis* of individual leadership is transformed through organising, indeed, but only by this affirmation of the *ethos* through the 'being-collective', or even through the 'being-anonymous', that intense organising always accomplishes.

It is now time to cast a short glance on the types of art in order to develop a notion of the form under which art could exist, and relate to itself, and still be a paradigm of organising. After all, it must be evident that only art that relates to normativity in a pronounced way could thus function.

## The Roles of Art as a Picture of the Relation of Organising to Itself

The systematic relation between art and business economics can be described in the following way, because inside art itself we are able to distinguish between four *scenaria* that can be transformed into stages of development, without too much exaggeration:

1. Art operates within the traditional context, understanding itself as privileged domain with a set of languages, and hence, experiences, of its own.

2. Art sees itself as only a territory, or even a de-territorialized territory, which means that it has no privileged epistemological position, and hence, the realm of canonical aesthetics does not constitute a regional ontology. This means that the problem of form inside art is a phantasm – as underlined by Baudrillard, in theory, and by Andy Warhol, in practise.

3. Art sees itself as a discourse directed towards itself. This means that art can be conceived of as a meta-discourse, i.e., as a sort of philosophy – as Hegel once, and Arthur Danto recently, has claimed. Art is a way to pose philosophical problems outside philosophy.

4. Art is a communicative effort directed towards an articulation of the traditional conflicts between science and knowledge, economy and morals, individualism and social responsibility. Art is a discourse that is able to break through the ways in which capitalist society succeeds in expropriating almost any critical position towards it. The Frankfurt School underlined this through an often rather naïve epistemology. Suzy Gablik has stressed this attitude, recently, in opposition to Arthur Danto.

Now, on the first hand, we can distinguish by analogy the same four stages in the relation of the managerial sciences to themselves. Secondly, we can look at the interplay between art and organising from this perspective in relation to the problem: What can organising learn from *the example* of the relation of art to itself?

The traditionalist approach to organising as management will still exist in branches of this world, and hence, its opposition to the concept of organising as genuine leadership, be it as the ethical way to handle managerial tasks, be it as the side of organising that relate to human relations. But its importance will increasingly be reduced in the light of organisational challenges and the problems of recruiting and keeping a highly educated workforce.

The second way in which art relates to itself as a regional ontology will, if it is transformed to the realm of organising, mean the fare well to every scientific, yes, even every systematic, approach. The vocabulary that catches this gesture will be often moulded on post-modern concepts like de-centering, *meson*, the middle, the anonymous subject, the 'rhizomic', and so on. The focus will be on processes, i.e., on organising, not on structure. Or the focus will be on the Deleuzean version of the event as the place where the anarchical forces of sense shall meet the meaningless, but iron-hard, laws of

history, in the image of the *eventum tantum*: Organising as the fooling of non-sense by non-sense itself.
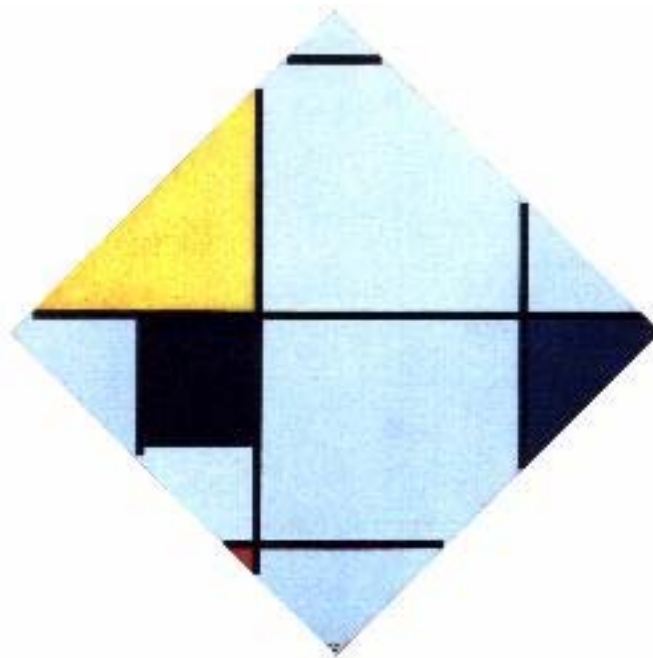


Piet Mondrian, *Lozenge*, 1921

The problem here will be that responsibility in the capacity of *the* ethical challenge to organising must either be built automatically into such concepts from the beginning – which is not the case – or this capacity has to be present as a distinct way to use these concepts. Alternatively, new concepts and attitudes must be imported into this field, like the strained concept of the 'multitude' so foreign to any pragmatic perspective on the 'hyper-modern' organisation. The consequence is that any reference to the corners of 'the Greek square' must be given up in this context, and hence, a systematic politics of ethics.

If organising chooses the third alternative, to be kept in a painful condition of consciousness of its own form, it has to turn to philosophy. Not just the meta-science of management, but its very language, i.e., its 'domain', has to be philosophy. However, there are several versions of philosophy, as we all know.

Allied with constructivist thought, system science, or discourse analytics, the self-consciousness of organising might easily turn scholastic, self-righteous, or even strategic in a subtle way. Organising might turn to an existentialist version of philosophy, but this attitude can also all too easily be turned into an ideology of the supremacy and autonomous self-development of the manager in the capacity of the leader. Power is disguised between what is obviously both good will and what originally were serious promises.

Philosophical discourse is a Must if the role of aesthetics shall be judged properly, and art implemented in the practise of organising, but it cannot solely form the language in which organising speaks to itself, because the aim of philosophy can never be solely identified with the aim of the capitalist firm, be it ever so responsible, and its employees ever so critical. As we saw in 'the Greek square', this regulative normativity can only be the aim of an approximation on behalf of organising as leadership, but, on the other hand, it is a strict condition, if philosophy shall not turn into mere performance, to fill it up with these regulative norms.

So, the attempt to transform organising into philosophy must evade transforming it into a quasi-general *sensus communis*, into a new 'lingua' of hyper-self-conscious communicative action. Just as art, when it addresses its own regional ontology, and de-territorializes itself, must evade being transformed into just another, unspecific, communicative activity – even if, through the media it uses, it might have a surplus of sense in relation to the straight discourse.

The fourth road is the most important. It is able to absorb the third alternative, the philosophical discourse, but to integrate it in a social-critical perspective, too. It definitely is a philosophical way, because it aspires to operate at the utmost meta-level. But it tries to use the surplus of meaning inherent in the forms of art. That is, it does not focus on the formal aspects of art, because it is already able to evade the formalisms of thinking.

Of course it would be fatal to try to make programmatic art, but it would not be fatal to try to make programmatic organising, if it means organising with a special normative attitude. This could be done, by forcing art into 'the Greek square', and by forcing organising into this square too, in the capacity of an art, and hence, transform it into leadership by transgressing its strategically defined limits. Leadership will then, as a social practise, be integrated into knowledge and virtue.

Now the question remains, whether management can learn anything about this fourth road from art, i.e., from the way art tries to cope with it?

## Some Final Remarks on the Concrete Relevance of Art to Organising

In this final remark I shall outline some common places where art and organising meet:

1. To practise art directly, be it as a conductor for an hour, or a one-day sculptor, can enrich the knowledge of the organiser in relation to her own experiences. This is the quickest and most effective way to confront the organiser with the normative aspects and the tacit dimensions of her own practise.

2. To consume art productively, i.e., to be a part of an active appropriation of an art-work – a very good example is the play *Tamara Land* described by David Boje.

3. To learn about art can, through the horizon of a general cultural capacity, enrich organising in ways neither surpassed by curricula or courses in business economics nor by consultancy.

A1. To practise art is to become involved in social actions of a prototypical kind that conjure up the mode of this practise, be it the place, the body, the flow, or the event; be it the relation to the concept of sense, as denotation, expression, or reflection; or be it the attitudes of speech, like the *topoi* of deliberation, the forensic and the epideictic, that form the *Art of Rhetoric* by Aristoteles. Art presents us with the core of communication, with the *ethos*, the *pathos*, and the *logos*, in an event-embodied way. Art is to *be evented*, and so is leadership.

A2. But art also confronts the person that implements it with a certain attitude towards attention, i.e., it is a new kind of making people present, and certainly oneself too. Art realises intensity as becoming. Organising actualises leadership as utopian.

A3. Art gives an alternative angle on strategy, because the goal here arises from the synthesis of the means. Art is a decentred or anonymous activity – or, even the strategic annihilation of strategy. Organising ought to be post-strategic.

A4. Art confronts us with a positive, non-subjective intentionality; it is 'worlding' us, so to speak. Art is in its essence, as writing or singing, chiastic; it is 'reprociti-zing', or it is letting us practise the *dechomai*, the unstrategic strategy of receptivity as capacity. Hence, it prepares us for the essence of the social, or of intersubjectivity, the acceptance of being 'capaciti-zed'.

A5. Art makes the play between *sarkos* and *soma*, between body and person, obvious, an insight so important to all organisers. The dimension of organising is time and flesh, allocating senses to identities, using the fuel of passion and hope to drive through the gates of concepts into the realm of ends.

But fore and foremost, doing art offers the possibility to understand how important normativity, be it reflectively stated or tacit, is to practise. However, this does not mean, of course, that the artist is morally superior. To understand normativity completely, one has to focus on the conceptual creativity of art, on its utopian epistemology. This means that art as *aisthesis* is a transformation of experience through the very gesture of reinforcing its capacities; through the richness of the alienated. Managerial practise might take this as a paradigm.
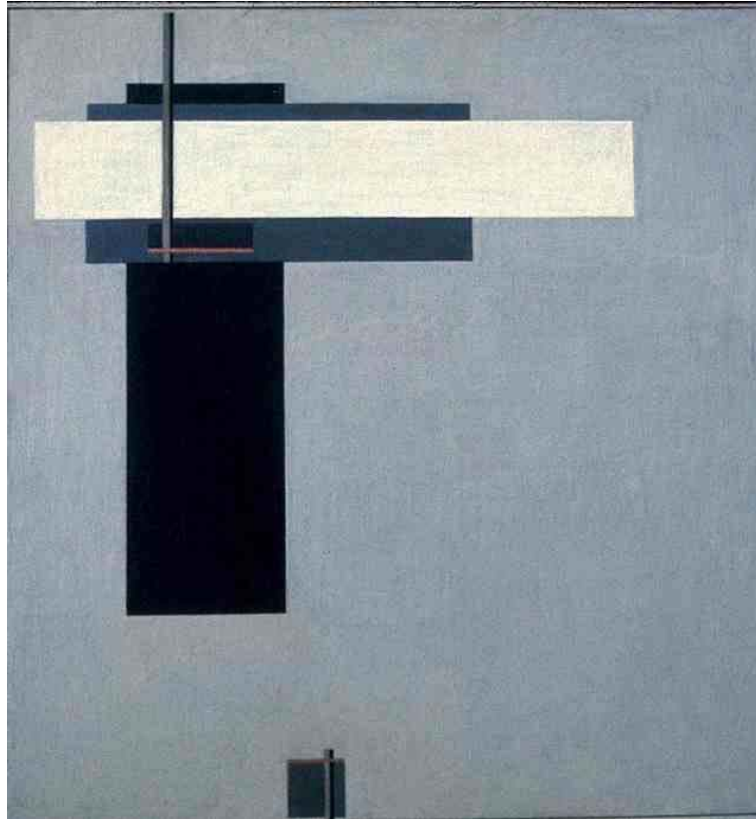
El Lissitzky, *Composition*, 1920-1922

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