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aesthetics at the heart of leadership

an exploration of business meaning and practices



"If you can really capture everything you know about a subject in words, it simply means that you do not know enough of it"

Mikhail Katznelson, Russian scientist and poet (in: De Groene Amsterdammer, 31th July 2014)



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Abstract

State of the art leadership and management theory is still dominated by rationality, logic and metrics as the primary source for cognition. Increasingly sophisticated and complex business and human societies require better leadership, a problem that has been identified in some intellectual publications. Practical aspects of this problem have been seen in the failing leadership in safety sensitive industries in the Netherlands. In the Rotterdam portindustrial area a problem has been identified in 2011 with the performance of a safety sensitive company, Odfjell Terminals (Rotterdam) B.V., storing large amounts of oil derivatives and other flammable liquids for which the necessary careful management and treatment was neglected. This led to a full stop of operations temporarily in 2012, under pressure of the DCMR Environmental Protection Agency amongst others.

Odfjell is identified in this research as a Greek tragedy. So what answer can be derived from the ancient Greek philosophy in order to overcome or prevent Greek tragedies? Inspiration and insights are found in the ideas of Plato about the relation between rationality, sensitivity and intuition in reaching for 'the good life'. This balance of three human sources of information is called in literature the aesthetics. It is defined in recent management literature as the *"interconnectedness of perception, thinking, and feeling"*. So to say how do you perceive yourself, your team and the world, and how do you bring that to cognition in order to manage your attitude and activities in private and professional life. A normative research is executed of the ancient ideas in order to bridge them with modern leadership performance. Originally in those days, such an approach was somewhat odd and unacceptable for Plato, because in his view 'the good life' can only be achieved by using your rationality. *"In fact this is the home of the artist"*, stated Plato in Politeia. Which was not meant as a compliment. Plato became more wise and thus interested in and convinced about other human abilities who are supportive and essential to achieve 'the good life'. He experienced a famous 'recantation'. In order to check these ancient ideas with current leadership practices, interviews have been held with artists, leaders in sports, politics, science and consultancy, and business leaders in Rotterdam and Buenos Aires. In this study it became clear that aesthetics are widely recognized as an important and essential but also relatively unknown tool for good performance, to say for living a good leadership life. It also became plausible that an adequate aesthetic performance in the Odfjell-situation could have contributed positively in preventing problems. It is in any case clear that leadership requirements in general and for safety sensitive industries in particular are not covering personal distinctive tools as aesthetics. It also became clear in what way modern leaders manage and maintain their own aesthetic tool. And it also became clear that business leaders and artists are in fact using the same balance. That gives an idea of universality of the tool of aesthetics, which is in line with Plato's ideas and which might lead to a 'recantation' in science (business administration) and business (management development) in order to establish the old idea that living a good life requires more than rationality and metrics. Leadership is a very human process, which needs to be fulfilled completely: with your own aesthetics, at the heart of leadership.

keywords: aesthetics, leadership, management development, intuition



aesthetics at the heart of leadership



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Preface

Thanks to Plato, 'kalon' or the beauty and the fine, has been presented seriously 2500 years ago as a reference to 'the good life'. This beauty is, in his opinion, more than a trivial sensory experience. Beauty is something for which every human being has an idea about it. Beauty as a state of mind in which all is sound and which may give 'a good feeling'. This is basically universal and that universality gives clues to life in general, and leadership life in particular.

Those are the presuppositions which were my take-off after reading Plato's Politeia. In my business activities, leading for a long period of time experts on environmental issues, as well as my artistic activities being educated as an artist, I came to the idea of an exploration of a common 'good' which is worth to be shared in a business administration context.

So there we are. After two years of intensive and inspiring courses at the Rotterdam School of Management, it can be concluded that we still can use ancient ideas about living 'the good life'. Let us call that innovation.

I like to thank all the more than 25 interviewees who shared their insights and dedication, in Rotterdam as well as in Buenos Aires. I like to thank also the two persons who introduced me to the most of those interesting and inspiring people: Cees Jan Asselbergs (director Deltalinqs Rotterdam) and Matthijs Landsmeer (Gerente General de Camara de Comercio Argentino-Holandesa, Buenos Aires). I like to thank the staff of Erasmus University/Rotterdam School of Management and the Universidad Argentina de la Empresa for their support and inspiration in executing this research. And specially I like to thank Ben Wempe and Job Hoogendoorn, as well as Juup Essers, for their coaching and support during my final research.

Jan van den Heuvel and Mario Bakker, general director and member of the board of the DCMR Environmental Protection Agency made it possible to join this interesting course. I am very grateful for that. Thanks also to my colleagues at the DCMR Air Quality Division, especially Sylke Davison for keeping me sharp on the English language, Sef van den Elshout for his overall comments, and Saskia Hemmes for helping me through the final completion.

I like to thank my colleague-students who did the same energy-consuming and energy-providing course. A common spirit makes, as always, the difference!

And I like to thank Wendela, for her aesthetic feedback which gave me context, often at the kitchen table, for doing it 'kalon'!



aesthetics at the heart of leadership



1 Introduction

In this research observations are made of leadership performance in an international business context, with a specific case in the Rotterdam Rijnmond area (the Odfjell-case) and with an emphasize on malfunctioning of leadership. These observations are brought in context of Platonic ideas on the 'good and fine' ('kalon') as expressed in Plato's early work Hippias Major. The apparent malfunctioning in leadership performance is analyzed and approached philosophically, with an emphasize on aesthetics.

Aesthetics is described as "*knowledge that is created from our sensory experiences, which includes a connection between our thoughts and feelings and how our reasoning around them informs our cognitions*", so to say sensory knowledge and felt meaning (Hansen, Ropo, & Sauer, 2007, p. 545/552), to do with sensing and intuition (Stech, 2013, p. 332). Aesthetics in the context of this research is defined as the "*interconnectedness of perception, thinking, and feeling*" (Bresler & Latta, 2008) or synonymously as a combination of sensitivity, cognition and intuition (Hansen, Ropo, & Sauer, 2007). To say it differently, it is about how the leader is connected in itself and in what way he is connected to his followers in the team or company. And moreover in what way the company is connected to society. Respectively on the level of the body, the field (ic team or company) and society as distinguished by Morton (Morton, 2007).

In literature (Ghoshal, 2005; Hatch, Kostera, & Kozminski, 2009; Hansen, Ropo, & Sauer, 2007; Zaleznik, 1977) it is made clear that besides the traditional control-related traits and processes, the modern leader needs to be needs to be moulded on the less tangible attitudes and instruments. In order to fundamentally understand the dimension of aesthetics as a basic human condition for people's living and thus for people's leading and following I will deeply go into Greek philosophy to make the basic ideas clear about the 'good and fine' as formulated by Sokrates in Plato's Hippias Major (Plato, Hippias Major, -390/1983) and the balance between rationality and non-rationality like intuition and sensitivity ('mania') as formulated in Plato's Phaedrus (Nussbaum, 2006). Moreover Martha Nussbaum has extensively worked on putting aesthetics in the logic chain with ethics to contribute to 'live a good life' and is therefore an important thread throughout this research (Nussbaum, 2001; Bender, 1998).

The relation between this aesthetics and the mentioned malfunctioning in business situations is also indicated by Mintzberg: "*You can ask yourself, how is it possible. How people who are the whole day in their office know so much about the service level in Moose Jaw, de submerged areas in James Bay? Just because they can use a Management Information System [...] It combines data and metrics, merge it to a handy summary to be distributed to the leaders. For government it is the election poll, for business it is the accountancy report and marketing report. Much more comfortable than having contact with your citizens, or with your clients. The problem with this bundled rationality is, that the power of judgement and intuition is diminishing. How can you feel something when you can't see it? How can you become aware of something when you've never experienced it?*" (Mintzberg, 1989/1998, p. 348).

In philosophy the aesthetics is used to describe the process of being connected with



yourself, the people and the world. In a recent research on aesthetic leadership, Patrick states that *"aesthetics appears to be interwoven almost invisibly into the whole of leadership fabric. The intuitive, non-rational nature of aesthetic leadership invites a more holistic understanding that appears beyond the reach of a fixed set of reproducible variables"*. Patrick refers to Barnard (1938) when defining leadership in a combination with the aesthetics basically by pointing on the system or process aspect of leadership: *"The process (of leadership) is the sensing of the organization as a whole and the total situation relevant to it. It transcends the capacity of merely intellectual methods, and the techniques of discriminating the factors of the situation. The terms pertinent to it are feeling, judgment, sense, proportion, balance and appropriateness. It is a matter of art rather than science, and it is aesthetic rather than logical"* (Patrick, 2012, p. 21).

Where Patrick speaks of the *"interwoven almost invisibly into the whole of leadership fabric"*, another question arises in a different, artistic, context: *"Where does the artwork exist before it is made?"* With this question Rudi Fuchs introduces a review of an artist in the Dutch magazine *De Groene Amsterdammer* (Fuchs, 2014, p. 53). It is a clear and relevant as well as puzzling question which points out an invisible world of components, concepts, mechanisms, ideas, drives of where a tangible performance or production is arising. This magical and almost archeological question of Fuchs brings me to the subject of leadership. Where does the leadership exist before it is performed? As the artwork pre-exists in the artist, leadership pre-exists in the leader and also in the followers. And what are then the components and mechanisms? As an almost mathematical, scientific question. The approach in this research is related to that. Truth and reality are tried to understand philosophically by in fact just building them, in a way it is described by the Dutch philosopher Samuel IJsseling: *"The philosophy is not the reflection of reality, just as a building. It is a magnificent structure, in which we feel (and know?) at home in a certain way. As in an artwork. Perhaps philosophy is nothing other than that"* (Groot, 2013, p. 55).

The appearance, meaning and added value for a leadership practice, will be explored in this research by interviewing three types of leaders: a group of assumed aesthetic leaders, a group of business leaders, and a group of artistic leaders. In this research a symbiosis is attempted to settle between ancient philosophical ideas and actual business and leadership practices and needs, in order to explore, assess and describe a normative set of requirements for contemporary leadership performance, a grammar for aesthetics.

The results of this research are intended to contribute to leadership theory on considering aesthetics as one of the key factors for leadership. The results are intended to contribute to a leadership practice as well.

The leadership aspects will be described in chapter 3. The philosophical aspects will be described in chapter 4 and the aesthetic aspects including the results of the interviews will be described in chapter 5.



2 Research design

2.1 Introduction

The research explores a rather alternative way to obtain 'good leadership'. The criteria for that will be derived from those of the 'good life' as described in ancient philosophical sources. So the ancient wisdom will be bridged to nowadays' viewpoints in business management, formulated in a research question which combines these two worlds.

In the first trajectory philosophy by Plato and others will be combined with the results of interviews with a group of leaders who have all shown a aesthetic and succesful practice of leadership (the so-called aesthetic leaders). This group of leaders is selected by the author, based on his experiences working and/or elaborating with these leaders in a variety of projects and in a variety of topics. Literature and interviews will be used in a context of a reflective equilibrium in order to "*consists in working back and forth among our considered judgments (some say our "intuitions") about particular instances or cases, the principles or rules that we believe govern them, and the theoretical considerations that we believe lead to accepting these considered judgments, principles, or rules, revising any of these elements wherever necessary in order to achieve an acceptable coherence among them*" (Daniels, 2013).

By this reconstructive analysis and synthesis, an updated description becomes available of the philosophical idea of aesthetics, management literature on this topic, and with additional actual leadership observations. The data will be scanned in literature on all the found topics to be able to construct a framework which can be then be used as a base for the analysis of the data from the interviews with the business leaders

In the second trajectory the ultimate combination of aesthetic aspects as performed by artist will be analyzed. In the third trajectory the gained insights in literature in combination with the results out of the mentioned two trajectories will be verified at business leaders.

The three trajectories are also put in the context of implicitly executed triangulation to check for consistency and divergation in order to contribute to the validation of this research.

One other additional source is used in order to check specific aspects in this research. This is done in two expert interviews on amongst others topics of interference of ethic and aesthetic aspects, neuro-scientific aspects, and aspects of design.

2.2 Research question

Leadership is a human activity and it therefore includes rational and logical mechanisms to make judgements and decisions as well as more intangible informations like sensitivity and intuition. Leadership literature focusses on traits (personal capabilities and skills, personality) and processes (interactivity with followers). Less attention is paid to the sensitive, common sense and intuitive aspect of leadership, in



literature referred to as the aesthetics in leadership. This research will contribute to that part of this leadership theory and -practice and the research question is therefore:

What is the appearance, meaning and added value of aesthetics in the context of leadership

Subquestions are:

- In what way the concept of aesthetics can be operationalized?
- What is the appearance of aesthetics in business leadership?
- In which way the socio-economic context of a leader is of influence in the performance of aesthetic aspects?
- What is the relevancy for management development?

2.3 Methodology

This research aims to reconstruct the grammar, as well in literature as well in leadership practice, of insights and practices to be related to aesthetics in a context of social normative studies. In this research it will be executed predominantly by interviewing leaders in different contexts. The results of both literature and interviews will be used to formulate a construct or grammar on aesthetics in leadership as well as best practices and new components of a leadership profile.

So this research aims on a (re-)construction of that part of grammar in actual leadership practice that might be related to aesthetics in leadership. This is executed in a reconstructive research approach (Berselaar, 2011, p. 154) obtaining to verify mentioned topics in literature, in combination with a grounded theory method in order to score emerging topics in the interviews as well (Berg, 2009).

It is a normative research which means that it has a prescriptive basis derived from classic and contemporary philosophical works. More specific this research reflects on the way aesthetics contributes to establishes good leadership.

All mentioned groups of interviews are characterized by a set of questions in order to gain insight in the phenomenon of aesthetics as experienced by the interviewees, and by that getting access to more generic definitions and opinions as expressed by the interviewees. To a certain extent this is performed as a Socratic method combined with the method of maieutics ('the truth is latent in the mind of every human being') in cases where the dialogue also is used to bring the interview to a higher level of mutual understanding (Wikipedia, 2014). This results in a combination of deductive and inductive reasoning, respectively supporting reconstructive and grounded theory components of the applied research methodology.

Normative research implies the ability to state absolutely what is 'good', for example expressed in a good life or in good leadership and from a viewpoint of what 'ought to be' in stead of what 'appears to be'. It is therefore appropriate in this normative research in which aesthetics as a contribution to good leadership is positioned as the reference. Nevertheless, empiric methods are used to trace back the attendance of these 'ought-to-be' aspects in the current leadership practice. This seems contradictory, indeed empiric methods are used to confirm or to deny 'appears-to-



be' facts, in stead of confirming beliefs or 'ought-to-be' opinions. In literature the special abilities of the Socratic method are explained in this context, namely due to its observed quality that *"Socratic method makes possible a certain kind of knowledge, even objective knowledge, but it does this by radically redefining what it means to call knowledge objective. A belief can be justified in elenchus only if it can be shown to follow from a general, principled account of why we ought to believe it (instead of something else), and this account must be universal in the narrow sense that it cannot merely express my opinion but must be put forward as a reason even a doubter ought to accept. To say that a certain belief is objectively true, then, turns out to mean nothing more or less than to say that it can be defended coherently as objective in elenchus. The test of objectivity, at the most general level, is simply whether or not a reason can be given for favoring one view over another that holds up as a good general reason under withering scrutiny from every competing point of view (Meckstroth, 2012, p. 652).*

Due to its subjective and time-and-place depending character, for reasons that valuing of normative items by individuals and cultures vary in time and place, this research is positioned as a 2014 observation of the appearance of the philosophical phenomenon 'aesthetics'. It is by that limited to the data which are made available during this research and by which a certain appearance of aesthetics will be described, not aiming on generalizing it for a larger group of companies or people.

Normative research itself is also varying in scientific attendance in time, related to varying perspectives on management. Easterby-Smith describes these dynamics by considering periods of dominance of normative theories. These periods are characterized by a classical view of management (1910-1950), a human relations type of management (1940-1970), a competencies related management (1980s) and a process type of management (2000s). Roughly this development in time can also be characterized as the emancipation of the employee: from being a component of a Taylorian production-'machinery' in which *"instinct, intuition and subjective judgement was replaced by a very limited version of rationality"* (Mintzberg, 1989/1998, p. 345), to acknowledgment of respectively motivating people (*tuche*-related), developing their skills (*techne*-related) and developing their active attitude on an individual level and in a social context (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2012, p. 5).

In fact this normative approach tries to be an answer in order to restore aesthetics in leadership which appears to be necessary in 2014 for the same reason as it was indicated by Mintzberg for the Eighties and Nineties when he introduced the 'machine bureaucracy' (for which managing it means that reality is predominantly on paper) as a problem of superficiality in management which lead to a management not capable to guide organizations into new directions and opportunities (Mintzberg, 1989/1998, p. 339). In the wording of 2014 it is that *"a human being learns, but man does not"* as stated by governance-specialist Kees Cools of the Tilburg University in an article in *Het Financieele Dagblad* following a recent Dutch company debacle within the firm Imtech. *"Investors, analysts and the media are always looking for champions, often selected on the basis of rapid growth"*. Financial director Van der Kraats (Randstad group) is surprised that he is never asked by investors how he is 'in control' of his business: *"They just want to be able to calculate the future cash flows and never ask about the risk section"* (Couwenbergh & Eikelenboom, 2014, p. frontpage).



An analysis of leadership has been performed in the description of the Odfjell-case (see paragraph 3.3).

This research focusses on the exploration, in literature as well as in leadership practice, of insights and practices to be related to aesthetics in a context of business administration studies. In this research the exploration will be carried out predominantly by interviewing leaders. The results of both literature and interviews will be used to formulate and construct a grammar on aesthetics in leadership as well as best practices and components for a leadership profile (see chapter 5).

The leader and the leader's perspective are the level or unit of analysis in this research, in which the focal point is set at the driver-side of leadership in stead of the outcome-side of leadership. The driver-side is questioned exploratively by face-to-face interviews in order to be able to judge the authenticity of the given answers, taking into account the possibility of bias by socially accepted answering.

The selection of interviewees in the group of artists is based on their reputation for being succesful and reputed. These interviews are prepared as a slightly semi-standardized interview but turned out to be more of a dialogue due to its explorative emphasize (see annex 4 for semi-standardized interview guidance).

The selection of interviewees in the group of aesthetic leaders is based on personal experience of the author in joint projects, so a judgment could be made of the certain level of aesthetic leadership for those leaders. Due to the explorative character of these dialogues, the form of the unstandardized interview as described by Berg (2009) is used (see annex 2, 3 & 4 for interview guidances).

The selection of interviewees of business leaders has been prepared by representatives of business associations in Buenos Aires and Rotterdam.

2.4 Conceptual framework

As stated, the focus in this research is on the level of the individual leader. In his relation to himself, and to the team and society. The personal attitude, abilities and preferences are obvious in this approach and more generally speaking obvious in man's behavior. The aesthetics might be function as a tool to enable a leader to express 'good' leadership. So aesthetics as an addition to the personality (*tuche*) and skills (*techne*) of a leader, is therefore conceptually positioned in the framework of Hogan & Kaiser.

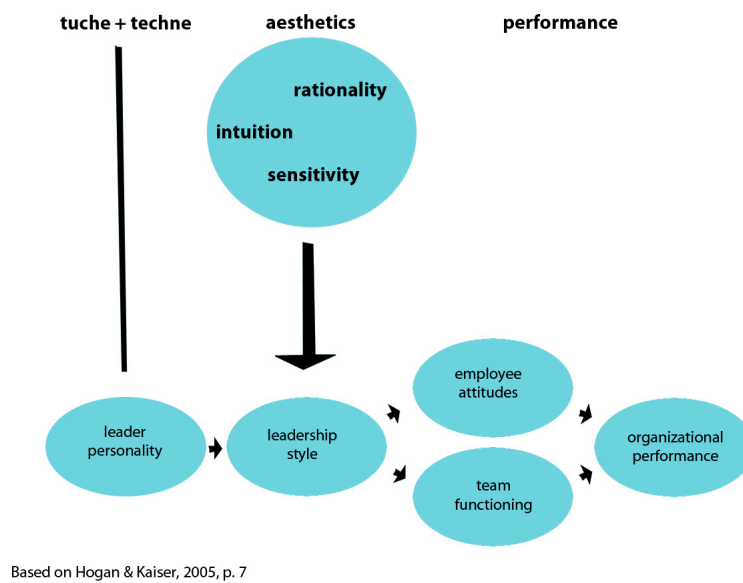
They have done an extended inventory on empiric data for the relation between personality, style and performance. They found that "*first, leadership is a real and vastly consequential phenomenon, perhaps the single most important issue in the human sciences. Second, leadership is about the performance of teams, groups, and organizations. Good leadership promotes effective team and group performance, which in turn enhances the well-being of the incumbents; bad leadership degrades the quality of life for everyone associated with it. Third, personality predicts leadership—who we are is how we lead—and this information can be used to select future leaders or improve the performance of current incumbents*" (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005).

It is obvious that for a complete overview of relevant aspects for organizational performance, this model is insufficient. In the context of this research it nevertheless pays attention mainly to the personality part of leadership which is at the focal point of



the research question.

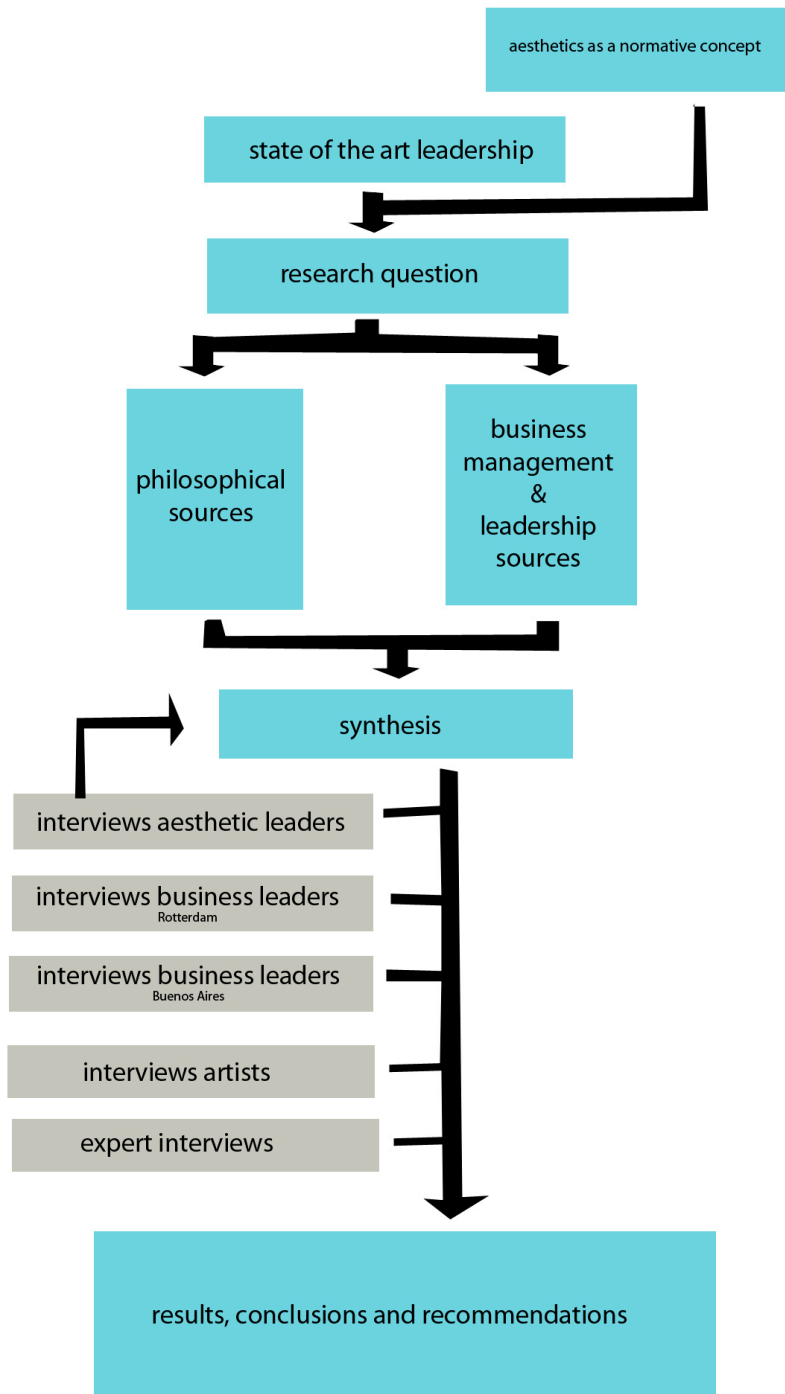
Figure 1 Conceptual framework Aesthetics at the Heart of Leadership





2.5 Research framework

Figure 2 Research Framework Aesthetics at the Heart of Leadership





3 Leadership from a business performance point of view

3.1 Introduction

The taxonomy of leadership styles varies from amongst transactional (flourished in times of industrial revolution and more general nowadays in production tasks), charismatic (flourished in times when empowerment and emancipation was needed and nowadays back in populistic forms to guide the empowered population which is not satisfied anymore) to transformational leadership (flourishing in times when the empowered people are able and willing to co-guide the group, in addition to an often still formal leadership role). For all these styles and types a more or less ideal characterization is given, which puts the leader to some extend on a stage as an almost mythical goddess type of person. This is close to Plato's absolute Ideas but this is quite far from the day to day leadership of a group of people. It is essential to stick to the real world when thinking and writing about leadership. Besides this point in literature little attention is paid to how a leader enacts his leadership behavior (Ladkin D. , 2008, p. 31) (Patrick, 2012), apart from the more implicit aspects related to the 'black box' of personality. The focus on leadership personality as "*a consistent pattern of way of thinking, feeling and acting with regard to the environment, including other people*" (Stech, 2013, p. 319) differs with a focus on leadership style in the way the fit is made with the context, with the environment. In the style approach, the traits of that style suggests that they fit in certain contexts which is to a certain extend adjustable. While in the case of leadership personality it is a matter of fit between the person, the leader, and the context. Adjustments can predominantly be made by a more drastical intervention than just changing your style (entering, leaving and/or changing a team) (Northouse, 2013, p. 319)

So this project starts from the level of the analysis of a human being, given his personality and given the basic drivers for life as Sokrates stated them in Plato's Phaedrus (237B7): "*a human being [...] has two guiding principles: a given desire for lust (hubris), and a taken insight that goes for the best (soofrosune)*". It is in other words the balance to be found in life between *hubris* and *soofrosune*.

Leadership failures are unfortunately abundant, and varied. From a personal leader point of view it may have to do with "*being too busy to win, being too proud to see, and being too afraid to loose*" (Lipkin, 2013, pp. 6-7). Based on my 15 years of experience and observations in management and leadership functions, this might lead respectively to narrow focus on tasks on the short term and loosing the overview in place and time, and to an-aesthesian and non-connected behavior which means a decrease in signals and feedback from the team and loosing coherence.

This may result in different types of failures. In an inventory amongst 1400 CEO's in the United States the biggest failures were listed (Ken Blanchard Companies, 2006):

1. Failing to provide appropriate feedback, especially praise and redirection.
2. Failing to involve others in processes.



3. Failing to use a leadership style that is appropriate to the personnel, task or situation.
4. Failing to set clear and understood goals and objectives.
5. Failing to train and develop their staff.
6. Inappropriate use of communication, especially listening, and a tendency to ignore alternative viewpoints.
7. A tendency to give too much or too little supervision, direction or delegation.
8. A general lack of management skills, such as problem solving, decision making and consensus building.
9. A tendency to provide too little or inappropriate support.
10. A lack of accountability, especially in holding staff accountable for agreed goals and behaviour.

Most of the mentioned failures are a result of insufficient informative, clear and connected relationship within the firm (1-7), while other failures are related to skills and accountability (8-10). Most mentioned failures can also be traced back in the evaluation of the Odfjell case as reported by the Dutch Research Board on Safety OVV (Joustra, Muller, & Meurs, 2013). See paragraph 3.3 for more details.

In a more recent inventory it is pointed out that leadership inadequacies are more common these days. McKinsey's researched leadership development amongst 900 CEO's worldwide and signified several general obstacles which appear to be some kind of universal for contemporary leadership. Awareness of and interfering with the business context, learning by doing (instead of solely training), awareness of the mindset behind behavior, and a proper monitoring of performance were the main findings which were found underestimated in their leadership development programmes (Gurdjian, Halbeisen, & Lane, 2014). In interviews with CEO's from Deutsche Bank, Nissan and Renault, Royal Mail Group and DuPont it was made clear that in the last decade things have changed rapidly due to increasing uncertainty, speed, dynamics and complexity. As an answer to this increasing importance of empathy, sensitivity and gut-feeling is mentioned by the interviewees in order to stay tuned with your team and with society (Barton, Grant, & Horn, 2012).

It can be observed that given the fact that the mentioned failures are related to leadership experiences in recent history they are probably due to an increasing misfit in contemporary requirements for a leadership practice. In literature this issue is addressed in several directions. Rietsema and Watkins point out in their article which position modern leadership on the edge of a new era in leading businesses, the increasing complexity of running a business and performing leadership: *"It is possible that "leadership" as a concept may simply have outlived its usefulness in its various implicit messages of hierarchy, selective application and linearity. In years to come, successful organizations will look at this subject in terms of a "way of being" that transcends individuals and characterizes entire organizations which accept it in a holistic sense while fully embracing change, paradox and complexity as pathways to growth and productivity...and even a greater purpose beyond the needs of the few, embracing the aspirations of all"* (Rietsema & Watkins, 2012, p. 29).

Mary Jo Hatch points out that based on an analysis of interviews in the Harvard Business Review with 90 CEO's, the role of the increasing dynamics in society is changing and



therefore requirements on leadership performance are changing. More than ever creativity and an ethical approach is necessary in business to "*match the pace of change in their competitive environments [...] and to maintain the legitimacy necessary to attract resources*" (Hatch, Kostera, & Kozminski, 2009, p. VI).

A modern leader needs to be therefore an aesthetic leader. The leader must be capable in the broadest sense to guide himself and his followers to achieve the goals which are set for the group. To put it differently: "*What remains evident across the board is that learning organizations where members are "continually learning to see the whole across disciplines and organizational boundaries create the most value"* (Rietsema & Watkins, 2012, p. 26).

In safety sensitive industrial businesses requirements are even more specifically and critically described for the safety culture, given the awareness that one needs an adequate and alert attitude of employees besides technical support to obtain an as safe as possible operation for the good sake of the employees, the company and society (Parker, Lawrie, & Hudson, 2006). The Hearts & Minds method, about 9 dimensions of requirements to the management of the operations, is a widely used analytical method developed by Shell which has also been used in the Rotterdam Rijnmond area recently in describing the state of the art of the safety culture (Zwetsloot & Bezemer, 2012, p. 24). Safety culture in general and this hearts & minds method more specifically seems not to explicitly address explicit personality, competence and/or aesthetics of the executive, leader or manager of the plant. For example Parker relates safety culture to organizational culture without specifying the requirements for leadership in this, apart from that she mentions the importance of attitudes and behaviors (Parker, Lawrie, & Hudson, 2006, p. 553). Leadership is mentioned only in the context of leadership change which might influence the safety culture and therefore requires 'amenability to change' (Parker, Lawrie, & Hudson, 2006, p. 554). For relevant distinctions in organizational culture Parker refers to the work of Westrum about cultural constructs that frustrate or enhance safety culture. As follows:



Figure 3 How different organizations respond to information concerning safety. Westrum (1996) in: (Parker, Lawrie, & Hudson, 2006, p. 554)

Pathological	Bureaucratic	Generative
Information is hidden	Information may be ignored	Information is actively sought
Messengers are “shot”	Messengers are tolerated	Messengers are trained
Responsibilities are shirked	Responsibility is compartmentalised	Responsibilities are shared
Bridging is discouraged	Bridging is allowed but neglected	Bridging is rewarded
Failure is covered up	Organisation is just and merciful	Failure causes inquiry
New ideas are actively crushed	New ideas create problems	New ideas are welcomed

The blind spot in the observation of a leader as a key player (in this example in the context of safety culture), is to an extent confirmed in a report by the Dutch Research board on Safety when reporting an evaluation of research cases in the Netherlands in the last 8 years. General conditions for a good (...) safety culture are mentioned: transparency in the organization, generosity in sharing information and enhancing each others safety role, registration of experiences in procedures, a safe culture for reporting safety issues, and focus on safety by the management of the firm. In this important evaluative report no leader as such is assigned. (Loo, Ipenburg, Verhallen, & Williboordse, 2013, p. 105), despite the fact that “*the leader, as a human being, definitely consults his intuition, emotions and gut feeling in his decisionmaking*” (Roeser, 2010). The leader is therefore a key chain in safety management specifically and in leadership in general.

3.2 Resilience

The mentioned dynamics, complexity and unpredictability of business in general have lead recently to a new developed concept in order to be 'an-aesthetic' for influences. It is called 'resilience' and is defined as “*the capacity of business, economic and social structures to survive, adapt and grow in the face of change and uncertainty related to disturbances, whether they be caused by resource stress, societal stresses and/or acute events*” (Boggemann & Both, 2014, p. 27).

In fact this is the actual reflex to the old classic Platonic issue of life: the unforeseen, to be dealt with *tuche* and *techne*. It is a feature of any complex organism, on the level of the individual body, the team, the firm as well as on society. It is 'installed' in order



to preserve continuity and by that it is an instrumental and practical or tactical and not a moral thing: *"resilience is only a means"* (Albani & Kupers, 2014, p. 46). This resilience-thinking is interesting and relevant in giving an insight in the actual perception and attitude towards the unforeseen. This enables a check with the way Plato thought and as a consequence offers the opportunity on checking the way the classic tools (*tuche*, *techne*) are still the same. As a result relevance and possible lacking of aesthetic aspects can be checked too.

Therefore it is relevant to go into some more detail based on a recent synopsis of state-of-the-art thinking and doing in a business context (Kupers, 2014). It is based on the so-called Resilience Action Initiative which signify three diagnostic levels of resilience: the structural (focus on the system in a company), the integrative (focus on the interaction of the company with its environment and the social capital in the firm) and the transformative resilience (focus on adaptability, distributed governance and self organizing capacity as well as innovation and experimentation) (Albani & Kupers, 2014, p. 42). In the same period of decades the human factor, as said to be an unpredictable and opportunistic aspect, has slowly been diminished from the leadership and management scene in scholarships and thus in the formal settings of boards and management. *"In effect, we have professed that business is reducible can be reduced? to a kind of physics in which even if individual managers play a role., lit can safely be taken as determined by the economic, social, and psychological laws that inevitably shape peoples' actions"* (Ghoshal, 2005, p. 71). In an academic attempt to put leadership and management-aspects into the mathematics and models which are more appropriate in physic sciences, that unpredictable and opportunistic aspects appeared hard to put in a mathematical model. The common sense is then diminishing from the scene: *"Thinking, when it becomes ideological, tends to fixate on concepts rather than doing what is 'natural' to thought, namely, dissolving whatever has taken form"* (Morton, 2007, p. 24). Ultimately it all leads to a poor performance of leaders: *"While ensuring competence, control, and the balance of power among groups [by management] with the potential for rivalry, managerial leadership unfortunately does not necessarily ensure imagination, creativity, or ethical behavior in guiding the destinies of corporations"* (Zaleznik, 1977, p. 74).

So given the requirements of modern society leadership practice as well as leadership scholarship and -education seem under pressure. Leadership is developing and is looking for new tools and instruments to be able to be more complete, more connected, modern and actual in order to meet the challenges of near future. In fact, as an answer to what is mentioned before as degradation of a human being in the role of a leader or manager to a machinery-type of leadership. To say it differently: *"leaders are theorised as disembodied beings"* (Ladkin D. , 2008, p. 31).

The ability to grow from good to great leadership has often been described in literature, mostly from an observative point of view. Some sources tries to explain the mechanisms underneath more thoroughly, as in the concept of the so called 'level 5 leadership' (Collins, 2011). In this article it is signposted that there is something not-common (by someone called 'eccentric') in the way this Level 5 leader is performing. In answering the question how it all can be understood, the 'born or bred' issue is put into position. Near-death experiences and religious revival are mentioned as well, but mentioned most of all is the conclusion that *"Level 5 is a key component inside the black-box of what it takes to shift a company from good to great. Inside that black box is yet another one - the inner development of a person to Level 5 leadership. We could*



speculate on what that inner box might hold, but it would mostly be just: speculation” (Collins, 2011, p. 135).

That inner black box, at least the performance related to that inner black box, has been described as the internal ‘action logic’ which leads to a typology of performance consisting of the 7 actions logics (Opportunist, Diplomat, Expert, Achiever, Individualist, Strategist, Alchemist). But then again how this ‘action logic’ is connected to a kind of leadership Operating System (Koeleman, 2013) is not yet clear (Rooke & Torbert, 2005/2011). That inner black box is a mental one which is implemented in the human mind. It is essentially a cognitive phenomenon (Gardner, 1996).

3.3 Actual business performance, Odfjell as an example

In my current work at DCMR Environmental Protection Agency Rijnmond in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, it is important to keep a safe and sustainable port industrial area where the interests of planet, people and profit are well-balanced. Good leadership in all aspects is then essential for such a safe and sustainable area. More good leadership means less hassle in our area on issues such as safety and environmental pollution. Protection of 1,5 million people on a relatively short distance to the port industries is a priority matter. In 2013 failures occurred in the leadership and the management of a company which stores oil- and oil products. An investigation took place and it became clear that essential basics of organizing the operations were not covered and guaranteed adequately.

It is observed by the Dutch Research Board on Safety (Onderzoeksraad voor de Veiligheid OVV) that Odfjell Rotterdam did not focus on safety and on identifying potential hazardous situations. Their attitude was not based on a self-developed safety culture, and was thus lacking sufficient coordination of safety tasks in the safety management system and was lacking adequate and structured internal auditing on safety. There was a neglect of people in the plant by not giving them adequate training, not giving them sufficient protection and not giving them sufficient professional attention in order to communicate effectively between the employees and the management. As a result the company culture consisted of isles, management by coercion and so called calculating behavior, and no connectiveness and common interests in the company. Due to a lacking of aesthetic insight in operations, technical installations and adjacent risk pattern, there was no aesthetic and adequate base for safety management in the company (Joustra, Muller, & Meurs, 2013, pp. 97-108).

From these selection of leadership- and management notions in the OVV-report, it can be assumed that there was an an-aesthetic and insufficient amount of responsibility in the leadership of the company, a lack of transparency and consistency within the management of the company and a lack of (robust long term) vision on own operations, on business context of operations, and of societal context of operations. There was insufficient focus on short term targets (financial or safe operations) and a lack of connectivity within the company. Finally it appears to be a degree of ‘business anaesthesia’ towards society, authorities, employees and business colleagues, probably related to (the lack of) capabilities in the management team and the leadership. But since the OVV-research did not analyze the CV’s and capabilities of the involved leaders, nothing can be definitely said about that.



management failure

- Not doing what the operations asked for
- Not complying with regulations and certifications
- An-aesthetic and unclear distribution of tasks and responsibilities, in any case for the maintenance of the plant and the safety management of the plant

leadership failure

- Not complying with scope and ambition of their own company QHSE-statement (Quality, Health, Safety, Environment statement)
- Not organizing sufficient attitude of responsibility for operations, the plant and the people ('taken no responsibility for organizing responsibility')
- No active connecting of available insights (not using the experience of employees who work there already for 25 years; not using the insights of the QHSE-manager in the management team) and necessary hierarchic lines and organizational structures in the company (no instructions were given or were impossible, that is not clear, in order to enhance the safety situation of the plant; responsibility was organized an-aesthetic)
- An-aesthetic behavior

In brief the leadership omissions in the Odfjell-case consists of:

- A lack of responsibility
- Insufficient protection of business, people and environment
- Insufficient connectivity inside the company
- Insufficient truth worthy connectivity and communication with the world outside the company
- Inconsistent vision for the companies future

The mentioned failures can be put into a context of leadership requirements. A distinction can be made between traits-requirements and process-requirements. Some of the failures can be related to that. This includes aspects of people interaction and participation and consistency and coherence in the team or group. In other words: aspects of the *form* of the group which makes a group more than just a sum of the components. In a small body of literature these aspects of organizational life is also distinguished as a so-called aesthetic aspect of organizational life (Strati, 2000).

From a societal point of view this example of inadequate and an-aesthetic business performance as illustrated by the Odfjell case is qualified as unacceptable by e.g. local (amongst others Council Rotterdam attn 11 July 2013) and national government (amongst others Dutch Parliament 5 September 2013). It is therefore relevant to analyze the way leadership can contribute to overcome this type of business performance. The Odfjell case makes clear that the leadership is not adequate on the management tasks part and not responsible on the aspect of organizational as well as a societal awareness. The internal and external context has been of limited influence on the overall performance of the Odfjell plant. Leadership context is an important feedback on leadership behavior as well as the performance. It is noteworthy that almost no attention is paid to the quality of and requirements for the people who lead this company. Accountability for the issue is led predominantly at the legal supervisor and politics and surprisingly not at the management in person of the company. This can be observed from a business management literature point of view as well as from the situational Odfjell point of view. For the latter the OVV-report is clear about inconsistencies in operations, management and leadership. It appears to be that is



not clear how to run a business, in this case an industrial business, properly from a business point of view as well from a societal point of view.

Nevertheless, leadership requires to be aesthetic in order to be performed adequately. In literature much attention is paid to signify and distinguish leadership features and styles predominantly based on leadership qualities. They are categorized in a trait-related definition of leadership and a process-related definition of leadership (Northouse, 2013, p. 7). While in literature leadership is widely observed as critical to business performance, there is also a wide range of paradoxically and inconsistent viewpoints on how this can be achieved. "*Contributing to the messy state of the art [of leadership] are controversies about theoretical and methodological issues as well as tensions between the disciplines contributing to leadership studies*" (Klenke, 1993, p. 112). This has recently been confirmed for the role of traits in an analysis of leadership in 28 peer-reviewed academic journals in the period 1999-2008 with studies from China, the European Union, and North America: "*when we examined the leadership traits presented in the literature, we remained confused as to what these findings illustrated about leadership traits and group performance*" (Brocato, Jelen, Schmidt, & Gold, 2011, p. 40).

Based on worldwide research data, the OVV-report on Odfjell and business literature, it can be stated that anno 2014 in current businessleadership performances are not adequate. There are some generic points which occur in a many cases:

- A lack of connection within the company, and with society
- An-aesthetic picture of resources, politics and energy in the firm, as to be used by the leader
- An-aesthetic picture of position and external context of the firm.

This makes a leader, and in fact also a firm, disconnected or an-aesthetized from the real world and from their own (human) resources. This leads to inadequate and mal-timed performance in a multi focussed way, not to say in a chaotic way.

It is questioned to what extent a leader needs to be connected properly to itself, linking rationality, sensitivity and intuition. It might also be determined by the role and perspective. Indeed the leader is as well a professional as a citizen, which might lead to a existential human paradox: as a citizen one prefers sustainable and responsible firms, as a professional one might prefer maximum return on investment, preferably on the short term (Couwenbergh & Eikelenboom, 2014).

It is obvious that connectivity on several levels is essential for adequate operations, as well as generally speaking an aesthetic human set of *tuche*, *techne* and aesthetic behavior of the leader. However this is also determined by the scope and contextual possibilities of the leader. If these are limited, for example when aiming for a short term return on investment as a restricted definition of a 'good' result formulated by investors, this will influence the result.

Some critical notes at the OVV-report

- The OVV-report is not explicit on the requirements for management and leadership for such companies. So related to that, explicit conclusions and recommendations on leadership itself and on the leaders are not part of the report;
- The observations as done in the OVV-report are predominantly instrumental and functional and not attached explicitly to the persons who were responsible in person.



4 Leadership from a philosophical point of view

4.1 Introduction

In this research the works of Plato are used as a universal source of insight into the soul and the organizing of the polis, to put it differently expressed in the leader as a person and as the chief organizer of the polis. Polis is used in the meaning of organization, like a firm or a team. Plato is an appropriate absolute reference to the nature of things (Plato assumes universal Ideas) and the fact that the works of Plato still used in scholarship as a guiding source of insight throughout time confirms this. Besides, Besided Plato is seen as the first scientific and systematic thinker and philosopher in Western culture whose fundamental Ideas and his Socratic technique are an important reference for observing life up to date (Prince, 1992). Here, the analysis of Nussbaum in her work 'The Fragility of Goodness' (Nussbaum, 2001) is used as a guideline by the sequential works of Plato. This is in addition to the subject in itself also relevant because of the fact that thus the so-called revocation which takes place in the work of Plato can be described. The revocation means that according to Plato humanity initially builds from the rational and cognitive characteristics of man (Politeia, Protagoras), subsequently followed by a more human characteristic as an equally important factor for good behavior by man (Hippias Major, Ion, Phaedrus). This revocation is in my opinion also analogous in management literature of the past 30 years. It develops from the purely rational, adequate image of the leader, to a more recent development into onto a societal required new balance of rational and non-rational human properties. Intuition and sensory properties are part of that. This revocation I consider the aestheticism of the human image (Plato) and the leadership image. By that, it also has an impact on the business literature and on the field of business administration. A similar but slightly different development from man to a human being can be traced down in the works of Michel Foucault, especially in the 'Hermeneutics of the Subject' (Foucault, 2005). In this analysis he transfers man from an object to be observed ethnographically or psychologically into a subject from which perspective the world is observed and how the world can be explored by navigation and piloting just for the sake of existence (Foucault, 2005, p. 249). This existential attitude or habit is an essential add, not to say a kind of super-techne, to man leading themself and others.

Plato notes that an existential task of a human being is to deal with the unforeseen, defined as that part of life that cannot be controlled. This is called *tuche*. In order to gain a certain level of control one needs to be crafted to effectively handle the unforeseen. That is knowledge (*episteme*) and competency, so to say that is the *techne*. In leadership literature this can be taken as the personality of the leader and the traits of the leader. Management development is predominantly focussed on developing both, with an emphasis on the latter one. In the context of this leadership research, *techne* is thus a relevant aspect of effectiveness and performance of a leader. It is featured by universality, teachability, precision and concern with explanation. Nussbaum states: "*Techne, then, is a deliberate application of the human*



*intelligence to some part of the world, yielding some control over *tuche*; it is concerned with the management of need and with prediction and control concerning future contingencies. The person who lives by *techne* does not come to each new experience without foresight or resource. He possesses some sort of systematic grasp, some way of ordering the subject matter, that will take him to the new situation well prepared, removed from blind dependence on what happens"* (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 95). Nevertheless, In Ion Plato makes clear what is essential for a good performance (in the case of Ion as an artist). *Tuche* and *techne* then seem to be insufficient and an-aesthetic when Sokrates states that something more is happening than just being a good professional (i.c. sufficient *techne*): *"Then that is how we think of you, Ion, the lovelier way: it's as someone divine, and not as master of a profession, that you are a singer of Homer's praises"* (Plato, Ion, -390/1983, p. 542b). More recently a similar observation is made by French philosopher Michel Foucault with another metaphor: *"The philosophical life, rather, or the life as defined and prescribed by philosophers as the life thanks to *techne*, does not obey a *regula* (a rule): it submits to a *forma* (a form). It is a style of life, a sort of form one gives to one's life. For example, to build a beautiful temple according to the *techne* of architects, one must of course follow some rules, some indispensable technical rules. But the good architect is one who uses enough of his liberty to give the temple a *forma*, a beautiful form"* (Foucault, 2005, p. 233).

4.2 Achieving the 'good', by Martha Nussbaum

Plato postulates in his early works (Phaidon, Politeia, Symposium) emphatically that the ethical learning process will take place by separation of intellect from humanly and bodily aspects. The old Greek takes fate and luck as something situational, asking themselves with how much fate and luck a man can live. This pragmatic viewpoint differs from the more recent and widely implemented Kantian viewpoint that moral values are aesthetically independent of fate and luck. In fact this is the contradiction between respectively 'doing good' and 'being good' including the Aristotelian remark that 'doing just acts without actually being just is better than not doing them at all'. As life can be described as a process of managing the unforeseen, how to deal the '*tuche*' with '*techne*', Nussbaum distinguishes three types of managing the *tuche*: related to individual aspects of a good life which are extra vulnerable for the unforeseen like love and wealth, related to the harmony or conflict between plural aspects of a good life, and the more internal (from a human point of view) vulnerability related to the so-called 'irrational parts of the soul' like feelings and emotions. These parts might lead to *"passions [which] can still figure as sources of disruption, disturbing the agent's rational planning as if from without and producing distortion of judgement, inconstancy or weakness in action"* (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 7). This does not sound like a prosperous perspective for humans in general and for leaders in particular. Nussbaum considers therefore how reason may protect us against the unforeseen, and how that then is related to feelings and perceptions. She signifies the link between these aspects, as the Greek do, as an ethical link. Other authors would signify this link as an aesthetic one (amongst others Bresler & Latta, 2008 and Hansen, Ropo, & Sauer, 2007). For Nussbaum aesthetic and ethic are however synonymous: *"I reject the notion of the aesthetic if it means something distinct from the ethical. When we hear stories as young children, our emotions are responding to the efforts of the characters to live flourishing lives, and thus they are ethical in the broad Aristotelian sense of the term"* (Abbate, 2012). The word aesthetic is indeed barely or hardly used in her book on



ethics 'The Fragility of the Goodness' but is, in my opinion, practically included in what she calls an ethical theory. For Nussbaum this means referring to Aristotle (and contradicting the absoluteness of the early Plato), that "*ethical theorizing proceeds by way of a reflective dialogue between the intuitions and beliefs of the interlocutor, or reader, and a series of complex ethical conceptions, presented for exploration*" (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 10).

In the works mentioned earlier Plato's 'reason' has a dominant position in describing the good life which becomes clear in Protagoras as a 'science of practical reasoning'. However more and more attention is paid in Plato's works to the passionate relations between people. Phaidon, Politeia and Symposium give emerging room to that aspect of living a good life. For Nussbaum it is also essential to pay attention to the earlier Greek tragedies, by which she makes clear that alternative sources of insight like literature give clues because "*to invite such material into the center of an ethical inquiry concerning these problems of practical reason is, then, to add to its content a picture of reason's procedures and problems that could not readily be conveyed in some other form*" (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 14). In this context Nussbaum criticizes the original rationalistic attitude of ethics of the good life as well for the reason that at the end an ethical content will be perceived by cognition through our emotional reflex to this that. It is in fact also a critic that Plato himself states that in Symposium living an independent good life, so without interference of the unforeseen, is a human life which is not aesthetic and which does not give the experience of beauty of a good life. In later works, like Phaedrus, Plato criticizes the an-aesthetic vision on the good life as expressed in his early works more sharply.

It is relevant to deliberate on the fact that the Odfjell-case may be seen as a Greek tragedy for the reason that, following Nussbaum, the case is similar to a situation in which basically good people 'die' for what happens to them 'by accident', by circumstances which are not under their control. Trapped by the unforeseen. This results in a bad performance due to the impossibility of dealing with two conflicting moral duties: the personal interests and ethics and the corporate duties and interests. In fact this is equal to the conflicts in listed companies between interests of the owner and the manager of the firm, which is called in management literature the 'agency-issue'.

Nussbaum already signifies a, what I call aesthetic, dimension in the Greek tragedies. In Antigone the argument of Haemon is not limited and absolute: "*To be flexibly responsive to the world, rather than rigid, is a way of living in the world that allows an acceptable amount of safety and stability while still permitting recognition of the richness of value that is in the world [...] the true way of being humanly civilized requires the preservation of the mystery and specialness of the external, the preservation, in oneself, of the passions that take one to these mysteries [...] for genuine community and cooperation*" (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 81). To say it differently, using one's sensoric and emotional abilities is of added value for living a good life and needs to be added to the techne-orientated life as preferred in Protagoras in order to handle ethical issues in human life. For the reason that in this Protagoras' view of life the problem of the intuitive adherence of man to a plurality of values is not addressed sufficiently while this can't be handled by solely techne, according to Nussbaum.

In Politeia a further development of the idea of 'the good life' leads to a somewhat hybrid viewpoint where reason as well as pleasure are incorporated. Pleasure then is



seen as a result of reason, argued by Plato by the fact that it has a so-called intrinsic value which is depicted by pureness, stability and truth. In this application of the absolute Ideas by Plato, pleasure still contributes to his basic principle that a good life is independent of context and circumstances and is by that ascetic by nature. In *Phaedo* it is still a starting point that life is an exercise in separating the soul from the body, while *Politeia* is more about an instruction on strategies to "turning the soul around from its natural human way of seeing to the correct way" (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 157). The same soul, as Nussbaum observes, that is mentioned by Socrates when he talks about the truth of the 'good': "*This, indeed, is what every soul pursues, and for the sake of this it does everything it does, divining obscurely what it is*" (*Politeia* 505E). Nevertheless Plato's approach is still by reason: "*Our psychology has a natural affinity with the truly good. We find mathematics beautiful and exciting because, by good luck, we fit with real beauty*" (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 161).

In the *Phaedrus* this growing attention to experiences and awarenesses other than just the rationally perceived ones becomes more abundant. 'Mania', as a possessed and so not a mere intellectual activity is introduced by Plato as a relevant aspect of living a good life. It is often connotated in the meaning of madness. A clear point opposite that connotation is made by Verhoeven when he refers to Socrates in the *Phaedrus* indicating that "*most people keep mania for madness or to be confused (parakinon), but they are missing the fact that [by Socrates] it is given by god (enthousiadzoon)*" (Verhoeven, 1967, p. 169). Nussbaum argues that this change is in fact an example of the recantation of Plato by himself expressed in a new view on the importance of feeling, emotion and love in the good life, implying that "sense and emotion are guides towards the good and indices of its presence" (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 215). It is not 'reason' then which is chosen as focal point but the soul of a human being. One expression of the good which is, however set in a aesthetic different context, relevant for a leadership perspective in which leader and follower are connected in order to achieve a quality of leading that is more than the separated parts together. In a beautiful metaphoric love story Plato describes the ability 'to let grow the wings of the soul', as an indication of the presence of beauty and as a step ahead to gain real insight in life. "*Receiving the other person's soul, allowing to melt the hard or impassive parts of him, he feels the sudden release of pent-up liquid within him, which makes of him another flowing, liquid light.[...] So transformed, he begins to have access to insights that are not available within the dry life of the non-lover. He would not have had them if he had remained very similar to the form*" (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 217). For Plato forms have to do with logical and ethical concepts in which he makes a distinction between forms on the common nature of a defined group of individuals and the abstract characteristics "*like beauty or equality or greatness*" (Rogers, 1935, p. 518).

Nussbaum furthermore concludes from Plato's love stories in *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* that it is not only a matter of gaining insight but also a matter of personal growth: "*Their search for understanding and goodness is accomplished, throughout life, in the context of a particular relationship with an individual whose distinctive character is nourished within it*". However, introducing 'mania' in the good life is not without consequences: "*The lovers have continually to struggle against inappropriate inclinations, to expend psychic effort in order to hit on what is appropriate*" (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 221). So introducing the irrational aspects of a good life leads to a more rich as well as a more complex good life, expressed beautifully by Socrates in a prayer to Pan the mad erotic god, son of Hermes god of luck, "*asking for a beautiful inside and an outside that will be loved by that inside*" (*Phaedrus* 279B-C, in (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 233).



So what can be concluded about this deliberation on living the good life as observed by Nussbaum in the works of Plato? It is a result of a phenomenon which is called 'sumfutos dunamis' in the Phaedrus: a power naturally grown-together, built up by the supportive cooperation of the non-rational aspects which are needed to reach the destination which is chosen by our reason. This does not mean that every human being will achieve this 'sumfutos dunamis' positively. Nussbaum makes clear that one needs to be of good nature and introduces a subtle distinction between the ethical and the aesthetical, which distinction she basically opposes: *"In people of good nature and training, the sensual and appetitive responds is linked with, and arouses, complicated emotions of fear, awe, and respect, which themselves develop and educate the personality as a whole, making it both more discriminating and more receptive. The role of emotion and appetite as guides is motivational: they move the whole person towards the good. But it is also cognitive: for they give the whole person information as to where goodness and beauty are, searching out and selecting, themselves the beautiful objects. They have in themselves, well trained, a sense of value. We advance towards understanding by pursuing and attending to our complex appetitive/emotional responses to the beautiful; it would not have accessible to intellect alone"* (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 215).

This, in fact, is the guiding light in this research and the definition of aesthetic leadership, in which aesthetics are at the heart of.

Society is becoming more dynamic and more complex, which leads to a more demanding leadershiprole. Nevertheless, managers and leaders are still mostly educated in a very specific idea of management and leadership [quote Milton Friedman invoegen uit Ghoshal]. Leadership scholarship, and as a result of that the leadership practice as generated by double hermeuneutics (i.c. the self-fulfilling leadership theory), has developed in the past 40 years from a pluriform approach to an almost one-dimensional focussed management-type of leadership. *"What started off as an entirely justified effort for introducing the scholarship of discovery to the research of business has ended up in the excess of eliminating all other forms of scholarship [ie scholarship of integration, practice and teaching] from the world of the businessschool"* (Ghoshal, 2005, p. 82).

lit must also be said that paying aesthetic attention to the mentioned increased dynamics in society and thus in leadership it is still not an easy default neither from an entrepreneurial point of view. Nassim Taleb, a former trader on the stock exchange and these days a sharp analyst on human behavior in business, observes that *"since my heart does not seem to agree with my brain [which tells him to act according to strategies, and set his emotions in accordance with the trading results], I need to take serious action to avoid making irrational trading decisions, namely, by denying myself access to my performance report unless it hits a predetermined threshold. This is no difference from the divorce between my brain and my apetite when it comes to the consumption of chocolate. I generally deal with it by ascertaining that there are no chocolate boxes under my trading desk"* (Taleb, Fooled by Randomness, 2004, p. 232)

Nussbaum concludes, with Sokrates (in 356C-E), that a procedure is needed to be able to make clear and above all systematic choices in order to achieve the 'good' and to be in control (page 161). She expresses this fuzzyness of the soul to the domain of tuche:



1 The attachment of people to fragile objects and activities resulting in the receptivity for contingency/coincidence [check welk woord nussbaum gebruikt]. "He does not know or control his future", states Nussbaum (page 161).

To what extent is for example a leader attached to his personal position, to short-term corporate results in a volatile market, and to the behavior of shareholders? Indeed none of them are fully in control of an individual leader.

2 The pluriformity of values to be achieved, without a clue on priority or interrelated conflicts.

Is for example a leader able (existential) and capable (does he has the skills) to lead his firm economically profitable and societal good at the same time?

3 The influence of basic motivators like passion and emotion which undermines the original plan.

Is for example a leader strong enough to neglect the opportunity to gain high benefits on the short term, in favour of a more sustaining performance of the firm?

These are the diseases which need to be treated. These are in fact the components of the Greek tragedy. "The right techne for making choices appears to be the techne which can treat these diseases", says Nussbaum (page 161).

Techne enables us to overcome the problems with tuche, as illustrated in the story of Protagoras. "He [Protagoras] has shown us thoroughly the identity and ways of life of a species are formed by the arts and abilities it possesses" (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 106).

The way it succeeds depends not only on the capacities and capabilities of the techne, but also on the level of conservatism as illustrated in the story of Protagoras: "Sometimes [...] as with the gifts of Zeus, the art will so deeply transform ways of life that we will feel that it has created a new type of creature. If, then, we contemplate curing our current ethical diseases by a new art, we must imagine [...] the life that we will live with this new art and the aims and ends that go with it. For we may not want a radical solution, if its cost will be to be no longer human. This would hardly count as saving our lives" (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 106).

4.3 'Kalon' in the Hippias Major

Within the context of aesthetics, Plato's Hippias Major is a dialogue about 'kalon', a ancient Greek word which is variedly translated through times as 'beautiful', 'noble' and 'fine', amongst others. Translators make a clear point of the consequences of a chosen translation: while 'beautiful' focusses on the more trivial visual quality of an object, does for example 'fine' associates more with value in the meaning of a value of consistency, like a good design or construction, a consistent and coherent speech or an 'everything-fits' event. In the formulation of Sokrates in Plato's Hippias Major it means that things are fine when they are "appropriate, functional, beneficial and to be enjoyed by ear and/or eye" (Plato, Hippias Major, - 390 / 1983). The Hippias Major is acknowledged as a genuine Plato piece of work which is an important take-off for the ontology on the theory of Forms by Plato. In the Hippias "He [Socrates] supposes that the fine is a form and that it is something, an unchanging nature. He does not go beyond this to ask how such natures fit into a general ontological theory; nor does he



state or presuppose the most distinctive doctrines of the theory of Forms" (Plato, Hippias Major, - 390 / 1983, p. 44).

The dialogue as a whole is a little conflicting and unsatisfying for both people involved, but within this to some extent dialectique dialogue insights develop en become available. A dominant and dialectique part of the dialogue is the disagreement of the meaning of *kalos*, which is understood (and translated) mostly as 'fine', and sometimes in 'good' or 'beautiful', depending on context (Plato, Hippias Major, - 390 / 1983, p. 49). (Hoerber & Kyne, 1955)

"And to this very day, Socrates, you aren't able to answer the question about the fine, what it is. [...] We had a grip on it just now when we replied that gold is fine for things it's appropriate to, but not for those it's not. And anything well is fine if this has been added to it: this, the appropriate itself - the nature of the appropriate itself. See if it turns out to be the fine". (293C-E). Socrates replies: "Therefore, if the appropriate is what make things fine, it would be the fine we're looking for, but I would not be what makes things be seen to be fine. Or, if the appropriate is what make things be seen to be fine, it wouldn't be the fine we're looking for". (294E). It is in this statement that Socrates clarify the distinction, in his opinion, between the inner beauty and fine and the outer beauty and fine "because that makes things be" (294E). So he add a somewhat existential dimension to the () beauty. On a meta-level this distinction is also the case for the Hippias Major itself were "Plato itself has striven hard to unite the two halves of his own personality, the two Socrates, and the inwardly beautiful Socrates with the outwardly beautiful Hippias in order to create one beautiful work of art: The Hippias Major" (Sider, 1977, p. 470)

He then focusses on the authenticity of the fine, *"the nature it's got"* (295E) and expresses that to the aspect of beauty and fine called usefulness. Then he makes an important statement which broadens the scope of the fine: *"then that's the way fine bodies and fine customs and wisdom and everything we mentioned [...] are fine - because they're beneficial", and he continues with "but the beneficial is the the maker of the good" so "the fine is is a cause of the good" (296E) and "it would follow that the fine is a kind of father of the good" (297B).* By which he relates beauty/fine, as an antecedent, to ethics and morality.

Finally Socrates adds a sensory aspect by concluding that *"this is what we say is fine, the part of the pleasant that comes by sight and hearing"* (299B).

Thus Socrates emphasizes on what intrinsically makes things fine, in stead of the only sensible or visible cosmetic fine which is of no value in his perception other than just looking fine. He is looking for a construct of the fine, and Hippias does not help him so much. *"But we shouldn't let it go yet, my friend. I still have some hope that the fine will make itself be seen for what it is"* (295A). And there they go...

What has been made fine, is a fine thing (a fine pot made by a good potter, 288D-E), as an example of craftsmanship. Fine is a relative thing, compared to context (like *"the wisest of men is seen to be an monkey compared to god in wisdom and fineness and everything else"* 289B). Thus fine can be foul, depending on the context. And vice versa. It might be just a matter of beautifying to create the fine when Hippias states that *"because we all know, don't we, that wherever that is added, even if it was seen to be foul before, it will be seen to be fine when it has been beautified with gold"* (289E). Which is opposed by Socrates. They agree on *"whatever is appropriate to each*



thing makes that particular thing fine" (290D). But a more absolute definition is needed for Socrates when Hippias expresses his perception of Socrates' need: "I think you are looking for an answer that says the fine is the sort of thing that will never be seen to be foul for anyone, anywhere, at any time" (291D).

So Hippias' attempts to describe beauty are limited to a level of superficial materialism (with examples as a beautiful woman, gold, and wealth in general). So to say things who are looking fine. It does not satisfy Socrates and he suggests some more fundamental and intrinsic examples of the fine and the beauty: appropriateness, functionality, beneficiality and the sensory aspect of the eye and the ear (Hoerber & Kyne, 1955, p. 183)

The Hippias Major expresses an ancient dialogue which can be put easily to an actual setting in leadership: the leader (Socrates) surrounded by consultants (the sophist Hippias) who are telling a truth in order to enable the leader to navigate through unpredictable time and space: the everyday business issues.

But in this case the consultant is not understanding and therefore not helping the leader. First a huge deviation becomes clear in the perceived importance and relevance of the 'fine' when Socrates asks Hippias: *"Teach me enough about what the fine is itself, and try to answer me with the greatest precision possible, [...] Of course you know it clearly; it would be a pretty small bit of learning out of the many things you know"*. And Hippias replies: *"Small indeed, Socrates, and not worth a thing, as they say" (286E).*

It can also be put in the perspective of two leaders with two, different, visions. Hippias is a leader when he teaches, which he confirms when Socrates asks him: *"Tell me, isn't the wisdom you have the sort that makes those who research and learn it stronger in virtue?" (283C).* His purpose in teaching and exploring his wisdom becomes clear when Socrates states that *"either Gorgias or Prodicus made more money out of wisdom than any other craftsman made from any skill whatever. And Protagoras did the same even earlier"*. Hippias replies then with: *"Socrates, you haven't the slightest idea how fine this can be. If you know how much money I've made, you'd be amazed. [...] I made much more than a hundred and fifty minas in a short time - and from one very small place, Inycum, more than twenty minas. When I went home with this I gave it to my father, so that he and the other citizens were amazed and thunderstruck. And I almost think I've made more money than any other two sophists you like put together"*. Socrates is to a certain extent impressed by this proven competence of Hippias and says: *"That's a fine thing to say, Hippias, strong evidence of your own and modern wisdom, and of the superiority of men nowadays over the ancients" (282D-283A).*

Hippias so is an acknowledged, knowledgeable and crafted leader in his teaching. His results are made measurable in the amount of money he gains. Nevertheless does that not guarantee a full access to markets to consult in: formal-cultural limitations of the Spartans mean that he may not teach there, despite his track record (284C).

It also can be said that the respective visions on the operationalability of the 'fine' are far ahead as illustrated in the final dialogue when Hippias states: *"But here's what is fine and worth a lot: to be able to present a speech well and finely, in court or council or any other authority to whom you give the speech, to convince them and go home carrying not the smallest but the greatest of prizes, the successful defense of yourself,*



your property, and friends. One should stick to that" (304B). But Socrates is not convinced about this 'success of competence' or 'success of techne' to put it in a context of Nussbaum: "*How will you know whose speech - or any other action - is finely presented or not, when you are ignorant of the fine? [...]*" "*What's fine is hard - I think I know that*" (304E).

So they do not agree finally on the meaning and the impact of *fine*.

Why want Socrates know this all? It empowers him to defend the 'good', while defending an argument risking to be refuted (287E-288B). As is the position of bringing a perspective of aesthetics in the modernistic management ambience.

So the 'good' has been defined clearly by Plato: It is a combination of appropriateness, functionality, beneficiality and the sensory aspect of the eye and the ear.

4.4 'Good' conditions for aesthetic leadership

4.4.1 Craftmanship

Beauty appeals to the aesthetic mechanisms of man, the artist stimulates the aesthetics. The triggered aesthetic generates a more aesthetic person. For a leader, his followers and the products generated are then the artwork, and for the followers the leader functions as artwork. The interaction is there.

The leader as well as the followers fill in their being artwork by being energetic, visionary, inspirational, decisive, which address them interacting at their aesthetic behavior. Giving is receiving, driven by enthusiasm.

And this interaction leads to a dynamic state of mind and society in which "people identify themselves with the values and standards which make conversation possible [...] This more deep insight points out, why there is a continuous progress in history. Man learns to know himself better and better" (Oosterling, 2013, pp. 340-341), which "*eventually achieves a more comprehensive identity: a structurally balanced insight into a new society*" as a result of dialectics (Oosterling, 2013, p. 352). In fact, this can be seen as a consequence of aesthetic behavior: interacting by using a mix of sensory, cognitive and intuitive attitude. Another result or competence is then the ability to generate (or better: to experience) internal and external feedback. Feedback is essential in preventing from so-called double binds or contradictions as described by Bateson (in (Oosterling, 2013, p. 369)): diverting judgements due to diverting contexts. Aesthetic skills are thus useful in being able to be sensitive and connected to the context which might be a team, a society, in fact also to yourself. Aesthetics facilitates that is given through the cohesion of people, interests, and things and generates more knowledge. This is postulated by Kevin Kelly as "*knowledge thus is a network phenomenon in which every fact is a nudge. We not only say that knowledge increases by increasing the amount of facts, but also (and more often) if the amount and the strength of the relations between facts increase. Knowledge derives its strength from those relationships*" (in: (Oosterling, 2013, p. 372)). This interconnectiveness is in a far more developed state in by Sloterdijk ('antropotechnique') and Oosterling ('radical mediocracy') it is criticized as a state which is dominated by (technical) media which might lead to the situation that "*the psyche is embedded technologically in the media*" (Oosterling, 2013, p. 372). Instrumentalization of aesthetics, which is the case in these viewpoints, seems therefore to have limits. In this



research the focus on the instrumentalization of the aesthetics is limited to the human level.

Bateson, Morton as well as Oosterling conceptualize this aspect in the ecological of life. It's the combination of a social, physical and mental power which enable people to do better and feel better. This is the ECO3 concept of Oosterling (Oosterling, 2013).

In Romantic times artistic and aesthetic experiences became available to the general public enabling them to the ideal, the highest, the profound. So the aesthetic experience became a mental travelling device, appealing to the (emotional, psychological) needs of human beings. The art follows this dramatically, materializing 'das ganz Andere': "*the radiant Jenseits as compensation for the cheerless Diesseits*" (Ovink, 1956, p. 6). Art gets an almost religious status, and the artist is the priest of magic and mysteries. For example, for Jung the artist is the one who is connected to the collective subconscious which enables him to anticipate intuitively to progression and development which is autonomous in its forcefulness. This all makes the distinction between the artist and the not-artist even bigger. The subconsciousness was in those days, "an intellectual product of a rationalistic, materialistic and mechanistic era" (Ovink, 1956, p. 7) and makes clear that apparently there was an intellectual need for distinguishing the obvious, factual, measurable from an evident but hard to understand phenomenon. Ovink marks this development as an attempt to restore the lost unity of man and as a confirmation of the inner conflict of man (Ovink, 1956, p. 7). By that the artist is an isolated person, and the connection between the artist and art in society need to be restored. As happened in the 20th century gradually by introducing arts and crafts movement by William Morris.

4.4.2 *Interconnection on three levels*

To gain insight in that almost magical connection between the Ideas and performance, the inner and the outer, the object and the subject, the conscious and the unconscious, the rational and the non-rational, this what is this? will be explored. The main question to be answered is the amount and nature of substance which is given to the process of interconnectiveness, of relationship. Amongst others Morton, Jung, Hegel and Deleuze and Guattari will be checked for that. From a business administration point of view analysis needs synthesis in order to be operationalized. The philosophical inventory is combined with recent publications on the issue related to leadership and management in business.

The parrhesiast is an interconnected human being, which means a body (to say it with Morton (Morton, 2007) in which rationality, sensitivity and intuition are connected as an aesthetic construct (Bresler & Latta, 2008, p. 12). Continuity of leadership is, following the approach of Oosterling, then determined by parrhesia and selfcare. This is the first level of three of aesthetics I introduce in this research.

The leader acts in a context (team, organization) which is signified by Morton as 'the field'. The authentic organization would, in analogy with the authentic human being, be interconnected to be strong and robust. For as well the leader as the followers a logic consequence (and condition) counts that he is "in his will to heal for other people integer, in his will to know credible, and in his will to power veritable" (Oosterling, 2013, p. 398). This is the second level of aesthetics in this research.



A third level of aesthetics, the relation to the surrounding market and world, is only briefly addressed in this research for the reason that the focus is more on leadership in the team, and less on the impact of that construct on society.

What is said on that almost magical interconnecting between natural things? Different authors have written it down put that in different words, nevertheless collectively attempting to define or disclose the machinery on this relational aspect of aesthetics. As already explained, relations in the context of aesthetics and leadership are observed on three levels of the intra- and interpersonal. Besides this the relation in a territorial/geographical context is observed, as like in a map. As in Like water does not stream from high to low but thanks to potential differences so a leader and a team has 'flow' due to the availability/occurrence of a medium in which this can take place. It might also be put in the 'potential difference' between the object and the subject. Moron stated that for aesthetics a distance is required. The interconnectivity is thus an ambiance, an in-between circumstance. It's the dialogue that occurs from it and in it, which is signified as 'aesthetic' by Morton (Morton, 2007, p. 67).

4.4.3 Truth

In this essay I choose the perspective of a leader as an authentic person who gives substance together with his people to the obligations and aims of the organization in which he is acting. Authenticity thus as a condition for responsible leadership. within this perspective the leader is not an instrument, a tool or an agency for targets from third parties. In my idea of the authentic leader ultimately is the one who has incorporated aims in himself? his self. Leadership in literature is often described as an instrument to the organization or firm, as 'techne' to the organization. Leadership engagement is then mainly instrumental. In fact, a leader is in his authenticity predominantly a personality with 'tuche', and supports himself with tools, with skills, with 'techne'. Having said this, the consequence of being an authentic leader is to be transparent, to say that thinking and doing are aligned. This reflects on the ideas of Plato when considering a good human being [check sources in Nussbaum]. A good human being is at least a parresiast, a truthfully speaking human being. Which may contribute to a strong and robust attitude to the outer world as Oosterling states: "*embodying of and living to the explicitated truth [is] a guarantee not to be crushed by third party power*". (Oosterling, 2013, p. 398)

Truth is relational (Oosterling, 2013, p. 399) and therefore determinative for the ones who are involved in that relation. This is less Platonian and more Aristotelian, because? Plato sees Truth as an absolute Idea. Truth is ultimately a collective embodying of a group (Oosterling, 2013, p. 400) and by that the agency for which a leader and his group do their job. Their self-declared agency. This collective embodying of a group has been placed in the context of a collective unconsciousness by Carl Gustav Jung (Jung, 1987) when he referred to the alchemy as important for the process of individuation, Jung's idea of the road to your aesthetic Self. The alchemy, a philosophical tradition as old as the Greek philosophers, in Jung's psychoanalytical context is of use in this research for the fact that it is taken as a kind of metaphor to become a aesthetic human being, symbolized by the so-called philosopher's stone. It is also relevant for the reason that the alchemy, as one of the old western sciences together with western astrology and magic, is representing the idea of the unity and connectivity of things up (metaphysical) and down (earthly) in human life (Wikipedia_Emerald_Tablet, 2014). More specifically, in the alchemistic purification



process 7 (or 12, depending on sources) steps are distinguished in order to reach the the enlightened Self, body and soul are becomen one. The fourth step, called conjunction, resembles the generation of the 'small philosopers' stone' by a reunification of sense and sensibility. This is also called by alchemists 'the marriage of the king and the queen' (Wikipedia_Alchemy, 2014).

The relevance of the collective unconsciousness is assessed alternatively in the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari. They mention, from a desire point of view (in stead of the Kantian reason point of view), the transfer of the individual unconsciousness to the collective one which is "specific to historically-situated groups and institutions rather than eternal or universal" and based on "a specific set of syntheses to process or constitute experience" in which a 'logic' is assumed in the way "*the unconsciousness and the bodily forces [are] animating its syntheses*" (Holland, 2013, pp. 6-7). This 'logic' is identified alternatively by Hegel in the context of the Beautiful. The Beautiful as transcendence, as bridging, is essential because of a "joint ownership of what else in our consciousness is presupposed as separate. This separation appears in the Beautiful diminished to sense that the general and the particular, purpose and means, understanding and object, perfectly penetrate each other" (Hegel, 2012/1835, p. 95). This is put in a more operational context by Alain de Botton in his Art is Therapy exhibition at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (together with John Armstrong; April-September 2014, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam Holland) when he observes that "*[the modern world] lacks the ability [as understood very well by religion] to unite the Beautiful with the Truth, in an attempt to make concepts and views of life more attractive and appealing and therefore more effective*". In fact de Botton indicates the functionality of beauty as important component in an aesthetic interface/process/procedure/system. He concludes his article with a notion of suboptimal use of culture in development and change of society (Botton, 2014).

So the Philosophers' Stone, the Logic and the Beautiful are signposted as three different illustrations of interconnectivity of metaphysical human properties in order to become a aesthetic human being.

4.4.4 Moderation and balance

"For, while the limits of the domain of the lower animals are sharply defined by their merely corporeal needs of nutrition and reproduction, man was created a being absolutely unlimited in his needs, his possibilities and his desires. Neither by nature, nor by his own reason, are limits pre-scribed to his infinity:- "In nothing is man able to limit himself to his actual necessities; of pleasure, of riches, of knowledge, he grasps at more than he can hold; his greed is incapable of moderation."

For the essayist, at least, the corollary is obvious. Since this appetite for knowledge and self-aggrandizement, coupled with the ability to satisfy it in a greater or less degree, is, in no case, more than simply a natural and inherent instinct, small credit shall it be to him if he blindly obey that instinct; for in so doing, he merely places himself on the level of the unreasoning brutes, and sets his own vaunted powers of reason and will at naught. The highest and only test of his superiority must therefore lie in his ability to dominate and master his natural heritage of ambition and curiosity; consistent moderation, expressed by the voluntary repression of his most cherished aims, must constitute his sole claim to credit at the hands of true philosophy: "The virtue of the soul does not consist in flying high, but in walking orderly; its grandeur does not exercise itself in grandeur but in mediocrity; nor so much in mounting and pressing forward, as in knowing how to govern and circumscribe itself



....*demonstrating itself better in moderation than in eminence*", as Montaigne is quoted in : (Truerlood, 1906, p. 223).

Moderation appears to be key to governance and selfgovernance by staying as close as possible to the self, to the subject. Foucault mentions these viewpoints of Montaigne as "an attempt to reconstitute an aesthetics and an ethics of the self" (Foucault, 2005, p. 251) which is related to the theme of the return to the self. From a leadership point of view, as it is the topic of this research, the care of the self (*epimeleia heautou*), the knowledge of the self (*gnothi seauton*) and the synthesis between those two. Foucault distinguishes three models for that synthesis, a Platonic (focussed on recollection), a Christian (focussed on exegesis) and a Hellenistic model (focussed on 'converting to the self'). The Platonic model is constructed around becoming aware of the ignorance of the self, implicitly given the fact that by recollection an entrance to and the rediscovery of the Ideas of being human is appearing. The Christian model confronts this approach by introducing the Soul as the source for nature and life pulses which coaches the self. The Hellenistic model is just aiming on the subject, addressing the self as an autonome entity and by that legitimization of the self as the self. In stead of the self as an representative of Ideas (Platonic Model) or Nature (Christian Model). However not feeling the necessity of making a choice for one model in this research, the focus will be on the Platonic model given the fact that the idea of aesthetics at the heart of leadership is based on an Idea of being good and doing good which needs to be disclosed in the context of (aesthetic) leadership. Especially the interviews with the so-called aesthetic leaders made clear that becoming aware of the ignorance of the existence of an aesthetics in life and leadership was a universal and an empowering experience for interviewees and interviewer.

So in brief, in the Platonic model the relation between the self-knowledge and the care of the self is about ignorance, knowing oneself, and recollection. Recollection is in fact the meeting point of the other two aspects, and by that "the soul discovers what it is by recalling what it has seen" (Foucault, 2005, p. 255). This in fact is the construction of an aesthetics of the self while it interconnects rationality and cognition ('discovers') with sensory ('what it has seen') and intuition ('recalling').

"As a result of both philosophical writings and extensive empirical work in psychology and biology, we are now wiser and more sophisticated about the cognitive dimensions of aesthetics, dimensions that can be applied to the aesthetic dimensions of scientific inquiry. Age-old questions, raised by scholars from Pythagoras and Aristotle to Hegel and Nietzsche and later to the cognitive revolution of the late 1950s concerning the type of cognition involved in the arts, are now reemerging within the context of the social sciences and the humanities, discussing the contributions of aesthetics to scholarship. Following John Dewey's work during the early 20th century and scholars such as Suzanne Langer, Nelson Goodman, and Harry Broudy, who contributed to the cognitive revolution of the late 1950s and the 1960s, aesthetics pointed to the interconnectedness of perception, thinking, and feeling" (Bresler & Latta, 2008, p. 4)

4.4.5 *The care of the Self*

The care of the self is an important phenomenon in historic development of the search for truth and parrhesia. First Foucault states that "*the epimeleia heautou (care of the self) designates precisely the set of conditions of spirituality, the set of transformations of the self, that are the necessary conditions for having access to the*



truth" (Foucault, 2005, p. 17). But this is not a static situation. Foucault postulates that a part of this pattern is a process of 'conversion to oneself' which implies a return to the self. Foucault expresses this 'moving' as a journey which will be done by navigating (which implies an aim, an objective, a theme of homecoming and safety, and dealing with unforeseen risks). He launches the idea of piloting as 'a theoretical and practical technique necessary to existence' which implies 'curing, leading others and governing oneself' by respectively medicines, political government and the government of oneself (Foucault, 2005, p. 249).

So philosophically speaking this is an important fundament, a basis and a kind of track, for human life in general, for every individual human being, and thus for everyone who is leading himself and is leading others. By that leadership is, as life, a search for truth, to be reached by parrhesia and found in the search for the self which enables the care for the self, which implies the care for others (niet helemaal te volgen). This self, this undesigned and basically more or less spontaneously occurring self, is in fact *tuche* which needs to be supported by knowledge and craftsmanship in order to make the journey. This is the *techne*. But *techne* is just *techne*, knowledge and practices in order to do tasks properly. In the context of leadership, it are the traits and competences. The earlier mentioned aesthetics in the meaning of Bresler & Latta (2008) are then an essential add to *tuche* and *techne*.

In three domains aesthetics are subject to mechanisms and processes which signify a revolutionary change: by signposting a return (Foucault; care of the self), a recantation (Nussbaum; about Plato who reflects differently on his former rationalistic image of man) and a rethink in business management (Ghoshal).

4.4.6 *The leader as an artist*

A leader is a performer, as an artist is. Art has been always an important signifier, and sometimes precursor, for societal development. This is related to the special position (sovereign channel), resource (inspiration) and attitude (sensor) of the artist in general. Beauty has within the art-historical context has always been controversial as beauty is seen as eccentric within the context of business administration. In this perspective a distinction is made in art history in the 'classical' approach, the 'romantic' approach and the 'reluctant' approach (Den Hartog Jager, 2012). The classic approach is the least relevant for the business administration context while this includes the fact that it cannot be realized by humans.

The artist is leading himself in combining rational, sensory and intuitive informations and insights in order to achieve a realization and materialization of his own ideas. In a way that it is more than just high-level craftsmanship. As Sokrates states to Ion, about his beautiful performances of the poets of Homer: "*it's as someone divine, and not as master of a profession, that you are a singer of Homer's praises*" (Ion 542B; in: (Plato, Ion, -390/1983, p. 35). In fact being a poet or an artist is a privileged and a special task which is not so much human: "*I think, the god is showing us, so that we would be in no doubt about it, that these beautiful poems are not human, not even from human beings, but are divine and from gods; that poets are nothing but representatives of the gods, possessed by whoever possesses them*" (Ion 534E in: (Plato, Ion, -390/1983, p. 26) and "*you see, it's not mastery that enables them to speak those verses, but a divine power, since if they knew how to speak beautifully on one type of poetry by mastering the subject, they could do so for all the others also. That's why the god takes their*



intellect away from them when he uses them as his servants [...] (Ion 534C in: (Plato, Ion, -390/1983, p. 26).

This viewpoint of Plato has continued to recent times: In a letter dated January 1914 the Dutch painter Piet Mondriaan stated that *"by not saying or telling something human, by aesthetic ignoring of the self, only than the artwork arise as a monument of Beauty: above all what is human; and at the same time human in its depth and generality"* (Kleijn, 2014, p. 46). Working the other way around is different as Oosterling states that *"to spiritualize mastery or craftsmanship is probably a somewhat too artificial exertion"*, observing that in literature (ic Sloterdijk) a relation between craftsmanship and devotion is signified (Oosterling, 2013, p. 412).

4.4.7 Management development

Within the context of this research the aspect of management development is focussed on the ability to develop an adequate balance between the rational, the sensitive and the intuitive. As it became clear from as well Plato, Nussbaum and others that the rational is essentially related to sensitivity and intuition and vice versa, the intellectual, to say rational, attitude of business man seemed and still seems to be key for a proper management performance. A human being is nevertheless unable to function socially and practically just by using his rationality solely. This is made clear in the scientific works of Antonio Damasio, a portuguese leading neuroscientist who has criticized largely the viewpoints of Descartes about his 'misunderstanding' of the role that feelings and intuition play in people's life and decisionmaking besides rationality. He introduced the so called 'somatic marker hypothesis' which is a theory about how emotions are involved in decision-making (consciously and non-consciously, positively and negatively). He states that *"when emotion is entirely left out of the reasoning picture, as happens in certain neurological conditions, reason turns out to be even more flawed than when emotion plays bad tricks on our decisions"* (Damasio, 2006/1994, p. xviii)

This confirms from a neuroscientific viewpoint the opinions of several scholars of management publications in which they observe that leadership is a matter of a aesthetic functioning human being (Ladkin, Hansen, Zaleznik, Ghoshal, ao).

So this construct of rationality, sensitivity and intuition needs to be addressed aesthetically and interconnectively when developing people in general and managers and leaders specifically. This aspect of connectivity, to be connected (with the self, with people, with society) is further given depth in the works of John Dewey (1859-1952), a well reputed American philosopher, who is seen as a member of the 'pragmatist movement' in American philosophy and who has been focussed to the aesthetic dimension of experience. In his view 'experience is a process in nature; it embraces potentialities as well as immediate actualities; it can be civilized or cultivated through education, whereby one becomes a participant in a social world [...] it can develop continuously rather than be suffered from moment to moment'. For Dewey the aesthetic experience is the most aesthetic experience for a human being enabling him to disclose and connect values of life by 'vital factors' like emotion, feeling and imagination (Alexander, 1995, p. 119/121). He not only projected his ideas on art and the role of art in society (the 'greatest intellectual achievement in the history of humanity') but also on the relation of a human being to society, not to say man's context. By that he formulates a form of social aesthetics, which enables him to point out the importance of connectiveness of human beings to society (Kosnoski, 2005). Dewey introduces small-



scale associations as a level of organized human life in which *"aid the individual in connecting the scattered pieces of contemporary society because they possess aesthetic qualities that counteract the spatio-temporal qualities of society in general [...] creating stable loyal attachments to militate against the centrifugal forces of present culture, while at the same time they are of a kind to respond flexibly to the demands of the larger unseen and indefinite public"* (Kosnoski, 2005, p. 212).

So the aesthetic machinery in man's life support one's interaction with society (i.c. other people) in a way that he is able to make the best out of it. This importance of experience (or one might say 'inverse expression') has been signified centuries before in a clear way by the scottish philosopher Thomas Reid (1710-1796), who is one of the founders of the 'common sense' school of philosophy. Thomas Reid however explains experience by distinguishing three sequential phenomena: sensation, conception and perception. This implies respectively addressing the senses, the logic and the feeling or judgement. Only by following that aesthetic sequence, by Reid, a sensory experience as a sensation functions like a language "that nature has constructed, and that nature has constructed us to understand, for the purpose of signifying real objects" (Yaffe & Nichols, 2009). The 'real objects' then, put in an art context by Reid, *"must express the artist's sentiments, and that aesthetic properties, like beauty and sublimity, are strictly speaking properties of the mind of the artist and not properties of material objects [...] we are inclined to say that the performance fo a symphony is beautiful, and we are not inclined to say that the symphony itself is beautiful"* (Yaffe & Nichols, 2009). The first aspect comes close to what Socrates says about aesthetics and the congruence of form and content.



5 Leadership from an aesthetic point of view

5.1 Introduction

So an answer is necessary to face for the mentioned aspects of modern society and the role of leadership within. What does the increasing complexity and dynamics mean for an organization, for leadership and for the leader, and is that achievable by human beings to anticipate on to it properly and adequately?

This issue is addressed in a somewhat alternative way in this research. Alternative from the straightforward traits- and processes orientated theory and practices. This is where I like to introduce a perspective, a philosophical perspective, that might enlarge the playing field of leadership in a way that it becomes more aesthetic and more adequate: the possible role of aesthetics in leadership: *"People use more than rationality and intellect to make decisions. They bring their minds and bodies to work; their emotions, feelings, and personal experiences that cannot be represented in any rational model. In fact, it is in those situations, where rationality does not apply, that leadership is most crucial. If we could reduce every decision to a rational model, we would not need leaders at all. CEOs would make very little money and fishbone diagrams would be priceless. If leadership continues to include the followers' perspective and explore subjective qualities, it will benefit from developing an aesthetic approach. Aesthetics has a long history and its stock and trade are the very areas that leadership is just now entering. What works in leadership will continue to be the central question for the practicing leader and leadership researchers alike. While previous leadership studies have largely taken an instrumental approach to what works, aesthetics also sheds light on what works, but what works aesthetically, what seems to agree with our tacit knowledge or implicit feelings and emotions regarding a particular context. It is actually a much deeper and complex reasoning than a solely "will it physically work?" instrumental determination"* (Hansen, Ropo, & Sauer, 2007).

Aesthetics as mentioned might contribute to a more aesthetic leadership as seen from and for the abilities of the leader. This is one step towards aesthetic leadership where while the context is also essential for performance: *"A consideration of the aesthetic is vital, since the aesthetic intertwines with the idea of a surrounding environment or world. The idea of a 'good' aesthetic is based on the notion that there is some intrinsic goodness in perception, neither captured nor perverted by the aestheticization process"* (Morton, 2007, p. 26). More specific, in this research *"the 'aesthetics pointed to the interconnectedness of perception, thinking, and feeling"* (Bresler & Latta, 2008). As mentioned, this is used as a guiding definition in this research.

Kuhn (1996) criticized fellow theorists, including White (1996), saying *"there is little or no interest in the emotive, expressive, experiential aspect of organizational processes, unless they can be measured and objectified, logically analyzed, and modeled for predictive purposes"* (p. 219). Instead, Kuhn asked, *"How might we adapt aesthetic philosophy to delineate the fragmented view that organization theory offers the complex human interactions in organizations?"* (p.219). Kuhn called for examining the aesthetic patterns and processes involved in creating shared meaning among organizational participants. Kuhn, 1996 & White, 1996, both in: (Patrick, 2012, p. 44).

In business administration, the functional as expressed in aiming for effectiveness and efficiency in business appears to be dominant and guiding in decision making and



operations. 'Kalon', or beauty, is not a key aspect in this context. From historic times on there seems to be a good reason for it: The beauty and the functional are often seen as opposites: something functional does not need to be beautiful, and beautiful is not contributing to expediency. As Herbert Read put it in (Ovink, 1956, p. 10): "*Art must be regarded as a necessity like bread and water; but like bread and water, it must be accepted as a matter of course; it must be an integral part of our daily life, and must not be made a fuss of*". This is also the case with aesthetics in leadership. Ananda Coomaraswamy in Ovink states that "the artist is not a special kind of man, but every man is a special kind of artist" (Ovink, 1956).

How does it function, the aesthetic behavior of men, and how can it be exploited? Ovink makes in a inaugural speech related to the art of printing a connection between the artistic aspects of man and the industrial aspects, so a connection between the effectiveness and the beauty: "*Let's call the beautiful and the efficient allies, that who sometimes need to strictly think of their own interests, but generally, under giving away their aesthetic independence, unite for their common goals are numerous (misschien zin iets makkelijker maken?). As man is restored to its original unity, and he no longer seeks the beauty and experience at official occasions which now mostly limit her appearance, but in every thing that it is worth being made, to that extent will any thing address him in his full personality (ook deze kan ik neit volgen). That is, not only his mind but also his feeling and therefore his sense of beauty*" (Ovink, 1956, pp. 17-18).

Ovink formulates that an argument for the added value the non-autonomous or applied artist in a basically industrial context of the printing industry, and more specifically the requirements, competences or techne for being a aesthetic and by that being a good employee and craftsman. But most often he signifies the importance of the interaction between men and product: a aesthetic product is addressing the personality of man, which is a good condition for generating aesthetic products further on. By that it is a progressive and positive cycle of development as a whole human being, aesthetically by the beautiful and functional made product, which reflects at the same time the aesthetic attention.

In literature a variety of descriptions is given for aesthetics in the context of social studies in general and even more specific in leadership and organizations. While Sokrates stated in ancient times that the aesthetic of the human inner state was a precondition for appropriateness, functionality, beneficialty and included a sensory aspect (Plato, Hippias Major, - 390 / 1983), this was more or less confirmed in 1999 when Strati took off for a relaunch of the concept of aesthetics in the context of organisations and leadership. Aesthetic knowledge in organizations is about a 'concrete relationship with reality' as a complementary to the insufficient Cartesian concept of the real (Vico in (Patrick, 2012, p. 19). The Italian Strati is the first modern scholar who puts the aesthetics in an organizational context, as a means to add a new type of knowledge in organizations, namely "*knowledge yielded by the perceptive faculties of hearing, sight, touch, smell and taste, and by the capacity for aesthetic judgment*" (Strati, Organization and aesthetics, 1999, p. 2). Strati emphasizes on the enactment of the leader and the non-limitative list of categories related to that. He signifies aesthetic categories of beauty, the sublime, the ugly, the comic, the gracious, the picturesque and the agogic, the tragic, and the sacred. In fact Strati categorizes 'ambiances' of leadership performances while Sauer and Ropo describe categories by which aesthetic leadership can be understood, like leadership emphasis, emotional repertoire, body,



language, rhythm, and space (Sauer & Ropo, 2007).

Beside these key aspects, attempts have been made to describe the phenomenon of aesthetics beyond the strict meaning related to the process of perception, including the perceived, and the perceiving. This is relevant to include because it enables us, if that will be the case, to distinguish an aesthetic attitude or experience from the traditional personality- and traits distinguishment often made in leadership literature. Aesthetic is different because it represents not directly a 'thing' or 'feature'. In literature the aesthetic is described more as a 'dimension' which "*sits somewhere between an objective notion [...] and a subjective experience*" (Marcuse in (Morton, 2007, p. 25)). Or as 'ambience' for aesthetics as a "*product of distance: of human beings from nature, of subjects from objects, of mind from matter*" (Morton, 2007, p. 67/25). In this description an important condition for relationship between people becomes apparent: one needs people (e.g. a leader and followers), and you need a distance between them to be overcome by aesthetics, which leads to some kind of relation. The sparkle which enlightens this process is called 'interest', interest in each others thoughts, feelings and motivations (Oosterling, 2013).

Glaser mentions in an educational leadership context the significating of alignment and coherence (Glaser, 2005), while Marie Jo Hatch points out several features of the face of the artist in her concept of leadership (besides the faces of the Manager and the Priest), to be creating, inspiring, provoking and comforting. In combination with having imagination, soul, faith, emotions, originality and purity (Hatch, Kostera, & Kozminski, 2009). For Hansen aesthetics in leadership is about sensitivity, cognition and intuition (Hansen, Ropo, & Sauer, 2007), while Duke states that it has mainly to do with direction, originality, fit and engagement (Duke, 1986). Morton places the concept of aesthetics for artistic as well as social studies as rooted in the Romantic period, starting with the writings of Baumgarten. In this period the natural nature on its own becomes an object and this implies that the relation, or better to say distance, between human beings and nature becomes obvious. Aesthetics is therefore also a "*product of distance: of human beings from nature, of subjects from objects, of mind from matter*" (Morton, 2007, p. 24), and perhaps of leaders from followers.

Donna Ladkin is pointing on the craftsmanship, mastery, expertise, coherence and authenticity, and purpose and ethical added value (Ladkin D. , 2008). In a recent research it is noted that aesthetic behavior of leaders is apparent and distinctive predominantly by the leaders' presence and performance (Patrick, 2012, p. 129).

For this research the mentioned descriptions need to be categorized in order to gain focus on the object of analysis in the interviews with business leaders. So roughly the key descriptives are categorized in features that have to do with personality, with traits, with attitude and with impact.

Martha Nussbaum has positioned the aesthesis in the midst of ethical human behavior, in order to be able to reach the good life. In other words, the aesthetics enables to bring together the beauty and the good of life. Beauty on its own, overwhelming our senses but not triggering a deeper awareness of the good, is not sufficient: "*Aesthetical experience could bring back our sensibility for those contexts that are necessary to help us live a good life, but, as members of a modern society, that is something we have forgotten. But if aesthetical experience is, however, to work to this effect, the boundaries between moral values (in the sense of what is just and in keeping with norms), ethical values (in the sense of the good and the adequate) and the*



aesthetically beautiful and sublime will have to be levelled out" (Bender, 1998). In the opinion of Nussbaum without an aesthetic experience it would not be able to link ethical rules and moral values to concrete situations in our daily concrete life, summarizes Rudiger Bender the works of Nussbaum. This in fact is a state of anaesthesia, in which an interconnectedness between rationality ('ethical rules') and sensitivity and intuition (the observed and experienced 'concrete situations in our daily life') as described by Bresler (Bresler & Latta, 2008) is not aesthetic or sufficient. To put it in a business context: when certificates and CSR-guidelines are all formulated, but not actively linked with observations and judgements of the actual and factual situation on the plant. This is in brief a large part of the problems in the Odfjell-case.

Back to the 'machinery' of Bender in which he distinguishes three main functions of the aesthesis in the ideology of Nussbaum: a first, heurestic, function helps us to assess an occurring concrete situation to normatives and put it in place and context, a second function helps us to fit normatives appropriate to that concrete situation, and a third function helps to answer properly on an observed change in a concrete situation by adjusting normatives in order to make them fit again (Bender, 1998). Aesthesis thus functions like an instrument or a medium that can transfer the description of an action. Without this we would not be able to understand strictly and widely speaking? snap niet wat er staat the action, and so to say it with Nussbaum we would not be able to observe or judge the rightness of the action. "The quality of description which is constitutive for moral rightness cannot be judged by a listing of assertative statements. It is only perceivable aesthetically. Therefore, it refers not so much to facts as to the lived sensation, as Rudiger states, observing that Nussbaum "sees aesthetic production as a moral achievement". Nussbaum: *"A good action is not flat and toneless and lifeless"* (Nussbaum, 2001).

So assessing the ideas of Nussbaum from the perspective of leadership, a leader as well as followers are 'reading' and understanding each other actions more aesthetic when experienced as an aesthetic one, enabling each other to contribute to the rightness or the moral achievement, to put it in the words of Nussbaum.

For Nussbaum the distinction between the aesthetic and the ethic aspects of a situation is not appropriate: *"I reject the notion of the aesthetic if it means something distinct from the ethical. When we hear stories as young children, our emotions are responding to the efforts of the characters to live flourishing lives, and thus they are ethical in the broad Aristotelian sense of the term"* (Abbate, 2012).

The successfulness of the aesthetic expression or production depends on its quality. As often Nussbaum uses examples from art and literature to make her statement clear. In one case she approaches aesthetics as a contribution to an ethical adequate solution as based on Henry James's novel "The Golden Bowl". Bender observes Nussbaum's distinction of five qualities of aesthetics: a degree of imaginative power, the beauty of the picture which must have a aestheticness that lacks nothing, a highly sensitive perception of situations, a perception that needs to be interactive, productive and creative, and an aesthetic representation (imagination, sensations, fantasies) that fills the gap between judgement and action (Bender, 1998).

These findings are connected and updated with data from the interviews which are held with a group of people who are leading a variety of organizations, from professional soccer-organization, through scientific and political positions, to consultancy and design. Which have in common that they are asked to participate in this based on my assumption that they all are to a certain extent leaders with an



emphasis on aesthetic behavior. This assumption is based on my observation and experience with them in collaborative projects.

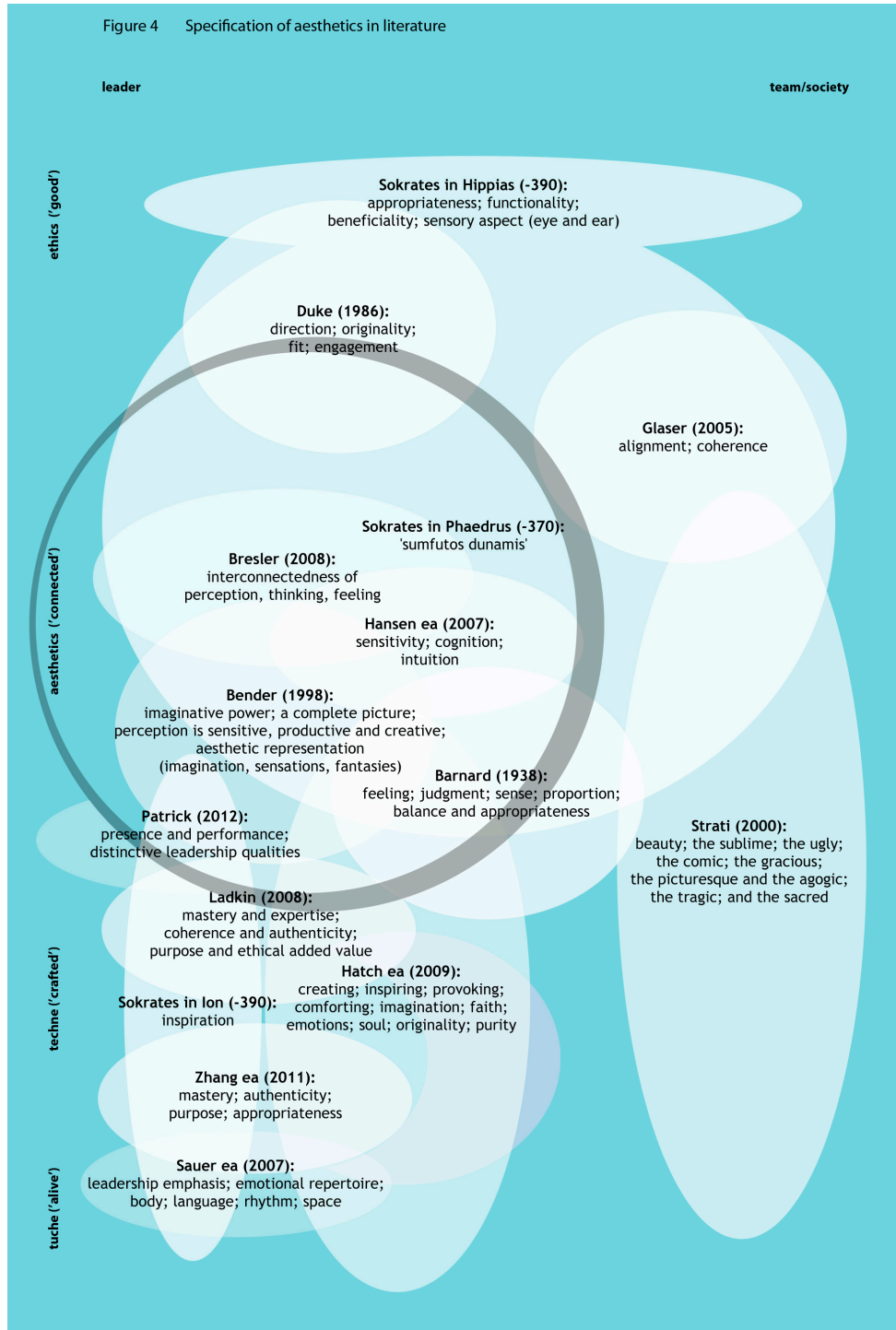
So these interviews are meant to explore insight in the way aspects of aesthetics are embedded in their leadership practice, if they are. And these interviews give insight in the way aspects of aesthetics enact leadership, if they do. These interviews are the first step in establishing a grammar on aesthetics in leadership.

5.2 Operationalization of aesthetics

Based on literature the following synopsis includes all the signifying key words. This synopsis is a guidance for the content analysis of the interviews with the group of aesthetic leaders and by that a component for the guided interviews with business leaders. In figure 4, the grey circle indicates the sources which are chosen as relevant for this research, based on the criterium that they focus on the aesthetic tool specifically.



Figure 4 Specification of aesthetics in literature



In the context of this research, which is a business administration context, it is relevant not to focus only on the contemplative aspects of aesthetic drivers in leadership but



ultimately to put a finger on the operational aspects. To say it differently: how it leads to something and to what it leads tangibly. In this chapter I will go into detail in what way this is performed as observed in interviews with artists, aesthetic leaders and business leaders. In the interviews I have tried to disclose, to discover, a merge of the normative starting point of aesthetics in leadership with the factual aspects in time and place as expressed in leadership and executed and experienced in different contexts and geographical and social economical locations in 2014. I have tried to trace back a timeless and abstract phenomenon in the day-to-day leadership, in order to be able to signify performance, meaning and added value of aesthetics in leadership. Interviews with the artists and with the aesthetic leaders are positioned as a verification and actualisation of the literature used in this research. With a special attention to the artist as an Platonic personification of the one is able to combine the rational with the irrational, as emerged in his Ion.

All interviews have been conducted by the author, in vivo. This enabled the author to observe the expressions of the interviewee in order to get an impression of the authenticity of the answers, the truthfulness of the answers and a glimpse of engagement of the interviewee. For all interviewees it can be said that they appeared to be authentic, truthfull and engaged. They all gave the intention to speak freely, and no spokesman attended the interviews. There was no other insight available to oppose these observations. TheseisThis observations were not done extensively but were done simultaneously during the interview as an extra control of the data?at the interview data.

The (26) interviews took 1-1,5 hour with two exceptions (0,75 hour and 2,5 hour) and were preferably conductedtaketaken at the location of the interviewee. So the majority of the interviews were helddonedone in the office of the directordirectordirector offices, while others some were helddonedone in restaurants and cafe's or one at home of the interviewee, one at the atlier of the artist and one at the office of the author. Interviews have been helddone atdone several locations in the Netherlands, predominantly in Rotterdam and in the Buenos Aires area of Argentina. The expert interviews were held done at university locations in Delft and Rotterdam. All interviews were held in the period November 2013-June 2014.

The interviews with the aesthetic leaders have been arranged by the author. All these leaders are personally known to the author. The interviews with business leaders have been arranged by the Chamber of Commerce in Buenos Aires and by Deltalinqs in Rotterdam. Just a few were arranged by the author himself. Almost all interviewed business leaders were not known to the author. The interviews with the artist were arranged by the author. The auther knew 2 of the 3 interviewed. Two of them were known to the author.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed by a professional company and were checked and collationated by the author. The transcripts were not checked by the interviewees before they were analyzed. The transcripts have been coded with support of software (MAXQDA for Mac, version 11).

5.3 The artist; Ion as a reference

In the earlier mentioned faces of leadership as described by Hatch ea (the Manager, the Artist and the Priest), the artist is the 'face' that is the most obvious and one-dimensionally focussed from a leadership point of view. It is focussed on the expression of personality (tuche), craftsmanship (techne), ideas and targets and consists practically



speaking of processes of generation, creating and production, to say making. So an artist is by far and by nature experienced in and moreover completely dependent on dealing with the synthesis of rational and irrational aspects of production and how to organize, manage and control them. So to focus on these aspect of leadership, which is at the end dominant and significant, not to say measurable, in the performance and (business-) results of the leader, I take therefore the artist as a reference for complete leadership in which the aesthetic aspects are developed and expressed truly and optimally.

Based on this assumption I interviewed three Dutch artists in which that development has lead to a widely acknowledged reputation based on their numerous artistic productions on stage and in artwork of high quality and for a long period of time. More specific the interview is used as a form to observe and analyze their ways of leading themselves in combining rational, intuitive and sensory aspects in order to express themselves adequately for an audience.

As indicated in 'The leader as an artist' in paragraph 4.4.6, the artist has very specific qualities in combining the rational and non-rational drivers for achieving the good life. For Plato, for whom is observed that he had an ambiguous attitude to poets (as a synonym for the artist), it is *inspiration* which brings the poet out of his mind when composing poetry, and is by that an instrument "*through whom the gods speak*" as expressed in *Ion*. Amongst a diversity of interpretations in time, the way Plato treats the inspiration by and through poets is nowadays seen as a kind of channel by which the divine is translated into a readable form. That makes the position of the artist special, also in order to be able to connect his ideas about non-rational aspects as intuition and emotion with real rational life as described in *Ion* and the *Phaedrus* (Plato, *Ion*, - 390/1983, pp. 8-9).

In the interviews with artists it becomes clear that they work very disciplined and organized in order to become completely in control for the practical, businesslike and rational aspects of their work. Then, as they formulate, only then sensitivity and intuition can flow freely. It is in fact creating the appropriate conditions from which point they are able to 'receive' the spirit in order to make a 'good' piece of art or to make a good performance. [quotes]. This also implies a complete control of their craftsmanship, as far as that is achievable. Related to that is the importance of being very well prepared, in order to avoid being derived and therefore less concentrated on the making of the 'good' [quote]. This all is quite close to the way Plato describes in *Ion* the specific character of the poet in order to do the 'good' thing. This includes also that there is some ritualizing in order to create conditions.

Due to their sovereign way of working, mostly without strict targets, they apply a balance in aesthetics more as a lifecycle. With significant and subsequent phases rather than an integral package of aesthetics which is there permanently. Periods of preparation, acquisition and administration (the rational part) are followed by an intensively sensitive and active and social phase (the sensitive and sensory part) in which the inspiration is fed, to be finished by a much more introspective, solitary and almost hidden part in which mostly the real creative work is done.

The results when they are 'good' are indicated as 'energized': "*every painting that just has been painted has a certain kind of energy which is felt and recognized by people [...] good paintings keep their spirit*" (Art1, 2014)). A chain is then started: "*inspiration*



[of the artist] leads to inspiring other people" (Art3, 2014). Which thus starts with expressing yourself in order to "create the conditions [for other people] to be inspired" to be started with "very precise formulating of your question and the conditions, then it might happen". So you start "very rationally with a plan and a way to go and at the same time, being your own spectator, you need to keep a close eye to yourself" (Art1, 2014). Artwork is about paint, image and spirit. The first two are clear and quite rational and manageable, the spirit is "in fact the energy which you can't put a finger on it. But it is recognizable in a good piece of art" (Art1, 2014)

This reflective attitude contributes to the inner balance between the rational, intuitive and sensory information that is received. This balance has also something of the necessary combination of comfort versus constraints, as a condition for achieving a certain level of energy and inspiration in order to put 'spirit' in what you are doing. This is described as a frightening but promising exercise which is to a certain extent manageable and preparable. Given the fact that ideas and expression of ideas are important resources for an artist, they need to flow as freely as possible. Techniques, practicalities, and so on need to be ready and completely done. *"When I go on stage, I won't have any thing to do with ratio and technique. If so, I have not prepared myself good enough. I need all my energy to let flow my intuition and emotion, for a good performance and for my audience" (Art2, 2014). So an almost paradoxal attitude is key: "the major part of my time in my atelier as an artist is making the way free, to let it [...] emerge, to give it a chance" (Art1, 2014), "the only thing you can do is to work the land" (Art2, 2014).*

To transfer this experience is then not so much a matter of learning rationally but of being conscious: *"if you really experience [things in life] than you can make things tangible to yourself and others. And by that you can transfer that experience to next situations automatically, because you became more wise" (Art1, 2014).*

The making of starts always as a kind of empty landscape, in which the artist tries to discover a fascination (Art2, 2014). Exploring the unknown seems to be essential for the artist, *"I like very much to explore new things" (Art3, 2014).* This is one of the phases of the creative process which appears in the interviews with the artists. All interviewed artists do have and do use some kind of cycle in order to phase the practical (rational), inspirational (sensory and sensitive) and creative (intuitive) activities. They do that subsequently. one phase, the creative phase in which the inspiration is needed, in a kind of lifecycle that is described by all artists. 'You need to plug-in into your reservoir' which is filled with experience, impressions and observations and which is best explored by just doing it. *"For my last show I worked four months in a recording studio, day by day. I wrote 40 new songs, and they were all fuck, but I had to make them" (Art2, 2014).* Every new project starts as an empty landscape: "You have to start always from scratch. Every creation is discovering the wheel again and again" (Art3, 2014) which means that there might be some routine in running the process itself but the content is new every time. It might be confusing, from a reflective point of view: *"when I recognize myself in one of my paintings, so when it is about style, then I actually already know that it is a dead-end street" (Art3, 2014).* To say it differently, style is steady state, which is not sufficient enough for an artist.

This cyclic way of creating by subsequently 'lived' phases of planning, inspiration and creation is a constant and specific part of artistic way of doing things. This is nevertheless highly unpredictable: *"I say we [team around the artist] are now going to*



start something I do not know the result by now. But I know for sure that I am searching for something that, at the end, will explain us a language from which we did not know on forehand that we would like to speak that language"(Art2, 2014). And so the unpredictable becomes something essential for an artist. *"You don't know everything. I don't know exactly how it [a painting] will look like or how it need te be manufactured. I don't need to know that and I don't want to know it, because I like to make it first"* (Art1, 2014). To be connected in yourself is distinguishing: *"if I have not connected myself with my ideas or what I basically want to say, it is visible in my painting"* (Art1, 2014). So the expression of the artist give information on the way he is connected in himself.

The artist is leading himself. Discipline is mentioned to be important. An explicit commitment to oneself is mentioned to be essential to keep one going things. *"If you are leading yourself you need to make very strict commitment to yourself, otherwise you just don't do it"* (Art2, 2014). This discipline is also enabling 'the good life' by *"focussing on comfort and wellbeing on a higer level than just luxury"* (Art3, 2014) and finding the *"ultimate true image"* in a lifelong search (Art1, 2014).

It is not mentioned in the interviews, but it appears to be the point that in a context of education it is not likely to be able to learn someone to make a piece of art with spirit, or to do a project with spirit. It is nevertheless likely to educate people in training their *tuche* and *techne* in order to make the right choices for the 'paint' and the 'image', and by that to create ones signature in making the right condition for his creations. Limitations are mentioned. Reproduction of a certain method, or a certain style, is killing from an artist point of view. *"To share a sublime experience with someone is not a matter of copying that situation, but sharing the sublimation of the idea behind that sublime experience"* which also prevents socially desirable behavior at spectators (and employees) for the assumed reason that, at that painting, *'one ought to have a sublime experience'* (Art1, Interview met kunstenaar, 2014). Superficially transfer of methods and styles thus brings one further from the good life.

So the enabling of the artistic *tuche* and *techne* to create a energized painting or stage performance requires several thing. It starts with interest and selfcommitment and a drive in order to *"make just a good show, knowing that the only way to achieve that is by stimulating everybody [myself and the team] to give the best out of themselves"* (Art2, 2014). This is followed by preparing a project and yourself by finding the right resources in the right moments and under the right conditions. In fact this is a search for the right balance in rational, intuitive and sensory drivers which vary depending on phase and character of a project (Art3, 2014). A reflective attitude enables to grow and develop per creation and experience, also in cases where the result itself is unclear but the need to follow a certain way is evident. In fact the artistic focus is not put directly on the result itself but on the conditions to create that result, in combination with trust in doing it the right way and a certain believe in the availability of the magical 'spirit'. By *"growing closer and closer to that"* (Art1, 2014), *"the 'spirit' is becoming visible and available"* (Art2, 2014) for an audience. With that quality of cooperation the expression of the artist (or the leader) establishes a connection with the teammembers like musicians and technicians to make a production or show. And ultimately this expression connects with the audience to 'live' the show together. Expression connects.



Managing the conditions is expressed variedly by the interviewed artists. It varies from the attitude that time by time 'you need to be silent enough to be able to hear yourself' to expel the rational aspect in the balance by "*exhausting people in order to divide them from their ratio and as a result come closer to their intuition*" (Art2, 2014).

Apart from the mentioned cycle in preparation, a preferred balance is also obtained by. By time experience and management of the balance between rationality, intuition and sensory impulses increase, based on trust in own intuition. Selfknowledge and selfcare are key elements. But style, repetition and routine are killing. The use of intuition grows in time because trust in intuition increases in time. Which also means that often 'it [projects, columns, writing poetry] starts with intuition and sensitivity, followed by rationality' (Art3, 2014). It is seen always as a combination, one sole aspect does not work adequately: 'you know, I don't believe in intuition in the sense of -it feels good today, so today I will create something-' (Art1, 2014)

Practically speaking the management of conditions personally is done sometimes almost ritually. One artist plans his creative phase during full moon, while another during this period is avoiding conversations and talking before noon including a daily yoga-exercise. The sensory aspects are managed by one artist by actively acquiring a variety of public attendances by presenting congresses. They all are very aware of the importance, for their quality and productivity, of selfcare by managing the mentioned cycle of creation. In fact that is a management of the balance and order of rational, intuitive and sensory aspects of their professionalism. About which they know a lot, their selfknowledge is huge and they live to it.

So living the 'good artistic live' as observed at the interviewees means a well conscious and generous attitude to the 'mania', to say it with Plato. While may be expected that in business life the 'mania' is tried to avoid and prevent as much as possible. Interesting contrast. The group of interviewed leaders are a bit in between.

This says a lot about how aesthetics can be managed successfully in yourself in a context of sovereignty, but it is clear that a regular business context in which followers and teams are involved with strict targets gives less room for such an approach. However, modified parts of it are observed also in the practice of businessleaders, for example a certain form of lifecycling and a focus on creating conditions for letting the 'good' business performance happen. It will be explained in the following paragraphs.

Emerging topics of applying aesthetics in the interviews with artists are:

- The importance of a good preparation
- Awareness of 'spirit'
- The ability of alternating and varying balance between rationality, intuition and sensitivity depending on context and phase in the cycle of production
- Awareness of a cyclic process, sometimes felt as lifecycles

5.4 The aesthetic leader

The members of this group of interviewees are selected based on the experience by the author that they express in their leadership the three components of aesthetics as defined in this research. These interviews are therefore used to check aesthetics as the somewhat abstract descriptions in the literature as used in this research.



All interviewees do recognize the meaning of aesthetics for their leadership, as well as the performance and added value. This is observed in the interviews as an issue on an intrapersonal level (the leader as a human being) as well as an interpersonal level (the leader operating in teams).

A central topic in the interviews is the notion of 'sound' relations or situations. To say it in the words as used by the artist: *"when the spirit is in it. This is experienced as a magical (I don't know how I created it, but all of a sudden it [the commitment of a group of scientists to a theory of the interviewee] happened!"* (Cmplead6, 2014), as well as a manageable aspect. Related to this "sound" notion there is often the phenomenon of a feeling of joy and pleasure ('Marocan women [who are following a course which is given by the interviewee], do leave their home and are happy in nursing their garden. They meet people. That makes me so happy, that is such a great pleasure' (Cmplead6, 2014). In fact these are two examples of the final result of the act of leadership. All interviewees give the impression that they have a clear picture or feeling of what is good. But what is the mechanism of aesthetics to achieve that good feeling, to achieve the good (leadership-)life. And is there only one 'aesthetics'?

First of all it is mentioned that 'there is no one [exclusive expression of] aesthetics. That does not exist. So you can't describe specific values or criteria for that. [Aesthetics] need to have some kind of coherence, but that is different for every person and every situation (Cmplead6, 2014). By which the dynamic, personal and situational aspect of aesthetics is signified.

Within the interviewees it all starts with believe and confidence in how they observe what they observe: *[aesthetics] seems to be rather universal. There is a component of rationality as well as cognition. Sometimes it is aesthetically not clear why we do something, but we do it. And we know exactly that we are willing to do it'. This is generally speaking identified not only as something rational but also something in which a sensory aspect is involved by which we 'express [...] how we are as a human being. We express that with our body' (Cmplead4, 2014). In order to be able to perceive this aspect it seems hard to achieve this impact virtually: 'our experience is that when we work together in different locations, it does not work satisfactorily. In spite of virtuality, it is also just a matter of flesh and blood and contact. Yes, ultimately it is all about people. Sometimes my people use Google Earth to check specifications of a [building-] location. I need to go there myself, I must understand the whole situation, I must see the light, I need to hear the location and meet the people. What is their culture, do they understand my ideas, how are they going to use the building? I design it for them so they need to be able to enjoy it' (Cmplead5, 2014). Intuition is one of the distinctive sources of information that is instrumentalized in aesthetics: 'if you are unable to observe a situation intuitively, than you will miss the whole situation'. So this means that one needs 'a strong intuitive feeling, which by the way does not always mean that it is right [which is checked simultaneously when] you apply at the same time the cognitive [information in that situation] (Cmplead2, 2014). It results in a kind of dynamic balance which is managed by executing repeatedly 'a circular process started by intuition and leading to an internalization of consciousness [...] and when something is missing [in this process], it does not have the same magic' (Cmplead2, 2014). Another interviewee makes clear that aesthetic observations leads to a judgement of a person or a situation and can be very decisive in decisionmaking: 'I feel directly if somebody is acting appropriate and good, and also when somebody "cuts the corners'. And that is something I don't like at all' (Cmplead3, 2014). This*



personal preference, which can be seen as someone's specific combination (or balance) of rational, sensitive and intuitive considerations, can also be decisive due to the fact that it 'gives more energy': *'If I believe in something personally, then it is more energized than an alternative option [...] because it is more internalized. But [rationally speaking] I can go for both options'* (Cmplead7, 2014). This example illustrates the dynamics of the balance between the three mentioned considerations, so to say in applying aesthetics in decisionmaking.

Context, as a part of the outside orientation of one's behavior, is then steering these dynamics. It is mentioned by interviewees that context is relevant to manage these dynamics appropriately. For example, the aspect of "doing the right thing" can be judged 'in fact only when you are there physically [at the location of action] or when you are able to feel the energy in that situation' and can be realized only when you are able yourself 'to use the right moment'. If you are not crafted to that *'you will never be successful. Not aesthetically successful'* (Cmplead6, 2014). So using aesthetic mechanisms contributes to a better fit-for-purpose result, taking into account that there is also always an aspect of luck in achieving that.

A well balanced aesthetics stimulates 'inner power' (Cmplead6, 2014). *'You can have those three elements [of aesthetics] and then focus on them separately, but at the end it is the whole which counts. An essential point in that [...] is that there is always a connection between those three which can not be seen separately [for which it is essential that] you can steer the action between them'* (Cmplead6, 2014).

Leading aesthetically, to put it that way, has an orientation insight and oversight. Expression is oversight-orientated and enables other people to observe and to understand you, and ultimately to connect with you. *'More and more I become aware in my job that only when people are connected a real change is possible. I don't believe that changes occur without connected people'* (Cmplead4, 2014). The external orientation is actually fed by the internal orientation, to say it is about *'the externalization of inner passion, because that is what people feel'* (Cmplead2, 2014). By several interviewees this is illustrated to be supported by having a shared image or picture of goals and behavior of the organization: *'So the challenge is to let people function by themselves which leads to employee satisfaction [and which is based on] the imagination of the aesthetic picture that you place in the organization. This is not only your aesthetic picture [of how it all functions preferably] but it is also their picture'* (Cmplead1, 2014). In a more directive way this is similar to 'the ten statements that are used in my team, which are of course my personal statements that the entire team must follow' (Cmplead5, 2014). Nevertheless, the "aesthetic picture" is seen predominantly as a rational consideration including *'knowing where to go' for which the emotional aspect as well as the aesthetic aspect act as a tool'* (Cmplead3, 2014). As a result, *'it is so exciting to be able to take decisions in which you feel the energy of your whole organization, knowing that you take the whole organization with you'* (Cmplead6, 2014), which is limited by size because 'it is not appropriate for me to lead a group of let's say more than 100 people as I am not able to connect with them all' (Cmplead1, 2014).

Apart from this "aesthetic picture", or "having one story" in the organization, some other conditional requirements are mentioned to obtain a connection with the team: 'when there is no interest, there will be no connection' (Cmplead4, 2014), and also reverence is mentioned as a requirement. For ancientness in the group, for the variety in people in the team ('we are not all the same type of person') (Cmplead4, 2014) and for sharing the same values (Cmplead5, 2014) which may however not lead to recruitment



of a new employee or leader who is similar to the current population in stead of recruiting people that understand the culture in a company. For which it may be questioned if enough attention is paid to that signification (Cmplead7, 2014). 'If everybody fits precisely aesthetically speaking it results in a lack of dynamics. It is then aesthetic but also static (Cmplead6, 2014). A close distance though is required, or to say it differently: an appropriate balance in the rational, sensitive and intuitive assessment is required: *'I tried it several times with somebody in a group. I expected more innovative power by doing that, but everytime it failed due to not being accepted by the group and too much distance between the people which all resulted in less energy in the group than I expected'* (Cmplead6, 2014).

The interviewees are aware, in several ways, how important expression is for the impact it may have on other people, in the context of what they want to achieve. *"If I present my lecture with a blouse that is "too much", then I know it won't contribute to my purpose [...] of enabling the audience to connect [with my presentation]"* (Cmplead2, 2014). In other words, the interviewee expects that the overall perception at an audience will then be out of balance. The right preparation is contributing to a well-balanced situation: *"look, I was at the location [of an official projectstart] in advance and prepared myself by imagining what will happen there [...] then I imagined the people who would attend there. How would they perceive? [...] and the cognitive in it is then to build the narrative around that [...] not to empower the people but to take them with you in your story which is by that not only a rational one. That is just a matter of being connected and energizing them, because you feel that it is veritable"* (Cmplead2, 2014). Using aesthetics means that relationships between people are more than just rational. The emotional impact of using aesthetics may lead to more affection with people, or distraction: *"I preferably not work together [...], or maybe only by mistake, with people I don't like. Someone might be a brilliant scientist, delivering the most brilliant paper, but when I don't like him I don't need him"* (Cmplead3, 2014).

The interviewees have not add other aspects or featured to aesthetics. It was understood as a sound set of components to this instrument.

Requirements and features for the application of aesthetics as emerged during the interviews with aesthetic leaders are:

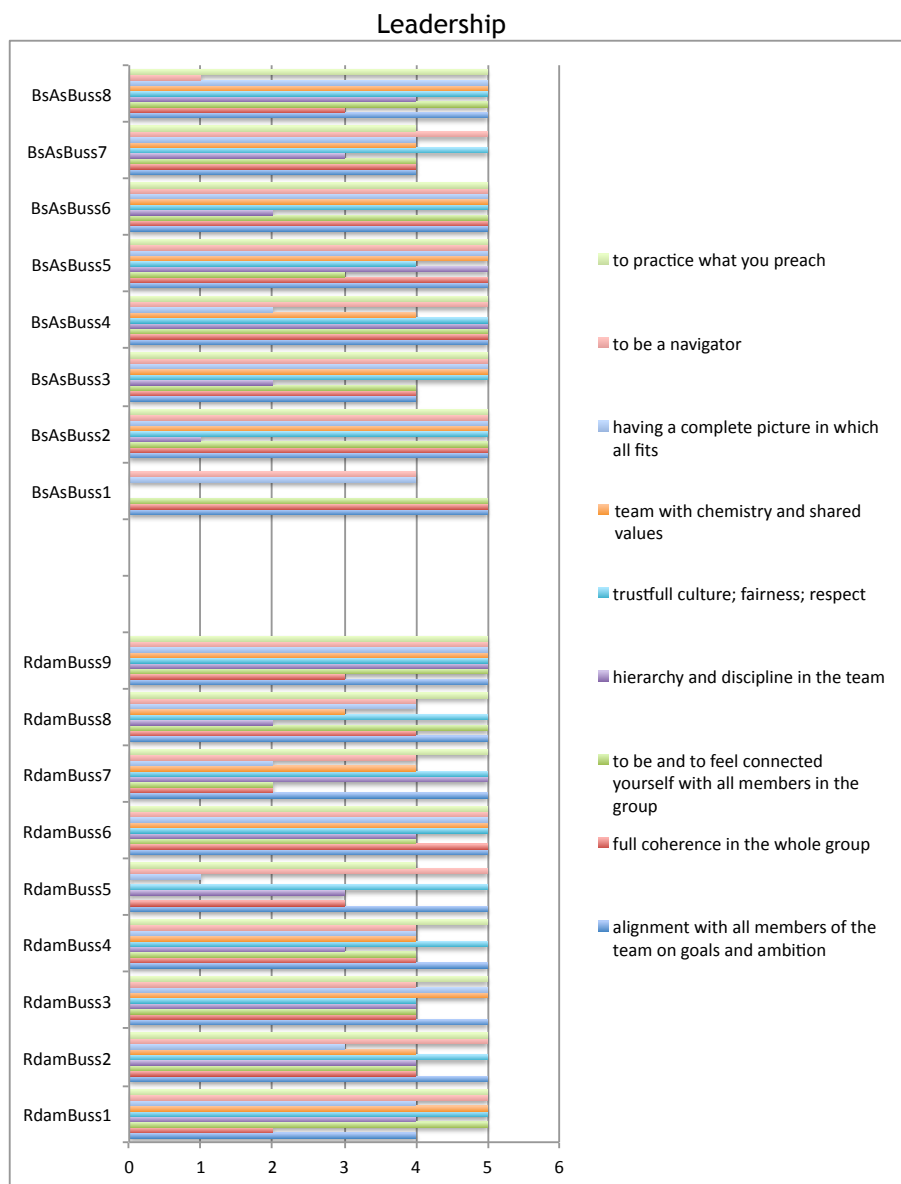
- Vulnerability;
- Moderation
- Respect
- Curiosity
- Energy
- Enthusiasm
- A paradoxical combination of restrained and expressive attitude.



5.5 The business leader

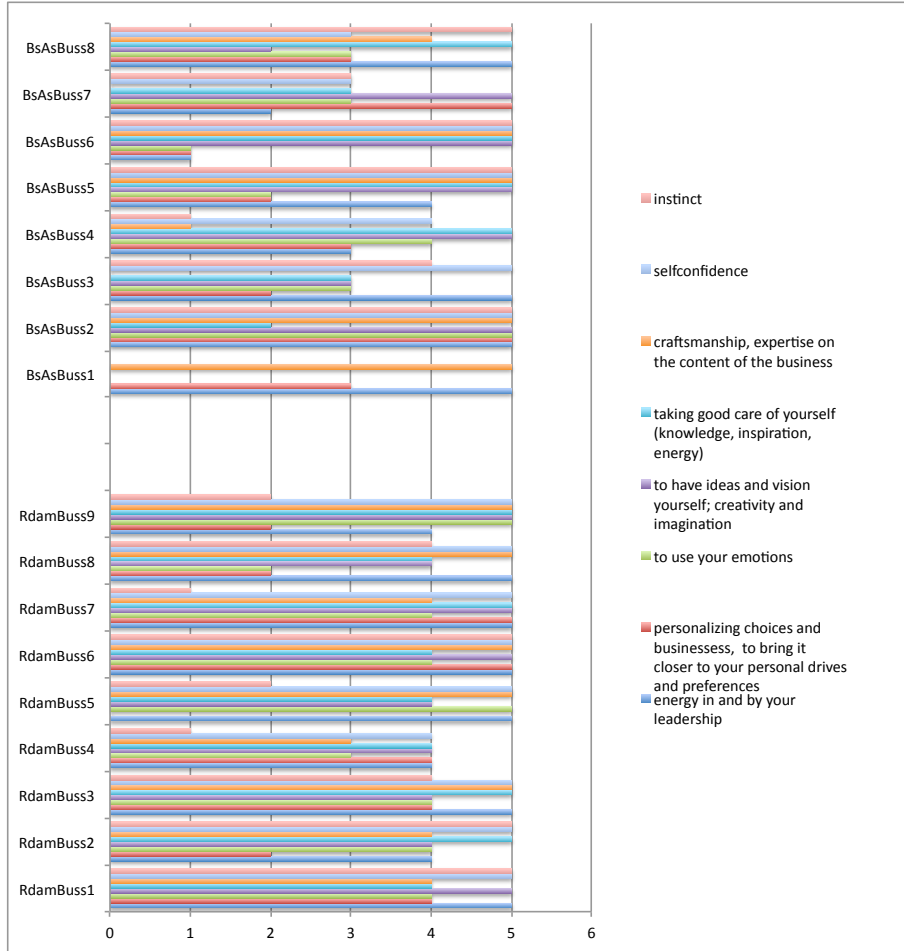
Based on literature and the interviews with aesthetic leaders a questionnaire has been formulated to gain insight in opinions on their leadership, and the relevancy of certain skills (*techne*) and aesthetics. The results are presented in figure

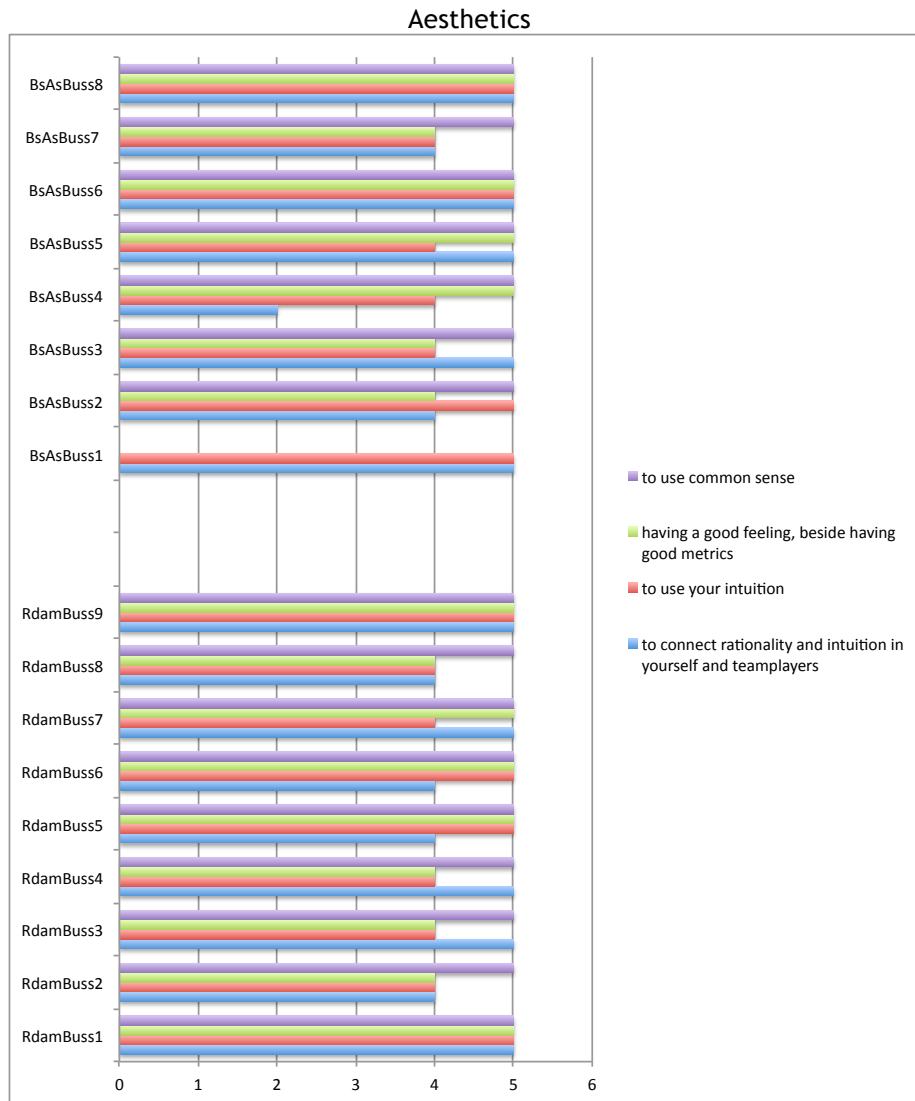
Figure 5 Leadership, Techne and Aesthetics in group of business leaders (1=not recognized, 5= fully recognized as relevant for the interviewee' leadership)





Techne





In the ideas of relevancy of leadership characterizations and attitudes the opinion is highly in line. Interviewees underline the importance in the team of coherence, trustfulness, to be connected and to be clear in roles and tasks. In other words, the (cognitive) ideas about good leadership are identical. This is the case at the Rotterdam interviewees as well as the Buenos Aires interviewees.

The skills (techne) to achieve an adequate leadership practice is seen more variedly. Which is an indication for a personalization of leadership in style and given skills. The ideas about the instrument of aesthetics in return are more similar.



For all interviewees it can be said they explain about their leadership practice very passionate and with enthusiasm.

Added value

Added value of aesthetics is mostly confirmed and indicated in several ways. Applying aesthetics as an instrument in leadership leads to more effective employee operations more effectively due to a better connection between people in the organizations and therefore a better early-warning system altogether (RdamBuss4, 2014). By that the results are better and it is more enjoyable, and it contributes to prevention and avoidance of things that go wrong (RdamBuss6, 2014). Overall there is more support created in the organization (RdamBuss7, 2014) which is a result of applying aesthetics by 'putting yourself into their shoes and know what they are thinking and just tell them that you will do anything possible to take care of them' (BsAsBuss3, 2014). On the other hand it is mentioned that not acting aesthetically does not mean automatically that the business is going down. It does contribute however to make a better use of business opportunities (BsAsBuss4, 2014) (BsAsBuss8, 2014).

Distinctiveness

From a management development point of view it is relevant to consider if this is distinctive from other instruments in leadership and not just another way of pointing at cooperation and communication. So in what way aesthetics are distinctive, in the opinion of the interviewees?

Basically aesthetics means a distinctive fit between personal characteristics and business situations (BsAsBuss8, 2014). It has a mutual aspect which facilitates responding to other people (Cmplead2, 2014), to be used mainly as a tool (Cmplead3, 2014), and enabling to take into account vulnerability of people (Cmplead4, 2014).

Aesthetical leadership is mentioned as gaining more trust and motivation than a non-aesthetic or anaesthetic leader, which is key for the quality of business operations (BsAsBuss6, 2014). Applying aesthetics means increased sensory abilities of the group, more "eyes and ears", to manage the plant adequately (BsAsBuss6, 2014), which means for the leader that he is informed definitely which makes one more effective in acquiring business opportunities (RdamBuss9, 2014). It makes by that people and organizations more aesthetic (RdamBuss6, 2014), apart from the fact that it is essential in decisionmaking while it is not possible to do that only rationally but one need also 'a good feeling' (RdamBuss7, 2014). Applying aesthetics might also lead to more creativity (RdamBuss8, 2014). It is seen as a key aspect in modern organizations, in conjunction with knowledge, content and vision (BsAsBuss2, 2014). Aesthetic leadership is also mentioned as the distinction between natural and artificial leadership behavior (BsAsBuss2, 2014). It is said that it stimulates people to "go the extra mile" which contributes to the difference between operating good and operating great (BsAsBuss3, 2014). Ultimately it is observed that the world becomes more enjoyable when acting more aesthetically, so it will be in a business context however then limited by the size of the company (BsAsBuss4, 2014). Overall it enables people to have affinity, a 'click', with each other and with whom you want to cooperate to achieve the business goals, predominantly by creating more balance in the group. Ultimately, the more aesthetic, the more inner power in people and organization, preferably applied gradually (Cmplead6, 2014).



Aspects of experience

Experience, professionally as well as life experience, is mentioned often as a factor in gaining more insight in how people really act and what they really need for that. The age of the interviewees is in the range between approximately 40 to over 60 years, with a professional leadership experience mostly of decades. The differences between the interviewees is not reflected dominantly in the interviews. A much more signifying aspect is to be conscious and reflective on behavior to obtain self-knowledge. This in fact is a more manageable way of becoming more wise than just the unconscious way by growing older. It can also be observed in the interviews that an increasing self-knowledge leads to an attitude of increasing self-care, not to say self-leadership.

Aspects of context

Context in a socio-economic meaning has been observed explicitly by interviewing business leaders in Rotterdam as well as in Buenos Aires. Given the fact that during the period of interviews in Buenos Aires, January and February 2014, Argentina went through a deep economic crisis leading to a major devaluation of the peso. Economic dynamics are much more intense and frequent in Argentina which mean unforeseen business circumstances in high frequency. However the interviewed business leaders in Buenos Aires and Rotterdam apparently are equally professional and contemporary human beings, the way they need to adapt to those unforeseen circumstances is different. The mentioned less stable economic and also political situation compared to the Dutch situation implies a more aesthetic approach on the intrapersonal level and on the interpersonal level. You need to be prepared to major business changes in days which means that the balance between rational, sensitive and intuitive considerations is more focussed on the sensitive and intuitive part than it is the situation in the Netherlands which is more focussed on the rational part. It appears to be also the case that the balance needs to be changed more often and more rapidly, and that the connectiveness between the three considerations is more tight, acting more as a whole. This is to a certain extent for society in Argentina a somewhat natural condition, as mentioned in several interviews, while culture in society is more based on relations than on formalities. So ultimately these socio-economic and cultural aspects are significant in the structure of the balance (less rational, more sensitive and intuitive), the dynamics of the balance (high) and the connectiveness (tight), compared to the situation as observed in the interviews with business leaders in Rotterdam.

Context in a meaning of the magnitude of the company or organization and by that the magnitude of the population to be lead emerged in the research as a somewhat differentiating topic in the interviews. The span of aesthetic control is mentioned several times as limited to 100-150 people, in order to be able to be connected with all employees. For larger companies and organizations or organizations with several locations, sometimes in more than one country, it is observed in the interviews that the leader focusses for the aesthetic part as well as for the other parts of his leadership on a small group of 10-20 people, supplemented by occasional contact with employees, on invitation (a monthly lunch with a varying group of employees) or as part of a trainee program.

So there is a difference in the application of aesthetics, and so in the quality of the connection with all employees, due to the magnitude of the group.

The interviews give the impression that leaders in very small company, up to 20 people, appear to be some more dedicated in applying aesthetics themselves practically. This might be related to the fact that in this situation leadership in the company is



practically limited to one person. Application of aesthetics might be perceived and felt by the leader of that company to be aesthetically dependent on him. As one interviewee made clear, behaving aesthetic is at the end predominantly related to awareness and conscious, which partly come by age and experience but can also be stimulated on its own.

5.6 Grammar of aesthetics

The observations and findings in this research make clear that aesthetics acts as a relevant precursor for emotional, practical, tactical and strategic behavior of people, and by that of leaders and followers. To say it differently, It operates at the heart of leadership. Given this functional location, it is also apparent that there is a significant and distinctive performance, meaning and added value. More precise it contributes definitely to achieving 'the good' by decisionmaking and judgement of people and business situations. It contributes also to acquire opportunities and it is variedly acknowledged as supporting in preventing casualties.

It is therefore an important parameter in selecting and developing people in order to be more certain that you have or will have the right person on the job. In this case a leadership-job.

The essentials of the grammar in aesthetic leadership

Taking all findings into consideration the essentials of the grammar as emerged in this research can be drawn. As a first step in explicitation of the key aspects as observed in this research. This first step is also meant to be inspirational and instructive to a further development of an indicative scale which supports awareness of the aesthetics as a tool, so making it available to the field of management development.

Enthusiasm, energy	Dynamics of the balance	Level of aesthetics	Character of balance	Interconnectiveness	Level of intuition applied	Level of sensitivity applied	Level of rationality applied

The dynamics indicates the ability to vary and adjust aesthetics related to dynamics in context. The level of aesthetics is an average of the values of intuition, sensitivity and rationality and gives an indication of the level of development. While the character of balance indicates skewness.

Altogether this scaling of aesthetics might support a more shared understanding of key aspects of this instrument and by that being helpful in raising (self-)awareness of the occurrence and relevancy of these aspects.

In the interviews it has happened often that the interviewee realized himself that he was already acting aesthetically to a certain extent but was not aware of that. This distinction, from a management development point of view, is key in order to be able to instruct people in using and applying this instrument.

In fact, artists, aesthetic leaders and business leaders are not significantly different in identifying aesthetics as a relevant instrument. They all are implicitly or explicitly,

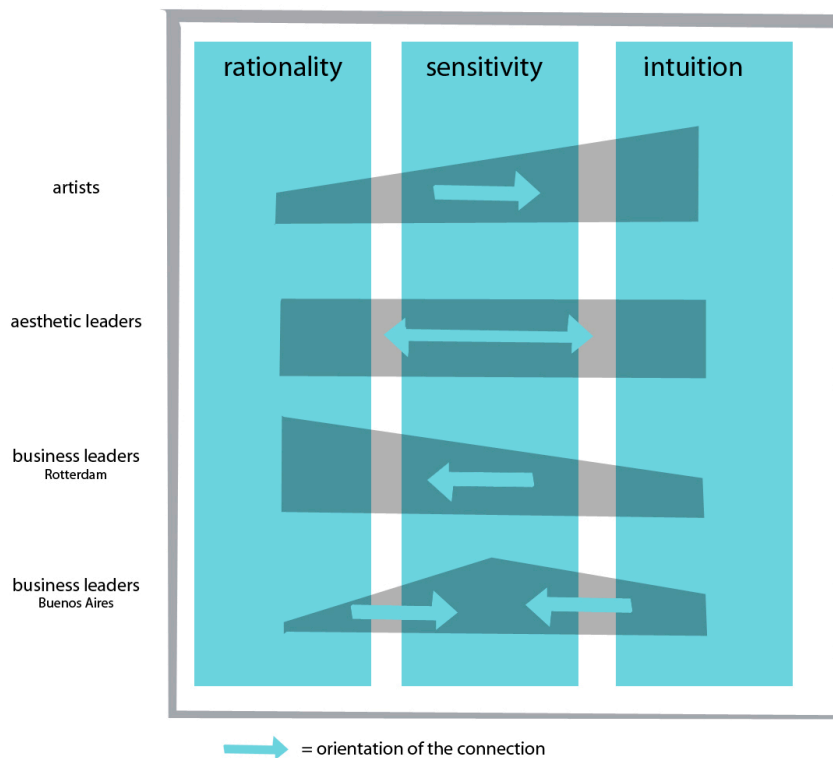


unconscious or conscious, managing the balance between rationality, sensitivity and intuition in achieving their personal goals, to obtain their specific 'good'. Apart from this, it is mentioned by interviewees that application of aesthetics is above all a highly individually designed expression of this tool.

Nevertheless there is an important difference in the way they 'direct' their management on that. The artists make supportive rationality and sensitivity to their artistic intuitivity, while the business leaders adjust intuition and sensitivity to support their rationality in decisionmaking. The aesthetic leaders are in between them. However they differ in the direction they manage them.

It is observed in the interviews that the composition and tactic and strategic application of aesthetics is done significantly different by the interviewees. So to say the appearance of aesthetics and the orientation of the connection within aesthetics is different. Based on the data in this research it can be explained by observed differences in socio-economic context (Rotterdam vs. Buenos Aires), by differences in the degree of awareness of aesthetics (aesthetic leaders vs. business leaders vs. artists), and differences in businessgoals (leaders vs. artists). These differences in appearance and orientation are indicative illustrated in figure 6.

Figure 6 Appearance of aesthetics in the groups of interviewees





Best practices in managing aesthetic conditions

Managing aesthetic conditions is discussed in the interviews on the two levels where this research is focussing on: interpersonal and intrapersonal.

Examples of interpersonal management of aesthetics has been mentioned in most interviews and do focus mainly on the relevancy of personal contact between the business leader and employees, business-collagues, trainees and customers. Given examples are informal meetings, lunches, breakfasts and business-weekends with partners. The relevancy for the leader, as observed in the interviews, is interest and pleasure (by meeting other people within the business) and strategically (by gaining information on operations complementary to the management reports). Given the general and well-known character of these practices those are in this research not further explained.

In the interviews examples of self-management and self-care are also mentioned by the interviewees. These examples are best practices on an intrapersonal level in organizing, maintaining and managing the aesthetics of the "self" of the leader. That makes them personal and specific and by that mostly hidden for inspirative or educative purpose. In some cases they appeared to be a result of "unaware competence". Given the importance of the intrapersonal level in applying aesthetics, these best practices, summed-up in the interviewees' their own quotes, give a relevant insight in a intimate part of the performance of aesthetics in nowadays business leadership. It is an insight in how business leaders organize their self-care in order to maintain a proper balance in their well-being. An important part of that is the balance in aesthetics. They are therefore relevant for this research, as they are informative to other leaders in order to stimulate an awareness and an attitude towards enjoyable and effective management of one's own aesthetics. The given overview is, in a business-management context, somewhat alternative and strange. Nevertheless, this is the way business-leaders express their self-care. Grouped in alphabetical order.

Altruism

- "Just always be at the service of others" (BsAsBuss8, 2014)

- "To help somebody, you have to help yourself first. Otherwise you can't help anybody" (RdamBuss6, 2014)

Art

- "My way in stimulation my own sensitivity and intuition is by reading about it, debate about it, perceiving opinions of other people about it" (BsAsBuss6, 2014)

- "I make photographs, I play music. Those activities are very close to my personal well-being, and at the end I realize myself that it is only art that remains. All the other things are just passing by" (BsAsBuss5, 2014)

- "Turn on the music and watching your children dancing. Music gives you energy. It is not just thinking, it is also the feeling" (BsAsBuss2, 2014)

- "I love the biographies [of inspiring people] I read" (BsAsBuss7, 2014)

- "I do play guitar a little, and piano. I can do it for hours. It probably sounds bad, but I can put everything away from me. Yes, I love to do that" (RdamBuss7, 2014)

Attitude

- "I need to create a safe ambiance for myself and for my people. That is so important to me" (Cmplead1, 2014)



- "I planned to have a happy life" (Cmplead2, 2014)
- "Preparation is so important to me. It's a way of internalization which enables me to let it go, in order to have attention and energy for something else. And that 'something else' is what happens when you are there, in that very moment" (Cmplead2, 2014)

Being conscious

- "The more you are conscious, the more you grow, the more enrich yourself" (Art1, 2014)

Compagnionship

- "Intellectual inspiration, sports and social contacts. Those are the three pillars to stay inspired" (RdamBuss3, 2014)
- "I get my energy from working with people. If my energy-level is low, I go for a walk-and-talk [in the firm] and after that I am charged again with initiatives, ideas and energy" (BsAsBuss6, 2014)
- "To be interested in my people. Driving home together after a meeting, meeting their family, asking if one is satisfied in the company and in his private life" (BsAsBuss1, 2014)
- "I love to enjoy the life around me, with all kinds of people. I love to go to jazz cafe's in Buenos Aires and Amsterda [where I meet] business people, artists and have a chat with them. Where I can get a glimpse of their life experience (BsAsBuss2, 2014)

Conditions

- "Often I do the best thing during Full Moon, that I know for sure about myself. So I keep that in mind always" (Art1, 2014)
- "I do my own checks and observations [in the workplace] to be able to implement my ideas, by assessing my own feelings adequately and by expressing myself effectively" (RdamBuss9, 2014)
- "Freedom, a lot of freedom. And that freedom leads to engagement [because the freedom enables me] to go out, to arrange the agenda I prefer. To go somewhere that my intuition tells me that I want to be there" (BsAsBuss5, 2014)
- "I need to organize for myself a certain level of comfort in order to be able to switch-on the intuition" (Art2, 2014)

Making choices

- "Maybe I have to sacrifice something, in order to enrich something else" (Art1, 2014)

Physical and mental condition

- "When the physical and the mental are in balance (achieved in my situation by a spiritual development together with yoga and sports), then everything goes better, it opens doors to new places and opportunities, and it results in good results" (BsAsBuss2, 2014)
- "To take my mountainbike on a Sunday brings back the balance between physical and mental activity" (RdamBuss4, 2014)
- "Managing health and knowledge. For the latter: I could have done more to that" (BsAsBuss4, 2014)
- "I am moving to taking more care of myself. In the past I took less care of my person than today" (BsAsBuss7, 2014)
- "Sailing for me is a very good training, as you are in changing circumstances constantly to which you have to adapt. It is a test and application of the combination of my



craftmanship and intuition [...] Besides that, after a weekend of sailing intensively I have to check my agenda for the Monday, because I have forgotten everything. And that is good" (BsAsBuss6, 2014)

- "I just need to run, as an instrument to prepare my decisionmaking. When the pressure is high, and too many issues need to be solved simultaneously, I just run to 'untangle' it all. That is a very comfortable way to deal with it" (BsAsBuss5, 2014)

Pleasure

- "The work itself must remain attractive for yourself" (RdamBuss4, 2014)

- "To ask myself regularly when starting a new day: 'What I am going to do today, do I like it really, does it give me pleasure?'" (RdamBuss7, 2014)

- "Up till now I only did jobs and things that I liked to do, and that is a very important thing to me" (Cmplead7, 2014)

Reflection

- "you may be wise, but if you don't stay close to developments you will be lost. So be open to lifelong learning" (RdamBuss2, 2014)

- "It is key to watch people in the business who perform in your opinion better or more successful than you do. In order to keep you reflective in yourself comparing with others" (RdamBuss3, 2014)

- "Sometimes I take a sheet of paper and write down on it everything I have in my mind. Then I try to find relationships and identify points of action. In 5-6 minutes this can be done by me" (RdamBuss4, 2014)

- "We suffered a lot through economic crisis [in Argentina]. But overcoming those and feel it, that has made me stronger and also made me happy" (BsAsBuss3, 2014)

- "Just reflect on yourself and manage your people like the way you like to be managed yourself" (BsAsBuss3, 2014)

Solitary

- "I am a yachtsman. So if I need to 're-boot' my head aesthetically, I go for sailing at sea" (RdamBuss3, 2014)

- "I can surprise myself, yes" (Art3, 2014)

- "To convince myself" (Art2, 2014)

- "I need a constant factor [in life] and that is amongst others a daily yoga exercise" (Art2, 2014)

- "I really take away from my work during my holidays. So I say to my representative: don't count on me for reading my email" (RdamBuss4, 2014)

- "Time by time, you have to be silent enough to hear yourself" (Art2, 2014)

- "I really do need 10 minutes a day to be aesthetically alone. Only 10 minutes, to read something and to reflect on issues and on myself. In fact it is some kind of relaxing" (RdamBuss8, 2014)

To act

- "If things go wrong, do first something simple that can't go wrong. Repair something with your hands, for example. Then you will reach some kind of euphoric state of mind which enables you to start with the more complex issues" (BsAsBuss6, 2014)

- "To create something is very important to me because I can make it this way visible, tangible and available, enabling it to be shared with and by people" (Art2, 2014)



5.7 Options for leadership development

It becomes clear in the interviews that being a professional leader in general and applying aesthetic aspects specifically is not a static issue. It is enriched and gradually aestheticd by experience and personal growth, so to say it is a matter of learning. In the context of this research learning is taken further than just mastering of skills. Above that it is the development professionally which requires amongst others day-to-day application of aesthetics in order to stay in contact with yourself, the team or firm, and society. In literature this is defined to be realized by a so-called reflective practice.

This means "paying critical attention to the practical values and theories which inform everyday actions, by examining practice reflectively and reflexively. This leads to a developmental insight" (Bolton, 2010).

A reflective practice has been analyzed and described by several authors subsequently. Kolb focusses on the transformation of information to knowledge (1975), Argyrs & Schön introduce single loop and double loop learning (1978), while Gibbs introduces his 'reflective cycle' which pays attention to the contineous aspect of learning in a cycle and which has similarities with the often used cycle in projectmanagement plan-do-check-act (1988). Johns takes into account the cooperative aspect (peer reviewing and colleague consulting) as an aspect which enables learning at a faster speed (1995). This model of Johns is therefore paying more attention to the interactivity and focusses on a two-directional perspective ('looking in and looking out'), which for the latter incorporates five patterns of 'knowing': personal, aesthetical, ethical, empirical and by reflexivity, as experienced in situations.

Figure 7 Johns' Reflective Model

<p>Looking in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find a space to focus on self• Pay attention to your thoughts and emotions• Write down those thoughts and emotions that seem significant in realising desirable work. <p>Looking out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write a description of the situation surrounding your thoughts and feelings.• What issues seem significant?• Aesthetics <p>What was I trying to achieve? Why did I respond as I did? What were the consequences of that for the patient/others/myself? How were others feeling? How did I know this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal <p>Why did I feel the way I did within this situation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ethics <p>Did I act for the best? (ethical mapping)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What factors (either embodied within me or embedded within the environment) were influencing me?• Empirics <p>What knowledge did or could have informed me?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflexivity <p>Does this situation connect with previous experiences? How could I handle this situation better? What would be the consequences of alternative actions for the patient/others/myself? How do I <i>now</i> feel about this experience? Can I support myself and others better as a consequence? How available am I to work with patients/families and staff to help them meet their needs?</p>

Johns 1995

Gänshirt pays, above this dominantly introspective approach in Johns' Reflective Model, also attention to the expressive side of performance and put learning and development



in a context of design (Oosterling: 'creation of a new world'), by formulating the Design Cycle (2007). This model is distinctive to the other mentioned due to the fact that it also pays attention to the expressive aspect, besides perception. It refers to the expression of an idea by visual or verbal means of communication, including the feedback of that expression by taking into account the sharing and perceiving of the idea (synopsis via: Wikipedia, 2014).

This evolution in recent times is observed similarly by Oosterling in a societal context of the process of design: "*In the short history of design [...] a shift has been shaped through content to context, [through] syntax via semantics to pragmatics. From: how does it look, through what does it for me, to: how does it work between us?*" (Oosterling, 2009, p. 3). This appeal on interactivity as component of 'creation a new world' is illustrated practically for example in 2014 in the wording of a rapidly emerging design-group from India: "*We do things differently. We want to be sustainable. We want to change the way people live. [...] Our clients are happy!*" (Lucid, 2014). Referring to Sloterdijk and Bourriaud Oosterling makes clear that 'design' transfers gradually to 'relational design', depending of the level of determination from inside ourselves of our actions, creativity and considerations. By this, relational design is able to appeal to our ethical, aesthetical and political awareness (Oosterling, 2009, p. 20) which is about to sustain in the mentioned five patterns of 'knowing': personal, aesthetical, ethical, empirical and by reflexivity.

So learning ('knowing') and design ('creating') are in this context complementary in realizing a tangible result.

Taking this all into account, it may be attractive and legitimate to draw conclusions on learning as if is a new level of learning need to be developed and implemented, besides single loop (focussed on operation), and double loop (focussed on operations + strategy). In literature much attention is paid to this level of learning and it's often called third-loop learning. Third-loop, as a higher and more integral (operations + strategy + paradigma) level of learning is nevertheless critically reviewed in an extended research on several approaches to this third level as "*conceptualizations [that] are often loaded with positive value; competing and conflicting definitions have not previously been debated, and have been subjected to virtually no empirical testing*". As they state, sometimes it is not a matter of learning but just a matter of a more efficient use of resources like competences: "*significant improvements in performance can often be gained through enabling existing competences to be used to greater effect—perhaps by resisting a felt need to transform*" (Tosey & Visser, 2012, pp. 303-304).

Based on the interviews it can be observed that none of the interviewees is indicating the necessity for a structural rethink of training and educating people in order to make them good leaders. To say, based on the findings in this research a paradigmashift is not directly required. Nevertheless, it is mentioned repeatedly that the current approach of recruitment, selection and development of (potential) leaders may not pay enough attention to the aesthetic tool. Therefore there is reason to redesign management development in order to obtain leaders with a more developed aesthetic behavior and tool in near future. So how to achieve that? Based on the observations in this research the following recommendations for management recruitment and development emerge:



1 The right fit

Recruitment assessment procedures appear to emphasize on personality (*tuche*), skills (*techne*) and experience mainly. They tend to be too one-dimensional, given the fact that this procedure is about a judgement of a human being, which consists by definition more than of those parameters (Cmplead4, 2014). The characteristics of aesthetics as explored in this research are identified to be a substantial and relevant, not to say essentially human, aspect in the performance of leaders. Including aesthetics in these procedures contributes to a more aesthetic judgement of candidates and therefore contributes to a better fit-for-purpose in the recruitment procedure. Every human being has qualities, it is just a matter of achieving the right fit on the vacant job (BsAsBuss2, 2014) which also means that the match with corporate culture needs to be incorporated (Cmplead7, 2014).

Ultimately one needs to feel happy in life and on a job. Happiness, as a synonym for "a good feeling", is mentioned merely as one of the key aspects in leading a business in general, and decisionmaking in particular (Cmplead7, 2014).

2 Aesthetic requirements

Related to the former topic, the requirements for leadership need to be reviewed in order to pay attention to aesthetics in order to have a more aesthetic and adequate set of requirements for these highly responsible tasks. One interviewee states that 'the requirements for a managing director in industries with a high safety-risk profile appear to be far less aesthetic and specific than, for example, the requirements for a process-operator' (RdamBuss5, 2014).

3 Giving personal attention and showing interest

To be connected as a leader with your employees, personal contact and interest is of mutual added value (RdamBuss1, 2014) and a starting point for having a relationship and by that to be connected. Leadership development might therefore focus more on increasing awareness of this aspect and the relational qualities of leaders (and followers) related to that (Cmplead2, 2014).

4 Lifelong learning

It is mentioned that due to dynamics in life and business it is essential to keep knowledge, wisdom and attitude up to date in order to stay connected with society, colleagues and businesspartners (RdamBuss2, 2014). Management development requires perspectives in lifelong learning, which pay attention also to the subject of aesthetics. In a rational sense as well as in a learning-by-doing sense, enabling the aesthetic tool to be applied.

5 Active exploration and management of (latent) aesthetic qualities

This starts with an often mentioned mechanism in interviews: to become aware in order to increase wisdom and by that in order to transfer this to upcoming situations (Art1, 2014).

As a means it is mentioned to be stimulated, or forced, by confronting people with difficult situations (and by that appealing to the dynamics and structure of the balance of their aesthetics (Art2, 2014)) which might distinguish between the more and the less appropriate for a certain job or task (RdamBuss8, 2014).

As a means it is also mentioned to create benchmark-like situations in which a certain rivalry is introduced which might be stimulating in developing the same state-of-the-art performance as the (crafted) colleague (BsAsBuss5, 2014).



It is mentioned to enhance a reflective practice in order to (re-)balance intuitive, rational and observed information adequately in specific situations (Cmplead2, 2014). It is also mentioned to stimulate people to perceive and experience themselves situations in vivo, in stead of using technology like internet as a barrier between the subject and your own senses (Cmplead5, 2014). It is mentioned to pay fully attention to the connection between the aestehtics in stead of developing and maintaining them separately (Cmplead6, 2014).

6 Application and developing of best practices in managing aesthetics
(see paragraph 5.6)

7 An indicative questionnaire on performance of aesthetics on an individual leadership level

Based on the findings a preliminary questionnaire is formulated as a first step towards systematically identifying this aspect of leadership quality in recruitment and assessment of leaders.



Figure 8 Preliminary Questionnaire Aesthetics in Leadership

An indicative questionnaire on performance of aesthetics on an individual leadership level				
<i>Note: the three aspects of aesthetics are rationality, sensitivity and intuition</i>				
The leader perspective				
1	Give an indication of the overall relative contribution in doing your business of the three aspects of aesthetics (rationality, sensitivity, intuition; in total 100%)			
		low	moderate	high
2	Give an indication of the level of development of the aspects separately?			
	rationality			
	sensitivity			
	intuition			
3	Which aspect do you rely on the most?			
4	Which aspect do you like the most in doing your business?			
5	Which aspect is perceived by business partners as the most convincing in doing your business?			
6	Which one is, in your perception, the most successful in doing your business?			
7	To what extent do you consciously connect the three aspects in your decisionmaking?			
8	Give an indication of your attitude in changing temporarily the given balance in aesthetics?			
9	Give an indication of your attitude in changing temporarily the connection between the three aspects?			
10	What comes first: to be connected aesthetically in yourself or to be connected aesthetically with your team?			
11	Give an indication of 'feeling good' in doing your business?			
12	Give an indication of being skilled in doing your business?			
13	Give an indication of being energized in doing your business?			
14	Give an indication of the importance of enjoyment in doing your business?			
The Follower perspective				
1	Give an indication of the overall relative contribution in doing his/her business of the three aspects of aesthetics in his/her performance (percentage, together 100%)			
		low	moderate	high
2	Give an indication of the level of development of the aspects separately?			
	rationality			
	sensitivity			
	intuition			
3	Which aspect do you rely on the most of him/her?			
4	Which aspect of him/her do you like the most in doing your business with him/her?			
5	Which aspect is perceived by you as the most convincing in doing his/her business?			
6	Which one is, in your perception, the most successful in doing his/her business?			
7	To what extent is he/she connecting the three aspects in his/her decisionmaking?			
8	Give an indication of his/her attitude in changing temporarily the given balance in aesthetics?			
9	Give an indication of his/her attitude in changing temporarily the connection between the three aspects?			
10	What comes first: to be connected aesthetically self or to be connected aesthetically with the team?			
11	Give an indication of your impression of 'feeling good' in doing his/her business?			
12	Give an indication of your impression of being skilled in doing his/her business?			
13	Give an indication of your impression of being energized in doing his/her business?			
14	Give an indication of your impression of the appearance of being happy in doing his/her business?			



aesthetics at the heart of leadership



6 Conclusions

- * The appearance, meaning and added value of aesthetics is recognized and confirmed by the interviewees as a relevant and essential human tool in achieving a level of excellence in leading businesses and managing life.
- * The concepts of aesthetics are operationalized effectively as resulting in rich and engaged interviews.
- * The appearance of aesthetics in business leadership has been identified on an intra-personal and inter-personal level. Best practices for self-management of aesthetics are observed.
- * The socio-economic context of a leader is of influence in the way that the balance and connectivity within aesthetics is adjusted. This signification is illustrated by indicating differences in all groups of interviewees in the way they manage the aesthetics.
- * In the Odfjell-case as observed by the Research Board for Safety the individual responsibility as a leader for operations is not identified. So requirements in general and aesthetic requirements in particular are not identified either. It is also observed that in actual regulations in the Netherlands (BRZO) and in Europe (Seveso II), the individual responsibility and requirements when leading a safety sensitive industry is not addressed at all.
- * In order to obtain leaders who are able to serve themselves, their companies and society in a complete and therefore also responsible manner, it is essential to pay attention to the aesthetic tool as it is a very human tool and as it is necessary for leadership in an increasingly complicated society. It contributes to finding a new balance between the rational and non-rational drivers in leadership. Serving that way the balance in the observation of Sokrates: *"a human being [...] has two guiding principles: a given desire for lust (hubris), and a taken insight that goes for the best (soofrosune)"*.
- * A grammar for aesthetics has been identified and indicatively described, including a preliminary questionnaire Aesthetics in Leadership.
- * Ambiance of the leader, like the scope of the firm and the population within the firm, is influencing (stimulating as well as limiting) the performance, meaning and added value of aesthetics.
- * Personal attitude and preferences (especially being interested in the topic) determine the performance, meaning and added value. Personal attitude and preferences are complex to educate on, which means that the difference can be made in the selection procedure.
- * Skills are to a certain level determining also the performance and added value. Skills can be trained to a certain extent.



* Acknowledgement and mastery of aesthetic aspects is partly established through experience which is a personal time enduring process.

7 Recommendations and further research

* A change of scope in analyzing cases officially, like the Odfjell case by the Research Board on Safety, in order to address the people who are directly responsible for risky behavior.

* Further operationalization of aesthetics in the context of management development is promising.

* Further research on options in regulations to address leadership requirements in permitting procedures in case of safety sensitive industries

8 Discussion and limitations

* On methodology.

Given the fact that the subject of aesthetics is not a common one, the guidance for the interview was sent in advance in order to introduce definitions and background and by that enabling preparation on the interview. All interviews were informative for interviewer and interviewee and had often a generative character: the conversations itself contributed also to new insight.

* Only the perspective of the leader is observed.

* It might be observed that this exploration of the aesthetics in a leadership context is dominantly a rational one. This says something of the author, and it says something of the culture in business administration. For example in Taleb's view on answering uncertainty and the unforeseen in his essay *On Robustness and Fragility: Deeper Philosophical and Empirical Reflections*, he postulates 10 principles for being robust. They all are more regulative of nature, than aesthetic. Which is congruent with the business world he has worked in, but is not stepping ahead from those paradigma's which are criticized extensively by the author at the same time (Taleb, 2010, pp. 111-115). For example, Patrick (2012) has observed aesthetics on a more sensory way which leads to more focus on the bodylike and ethnographic expressions of aesthetics which makes it in a way complementary and depicts a certain lack in this research.

* On scope within this normative research.

The society point-of-view is chosen as the scope in this research. This implies that definition of the 'good', for which aesthetics are assumed to contribute to achieve that level of quality, might be different from for example a shareholder-scope. Nevertheless can in principal the contribution of aesthetics be more or less identical to every definition of the 'good', due to the fact that aesthetics can be seen strictly speaking as conditional and not normative in itself. Following Nussbaum however, one may assume and expect that a fully aesthetic approach leads automatically to a certain ethical point of view.



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aesthetics at the heart of leadership



Annex 1 An brief introduction to aesthetics and the 'good'

At the start it is necessary to introduce the term aesthetics, while in general and scientific life it is used in different contexts. Later in this study, aesthetics will be explained and illustrated extensively. Now as a start, a brief and basic explanation of aesthetics: *"Aesthetics, a term coined in 1735 by Alexander Baumgarten to denote a theoretical and practical discipline aimed at the perfection of sensory cognition, was derived from the Greek aisthanomai, meaning perception by means of the senses. Aesthetics has since evolved to refer to two interrelated areas: the philosophy of art and the philosophy of aesthetic experience. The philosophy of art grapples with the question of what constitutes art. Answers from theorists differ widely. Some adhere to the impossibility of defining art given varying focuses on art movements, theoretical foundations, and social contexts, whereas others attend to the creative impulse that undergirds all human activity.*

The philosophy of aesthetic experience grapples with the nature of encounters with the arts, including artifacts and phenomena (e.g., nature) that possess aspects susceptible to aesthetic appreciation. Some theorists attend to appreciation and enjoyment, whereas others find the aesthetic to be a way of knowing and experiencing the world.

In the context of qualitative inquiry, aesthetics can refer to qualitative studies that attend to the philosophical concepts and considerations of the arts and of aesthetic experiences. Increasingly, aesthetics is understood as attention to the act of creating meaning from within the act of creating itself. Aspects of this fundamental human encounter between subject and other (world) can be traced historically, with a cross section of thinkers addressing varying perspectives. The sensory cognition required and the perceptual reciprocity assumed are at the core of contemporary qualitative research (Bresler & Latta, 2008, p. 3).

Aesthetics are seen as an implicit precursor for ethical behavior. For some authors (Nussbaum, Hatch) these items are closely related, while others make a clear distinction between aesthetics and ethics: "Dean, Ottensmeyer, & Ramirez (1997) point out that an aesthetic perspective addresses questions and issues that are fundamentally different from instrumental or ethical concerns. The approach is not only unique but important. For instance, people are attracted to things they see as beautiful and are repulsed by the ugly. We want to be involved with organizations that appeal to us on aesthetic dimensions". In: (Hansen, Ropo, & Sauer, 2007, p. 547). Nevertheless, an aesthetic experience can result in values. This is a key point in the philosophy of John Dewey (1859-1952), a well reputed American philosopher, who is seen as a member of the 'pragmatist movement' in American philosophy and who has been focussed to the aesthetic dimension of experience : *"When the rhythmic interaction of individual and world comes to be consciously experienced as a developmental process culminating in the kind of organic integrity and wholeness which makes the event sensed as deeply meaningful, pervaded by a qualitative continuity which uniquely distinguishes the experience as such"* (Alexander, 1995, p. 120). This is also pointed out by Bender in his analysis of the works of Nussbaum making clear that aesthetic production and experience is something on its own but nevertheless gains added value by enabling to connect a moral attitude to a concrete situation (Bender, 1998).



The Enlightenment can be seen as an era which is predominantly devoted to the rationalistic development of society and man. Started from an emancipatoric driver in disclosing the Truth from the till up then religious dominancy of art, science and justice. One might say, the non-rationalistic aspects of humans were left behind (in religious organizations and in individual religious consciousness) and adjoined separately the intense rationalistic or scientific development by a flourishing religious life, collectively and individually. 40 years ago a dramatic decline of religious life started to develop in western and developed society, leading to a strong growing degree of the so-called un-affiliatives up to 20% in 2010 (30% < 30 yrs) in the United States (PewResearch, 2012) and in The Netherlands up to 65% in 2006 in comparison to 23% in the late Fifties (Becker & Hart, 2006, p. 39).

In the last decade an aspect of the rational part which bridges the human part has gained a lot of attention. The ethical or moral leadership, (to be used interchangeably with the Greek meaning of ethical as of 'character and education', and the Latin meaning of moral as of 'custom and rule'; (McCloskey, 2006, p. 64)) has been a serious perspective in doing good. Ethical in the Greek meaning character and education as well as the Latin meaning The aesthetics are not so much focussed on moral, they go beyond it (Hansen, Ropo, & Sauer, 2007). In fact they are looking to do things right, appropriate, well-balanced, and complete. In modernistic times it is sometimes difficult to address issues which are to be measured alternatively from metrics, so is the case with aesthetics. Nevertheless there is a growing attention to this academic field, giving the fact that industry and society is becoming more and more advanced which means that the way it is lead needs also needs to be more and more fitted to that.

As stated a guiding author in this search for the 'good' as a stimulant for better leadership is the American philosopher Martha Nussbaum (1947). She has contributed largely and variedly to science, politics and philosophy in order to 'formulate a theory for global justice'. A central theme in her work is human vulnerability: *"I have always thought of the emotions as recognition of the ways in which we are vulnerable when we relate to others and of everything that out of reach and over which we have no control"* (Nussbaum, Interview with Martha C. Nussbaum: If citizens are not independent, then what we have is not democracy, 2011). She distinguishes good (amongst others love, friendship) and bad (amongst others violence, hunger) vulnerabilities for which one needs to have a tool to become aware of them and manage them. That's what she calls the 'capabilities approach'. In her normative approach she makes these distinguishes explicit: *"when nations argue about development and quality of life, they should consider these difficult questions about good at the same time. They cannot simply take for granted that things will get better when their GDP increases. Development means precisely that things are getting better"*.

In her book *The Fragility of Goodness*, Nussbaum examines rational self-sufficiency in Greek philosophy as a human condition for protecting the good of a human being and a good life (eudaimonia) by reason against 'luck', used by Nussbaum in the meaning of the unforeseen and by that close to the old Greek word '*tuche*'.

For the ancient Greek society rationality is a central point in thinking about a good human being. In those days it was a fundamental condition which makes the difference between us and animals and plants, because *"We have reason. We are able to*



deliberate and choose, to make a plan in which ends are ranked, to decide actively what is what to have value and how much value. All this must count for something. If it is true that a lot about us is messy, needy, uncontrolled, rooted in the dirt and standing helplessly in the rain, it is also true that there is something about us that is pure and purely active, something that we could think of as divine, immortal, intelligible, unitary, indissoluble, ever self-consistent and invariable. It seems possible that this rational element in us can rule and guide the rest, thereby saving the whole person from living at the mercy of luck" (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 2).

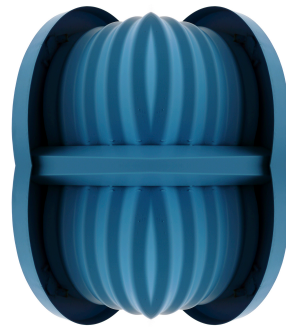
The development of the 'good' is in itself an ethic learning process, says Nussbaum. However the ethical is not a focal point for this study, the conditions and precursors for that are. It will be elaborated by the development of the viewpoints of Plato on the essential attitude and habits for living a good life, as observed by Nussbaum. In this, living a good life is taken as an analogy for performing good leadership as it is in both cases basically related to a fundamental human condition. Not a passive one but one that is intrinsically in our being and acting as a human being and therefore is applicable to life and leadership (moeilijke zin). This is made very clear in the epic 'small is beautiful'-vision on the good life by Schumacher: "*I say [...] that we think with or through ideas and that what we call thinking is generally the application of pre-existing ideas to a given situation or set of facts. [...] Some of the ideas are ideas of value, that is to say, we evaluate the situation in the light of our value-ideas*" (Schumacher, 1973/1993, p. 64)



aesthetics at the heart of leadership



Annex 2 Questionnaire guided interview aesthetic leaders



Rotterdam, 24 november 2013

Beste interviewee,

Deze tekst ontvang je als een opstap naar ons interview binnenkort. Over leiderschap is veel gepubliceerd, over *aesthetica idem*. Over de combinatie veel minder. In deze tekst zet ik een aantal tekstobservaties naast elkaar die niet pretenderen compleet te zijn, maar die wel beogen een indruk te geven van de context waarbinnen ik mijn masterthesis ga realiseren. In die zin geeft het ook een richting aan ons gesprek. Niet meer dan een richting overigens want bij uitstek een gesprek, de dialoog, doet vaak weer nieuwe gezichtspunten tonen. En dat is de positie van deze interviews in mijn onderzoek: huidige inzichten toevoegen aan hetgeen in de klassieke literatuur reeds is beschreven.

Met groet,
Marcel

=====

Leiderschap benadering 1¹

"Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal"

Leiderschap benadering 2²

de mens volgens Aristoteles:

- mensen zijn zowel kwetsbaar als actief
- ze hebben behoefte hebben aan een rijke, onherleidbare pluriformiteit aan waarden
- nadruk op de rol van liefde en vriendschap voor een goed leven

1 Peter G. Northouse (2013). Leadership (page 5). Sixth edition

2 bewerking vanuit: Martha Nussbaum (2006/2013). De breekbaarheid van het goede.

2 bewerking vanuit: Martha Nussbaum (2006/2013). De breekbaarheid van het goede.



een goed mens volgens de Aristoteliaanse deugdenethiek:

- aandacht voor rol van drijfveren en hartstochten bij het maken van een goede keuze
- aandacht voor vaste patronen in beweegredenen en handelen (ic karaktereigenschappen)
- interesse voor het leven van de betreffende persoon als geheel

het karakter van goed leven

'In het hele menselijke bestaan is toch een juist ritme en een juiste harmonie vereist'; de harmonie is er niet van nature, maar de behoefte eraan wel. [...] moreel onderricht is het rechtbuigen van de boom en morele voortreffelijkheid is dat hij recht is - een voortreffelijkheid die volledig intrinsiek is in onze opvatting van een gezonde, normale boom".

leiderschap is vakkundig toeval-management : tuche + techne

het **tuche** uit de Griekse filosofie

= toeval, in de betekenis van het element van het menselijk bestaan dat mensen niet in de hand hebben

'plato's uitvoerige bespreking van ingrijpende ethische voorstellen komt steeds voort uit een scherp besef van de problemen die mensen in hun leven ondervinden als gevolg van onbeheerst toeval. [...] die problemen kunnen alleen worden opgelost door een nieuw soort deskundige: iemand die met zijn kennis morele afwegingen op een hoger plan zal brengen dan de verwarrende praktijk van alledag en die daarmee de wens naar wetenschappelijke nauwkeurigheid en beheersing vervult die al in die gewone overtuigingen besloten ligt'

en het **techne** uit de Griekse filosofie

= competentheid, het doelbewust toepassen van menselijke intelligentie op een bepaald aspect van de wereld, wat een zekere beheersing over *tuche* oplevert; het gaat om het omgaan met behoeften en om vooruitzien en sturing met het oog op toekomstige toevallige gebeurtenissen. In een leven met *techne* komt je niet zonder enige voorkennis of vernuft in een nieuwe situatie terecht. Je beschikt over een zeker systematisch inzicht, een methode om zaken inhoudelijk te ordenen, zodat je de nieuwe situatie goed voorbereid tegemoet treedt en niet meer blind hoeft af te gaan op wat zich toevallig voordoet

aesthetics

** "Aesthetical experience could bring back our sensibility for those contexts that are necessary to help us live a good life, but, as members of a modern society, that is something we have forgotten. But if aesthetical experience is, however, to work to this effect, the boundaries between moral values (in the sense of what is just and in keeping with norms), ethical values (in the sense of the good and the adequate) and the aesthetically beautiful and sublime will have to be levelled out"³

³ Rüdiger Bender (1998). The Aesthetics of Ethical Reflection and the Ethical Significance of Aesthetic Experience: A Critique of Alasdair MacIntyre and Martha Nussbaum. University of Erfurt.



** the 'aesthetics pointed to the interconnectedness of perception, thinking, and feeling"⁴

goed leiderschap is vakkundig toeval-management : tuche + techne + aesthetics

Criteria voor *techne*, voor competentheid, volgens Plato en Aristoteles:

- algemene geldigheid
- overdraagbaarheid
- nauwkeurigheid
- gericht zijn op een (maatwerk-) verklaring of oplossing

Criteria voor *aesthetics* volgens Nussbaum in Bender:

- degree of imaginative power
- the beauty of the picture must have a completeness that lacks nothing
- highly sensitive perception of situations necessary for succesfull conflict solution
- perception need to be interactive, productive and creative
- aesthetic representation (imagination, sensations, fantasies) fills the gap between judgement and action

When an aesthetic representation (art, leadership, human attitude, ...) has these qualities, Nussbaum concludes, then only such a representation can "convey" the "rightness" of an action.

tot slot samengevat in de opvatting van Duke:

Aesthetics in leadership: direction, originality, fit and engagement⁵ ...and maybe more...

⁴ Bresler, L. & Macintyre Latta, M.(2008). *Aesthetic Inquiry*, in L. M. Given (Ed.) *SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, 11-14

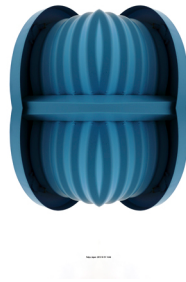
⁵ Duke, D. (1986); *The Aesthetics of Leadership*; *Educational Administration Quarterly* 7.27



aesthetics at the heart of leadership



Annex 3 Questionnaire guided interview business leaders



Aesthetics in the Heart of Leadership
Research project
Marcel Koeleman Enero-Junio 2014
Rotterdam School of Management
Rotterdam, Holland / Buenos Aires, Argentina

Questions for the guided interviews of leaders in industry in the portindustry areas of Buenos Aires and Rotterdam

Introduction and background

My name is Marcel Koeleman and I am researching business administration at the Rotterdam School of Management, part of the Erasmus University in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Apart from this I follow a course course at Universidad Argentina de la Empresa in Buenos Aires and I am doing research on aesthetics and leadership for my thesis this period of time in Buenos Aires and Rotterdam.

Leadership is a human activity and it therefore includes rational and logic mechanisms to make judgements and decisions as well as more intangible mechanisms like sensory and intuition. This is aesthetic leadership. Leadership literature is focussing on traits (personal capabilities and skills, and personality) and processes (interactivity with followers). Less attention is paid to the sensory, common sense and intuitive aspect of leadership, in literature referred to as the aesthetics in leadership. This research will contribute to that part of leadershiptheory and -practice and so the research question is:

What is the appearance, meaning and added value of aesthetics in the context of leadership

Theory



In the book 'The Three Faces of Leadership: Manager, Artist and Priest', Mary Jo Hatch observes that today's business is changing due to increasing dynamics in society. More than ever creativity and an ethical approach is necessary in business to "match the pace of change in their competitive environments [...] and to maintain the legitimacy necessary to attract resources" (Hatch, Kostera, & Kozminski, 2009, p. VI). A modern leader needs to be therefore a aesthetic leader. Leading is art and religion besides management, states Hatch.

In literature (Ghoshal, Hatch, Hansen, Zaleznik) it is also made clear that besides the traditional control-related traits and processes (the 'manager'-side of leadership), the modern leader needs to be crafted also on the less tangible attitudes and instruments. In order to understand fundamentally the dimension of aesthetics as a basic human condition for people's living and thus for people's leading and following I will go deeply into Greek philosophy to make clear the basic ideas about aesthetics as formulated by Sokrates in Plato's Hippias Major (Plato, 390 BC), and the balance between rationality and aesthetic as formulated in Plato's Phaedrus (Nussbaum, 2006).

Within the context of aesthetics, Plato's Hippias Major is a dialogue about 'kalon', a ancient Greek word which is variedly translated through times as 'beautiful', 'noble' and 'fine', amongst others. Translators make a clear point of the consequences of a chosen translation: while 'beautiful' focusses on the more trivial visual quality of an object, does for example 'fine' associates more with value in the meaning of a value of consistency, like a good design or construction, a consistent and coherent speech or an 'everything-fits' event. In the formulation of Sokrates in Plato's Hippias Major it means that things are fine when they are appropriate, functional, beneficial and to be enjoyed by ear and/or eye.

This value of consistency is made more precise in several ways through time in literature. In this research project interviews with to say 'aesthetic' leaders contributes to that. A listing of these so-called aspects of aesthetics are to be found in the table.

Practice

This research project will emphasize on the role that aesthetics play in the the fulfilling of a modern, to say aesthetic and adequate, leadership. It will by that explore the meaning and actual performances of the aesthetics, the added value and the way it may be operationalized in a businesscontext. Literature as well as qualitative data will be collected and brought together.

As part of that I am interviewing people in a leadership position within firms, in order to gain insight in the contribution of aesthetics in nowadays leadership by observing practices of aesthetics in different businesses, cultures and organisations. This interview with you is contributing to that!.

The results are intended to contribute to leadership theory on including aesthetics as one of the key factors for aesthetic leadership. The results are intended as well to contribute to a better leadership practice.

Thanks in advance for participating in my research project and contributing to theory and practice on aesthetics as a component for aesthetic and modern leadership!

Rotterdam/Buenos Aires, 2014

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Guided Interview Questions

1 Leadership

Mary Jo Hatch describes modern leadership as a combination of being a manager, an artist and a priest. Any comment on that?

- 1.1 What is your position in your company and for which businessgoals you are responsible?
- 1.2 Can you describe your style in leadership?
- 1.3 What can you say about the role of aesthetic aspects like sensitivity, common sense and intuition in your leadership?
- 1.4 What can you say about the balance between rational and aesthetic aspects in your leadership practice?
- 1.5 What can you say about being connected with people in your organisation? Importance, intensity.
- 1.6 What inspires and enjoys you as a private person?

2 Decisionmaking

- 2.1 Can you describe how you organise your people to reach your businessgoals?
- 2.2 Can you describe how you organise your work, in order to have 'a good feeling' about the operations?
- 2.3 So how do you make choices and decisions, by head or by heart?
-In what way you include your own personal observations, beside metrics and KPI's, in your decisionmaking?
-What kind of role plays intuition in your decisionmaking? Can you illustrate that with an example?

3 The aesthetics

3.1 Aesthetics in leadership is related to several practices and attitudes all dealing with generally speaking the role and the operationalization of sensitivity, common sense and intuition. In detail it is described in literature variedly. For this researchproject a listing has been made based on literature as well results of explorative interviews with leaders on this subject. In random order:

aspects of aesthetics	recognized as important in your leadership
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		no	little	indiff	some	yes
1	alignment with all members of the team on goals and ambition					
2	full coherence in the whole group					
3	energy in and by your leadership					
4	having a aesthetic picture in which all fits					
5	to be and to feel connected yourself with all members in the group					
6	personalizing choices and businessess, to bring it closer to your personal drives and preferences					
7	to use your intuition					
8	to connect rationality and intuition in yourself and teamplayers					
9	to be a navigator					
10	to practice what you preach					
11	having a good feeling, beside having good metrics					
12	to have ideas and vision yourself; creativity and imagination					
13	taking good care of yourself (knowledge, inspiration, energy)					
14	to appeal to the aesthetic sense of the employees ⁶					
15	a project or process can be beautiful on its own					
16	to use common sense					
17	hierarchy and discipline in the team					
18	trustfull culture; fairness; respect					
19	selfconfidence					
20	instinct					
21	team with chemistry and shared values					
22	to use your emotions					
23	craftsmanship, expertise on the content of the business					

3.2 On the points you recognized, can you say something about how you practice it?
-examples (succesful and not-succesful)

3.3 Which mentioned aspects of aesthetics are guiding you predominantly when you make decisions?

⁶ as like: 'a good speech on a vision is of more influence to the employees than the content of the vision itself'



- 3.4 What is the balance between rationality and intuition in your leadership practice? For example 50/50, 80/20, 30/70 or other?
- 3.5 Do you actively stimulate your own sensitivity and intuition to be useful in your leadership role?
And how do you do that?
-having creative activities during free-time
-meeting lot of different people
-being physically fit and in shape
-debate with friends or colleagues
-art/music/literature. Active/passive?
-other:

4 Aesthetic leadership

- 4.1 Do you feel aesthetics in leadership is a relevant signification?
- 4.2 What makes aesthetic leaders distinct?
- 4.3 Would aesthetic leadership encourage successful operations in your organization?
- 4.4 What could be the added value of aesthetic leadership in preventing business casualties on one hand and acquiring business opportunities on the other hand?
- 4.5 Organizations and businesses are in permanent change. What can be the contribution of aesthetic leadership to manage that process successfully?
- 4.6 Do you like to be an aesthetic leader?
- 4.7 To what extent are you in your opinion an aesthetic leader?
- 4.8 What makes you happy in your leadership?

=====0=====



Annex 4 Questionnaire guided interview artists

Guided Interview Questions

The role of aesthetics in leading yourself being an artist

- 1 How are you leading yourself?
- 2 What can you say about the role of aesthetic aspects *perception* (or intuition), *thinking* (or rationality) and *feeling* (or sensitivity) in leading yourself?
- 3 How are they interconnected in your way of leading yourself being an artist?
- 4 What is the balance between rationality on one hand and intuition and sensitivity on the other hand in leading yourself?
- 5 What is in your opinion the meaning of making things fysically (a piece of art, a performance) in your artistic practice for the interconnection of perception, thinking and feeling?
- 6 Do you actively stimulate the interconnection between perception, thinking and feeling to be useful in leading yourself, or is it just a matter of selfsteering inspiration? Any examples?

=====0=====



Annex 5 List of interviewees

Aesthetic leaders / Netherlands

- Laurentien van Oranje, member of Dutch Royal Family and director of several foundations
- Jeannette Baljeu, former alderman Municipality of Rotterdam. Now member of Council of Rotterdam
- Francine Houben, artistic director and owner of Mecanoo Architects, Delft Holland
- Jan Willem Erisman, professor VU Amsterdam and director Louis Bolk Institute, Bilthoven Holland
- Toon Gerbrands, former director of professional soccerclub AZ'67. Now director of professional soccerclub PSV
- Maria Yazdanbaksh, professor University of Leiden and Djakarta. Director Institute of Immunology
- Jan de Vreugd, owner and director management consultancy office

Business leaders / Rotterdam

- Ronald Paul, COO Port Authority Rotterdam
- Jan van den Heuvel, director Environmental Protection Agency Rijnmond
- Peter Pesselse, CEO-EECV
- Bart Leenders, CEO Neste Oil
- Raymond Riemen, CEO Broekman group
- Jaap Hoogcarspel, director Air Liquide
- Tom Sanders, director Aluchemie
- Max van der Meer, director Huntsman
- Steven Lak, chairman Deltalinqs

Business leaders / Buenos Aires

- Alex Westendarp Knol, Damen Shipyards South America
- Bernardo G. Schiffrin, International Operations Manager, 3M Latin America Region
- Paula M. Altavilla, Gerente Comercial, Division Consumo y Oficina, 3M Argentina y 3M Uruguay
- Pieter Dekker, director Bejosemillas Argentina
- Rogier Kievit, Regional Manager South America Nidera S.A.
- Niek Boot, owner and director Satecna
- Erik Yardin Millord; owner and director Raypac
- Jeroen Douglas; executive director Solidaridad International

Artists

- Vincent Bijlo
- Robert Zandvliet
- Wende Snijders

Expert interviews

- Sabine Roeser; professor TU Delft Department of Values, Technology, and Innovation
- Henk Oosterling; professor EUR Faculty of Philosophy/director ECO3 DoenDenken Rotterdam



aesthetics at the heart of leadership



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