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Semiotics applied in the Qualitative Specification of Objectives

Gestalt, Perception, Distinction, Identity and Identification

The Power of Distinction and Non-Verbal Communication through Gestalt and Facts.

A Need and its Achievement

Gerhard Eichweber

The world is a world of Signs. But which Decision Maker or Leader actively uses Semiotics?

"The Life World is a Sign World - Whoever wants to understand Life must understand Signs."

A claim shared by a collection of papers on fields of application of Semiotics, united in a book of 2 tomes realised at the occasion of the 65th Birthday of Martin Krampen. Thus: 22 years ago.

And a good ten years after we at Value Design started to proactively use Semiotics as knowledge basis in our methodical approach to giving the right "Gestalt" to Artefacts. Gestalt non-verbally transmitting meaning by expressing the very "Being" of both the observed Artefact itself, be it a product, service or building – and of yet another Artefact: The Company and Brand conceiving, making and offering the Artefact. Identity, through the Gestalt, thus, leads to being identified and becoming the object of identification with both, the maker and its products.

Gestalt, as a professional term used in psychology of perception, is more than form or shape: It is the Continuum or "whole" of form, colour, texture, haptic, light, shadow, glare and matness as well as movement and sound of an artefact. And if other properties are part of its nature, these, too, are part of the Gestalt. Gestalt, thus, can also comprise of implicit and intrinsic items.

The Gestalt of artefacts (products, buildings, points of sale, etc.) thus, communicates both: The Being of the artefact itself, its uniqueness regarding function, use, operation, value for buyers and users, etc. – Plus the Identity of the Enterprise / Brand, as an additional argument. The degree, to which this complex task is achieved, is a measure of good professional design. But it can only be as good as its specification: The verbal briefing in precise qualitative terms to be translated into Gestalt non-verbally expressing of Being, thus, requires the strategical definition of this very Being by nobody else then the leaders themselves. Their most important task: Define the uniqueness to be expressed through Gestalt – from a long term perspective.

"Gestaltung", thus: "giving Gestalt", is the original term for what we now hear named "Design". And it is the much more expressive word. Because it means giving Gestalt to an Artefact. Artefact is everything, what is not a result of nature's rich sources of variation.

All man made objects, from thought over plan via project to products and structures and side effects, are artefacts. Thus, we can, in addition to "hard" products and infrastructures also "design" ideas, strategies, plans, software, etc. The humane definition of artefacts is called Design. As Artefacts are perceived and interpreted, automatically, as Signs, we better are aware of this. Design, and its briefing, specifying precisely the results aimed at, always, too is creating Signs.

Our Sign World is to an increasing extent a world of Artefacts, and, thus, of man made signs. Intended or not: "One can not not communicate" said Wazlawik. And here is the danger of incompetence in dealing with the Gestalt of Artefacts: How can they as signs communicate any "right" message, if the message has not been planned, often not even thought about, at all?

In the Book "Life World – Sign World" the Artefacts and the areas they "belong" to, are divided to give the collection of scientific papers and essays a structure. But then: What sense does it make, to divide the life-world, namely as a sign-world, into parts? Doesn't Design concern all?

Why is there, thus, in this context, a distinction between design and architecture? Isn't Design, namely as Gestaltung, nothing other than the definition of artefacts, all artefacts, all man plans, including their automatically being Signs, and, thus, subject of perception and interpretation? If Semiotics is the science dealing with Semioses, thus, with processes of posting signs and their being perceived and interpreted, and, thus, an artefact, we can also apply this to semiotics, too.

Thus: What does it tell us of the authors, if they make a distinction between architecture and design rather than between design and non-design – and this regarding any group of artefacts? Or – Same subject, different question: What does it tell us about prevailing paradigms?

Design regards all, "From the Spoon to the City" - and much more: Thought, Strategies, Plans. Gestaltung, thus: Design, is the term for both the process and the result of the "Conception of artefacts fitting human needs and preferences" – and societies – as much as observing human responsibility for the world as a whole. Actually: The whole includes all humans, in their diversity.

Thus: When Gestaltung, Design, was conceived, and whenever in the past people returned to its definition, emphasizing its essence, the wording read more like: "serving man and humanity". Expression, to which progressively the responsibility for the environment was added.

But this long referred to a misleading concept of both man and society: A somehow reduced concept influenced by Marx and Materialism. A concept still prevailing through many paradigms, both socialist and capitalist, but in any case "materialist". The infamously arrogant nature and the misleading, paralysing and sabotaging nature of this concept could have been understood earlier, if the terms, in which Marx himself, Lenin and, moreover, Stalin, and other socialists, like Brecht, in private spoke about the labour class people, were known by more people and studied in the original texts, rather than only reported in secondary literature finding little attention. – If at all.

Materialism, however, by pure logic can be understood as the vital ideological error of thought, which necessarily has led to proving the concepts of Communism and "Socialism" wrong, and consequently is now also endangering "Capitalism". Another concept originated in Marx and the ideology of "Scientific Materialism". This last term is already a hint on how intense the ideological mission of Materialism has infiltrated and is paralysing the concept of "Science" and all what is based on it: Politics, Media, and the Sciences themselves. Namely those, which deal with the human nature, and therefore would better be called "humanities" – but ever since try in vain to be "exact" sciences: Economy, Management, Administration, Sociology, Political Sciences, etc. etc. We can not even save Philosophy from this observation. At least not in how far it leaves neutral critical positions and fosters "Negativism" as "right" and blames "Positivism" as "wrong". After all, which Creation, which sustainable Solution has ever been realised with a negative mind-set?

It was Karl Popper, who named the modern day origin of these misleading paradigms: "Hegel, Marx and the Consequences". And it was the natural scientist and theoretician of science, Jakob

von Uexküll, but also his son Thure, a physician with significant impact on Medicine as science, who explained the cornerstones of the logical error: The wrong concept of "Objectivity", when matters of research truly are not "Objects", but "Subjects" – because they change when being researched. The elimination of qualitative information and the unjustified importance of often insignificant "Quantification", further ridiculed by the demand of "Reproducibility".

The predictions presented in the famous report by Denis Meadows and Eduard Pestel to the Club of Rome, much discussed and observed by my generation, who were students at the time, could not be reproduced, because we, the subject, not object, of the studies, upon publication of the results, did indeed change behavior – and, thus, course – making the predictions fail... May be not enough, to really put the world and its societies on a sufficiently good course, to "save the world". But certainly marked enough to prove: We are Subjects, and, thus, we change as a consequence of being researched. And therefore the research can not be reproducible. Is it therefore not "scientific"? I insist: It is. And pretty much so. And I observe: If one takes some key-sentences written by Jakob von Uexküll (he was Biologist), written about a century ago, and exchanges the term "Biology" substituting it by the term "Economy", these texts and their affirmations remain logical, and – moreover true: They explain, why economists are unable to understand the matters they are pretending to research. And this explains why they do not understand the true nature and the deeper sources of the continuously building wave of crisis: The misleading paradigms of materialism having ideologically long infiltrated all sciences, even the "capitalist" understanding of "Economy". And hindering politics to adopt effective measures.

The above – and the conclusions and the, instead, effective and efficient (thus: less costly) measures to be taken – having been subject of previous papers, it is mentioned here only as a reference, in order to understand the significance of the matters offered for consideration and further studies in the rest of this paper. Like a number of papers, following the presentation of my complementing findings on economy, and how to sustainably and lastingly overcome crisis, this paper aims at presenting ways out. In this case: The consciousness regarding the potentials of Design, and the practical usefulness of Psychology of Perception, Information-Aesthetics and Semiotics as management tools for the achievement of greater and longer lasting success.

Tackling crisis at its roots means providing sustainable employment, prosperity. Considering, that the sum of all micro-economical results – thus: of the many success stories of entrepreneurs and their firms – is in principle, as the sum of all successes and failures, leading to the results of what the media nowadays call "the economy", or, more precisely, "real economy", thus: "macro economy", understanding, what drives these successes appears to be crucial to understanding what happens under which boundary conditions. Or, in different terms: In which context.

As explained in previous papers, it is the context, which decides over the validity or applicability of the prevailing paradigm, that "economic growth" leads to growth of employment – or not. And it is the dealing with qualitative distinction, with diversity, which decides over success or failure, prosperity or continuously further growing crisis. The goal is: To avoid financial Tsunamis.

Gestalt expressing Meaning correlated to Being – And therefore to be planned proactively:
The terms already used in the above introduction into the matter and its objectives, sustainable economic development as result of many sustainable socio-economic success stories, may require some additional clarifications, if not "Definitions". For instance the concept of nonverbal Signs: Signs represent a meaning, a content. They, thus, are "Signifiers". And they are interpreted. The Interpretation follows Perception: Signs are perceived. Their content or meaning functions through Aesthetics, thus, through the attribution of meaning - and, thus, significance – to the perceived signs. Now, as whatever is perceived, by being automatically interpreted, functions as

sign, we better control what we do – and what we do not do – under the point of view of its significance, being a sign, to others. Moreover, this applies to the way, how we do, what we do.

And in a world of man made objects, in their totality called "Artefacts", the specific "Being" of these artefacts speaks to those perceiving them. It, thus, appears logical, to control, what speaks to others about oneself, namely, if this "self" is a company and if we bear responsibility for the fate of this legal person and all, what depends of its actions and their being perceived.

Psychology of Perception, moreover: Psychology of Gestalt, Information Aesthetics and Semiotics (or Semiology) are scientific approaches to understanding the working of communication. Thus, of sending signs and how they are perceived and interpreted by whom in which context. We need not delve into the depth of scientific analysis of these processes, less into its terminology, to understand the importance of the matter. More important for leadership is to be and always stay aware, that words are believed much less than facts. – Or what people perceive and interpret as facts. Non-verbal information, thus, prevails. People believe what they see and perceive. Because it is they, who sees and perceives. And they hardly distrust themselves and what they themselves see and judge. This is, why to control not (only) what we say, but what we do is so important. Therefore: Wherever more people speak for one "legal person", it is overly important to control, what is communicated non-verbally. Speaking with "one voice", thus, requires planning and control, thus, leadership, where the leader at the top decides, while it helps for all to act in the same coherent and stringent manner, to come to the conclusions in inclusive, systemic processes, structured as methodical "team" processes, in order to be effective. And efficient. Two adjectives for two different concepts. Both equally important for success.

Steps towards a Techniques-Toolbox for Inclusive, Systemic Processes as Artefacts of its own.

Methodology and techniques of team-processes, in order to equally serve the different criteria and expectations to be met, not only have to lead – nearly "automatically" – to an optimum of functional and quantitative aspects of the solution to specific problems, which an artefact is aimed at solving – and better than others. But also to an optimum in meeting the qualitative criteria, in the eyes of those, for whom the solution is meant. These qualitative criteria can be seen as the result of values and attitudes towards the world in general, and more specifically the problem to be solved by the artefact, leading to specific preferences of those who, by knowingly or subconsciously sharing the same values constitute a group, which we call a "Target Group" For the definition of target groups, thus, quantitative criteria, such as age, income, position.etc. are much less important than "Taste", as a result of socio-cultural, mental formation leading to specific preferences regarding specific aspects, which the creators of artefacts need to know and understand perfectly well, in order to cater to the target group better than others.

Also competition, thus, is a process of qualitative distinction aimed at specific groups in the best sense of "USPs" – meaning Unique (uniquely well fitting) Sales Propositions (Benevolent submission of own Being at the choice of each member of a target audience). It is this latter term "Proposition", which already indicates the parallel of the implied "Love of next of kin" which, thus, is a vital element of sustainable success in every business. The concept of "Love" or, in more univocal terms, "Benevolence" is, thus, crucial for success, starting with the interest in others, in order to be able to understand and serve their preferences better. In qualitative terms. Without recurring to quantitative criteria as "arguments". And thus with margins allowing to invest more in more understanding, research and development further strengthening one's competitiveness. A competition for being preferred for Being, not numbers.

Different is Better. Just How, precisely, and Why? This is to be understood to cater to groups. Human Diversity and Diversity of Offers being the prerequisite of being preferred over others,

Diversity is the single most important criterium to be planned and achieved in every artefact, in order to have an own "Raison d'Être" resulting from the specific preferences of target groups.

Qualitative human diversity being by principle subversed, wherever the concept of "Materialism" reduces everything and every need to merely quantitative criteria – and generalising functional requirements to a maximally common denominator, while not respecting (even: ideologically repressing) the fact and human right for qualitative diversity, not only explains the logic of the fall of communism, but the same danger for "Capitalism". A danger all the more imminent, the more "Capitalism" follows the ill concepts supposed by Marx. A development coinciding with the fall of Socialism and many people with lifelong socialist indoctrination now acting exactly as Capitalism had been explained to them by Socialists. The fact, that some shrewd personalities, who have been more or less randomly appointed to become "Oligarchs" by western oligarchs and their mechanisms of hidden influence, are following their criteria, just like a "pact with the devil", can be seen as indicators or "signifiers" disclosing the only scarcely camouflaged hidden agendas and politicians functioning as "puppets on strings" behind such developments. But it also, all the more, indicates the vital importance of qualitative distinction. In this case between Capitalism, Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurs and Managers or (Business) Administrators – and the paradigms prevailing in and regarding each of these terms – and their systematic content for which the terms serve as labels. Terminology and Etymology precisely linking names to causes, thus, are vital to understanding. They are a tool for the internal processes aimed at understanding target groups and the roots of their preferences as best one can. And they serve as tool for the conception of the precise diversity of artefacts to be conceived, in order to be precisely tailored to cater optimally to such specific preferences.

Different is better. But the specific way of being different is to be known, understood and kept in mind while resolving any detail of a new artefact aimed at a qualitatively distinct target group.

Being different, and thus precisely fitting different needs and preferences, being the key to higher Value Added, leads to the short rule and slogan: "More Value Added by respecting Values". – One could also say: "More Value Added by catering to Values in their Diversity." And to the facts and rules, for utmost success to be observed in this context, namely as far as "Brand Techniques" (rather than superficial "branding") specific courses and training in practice is just one more of a line of topics immediately to be implemented as part of promotion and development of any local or national economy. And in every form adhering to such effort. These, too, are mentioned and described in earlier publications.

Here, however we need to limit the discourse on economy as a whole, and how the economy of any territory is the sum of economies of the individual firms, thus, of the individual success stories of truly sustainable entrepreneurial behavior. And how this is also result of education. And of culture, namely of the interest and ability to distinguish and precisely serve diverse needs and preferences. And how own distinction re enforces success of unique brands and their offers.

It is also worth noting, how these brands become property not only of their "owners", but of their stakeholders: Those, who identify themselves with the brands – and don't want to be deceived. Here the term benevolence, stands for the interest in the other as a prerequisite of success, by filling "love of next of kin" with life, turning it into a practical means of distinction. The word "love", too, explains how identification with artefacts can resemble love-hate relations.

While the latter again is more of a topic for courses in entrepreneurship, brand technique and marketing of the new (new marketing, marketing of innovations), here the basic question

of economy stands in the foreground: How does the reversion of the prevailing paradigms of a focus on "numbers" (quantitative criteria) and the already far progressed substitution of values and their distinction by the mere focus on numbers. Lately, as most visible sign of such ill focus, the hilarious numbers of moneys pumped and destroyed in the Financial Systems, mistakenly named "Economy", finally have generated doubts, which may nurture the hope, that the following few lines may receive more interest and, eventually, lead to more understanding.

The opposite of (Over-) "Rationalisation", leading to reduced typology of products following a egalitarian (and, thus, repressive) paradigm: Taking Diversity (as the most crucial equal right), and, thus, human beings, seriously, and trying to understand the differences of their dreams and preferences, turning them into so far "latent markets" to be served with specifically "different" offers, can not be done with robots, but by people taking an interest in other people's diversity. (But robots don't pay social security, taxes and don't buy anything either.) And the greater Value Added, resulting from serving the target groups better, allows companies not only to employ more people and give them more interesting and thus rewarding tasks to fulfill, but also to pay them better, while also being able to direct more resources on furthering leadership in the market segments thus created and developed, through innovations and uniqueness, but also in qualitative market research and manufacturing technology, in order to defend the leadership through productivity, too. And also the employment and social impact on the region.

Diversity of Values and Preferences leads to Diversity of Demand. This justifies and requires Diversity of Offers, which can only be realised with more and diverse Personnel. Thus, diversity of people taken seriously leads to more employment, better remuneration, functioning social security systems and lasting general prosperity and inner peace.

Now: If the above is also brought into other countries, in order to reduce their need, sorrows, dependence and forcibility, also outer peace finds better pre-conditions, and migration pressure will be strongly reduced, because good people find better opportunities in their own countries. In the following pages, we shall try to translate all this, even more explicitly, into an eagle's view and recommendations for the global socio economic situation and the hidden wars going on, which use the ill focus on the "drugs" Finance and Energy, to virtually turn countries and their working populations, from entrepreneurs to the last worker, but also politicians and administrations, into slaves of foreign interests and their hidden agendas. Hidden wars, in which Finance and Energy, but, moreover, misleading paradigms followed by all, as if they were true (and "scientific") serve as weapons. Weapons to be defused.

Understanding, how the dependence on Finance as well as Energy as drugs allows those, who control them, to repress economy – and with it: individual success and general prosperity, social security and, thus, self determination and independence of countries and continents – also leads to the solutions leading away from such dependence sabotaging the independence of peoples: Locally rooted Entrepreneurship, Diversity, Innovation, Uniqueness – and its defense against plagiarism. And above all: Reversing the undermining of qualitative distinction, of human diversity of values and the resulting diversity of preferences by egalitarian reduction of all to quantitative criteria: Numbers of all kind. Numbers, which have no significance, as long as the matters have no "Sense", no reason to exist of their own. But if the reason is there, and uniquely so, true experts will be capable to resolve also the quantitative aspects of the matters. It is this specific competence of holistic optimising, which needs to be taught, through mentoring and teaching, in order to reverse the paralysing influence of misleading paradigms: Paradigms of Materialism. Paradigms about to destroy, after socialism, also capitalism, and with it open societies. Cui Bono?

Remarks on Economy and What makes it Sustainable: Diversity. Again: "Different is Better."

In following the misleading paradigms attributing significance to quantitative aspects alone, politics and administrations argue to influence numbers by numbers. Thus, trying to steer the financial results through financial measures.

That does not work. But reluctance to recognise, admit and alter the process is great. Although proven insight in better solutions exists. The ever repeated "power of opinion"-pattern of leadership insisting of the wrong measures is the motive of the books by Barbara Tuchmann, see e.g.: "The March of Folly".

Is there a chance, that this time the mislead will listen, start resisting and eventually overcoming the misleading paradigms and evolve from being lemmings (mislead followers) of foreign agents? Hope dies last. And the conviction, that it is possible to emerge as equal partners into peaceful co-existence of all diverse individuals, ethnicities, cultures countries and continents, in common prosperity. And therefore here is briefly repeated, as far as economy, individual success and common prosperity has been the subject of previous publications. We can define economy as: Sum of all Transactions realised, thanks to the degree of fulfillment of individual preferences, by serving these with distinct offers – or, as an even more generalised term: Artefacts.

As far as Transactions, it is obvious, that both their number is important – and the individual height of these transactions. A height defining the margin, and the contribution to the ability of the respective enterprise to develop further, not only by means of strong proprietary research and development, but also with the resulting challenging and rewarding tasks for the personnel. And the ability to remunerate well and to compete for best personnel by the combination of challenge and remuneration – leaving the lesser for those with the more egalitarian and, thus, lesser offers leading to more repetitive work., less requiring identification with own distinction aimed at satisfying distinct target groups better. And thus being rewarded the higher price.

Only where distinction of artefacts fits expectations and preferences so far not met, is the price the result of the value for the customer. Where, instead, artefacts offered are less distinct – and, thus, lack a very own reason to exist – a situation which in our days prevails, as result of erratic thought turned into prejudice and paradigm, in almost every industry: Prices become function of Costs; Or: price = f (costs).

Where prices are a function of costs, and where, thus, the competition occurs, instead of by means of qualitative distinction, with a focus on merely quantitative criteria disregarding human values, it is obvious, that in such ill battles can only prevail, who wins at the costs-front, too.

The resulting cut-throat mentality of "management" or business-"administration" instead of true and locally rooted (and by nature sustainable) Entrepreneurship competing by understanding and serving target groups better, leads to excessive automation (only possible, where products are all the same) reduction of jobs and placement of manufacturing (and services) into other countries. But immediately moving the work elsewhere, as soon as workers there, too, want to be able to afford their children good education and living with one job, rather than three. Nothing against fighting the worst symptoms of such irresponsible behavior with rules and regulations, e.g.: regarding "corporate governance". But the real, the underlying quest is that of understanding the very root of all these problems: An error of thought, which Karl Popper named explicitly in the subtitle to the second tome of his main work: "Hegel, Marx and the Consequences". Consequences not only proving socialist ideology and practise wrong. But Consequences which, upon the systematic infiltration of the sciences with "materialist"

ideology, ever since have limited the sciences far below their true potentials. This again, early on, had been proven wrong by authors such as Jakob v. Uexküll and later reiterated, with all the more proof, by his son Gore: Repression of the Qualitative and Reduction of All to quantitative criteria, is the origin of all errors. Thus, the Quintessence of all remedy: "Different is Better". Reducing Difference to "objective, quantifiable and repeatable" criteria is, in plain words, dumb. So is the "Negativism", just another paradigm of Marx' errors and the respective ideology sabotaging the sciences and, through these, the media and politics, rules and regulations based thereupon, the world.

Now: Following the findings published by Thomas Kuhn regarding the resistance of sciences (and, moreover, scientists) to reverse and correct erratic paradigms, it appears desirable, but taking all too long to wait for such insight and its effects on the corrections of wrong teachings – and their effects on the world. The definitive financial Tsunami, for some time ending the steadily building frequency and amplitude of crisis, meanwhile will have occurred. We must, thus, focus on those forces who, once they understand, can act much more immediately, swiftly and effectively: Entrepreneurs and Leaders in truly entrepreneurial businesses. They merit all out attention, support, advice and mentoring. Plus: By doing so, we have ignited the turn around of the Basque Industry and, thus, the situation of the Basque economy and with it, its explosively ailing society. Thus: It is all already proven. And – knowing resistances and counter-forces – it can be done even better... The Bilbao Effect can be repeated. Everywhere. If one understands, how it really has been achieved. This, too, has been explained in previous papers.

With this lengthy introduction into the reasons for the time and effort, the Mission, to enhance the successes of individual businesses, which in their sum improve "the economy", we have, however laid the ground for understanding the importance, of the following: Using Semiotics and other "qualitative" tools for the achievement of better artefacts in inclusive, systemic multidiscipline processes sharing and optimising the details of what makes all the difference.

Identity and Identification, own Distinction and its serving Diversity of others, is a matter to be understood and shared by all in every organisation. Moreover, this qualitative understanding and distinction must transpire from all actions and offer, thus: From all Artefacts stemming from an organisation. This different Being must speak for itself and not be lilted and relativated by words.

It just must be turned into tangible distinction inviting and encouraging the distinction by others, and the Identification of those Others, Target Groups and Public, with the recognizable uniqueness shaping the distinction and being the reason to be preferred by Target Groups and justifying the Identification of those Others with the Artefacts (Products, Services, Brands). This Uniqueness and Distinction is, what gives Artefacts their very own "Raison d'Être", their Reason to Exist. Without it, they would be exchangeable "Mee-Too"-Offers. Offers aimed at stealing market share from others. And, consequently, at destroying the ability of others to pay their employees and vendors well. And the whole chain of evil starts its ill development: Competition over price and, thus, costs, turning the otherwise neutral term "Productivity" into a synonyme for Unemployment. And, thus, weakening regional economy and prosperity, the function of social security systems and the society, namely its openness, and its political system as a whole. Whom would that serve? Is that the intention? If not: Change of Paradigm is needed.

And, again, as stated, there is no time to wait for politicians, administrations and sciences to learn the lesson. Those must act, who understand and can free themselves from the erratic paradigms infiltrated through a long "Brain Wash": Private Initiative is required. Both of public pressure groups and, moreover, from entrepreneurs. But it would, of course, be good, is some intelligent administrations, like in the eighties that of the then recently more autonomous Span.

Basque Country. Otherwise, The author of this paper would never even presented himself there spontaneously, and offered advice regarding the traps to avoid, and how to do it, to be really effective and efficient. Proposals than invited and finally accepted to implement personally. A tuning and holistic concertation of the right measures already envisioned by wise politicians. New politicians filling the void of the recent overcoming of fascist repression and newly granted partial autonomy. A training programme for meticulously selected local professionals. Measures laying the groundwork and mentoring entrepreneurs, what only they can: Create Prosperity.

Understanding and Defining the Role of Distinction: First and foremost a Task of Leadership.

With the overview over the deeper reasons, why distinction is so important, and why it thus is so important to understand it and its role and power, we arrive at the tools lending themselves to be used in the process. Tools to be understood, adopted and adapted to every specific case, above all by entrepreneurs and all other leaders interested in being more successful and adding with their individual success to the wellbeing, the prosperity, social security and peace of their society. Leadership is a matter not to be delegated. And Distinction is probably the most important tool for success. Normally, though, this remark would read as "Design is the most powerful management tool for outstanding and lasting, thus, sustainable success". A remark, however, which still could be mistaken: Design is a Management Tool. A tool for leadership. And in order to serve at its best, it must be (understood and) used by the leaders themselves. They must specify, what shall how mark the distinction of the artefacts under scrutiny. That task must never even thought of being delegated...

Leadership, thus, is qualitative specification of goals, objectives and tasks. It is the qualitative briefing, the description of the diversity in words, which defines the tasks for all involved. And it is the wise choice of processes, which turns the tool into an even more powerful one: Processes must be multidisciplinary, because holism, sustainability, holistic tasks and their contexts are complex. In order, not to leave any aspect unregarded, not to fall into any trap, processes must assure, that they lead in every respect to sustainable solutions.

Processes must be inclusive, in order to include all the specific know how present in a firm or organisation, and by including the people and their identification with the task, leading to offers or artefacts precisely representing the specific competence of the firm and its brand.

Processes must be systemic, in order to feed back the knowledge about all details of market and technology, research, developement, industrialisation (productionising), logistics and distribution, thus all reasons behind all detail decisions, with all involved. Because only thus can the reason behind the things be turned into a unique and reccogniseable Corporate Culture leading to Identification of third parties with the artefacts. An Identification not to be easily deceived or even disregarded by other actions not fitting the personality thus established.

A personality, in the perception of target audiences, is more swiftly created than altered. It is therefore a matter of Leadership not to be delegated to supposed internal "Specialists" (or not even that) and less so to external Advisors.

The target of Self Image and External Perception must not be left to accident, not to Others, and – less so – be subject to random or accidental change by exchange people in charge without qualitative briefing, joint elaboration of specifications and tasks and their fitting a long term perspective and strategy. Strategy, again, is a matter for the leaders, but to be shared and, best, elaborated jointly in inclusive systemic processes, like Scenario Techniques. And to be decided, after good and critical long term reasoning, by the leaders and nobody else.

Identity, its "design" and its implementation into all spheres of an organisation, in order to shape the specific "Being" as perceived as a coherent and stringent set of rules establishing, developing and tuning the Identity as perceived from Outside and Inside, thus, is the probably most important task for every Boss. Only that few are aware of it. And therefore also not sufficiently competent to fill the competences they hold. This is to be corrected. Best by mentoring. Programmes of Mentoring both entrepreneurs and their top-aides and staff are, thus, crucial. Such programmes must include the concepts of Distinction, their sensing and communication. They must start with the strategic part enabling to base decisions on long term views. And they must comprise of the methodology and techniques leading to overall optimums. All of this refers to psychology of perception, Information Aesthetics and Semiotics. "Sciences", mostly employed to judge artefacts. But rarely employed to precisely specify and achieve goals.

From Scenarios and Assumptions to Creative Interpretations and Unique Solutions.

What will the world be like in 30 years from now? Which are the logically consistent scenarios? What does each scenario mean for one's own activity and future? Which strategies to develop? How to steer the company's own incomparable and unconfoundable uniqueness, continuously redefined through its offers and its matching Being and Values of specific groups, into the future? How to plan, specify and design this own uniqueness now, but extrapolating it from past and present, honoring its existent identity and following, in a well tuned continuity, into the possible future, still reserving the concept the variability needed to adapt to the real course of times?

How many supposed leaders avoid such questions, stating that "one can not" ... whatever? Among the many bad excuses often heard are statements like: On can not... "be unique in this business" ... predict the future ... assure continuity ... make employees follow qualitative instructions ... compete by qualitative distinction instead of price. Or: "The market" wants, etc.

There are people who do not recognise, how much such statements put competence in doubt. But there are others, who feel reminded of own concepts, buried under prevailing paradigms. Others, who feel relieved, reconfirmed and – now that there are other professionals reassuring them – ready to change course, starting with the question: What can we do right now, to be preferred by the way we are doing business? And how can we change our offers, to compete better, and no longer over price, delivery times and other quantitative criteria alone? These are the ones to help immediately, and consistently, dependably, until their success shows and convinces those, who hear, but in view of the continued insistence of others, hesitate to change course themselves – until they see the success of those, who do harvest on distinction.

Challenge: Overcome Paradigms of Materialism, Return to Appreciation of Human Diversity

After all: The preachers of the paralysing paradigms are many: Bookkeepers, Bankers, Authorities, the Media, Administrations, Employees, Colleagues, Friends. But also "Science" – and Churches. People, even supposed Leaders, are long dishabituated from trusting own proprietary thought, analysis, reflection and judgement. Moving with the mainstream, even if it is accelerating and heading for a huge waterfall, to many seems to appear nearly as comforting as a Cocon. Just: Is an entrepreneur, who follows the mainstream rather than doing nothing as others do? Often leaders appear unaware of their own power to shape (or at least influence) with their firm stances their little part of the world, their market. In looking back into the portfolio of experience, and far enough to disclose no secret, one can produce examples which might serve, who from metaphors can deduct analogies as a perspective into their future.

Egalitarianism, as far as its relation to the limitation of the Sciences to "Objectivity, Quantification and Reproducibility" in "modern times", according to Popper, has its roots in "Hegel, Marx and the Consequences", thus, in marxist concepts like Materialism. Errors of thought, which not only

by their pure logic have proven Socialism wrong, but now increasingly endanger Capitalism, too. Egalitarianism – and Materialism – however, have much older, archaic roots, which must not be overlooked. And they work forth, as paradigms, from there, through all times. and, thus, merit close attention. They all the more require our close attention, if and when our research aims at overcoming the old "normality" of few rich and many poor, of conflict and war, using reason to reach better times replacing such old normalities by new better normalities. As stated on earlier occasions, peace is no normality yet. And the disruptive forces of use of power, military and war also endangering Europe, despite its unseen new history of long peace, are much neglected, but all too visible, again, at present. But, to be overcome, they must not lead to wrong conclusions. Thus, to finally reach the valid objectives, which Religions as well as Marxism have so long aimed at, we must learn: Quantitative equality can only be reached by nurturing qualitative diversity. From "feeding the poor" and more equal "Distribution", mistakenly lamenting Diversity and Individuality as "Egoism", we must switch to "Empowerment", thus: Own responsible Judgement.

Enticing, Nurturing and Mentoring Private Initiative, thus, is the task to lead societies out of their continued Turmoils. This is the Quest to succeed in. This is the Alternative, long available, but only at present increasingly sought after.

The Greek outcry for "no more" of the paralysing ideological measures, driven by quantitative criteria or tumb materialism alone, expensive in many more ways than just money, requires to finally understand, everywhere, where the error lies, and how the Bilbao Effect can be repeated. Formulas like "Podemos", the Spanish "Yes, We Can", are right, but so far they are more a desperate outcry of hope than certainty. And less based on the substantiated knowledge and experience. Because so far the lessons not only have not been learnt, but repressed. Cui Bono?

The outcries, and the determination to do better, require to be supported with the knowledge, methods and experience available, which does not serve the solutions, but the methodology to be adapted, hands on, to each and every different case. Regarding "macro-economy" in every state and region. But, moreover, because macro economy is the sum of all individual results, regarding micro economy with all willing and decided entrepreneurs and companies ready to change course and prosper. Locally rooted and socially responsible.

This again, in principle, as a pattern, is what has been implemented in Spain's Basque country in the eighties. The 30st anniversary of this effort, of a concerted action coordinating all measures of promotion of economic development, laying the ground for the later so called "Miracle of Bilbao", can and should be used to tell the world: *"Here is, how we did it. Not by superficial signs architecture putting the ongoing change in evidence, but by reiterating: "Different is better!"*

Change is a Matter of Competent Leadership overcoming erroneous Paradigms – Top Down Change, to be effective, is a matter of inclusive and systemic multi discipline team processes. But, in order to go into the right direction, change requires to be led and coordinated as part of a long term vision and strategy to be individually formulated by the leaders of each and every unit, company and organisation. Giving, reassuring and strengthening the specific "Raison d'Être" to each such business and organisation. A huge teaching job. Moreover, a huge Mentoring task.

It requires to teach, at various levels and in all areas which can be reached, the return to deal with diversity and independent judgement, applying same methods for different ways serving diverse situations, target groups and contexts. It is here, where Semiotics are part of the plan: Semiotics are to be applied for the understanding of the course of the world. Otherwise, how can one ubicate the own situation in the current context? And how can one design the future role of one's own area of responsibility in the future? Not an impossible challenge at all.

Scenario Techniques is the method, Ute von Reibnitz is one of the most substantiated authors and practitioners in this field. Others claim it too, but require leadership and control in order to follow through in a thorough manner. Thus: A measure to be started and implemented "subito". A measure observing and teaching to observe signs in order to independently understand the trends, the course of the world. Semiotics applied in order to find, establish and tune strategies.

Apart from developing independent strategies, however, Leaders, as well as their top staff and external advisors (in crisis all jobless academics are "consultants", just not the consultants of an older, more competent and seasoned sort) need to be instructed and trained on the job, in new projects of innovative entrepreneurship, in the methods of gathering and applying the information regarding qualitative distinction in their everyday life and practice: Who is different, and how. How would, thus, products and services suit them better than the current mainstream offers can? How can one realise different solutions, and how can these be optimised to leave the margin needed not only to pay for the effort, but for further research and development further improving, but also finding additional unique solutions for differently different users? How can one secure own innovations and USPs against plagiarism? How can one reach out with one's own innovation to the same target groups, more or less diluted around the world, in order to serve them, too, better, than the current main stream offers? How can, thus, the term "Globalisation" be turned in the sustainable practice it in theory can and should be? This, too, requires looking out more closely, independently judging, and, thus, interpreting signs.

When it comes to seeking for new ideas and concepts, elements of distinction, beyond own lacks and riches, culture and identity, dreams and specific competence leading to new solutions, existing, however little publicised techniques for understanding diversity and design of fitting distinction are available. Here Patterns of Use, Life Style Matrix and Semantic Differential are to be named. Hands-on techniques, like all methodology not an end to themselves, but tools to overcome lack of interest and understanding of diverse values and attitudes and the diversity of preferences resulting from these.

Patterns of Use regard the paradigms of use of a product and service. Approaching a matter from a decidedly distinct extreme point of view, opens eyes and leads to fulfilling latent, however so far not consistently and satisfactorily served preferences – and dreams. As a metaphor, one can take "Design for Handicapped People": By trying to ease the use of artefacts with a closer look on specific difficulties, one often finds huge advantages for all, not just the handicapped. Such products, thus, find larger market segments, than their initial niche.

The life style matrix is an approach to distinguish and understand the different attitudes to life, and to differentiate the effect and potentials this has, to serve people better by distinguishing their qualitative diversity rather than believing that quantitative criteria, age, money, give a clue.

The Semantic Differential, moreover, is an old concept widely applied in the analysis and discussion of the perception of matters. Existing artefacts that is. The semantic differential, thus, can be applied on the perception of artefacts, such as products, services, infrastructures etc. But, moreover, also on the perception of companies and brands and their business practice perceived as behaviour of being by both internal and external observers.

Now, if the semantic differential can be instrumental to understand, how we are, and how what we do is perceived, one can also take the same differential and correct it to how one wants to be and be perceived instead. Such process, as an inclusive systemic process, can raise awareness of problems, but also immediately lead to solutions. Moreover, regarding the Being of products and infrastructures, the semantic differential, turned around into a tool to specify the perception

of the future artefact, and here again differentiated either as perception by specific groups and as perception by any general public, independent of contexts. From here, to be really useful, not only for the control of results, but as a guideline for the design and achievement, the typical target values of adjective pairs can be used as quest for designers. Designers, engineers and economists who in teams, by knowing the task and the target group, use such target values as stimulation to lead creativity processes to new solutions.

After all, this is, what it all is about: Innovations serving specific purposes better than the known. The creation of new "condensation cores" for different ideas in the process crystallising into hitherto unseen and unthought of new solutions helps to achieve quantum leaps. Technical quantum leaps, as far as function, feasibility and costs. And qualitative quantum leaps in the eyes of the future customers and users. By being different in the right way.

For all these approaches, examples of processes and their results can be given, which would definitely exceed the scope and limitations of this paper. But they are available, e.g. in seminars. Here, instead, the focus had to be limited to explaining why qualitative distinction is so overly important, and that it can be implemented, hands on, without much theory, less terminology, into the practical businesses in order to turn these around and with their successes economies around. Much better than with the currently excessive, however hardly effective, quantitative approaches long forced upon companies and now also countries, sabotaging rather than freeing their potentials.

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The "surprising" results, and the question, why, what in parts contradicts prevailing paradigms, has worked so well, has led to the publication "Sustainable Management in times of potential Economic Downturns. That publication extensively analyses economic theory and adds conclusions so far unseen, while also criticising scientific theory overly focusing on quantitative aspects alone. while disregarding qualitative information. This being identified as the "key" promoting crisis rather than prosperity. That publication by the author is completed by a long list of recommended

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