Jacob Dahl Rendtorff

French Philosophy and Social Theory

A Perspective for Ethics and Philosophy of Management

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French Philosophy and Social Theory

A Perspective for Ethics and Philosophy of Management

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Contents

Chapter 1
Introduction

The topic of this book can be formulated in one question: What is French philosophy (with its different approaches) and what kind of insight does it contain for business ethics and philosophy of management? This question addresses the more fundamental problem of what constitutes French philosophy: Is there a particularly French metaphysics, theory of science, or social philosophy, or does French philosophy and social theory only refer to some philosophers and social scientists that use the French language? Indeed, some argue that French philosophy is much more than this, claiming that it is a form of life and culture based on French culture and lifestyle. Hegel (1770–1831) tried to answer this question. In his lectures on philosophy of history, he argued that while English speaking philosophy is critical towards metaphysics and expresses a formal idealism or skepticism, French philosophy has much more life, more movement, and indeed more spirit.[1]

According to Hegel, the revolutionary philosophy of Montesquieu (1889–1755), Voltaire (1694–1778), Rousseau (1712–1778), and d'Alembert (1717–1783) expressed the self-transcendence of absolute spirit towards the universal that revolted against predetermined conceptions and ideas. Hegel understood that French philosophers felt at home in metaphysics. He emphasized the element of rebellion in French Enlightenment thought that reacted against a 1,000 years of authority and hierarchical constructions of state, market, and civil society. What was important for Hegel was not so much positive philosophy, but rather the critical negative force in art, reason, and science that was expressed in the French philosophy and social theory of the Enlightenment. This was a concrete manifestation of the abstract ideal of freedom that was already present in Descartes' (1596–1650) metaphysics. French philosophy is, in this sense, marked by a holistic, metaphysical, and critical approach that addresses every important issue. The wish to be critical is much stronger than in

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[1] See W.F.G Hegel: *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, translated into English as *Lectures on The History of Philosophy*, by E. S. Haldane from Michelet's collection of Hegel's lectures, Jena 1805 and later, but closer to the Heidelberg text from 1816–7, published 1892, reproduced by Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955. See "Section Two: Period of the Thinking Understanding, Chapter II. – Transition Period C. French Philosophy".

Anglo-Saxon philosophy and French Enlightenment philosophy has much more vitality than the more conceptually analytical German philosophy.

As one of the last great thinkers of systems, Hegel would properly look on the French philosophy and social theory of the twentieth century with rather critical eyes because this philosophy criticizes abstract metaphysics. Hegel was right in seeing French philosophy as vital and concerned with real problems, though the contemporary trends has become very critical towards metaphysics to the point of sometimes being seen as postmetaphysical. The French approach to business ethics and philosophy of management is also very critical and sometimes skeptical to the very idea of organization and management. It is therefore hard to say that French philosophy is still committed to a classical ideal of contributing to the perfection of humanity. Moreover, this philosophy does not contain a global concept of ethics and human organization in state and market. It is also a question whether there is a kind of essential culture and original and particular language that is expressed in French philosophy today.[2]

The philosopher and mathematician Michel Serres (b. 1929) has emphasized some of the same characteristics of French philosophy and social theory that Hegel described nearly 200 years ago. Serres, who's thought and philosophy goes beyond usual disciplinary boundaries and combines poetics, science, cybernetics, and theory of organizations, posits that French philosophers have developed a very admirable style characterized by the ability to do things differently, to differ from the predominant understanding, and to criticize widely-accepted scientific conceptions. You could say that the core of French philosophy is unpredictable, creative, and innovative.[3] French cultures are marked by conflict, which informs the different approaches within French philosophy and social theory. This is exactly what this book aims to show by drawing out some of the potential implications of the different concepts of French philosophy for business ethics and philosophy of management.

As a professor of history of science at Stanford University and infamous for teaching American students in French, Serres has expressed a strong defense for the inseparability of French philosophy from French language and culture. Indeed, when we want to study the implications for business this may be even more important because French philosophy implies a universal conception of management and leadership based on the particularities of French society and culture. But this is interesting in the contemporary situation where international business-people, diplomats, heads of state, politicians, and scientists do not routinely use the French language. Indeed, this can be seen as a proletarization of the business and wider international community. This loss of education, culture, language, and philosophy has in some sense rendered French language extremely elitist. It has become a critical language for people who are not part of the global financial

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[2] Jean-Francois Mattei: "Avant Propos" in Jean-François Mattéi (sous la direction de): *Philosopher en français*, Essais, PUF, Quadrige, Paris 2001, p. 2.

[3] Michel Serres: *Eloge de la philosophie en langue française,* Flammarion, Paris 1995.

system, though this may indicate a potentiality for French philosophy. Since it is not the philosophy of people with power and responsibility, it is freer to criticize social forms, organizations, and market dynamics in modern society.

This conception of French philosophy as being particularly revolutionary or searching for freedom is not universally shared. André Glucksmann (b. 1937) is a Parisian intellectual who has been critical towards modern metaphysics as being the philosophy of the *maîtres penseurs* (master thinkers). In his book *Descartes, c'est la France* (1987) he has said that French philosophy is dominated by the Cartesian tradition, which basically expresses a strong belief in rationality and in human self-consciousness as the basis for knowledge.[4] This heritage expresses a "methodological doubt" and a search for a certain beginning or starting point for philosophical reflection. From this perspective, French philosophy and social theory are reflective and characterized by the ability to relate critically to the world in a somewhat ironic, analytical, and skeptical manner. But this is also the basis for a world-alienating nihilism and distance from the common sense of ordinary life that has been one of the causes of totalitarianism and destruction in the twentieth century.[5]

Indeed, many of the names often presented as the great twentieth-century philosophers and social theorists are French.[6] A representative list could include Henri Bergson (1859–1941), Alexandre Kojève (1902–1968), Gaston Bachelard (1884–1962), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961), Emmanuel Lévinas (1905–1995), Michel Foucault (1926–1982), Gilles Deleuze (1925–1990), Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002), and Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), as well as social theorists like Edgar Morin (b. 1921), Gilles Lipovetsky (b. 1944), and Luc Boltanski (b. 1940). Of course each of these thinkers are different, but it is the conceit of this book that they at least share important insights for business ethics and philosophy of management.[7]

This investigation requires an awareness of the different philosophical movements in the twentieth century, including phenomenology, existentialism, Marxism, structuralism, poststructuralism, and deconstructionism. Even though they are distinct they share overlapping themes.[8] For example, the tension between the self and the Other (*le même et l'autre*) and their relation to a third, namely society and history, are important common themes in the philosophy of social organization.[9] The critical revolt against the philosophy of the subject and humanism is an important dimension of the critique of organization and society in French philosophy and social theory.[10] Furthermore, the cosmopolitan city of Paris—with all its attractions and wonder—is

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[4] Andre Glucksman: *Descartes, c'est la France*, Flammarion, Paris 1987.

[5] Ibid., p. 66.

[6] Vincent Descombes: *Le même et l'autre*, Paris, Minuit 1979.

[7] Ibid., p. 13.

[8] Jean-Francois Mattéi (sous la direction de): *Philosopher en français*, Essais, PUF, Quadrige, Paris 2001, pp. 21–127.

[9] Vincent Descombes: *Le même et l'autre*, Paris, Minuit 1979, p. 12.

[10] Luc Ferry & Alain Renaut: *La pensée de 68*, Gallimard, Paris 1988.

an important cultural context for the critical development of French philosophy. It is common to nearly all important French thinkers that they consider themselves as important members of French society and culture.

So, on this basis it should be possible to understand how French philosophy and social theory, with its general and holistic approach to the world and philosophical problems, contains important concepts that can be applied to business ethics and the ethics of organizations. Indeed, the term "French theory" that has been used in the Anglosaxon world is appropriate to characterize this approach. Accordingly, the content of the book should not be understood as practical or applied business ethics but a discussion of the philosophical foundations of business ethics and philosophy of management in the perspective of French philosophy and social theory. Accordingly, we can say that the reflections on French theory provide a framework for the study of the foundations of business ethics and philosophy of management.

Although the book covers a wide range of philosophers and philosophical movements there will be a core and deep unity to the text: a demonstration of how the conceptual resources of French philosophy from the early twentieth century to the present day can be applied to business ethics and philosophy of management, providing new perspectives. This will be accomplished by analyzing the points of view of particular philosophers and philosophical movements, thus providing an overview of possible applications of French philosophy to business ethics and philosophy of management and organizations. This approach was taken because the general business or business ethics reader will likely be interested in the tension and interactions between the various approaches rather than detail about a particular philosopher or philosophical movement.

Against this background, particular concepts in business ethics and philosophy of management require philosophical and conceptual clarification, including: epistemology and ontology of organizations, institutions, and action; business ethics and responsibility; leadership, power and employees; and stakeholders, legitimacy, and judgment. Addressing political economy and business ethics from the point of view of French philosophy means examining the very conditions of business and economics in society. The French tradition encourages philosophical critique, but the conditions of capitalist possibility alone are not under scrutiny; rather, our discussion will also consider possible transformations of capitalist society into a better and more just society. Indeed, this book addresses the epistemology of organizations as the study of how knowledge in business and other kinds of organizations in market and society is organized and situated in relation to cultural and social interaction. The heart of this analysis is understanding how French philosophy and social theory conceives of institutions, institutionalizations, and their actions, which is instructive since French thought provides us with new concepts of business ethics and organizations that are different from the dominant concepts.

It can be argued that modern markets are indications of the social institutionalization of meaning.[11] The different theories and concepts of society in French

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[11] Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio: *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London 1991.

philosophy provide new approaches to this topic that challenge mainstream institutional theorization of business ethics and the social sciences, including fundamental concepts such as leadership, power, employees, and stakeholders. Here, it is important to analyze the possible conceptions of leadership and institutional environments within the different approaches to French philosophy and to see whether they have an answer to the question of the foundations of business ethics and philosophy of management. Finally, it should be stressed that contemporary French philosophy contains insights that can provide resources for understanding organizational legitimacy, ethics, and judgment.

It is important to emphasize that this book does not deal with a specific academic tradition of business theory and philosophy of management in the French management sciences. The aim is instead to show how the general tradition of contemporary French philosophy has significance, and many interesting ideas, for business ethics and philosophy of management. Having said this it is essential to clarify that the book is not a technical or applied manual for management sciences. Instead, it presents some philosophical questions and ideas for scholars, students, and professionals in management and business ethics, who can include a philosophical dimension in their investigations.

There is actually not much academic discussion of business ethics of philosophy of management in France. Few contemporary authors are publishing works related to business ethics and philosophy of organization. There is, of course, a growing literature in management science about corporate social responsibility, but this literature does not refer much to the French tradition of philosophy, and is based on Anglo-Saxon management theory. Of books that deal more explicitly with business ethics, Alain Etchegoyen's (1951–2007) work deserves mention. Toward the end of the 1980s and in the early 1990s he published two small books, *La valse des ethiques* and *Le temps des responsables,* that introduced the concepts of business ethics and ethical responsibility to a wider French audience. Etchegoyen also discussed the concept of corruption from the point of view of business ethics and corporate social responsibility.[12] Contrary to Etchegoyen, who was very open to the world of business ethics, André Comte-Sponville's (b. 1952) *Le capitalisme est-il moral* criticizes the idea that it is possible to combine capitalism and ethics.[13] Sponville argues that there should be a strict difference between ethics and economics, and that these two discourses cannot be combined. In addition to the discussions of business ethics, we find with the work of the professor of organization at CNAM, Yvon Pesqueux (b. 1951), who, in collaboration with Yvan Biefnot, wrote a 2002 book entitled *Ethique des affaires: Management par les valeurs et responsabilité sociale*.[14] This title, alongside Jérôme Ballet and Francoise de

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[12] Alain Etchegoyen: *Les Entreprises ont-elles une âme?* (1990), *La Valse des éthiques* (1991), *Le Temps des responsables* (1993), *Le corrupteur et le corrompu* (1995).

[13] André Comte-Sponville: *Le capitalisme est-il moral?* Albin Michel, Paris 2004.

[14] Yvon Pesqueux: *Ethique des affaires: Management par les valeurs et responsabilité sociale*, Editions d'Organisation, Paris, 2002 (en collaboration avec Yvan Biefnot).

Bry's *L'Entreprise et l'éthique* from 2011, provides a general presentation of Anglo-Saxon business ethics related to the French context.[15]

Apart from these examples it is, however, very difficult to find in-depth presentations of philosophy of management in French philosophy and social theory. Since French philosophy has said very little directly about management, it is not possible to find fully developed theories of management and business ethics by each philosopher considered in the book. This is not necessarily a problem, if one looks at philosophy of management beyond a narrow perspective by considering a general philosophical horizon as essential for *humanistic* management. Seen from this perspective, the book provides a general overview of philosophical perspectives in French philosophy that may be of interest to managers in modern society, and explores the implications of each for business ethics and philosophy of management.

This humanistic focus presumes that managers need a general education in philosophy and social theory as a kind of political economy in order to inform decision-making in business ethics. French philosophy can contribute to this dimension of the education of managers in business ethics, and not only regarding technical aspects of organization or in ethics as a discipline of learning good social behavior.

Accordingly, the focus of analysis is to look at each philosopher and philosophical movement from the perspective of business ethics and philosophy of management. Each basic concept in each philosophical system is defined to provide a sketch of how each thinker or movement conceives of organization, institution, and organizational bureaucracy.[16] The different theoretical approaches are presented in a totality in order to provide a general frame for understanding the foundations of business ethics and philosophy of management.

Within each particular philosophical sketch, the analysis at the individual and organizational levels leads to a description of the implied conception of political and social philosophy, and of society as such. The type of political economy and the role of the organization in political economy are implied within each concept. This includes the problem of the limits and possibilities of a particular philosophical approach with regard to the conceptualization of political economy.

The question becomes how organization, institution, and political economy (as well as leadership, value judgment, business ethics, and corporate social responsibility) can be defined from the perspective of a specific philosophical theory and worldview, from Bergson to Durkheim. The great French tradition of political philosophy from Rousseau onwards informs this analysis, examining how interpretations of ideas such as "liberté, égalité, et fraternité" can inform business and philosophy of management.

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[15] Jérôme Ballet, Francoise de Bry, Aurélie Carimentrand, Patrick Jolivet: *L'entreprise et l'éthique*, Economie humaine, Seuil, Paris 2011.

[16] Jacob Dahl Rendtorff: *Responsibility, Ethics and Legitimacy of Corporations*, Copenhagen Business School Press, Copenhagen 2009.

Accordingly, it is essential to emphasize that this book is a philosophical work of business ethics and philosophy of management. Its aim is to introduce French philosophy and social theory; i.e. French theory to inform the reader when they want to address issues in business ethics and philosophy of management from this perspective. Or course, this is only one perspective in the field. In fact, the aim of the work is to see philosophy of management and business ethics within the broader horizon of political philosophy, social theory, and social philosophy and also philosophy of economics.

Most of the work is intended to give a general presentation of French philosophy and social theory. To emphasize the possible bridge between the two worlds, and to provide concrete cases, each presentation of a philosophical theory will reference some of the major applications within business ethics and philosophy of management.

In any discussion of business ethics and corporate social responsibility in the light of republication organization of society, it is essential to address the relation of the economic market to economic developments in the French Republic. In postwar times, with General de Gaulle (1890–1970) in power, French bourgeois business culture recognized the importance of art, culture, and the great traditions of the humanities for establishing a good and well-functioning economic market. Indeed, it is a paradox of the current situation that just as new public management and efficiency in the French public sector seems to have overshadowed important values, such as ethics in public administration, the private sector is increasingly focusing on how social responsibility and good citizenship informs the legitimacy of private corporations.

This does not, however, lessen the fundamental difference between the French business tradition—based on respect for the humanities, art, and culture—and neoliberal capitalism, which sometimes forgets every concern for the spiritual dimensions of life. Indeed, the French tradition represents something quite apart from the American concept of business. There is much more to the French tradition than the concept of profit-maximization, which has been so dominant in the US business context. This French republican context may also explain the great skepticism towards business corporations in France. When we look deeper into the different philosophical conceptions of capitalism, the market, and modern society we see very different visions of society than the one that is represented by mainstream capitalism and neoliberalism.

Business ethics and philosophy of management in the French context also provides a theory of how to relate the humanities and business to each other, which further implies a discussion of the role of the state in relation to business. Assessing the differing conceptions of capitalism in French philosophy helps to develop a vision of the relation between society and business in a cultural context. Further, the subtleties of the different philosophical approaches can inform a discussion of how to transform capitalism and present economic markets into something very different, in fact a totally different view of business and the possibilities of organization in modern society.

In order to respond to those challenges and problems the book is structured in the following sections: (1) early modern French philosophy, (2) personalism and existentialism, (3) phenomenology (4) Marxism, (5) structuralism, (6) poststructuralism, (6) hermeneutics, (7) liberal political philosophy, (8) poststructuralist sociology, (9) postmodernism and hypermodernism, and (10) conclusion and perspectives. Each section presents important concepts and relates them to contemporary issues in business ethics and philosophy of management.

The *methodology* is that each chapter presents the basic concepts of a philosopher and a philosophical movement. This is followed by a discussion of how this philosophy can be applied to business ethics and ethics of organizations studies, including some references to major world view that have been developed in this field. This kind of methodology—one that does not directly mix the philosophy and the business studies—is the most reliable way to present the material because it clearly distinguishes between the philosophy and its application within business ethics and ethics of organizations. Moreover, it does not instrumentalize the philosopher into a context of business that does not really apply to the specific philosopher.

It is a presupposition of this book that French philosophy has new and interesting insights to contribute to the understanding of business ethics and philosophy of management. Accordingly, I don't agree with those who argue that French philosophy, with all its metaphysical difficulty, is meaningless. We must go beyond the "science wars" about French philosophy, which were initiated by physics professors Alan Sokal (b. 1955) and Jean Bricmont (b. 1952) in their book *Fashionable Nonsense: Postmodern Intellectuals' Abuse of Science* (1997). The authors' sharp criticism of postmodernism began with an article that Sokal published in an American critical theory journal, *Social Text*. After publication Sokal argued that the article, which argues for a certain cognitive relativism in science studies, was a joke and that the text was full of logical errors and absurd nonsense. The point was to ridicule French-inspired postmodern science studies,[17] but this point of view was generalized by Sokal and Bricmont and applied to most of French philosophy, and in particular to the popular poststructuralism that included thinkers like Jacques Lacan (1901–1981), Deleuze, and Derrida. These philosophers, taken as typical representatives from the French tradition, were cast as neither serious nor scientific, but rather as a kind of "fashionable mysticism" that, like Marxism, had become an opiate for intellectuals.

The question is whether this attack on French philosophy—a philosophical tradition that has produced Descartes, Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Sartre—has any merit. There is a critical and boundary transgressing vitality, which Hegel appreciated, that has become a central part of contemporary French philosophy. Indeed, the aim of this book is to show how important this vigorous critical theory, among other important insights, can be for the sciences of business ethics and

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[17] Alan Sokal & Jean Bricmont: *Fashionable Nonsense, Postmodern Intellectuals' Abuse of Science* (English translation of *Impostures Intellectuelles*), Picador, New York/USA, 1997, p. 2.

philosophy of management. It is not the aim to instrumentalize French philosophy into a kind of banal managerialism, but rather to show its benefits for political economy, management, and capitalism. Indeed, why should we not use philosophical insights in management or reflect philosophically about management? This was what great philosophers like Descartes, Leibniz, or Hegel did in relation to the physical sciences.[18] Moreover Derrida, in response to Sokal's criticism, has emphasized that he never intended to develop a narrow relativism as a criticism of reason and the Enlightenment; quite the opposite.[19]

The critics appear to have been captured by political correctness and to be operating as skeptics towards the potential of French philosophy for providing a basis for understanding business ethics and philosophy of management. The critics focus on the need to provide analytical and logical argument and they also say that we need a more practical approach to business ethics and philosophy of management. In contrast to this skeptical view I think that the critics have not understood the full knowledge potential of French philosophy for sciences like management and organization theory. It seems rather odd to charge critical metaphysical reflection for scientific fraud, as Sokal did.[20] Rather, it is task of this book to show the paradigmatic potentials of contemporary French philosophy in order to provide broader and deeper conceptualizations of philosophical foundations to understand the dilemmas and tensions of philosophy of management and business ethics.

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[18] Pascal Engel: "L'affaire Sokal concerne-t-elle vraiment les philosophes français" i Jean-François Mattei (sous la direction de): *Philosopher en français*, Essais, PUF, Quadrige, Paris 2001, p. 458.

[19] Ibid., p. 472.

[20] Ibid., p. 469.

Chapter 2
Business Ethics and Early Modern French Philosophy at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

Modernity was developing at the start of the twentieth century, but nothing like contemporary globalized capitalism with its large corporations existed. This period marks the beginning of contemporary French philosophy and many of the conceptions of ethics and society that are important today were developed at that time. In France, the Cartesian philosophy of subjectivity was influential on the formulation of the most important questions in French philosophy concerning the relation between body and mind, about the status of the external world, and about the relation between philosophy and the natural and social sciences.

The social thinker François Marie Charles Fourier (1772–1837) influenced the political and social philosophy of the time by strongly criticizing the suppression of workers and the proletariat by capitalistic industrial society. Fourier defended a utopian socialism together with Claude Henri de Saint-Simon (1760–1825), who contributed a critical perspective to social philosophy and investigations into society and its political social and economic institutions. The anarchist socialist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865) and his critical analysis of property rights also had a huge influence and marked the general critical attitude towards capitalist organization of work and business by French philosophy in the beginning of the twentieth century, when industrial modernization was viewed as a huge challenge to human life and dignity.

On the other hand, the classical positivism of Auguste Comte (1798–1857) was still dominant at the beginning of the twentieth century and was more in favor of economic developments. Positivists agreed with Cartesians that the ideal of philosophy was to operate as a strict science with analytical reason focused on pure given facts. The positivists endorsed scientific and economic progress, and the technical sciences that helped capitalist modernization of traditional society.

Likewise, there are different approaches to business ethics within the tradition of management and theory about management in French society and philosophy. The predominant practical approach to ethics since the industrial revolution has been a kind of Catholic value-based managerial paternalism. This paternalism considers the corporation as a family and the capitalist and the employee work

together, though there may be a kind of domination and power relation within the work relationship where the capitalist has all the power over the employee.

The eighteenth-century economist Jean Baptiste Say (1767–1832), who also was an industrialist, defended an influential liberal economic doctrine—the source of the invisible hand in the classical economic tradition—inspired by Adam Smith (1723–1790) and Bernard de Mandeville's (1670–1733) *Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits*. At the time, prevailing thought emphasized the necessary collaboration between managers and workers, in a sense introducing paternalism. The paternalist school proposed a conception of the values of the corporation between socialism and ultraliberalism.[1] According to this position the corporation should be constructed like a family in which moral paternalism was conceived as fundamental to ensure coherence. In fact, modern corporate social responsibility and business ethics can be considered as a reaction to an empty space left by the lack of paternalism in the modern world.

At a time, Say was professor at the Conservatoire des Arts et Metiers in Paris. He was in favor of paternalism and he defended the small enterprise as a family structure. Later, he inspired the great French classical management thinker Henri Fayol (1841–1925) who developed the classical theory of administration in France. Fayol developed an influential theory of management based on practical concepts of administration, inspired by the concept of scientific management developed by Friedrich Taylor (1856–1915).[2] In his approach to management, major concepts are administration and planning. In his book about *Administration industrielle et générale* (1918) he defined concepts of division of work, responsibility of authority, discipline, rational planning of goals, concern for the general interest of the organization, concern for good salary of employees, centralization, hierarchy, order, fairness, stability in the workforce, initiative and Esprit de corps (concern for the community).[3] We may say that these concepts define the rational concept of management. Together with the concept of scientific management, rational bureaucracy, this approach of rational administration can be said to represent a rational concept of management that constitutes the approach that somehow is supported by the values of the Protestant ethics of responsibility, integrity and accountability. Moreover, in all cases management processes are built on concepts of work as a calling and based on dutiful devotion. In this sense, scientific management and rational administration had influenced practical management science in the beginning of the twentieth century.

In addition to Fayol, the early French sociological tradition was very important. In particular, Gabriel Tarde (1843–1904) deserves mention. Tarde developed a concept of organization that later influenced many philosophers and social theorists.

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[1] Jérôme Ballet, Francoise de Bry, Aurélie Carimentrand, Patrick Jolivet: *L'entreprise et l'éthique, Economie humaine*, Seuil, Paris 2011, p. 51.

[2] Frederick W. Taylor: *Scientific Management*: Harber & Bros, New York 1947.

[3] Henri Fayol (1916/1999): *Administration industrielle et générale*, Dubod, Paris 1918. English edition: *General and industrial Management*, Pitman, London 1949.

However, if we want to find the roots for a modern humanistic vision of human organization and a more general foundation for the concept of philosophy of management we have to look to the philosopher of creative evolution, namely Henri Bergson.

2.1   Henri Bergson: Living Presence and Creative Evolution

Henri Bergson (1859–1941) reached the peak of his popularity in the years before the First World War, but he was also a very influential philosopher in the 1920s and in the years before the Second World War. Bergson's philosophy represented a strong revolt against the positivist, Cartesian, and materialistic philosophy. The so-called Bergsonism was leading in the cultural environment of Europe at the time.[4] It represented emancipation from classical mechanical physics, Darwinian behavioral biology, and utilitarian ethics. It therefore also represented a sharp criticism of materialism and economic capitalism.

We can read Bergson's philosophy as one of action, process, and movement.[5] In this sense Bergson provides us with the philosophical basis for understanding organizational dynamics and the integration of ethics and morality in business and organizations. In particular, Bergson develops a theory of creativity, enduring multiplicity, and the dynamic movement of creative forces that functions as the foundation of organizational change and movement. This is proposal for a philosophy of management and organization that takes its point of departure in the dynamics and movement of real life.

Bergson's philosophy made it possible to believe again in human freedom and a divine intent. He argued that a directive force of life (*élan vital*) and an organizing creative principle govern the universe and society. Bergson was not satisfied with analytical methodology and natural science mathematics in the human and social sciences. He wanted to integrate the theory of evolution with a spiritual conception of human beings and nature. This vitalism can be considered as a romantic reaction against the belief in economic progress of industrial society. Bergson wanted to go beyond the instrumentalization of the capitalist world towards the metaphysical mysteries of life. Like symbolism in art and literature Bergson's philosophy represented a spirit of the present that revolted against anonymous mass society and desired a return to human spirituality and individuality.

Bergson was born in Paris in 1859 to Jewish parents. His father was Polish and his mother was British. He studied at the École normale supérieure, together with Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) and Jean Jaurés (1859–1914), who later became the

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[4] Emile Bréhier: *Histoire de la philosophie II, La philosophie moderne*. (1926) Paris 1967–1968.

[5] Stephen Lindstead and John Mullarkey: "Time, creativity and culture: Introducing Bergson", *Culture and Organization*, 2003, Vol 9(1) March, pp. 3–13, p. 3.

leader of the French socialist party. After official state exams (*agrégation*), Bergson worked as a teacher of philosophy in different high schools in the French provinces before he came back to Paris in 1889 to teach at École normale supérieure. In 1900, Bergson received one of the prestigious positions as professor at Collège de France, and in 1907 he published *L'Évolution créatrice*, which made him world famous.

Bergson's lectures at Collège de France quickly became a social event among the Parisian bourgeoisie and attracted listeners from all over Europe. Bergson's philosophy became fashionable in the cultural and intellectual public space and also among liberal Catholics, which was one of the reasons why in 1914 Bergson's books were listed among the list of those forbidden by the Catholic Church, even though Bergson later approached Catholicism in his philosophy.

In 1917, Bergson travelled as a diplomatic representative to the US in order to convince the Americans to intervene in the First World War on the side of the French. By 1925, Bergson had become the first president of an international commission for intellectual collaboration. He died in 1941 of a pulmonary disease that originated from standing many hours in a queue in order to be registered as a Jew by the Nazis who had invaded France.[6]

Bergson's philosophy of life and spirituality represents a poetic and impressionistic criticism of economic life. In this sense it represents a philosophy of life approach to organizations and philosophy of management. As such, Bergson's philosophy represents the general challenge in French philosophy and social theory to the crude materialism of capitalist economic systems.

Bergson thought that human beings are a part of the life of the universe that is a creative process where something new is constantly emerging. With an implicitly qualitative understanding of human freedom, this approach amounts to a criticism of determinism and reality because consciousness cannot be reduced to matter. It is a spiritual unity in time, and time cannot be understood with the concepts of space. Every moment expresses something unpredictable and the experience of time develops dynamically. Real time is experienced time in human consciousness, which he characterized as the duration of consciousness (*la durée*).[7] Bergson states that an inner force, a spiritual and dynamic principle that collects experiences through memory, determines the deep human consciousness of the "I."

In *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (1889) Bergson uses intuition as a method to understand human freedom as the spiritual and temporal duration of spirit.[8] Bergson was not against science, but he thought that empirical and analytical methods were not capable of grasping the subjective inner life of the self and the dynamics of the universe. Philosophical intuition can go much further in understanding the immediacy of experience in consciousness.[9] As a form of

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[6] Leszek Kolakowski: *Bergson*, Oxford University Press, 1985. Madeleine Barthélemy-Madaule: *Bergson*, Le Seuil, Paris 1967.

[7] Henri Bergson: *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, Paris 1889. *Oeuvres*, pp.1–157 (Paris 1959), p. 82.

[8] Ibid., p. 132.

[9] Ibid., p. 134.

knowledge, intuition can be compared to artistic creativity. Here, thought works with complex and creative totalities, and reality is not mixed into different parts. It is therefore possible to understand the spiritual being of consciousness. Bergson compares intuition with a weak light that helps guide us in the right direction. Intuition goes behind our spatial and material perception of reality to capture original human freedom as concrete and immediate life in consciousness.

Bergson emphasizes that memory is central to the consciousness of the self. He employed the idea of *durée* to mean that, in principle, we can remember everything. Personality is the continuous accumulation of experiences. It is not material but a spiritual unity that maintains what is different in a unity through time. Pure duration is a new principle that makes it possible to understand the unity in human states of consciousness.[10] Bergson argues that it is a mistake to consider consciousness as matter and reduce it to a material object in space. Experience is not material, but only exists as a spiritual unity. Even though he agrees with Descartes that consciousness is a spiritual principle, Bergson is sceptical towards reducing it to a substance because this destroys the possibility of understanding its temporality.

Bergson refers to a deeper self that is different from the superficial self that is a part of space. The deeper self is understood as temporal spiritual presence that is the real foundation of meaning and significance. The unity of the self in perception is made possible by a stream of consciousness that bridges emotions, senses, and actions. In this living presence time is not conceived as separated moments on a scale, but as an organic unity in constant creation.[11]

Therefore, nothing in consciousness is predetermined. The being of consciousness is change, becoming, and movement. Human freedom consists in the fact that something new is constantly added to the accumulated experience in the duration of spirit. History unfolds through continual emergence. This freedom means becoming, in the sense of artistic fantasy and spontaneity, where human beings form themselves through their senses and actions. Personality is created through life experience. The will is free because presence and future are unfinished in relation to the duration of consciousness. Freedom consists in the realization of actions and experiences in accordance with personality.[12]

We have to go beyond the limits of language to understand how each individual is unique in his/her deep self, which is at the limits of the immediate experience. Bergson is basically skeptical towards the externalization of human life lived in the spatial world. In his early works, he is not really interested in the relation of human beings to each other or in the place of human beings in history and in common historical action. Therefore, Bergson's early philosophy also expresses a critical attitude to the self of working life and production as somewhat far from the real inner self that is attained through the spiritual exercise of reconstruction of

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[10] Ibid., p. 27.

[11] Ibid., p. 30.

[12] Ibid., p. 50.

immediate experience. In this sense, Bergson seems to announce a program of spirituality as a possible new understanding of life.

In *Matière et mémoire: Essai sur la relation entre corps et esprit* (1896) Bergson continued his work on his theory of consciousness. Henri Bergson wanted to solve the conflict between a realistic and idealistic conception of the relation between soul and body. He considered matter, materiality, and objects as a collection of pictures that are represented in the sensual presence of spirit. Consciousness is understood as a psychic attention that organizes sense experiences.[13] The body is the center of emotions and actions that is founded of the coordination of senses, will, and action.

Sense perception rules over space in the same way as action rules over time. The lived body is the center of action between what it affects and what it is affected by. The body is the center of the material world and the basis of the duration in presence of consciousness. As the basis for consciousness it is the lived presence that makes possible the matter of existence. Memory is a pictorial representation of the past that is transferred through the body. The body is a conductor that receives impressions from matter mechanically, but also at a deeper level through the ability to imagine the past and select among the pictures of memory.[14]

When we read a book we use both forms of memory. The habitual mechanical memory of the brain gives us the ability to read while the deep memory of consciousness makes it possible for us to reconstruct the narrative in the book. This deep memory represents an ability to maintain experience and make a synthesis of the pictures of memory in a totality.

Bergson is like Plato when he states that consciousness in principle can recollect everything that is important from the past. Memory is infinitely growing. In memory we make a unity of past, present, and future in identity. According to Bergson, consciousness is memory and what we can remember is already there, for example in the experience of déjà vu.[15] Real time is in memory where we remember those events that do not exist anymore. While habitual memory builds the bridge between brain and consciousness, deep and pure memory helps us to maintain our identity as a temporal unity.

Bergson argues that consciousness is fundamentally different from the body. It is not a product of the brain or the nervous system, but has its own freedom. The brain is not the source of consciousness, but a meeting point between the material world and consciousness. We need to imagine a Cartesian consciousness that is not bodily. It is fed by the impulses of the body, but it is not itself a product of bodily movements. We can say that consciousness borrows from bodily matter, when it perceives and experiences the world. It then—due to its spirituality—gives back through free movement and experience.[16]

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[13] Henri Bergson: *Matière et mémoire, Essai sur la relation entre corps et esprit*, (1896) Oeuvres complètes, Geneve 1946, p. 16.

[14] Ibid., pp. 92–93.

[15] Leszek Kolakowski: *Bergson*, Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 46ff.

[16] Henri Bergson: *Matière et mémoire, Essai sur la relation entre corps et esprit*, Oeuvres complètes, Geneve 1946.

In this connection Bergson emphasizes the relation between memory and human experience of real time. Consciousness is not a material substance, but continuity in time. A consciousness without memory is impossible because consciousness is defined as the temporal unity in pictorial representations in memory. It is an unfinished process of becoming that integrates presence and future in a unity.

Bergson's dualistic theory about the independence of the consciousness of the body implies that he did not want to refute the thesis of the immortality of the soul. The dreaming self is an example of an immaterial consciousness that has left space. Bergson would not exclude that consciousness still exists in the world after the body is dead. Personal continuity has no predetermined limit or ending and it is different from the biological brain. We cannot have any scientific experience of immortality but presuppose it through religious belief and mystical experiences. Bergson was, therefore, very interested in parapsychological phenomena. He thought that through parapsychology it might be possible to get in contact with spiritual consciousness and the disembodied consciousness of others.

Bergson's thought has great currency today as a criticism of neurophysiologists who insist on reducing consciousness to neural networks in the brain. Paul Ricœur (1913–2005) was inspired by Bergson in his discussions with brain researchers, when he defended a phenomenological conception of consciousness based on intentionality.[17] The distinction between the two types of memory means that neurophysiology, even though it can explain the biological foundation of memory, cannot purely explain the human life of consciousness mechanically and causally.

2.2 Creative Evolution, Moral and Religious Development

In *L'Évolution créatrice* Henri Bergson situates his philosophy in the perspective of cosmology and natural history. Bergson argues that human consciousness expresses life energy that is a part of the life spirit of the universe. Consciousness is dynamically placed in the organized development of the universe.[18] Bergson would like to combine the theory of evolution with his spiritual worldview. The evolution of the universe takes place within a frame of life that infinitely forms new species and dimensions. In other words, evolution presupposes the spiritual force of life (*élan vital*). Every new species can be seen as a reading of a problem of evolution. Bergson relates his thinking to mechanical physics and to a dynamic development of energy in the universe. He thought that Jean Baptiste Lamarck (1744–1829), Charles Darwin (1809–1882), and the British philosopher of evolution Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) did not fully explore the consequences of evolutionary theory.

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[17] Paul Ricœur: *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*, Le Seuil, Paris 2000.
[18] Henri Bergson: *L'Évolution créatrice*, Paris 1907, 52. PUF-edition, Paris 1940, p. 16.

Life is rather a manifestation of creative energy that cannot be understood mechanically or biologically as "survival of the fittest." There must be a force, a driving principle in evolution. Bergson argues that evolution and belief in the divine do not have to contradict each other. Even though consciousness itself is a product of evolution, evolution has the character of being a product of consciousness. It is an open duration, as in foetus development, where the past is inscribed in the present and points towards the future.

Darwinism could not explain the inner teleology of evolution as based on the creative energy of the force of life, because it still had elements of mechanical thinking. The universe is an organic unity that develops itself in a creative process, as human consciousness is creative life energy in matter. The unity of life is an infinite, creative, dynamic, and innovative principle and taking part in it does not separate organisms. The emergence of new species expresses a creative solution to the problem of life. This development is not predetermined but is created in indeterminate unfinished infinity.

In fact, there is no predetermined model that can explain the aim of evolution. Organisms adapt to surroundings without any predetermined systematics.[19] The force of life struggles to survive and overcome obstacles, even death.[20] Instinct, mind, and intuition are different manifestations of the struggle for life and the development from plant and animal to human being.[21] Indeed, human consciousness, language, and society are also results of this evolution. Natural laws are based on the infinite transformation that is behind the repetition that makes the geometrization of nature possible.[22] New forms of life in the universe express an organic evolution that is based on unconditional teleology, where organisms driven by the energy of life are moving towards increased perfection.

Bergson refutes, however, that the universe is created as something absolute out of nothingness. Matter is at once a force of life and a force against it, and must therefore be overcome. Nothingness is a pseudo-idea that should not be mixed with the concept of being. Representation of nothingness always contains something, for example a desire or something one regrets.[23] Negation is second order confirmation because it affirms something as an object[24] It has a social rather than an ontological signification because it expresses an error or an emotion of dissatisfaction or absence.

According to Bergson, it seems like the universe is marked by a divine intention that creates a unity through artistic creation, which in turn creates new forms of life in an infinite vitality. Bergson is close to a pantheistic position when he argues that

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[19] Ibid., p. 50.

[20] Ibid., p. 271.

[21] Ibid., p. 186.

[22] Ibid., p. 232.

[23] Ibid., p. 283.

[24] Ibid., p. 288.

the creative force and energy of life live in all organisms of nature ("Dieu ainsi défini, n'a rien de tout fait; il est vie incessante, action, liberté.").[25]

Creation is a mystery because the divine is a life principle in matter that drives organisms to develop as more and more complex systems and mechanisms in tension between unity and plurality. There is an "undetermined teleology" with a plurality of processes—such as in a work of art—of endless dimensions. This is a kind of ex nihilo creative interaction with the surroundings, generating new and surprising life forms, where the universe is a center of temporal duration and evolutionary creativity. This conception of the force of life places thermodynamic physics and Darwinian biology in the larger frame of a world created by God and in an evolution that is both determined and underdetermined teleology.

In *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (1932) Bergson conceives these problems in the framework of moral philosophy. His engagement in peace and international cooperation is reflected in this work that contains his history and social philosophy. Through this work, Bergson wants to combine insights of social anthropology and ethnology with the philosophy of creative evolution. Bergson wants to show that human moral and religious life is marked by the *élan vital*, the force of life that moves towards greater perfection. As he earlier went into dialogue with neurophysiology and biology—at one time he discussed his conception of the universe with Albert Einstein (1879–1955)—Bergson engaged the contemporary social science theories of Émile Durkheim, Lucien Lévi-Bruhl (1857–1939), and Marcel Mauss (1852–1950). The central question for all these thinkers was the function of religion and morality in society. Bergson distinguishes between two forms, a closed and an open source of morality and religion.

Bergson discusses the origins of the human emotion of duty (or obligation).[26] Both social pressure from closed societies and human instinctual drives condition this obligation. It is expressed both in the social rules of morality and in the religious experience. *Closed* moral obligations come from nature and internalized habits that help survival. The *open* universal morality expresses a movement towards respect for human rights, humanity, and dignity.

Bergson argues that both emotion and reason play a role in human concern for morality and religion. Morality is based on natural human emotions and instincts.[27] Bergson agrees with Rousseau that human beings can, by nature, be socialized. Bergson says that the principle of life in creative evolution manifests itself in human moral sense. It is therefore possible to say that the two sources of morality (i.e. both open and closed) come from society's structural habits and norms of duty, and at the same time express the instinctive development of the human species.[28]

[25] Ibid., p. 249.

[26] Henri Bergson: *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (1932), 25 edition, PUF, Paris 1962, p. 18ff.

[27] Ibid., pp. 46–47.

[28] Ibid., p. 53ff.

Accordingly, there is both a social and natural dimension to human morality. Human beings are by nature social and they improve their intelligence in the development of society. It is the creative abilities of humanity, its participation in creative evolution, which contributes to the historical perfection of moral concepts such as human dignity and the inviolability of the human person.[29]

This moral progress can, however, only be defined retrospectively. Concepts like freedom, equality, and respect for the law express an idea of progress in relation to the uncivilized societies of earlier times. The different historical civilizations in antiquity, for example Judaism and Christianity, have contributed to this development. In the movement towards an open society, they conceived of humanity as a unity with universal morality. This moral progress emerged simultaneously from social pressure and the force of humanity in its creative genius. Accordingly, civilized society is the result of creative values (e.g., respect for persons and sympathy for the other) that have been very important to the evolution of humanity.[30]

Bergson also distinguishes between an open and closed religion. Religion is the driving force in the movement towards universal feelings of fraternity. The *closed* society has a static religion while the *open* one has a dynamic religion in which we can perceive the creative force of being. Closed societies with static religion are tribal. They mythologize nature in order to maintain stability and order, and explain human destiny through its mythological origins. Magic is a system to control change in the light of natural religion. Static religion implies a mythologization of nature in the same way as rational reason helps to secure the survival of society.

The transition from a closed to open society cannot happen without religious influence. Different religious conceptions, whether Hindu or Buddhist, in ancient Greece, among Jewish prophets, or among Christians have opened the way to universal morality. Christianity was the first religion that gave meaning to the belief in the irreplaceability of human beings. It is only with religion as the driving force that society can learn universal respect for the dignity of the human person. Dynamic religion is an expression of such a divine force of life. The efforts of mystical thinkers represent intuitive attempts to capture the creative force of the universe. The mystical traditions in the great religions help to capture love in human beings. Jesus is arguably the greatest of all religious mystics who captured the importance of divine energy in mystical experience.

In an open society the humanity and equality of every human being is recognized with regard to moral rights and duties. History is conceived as a spiritual progress towards open society. While the closed society, with its static religion, is conservative and preserves society, the open society, with its dynamic religion, brings us closer to a universal morality based on human rights and democratic principles.

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[29] Ibid., p. 78ff.

[30] Ibid., p. 85.

2.3   Bergson, Business Ethics, and Philosophy of Management

What kind of business ethics and philosophy of management is implied in this subtle, profound, and rather impressionistic philosophy that is proposed by Bergson? What kind of question does Bergson's philosophy ask to philosophy of management and what is the contribution of the philosophy of life, multiplicity, and movement, as proposed by Bergson? At first glance it seems fair to represent the high French bourgeoisie search for art and beauty in life as out of touch with the harsh reality of working life of industrial society that was also a part of colonial France before the First World War. From this perspective it looks like a naïve philosophy that has nothing to tell modern capitalism, which is so much bound to the neoliberal ideas of utility, instrumentalism, and individual profit maximization. Accordingly, it is tempting to argue that Bergson has nothing to say to business ethics and philosophy of management and that it is somewhat futile to read Bergson in other to reach a better understanding of business.

However, after thinking more deeply about Bergson and modern business, we can see many possibilities for a philosophy of management that implies a whole new way of thinking about business and management: one that goes beyond the neoliberal paradigm and its reduction of business and organizations to an economic and systemic interaction. In general, for Bergson, the world is fundamentally organized. Bergson's philosophy is really one of organization, developed with the basic concepts of action, process, and movement.[31] His philosophy of mind and sociality provides us with a philosophy of culture that is realized in the self-organization of life with the *élan vital*.

Bergson opens us to introducing concepts of spirituality, creativity, and humanity in business. Work is no longer conceived as an instrumental and materialistic activity, but rather as a fundamental human creativity that contributes to the evolution of society and nature towards a better society. Bergson's theory of self-organization also provides a basis for a philosophy of spirituality and business.[32] Moreover, it involves a whole new understanding of the creative dimensions of management and of what "becoming" really means within the framework of creative knowledge management.[33]

One aspect of this new vision of management is the focus on the immediate ideas of (deep) consciousness as the basis for understanding human subjectivity. Bergson has a very different vision of human spirit and mind than mainstream business theory, which tends to reduce human beings to strategically thinking utility

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[31] Stephen Lindstead and John Mullarkey: "Time, creativity and culture: Introducing Bergson", *Culture and Organization*, 2003, Vol 9(1) March, pp. 3–13, p. 8.

[32] Luk Bouckaert and Laszlo Zsolnai (Eds): *The Palgrave Handbook of Spirituality and Business*. Palgrave-Macmillan, Hampshire, England, 2011.

[33] Maria Jakubik: "Becoming to know. Shifting the knowledge creation paradigm" *Journal of Knowledge Management*, Vol. 15 No. 3 2011, pp. 374–402, p. 374.

searching individuals who seek a maximization of personal interest rather than a spiritual vision of leadership. With Bergson's focus on the free spirit of mind there is another view of the subject involved than the one that is present in mainstream economic thinking. Bergson, in his vision of the relation between mind and memory, duration, time, and intuition, presents another vision for business—one that focuses on beauty and the depth of life as essential. Taking this vision of identity and intuition seriously means that we have to redefine the role of business and work in human life in terms of creativity and creative evolution.

This is also the case with seeing organizations and corporations as social institutions. The Bergsonian approach would abandon the neo-Darwinism in economics and social development that is present in the dominant vision of capitalism. Rather, we would focus on the link between human creativity, freedom, and intuition in the vision of the creative mind. Moreover, we would look at how organizations could harness the importance of art and innovation, and their linkage to creativity, to generate dynamic adaptability and development. The environment could be conceived as living creative organisms contributing to self-organizing teleology of the evolution of nature and society within the mystery of free creation without predetermination.

Moreover, the distinction between closed and open morality and religion also involves a radical rethinking of the purpose and meaning of organizations. Closed organizations are based on authoritarian rule-based norms that everyone follows without question; however, this kind of organization has gradually provided space for a more open society, morality, and religion with a universal focus on human creation and spirituality, as well as a concern for human rights and dignity. This is an open view of morality and society that moves beyond closed morality towards creative evolution, where spiritual creativity in organizing and organizations enables new and more advanced forms of life.

2.4 Emile Durkheim: Solidarity and the Institutionalization of Freedom

It was rather late in his career that Bergson formulated his social philosophy that is relevant for business ethics and philosophy of management, though French philosophy at the beginning of the twentieth century was not short of sociological thought. Following the positivist sociology of Comte, a number of sociologically, anthropologically, and ethnologically oriented philosophers had developed a close connection between philosophy and the social sciences (notably Durkheim, Lévy-Bruhl, and Mauss). This trend can be analyzed in connection with Bergsonism, but it also contains a strong revolt against this philosophy. Common ground between Bergson and this sociology includes an effort to go beyond our immediate frame of experience in order to describe the concrete relations that condition this experience. This is at odds with Bergson's focus on individual freedom and also the Cartesian university philosophy, with its belief in a rational and self-conscious subject.

While Bergson was interested in immediate experience and creative evolution, Durkheim concentrated on social facts. He wanted to investigate social laws and structures. His aim was to lay a foundation for social philosophy as an objective science. Durkheim considered being a part of society as one among a number of social facts (*les faits sociaux*) that he emphasized as things; that is, expressions of an independent social reality that is different from consciousness of the physical world.

Durkheim wanted to show how the individual could be considered a product of social institutionalization, determined by social pressure and new forms of solidarity in a given society. A social fact expresses an outer pressure that determines the actions of individuals.[34] Durkheim's theory of modernity contains an ethical potential because it emphasizes the necessity of work solidarity as a way to overcome isolation and egoistic individualism.

Durkheim's investigations into the foundation of the sociology of moral standards and how institutions generate morality are particularly relevant to philosophy of management and business ethics. His sociology and philosophy helps us to understand how institutional moral standards are authoritative guides for interpersonal behavior. We can say that the sociological approach to normativity provides the basis for understanding the cultural transmission of moral standards in relation to the organization, the market, and the business system integrated in the culture of society. It explores the societal foundations of standards for fair responsibility and managerial moral standards in cultural and normative conventions and institutions.[35]

Durkheim came from an orthodox Jewish family with a long pedigree. He went to École normale supérieure in the years around 1880, and was friends with the socialist, Jean Jaurés. In 1882, he became a high school philosophy teacher and for a number of years he was professor of social sciences and pedagogy in Bordeaux, where he and his coauthors wrote a book on sociological method that contributed to the foundation of his new social thought. In 1902, Durkheim received a position to work for development of sociology as a science, but it was only in 1913 that he began to teach sociology at the Sorbonne. In 1896, he founded the journal *L'Année sociologique*, which was the most important French social science journal of its day, until it ceased publication in 1914. Durkheim was strongly publicly engaged in the first decades of the century, fighting for a socialist and liberal republicanism that contrasted with Anglo-Saxon utilitarianism by focusing on individual dignity and inviolability. In connection with the Dreyfus affair (a heated public debate about the implied racism of arrestation of a Jewish captain Dreyfus by the French government in the late nineteenth century) Durkheim intervened on the side of the socialists. He argued against anti-Semitism for social solidarity instead of the economic individualism and egoism of the liberal positions.

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[34] Emile Durkheim: *Les règles de la méthode sociologique*, (1895) Séconde édition, Quadrige, PUF, Paris 1937, p. 14.

[35] Frederick Bird and James A. Waters: "The Nature of Managerial Moral Standards", *Journal of Business Ethics* 6 (1987), pp. 1–13, p. 11.

He died at 59 years old in 1917, partly because of his great grief over the death of his son and many of his friends in the battles of the First World War.

Durkheim expressed, in a certain way, the French tradition of objective thinking. His work, inspired by Comte, holds a strongly objective style that describes social facts and human beings as a part of a social totality.[36] At the same time, he was influenced by the Kantian philosophy of Charles Renouvier (1815–1903), who was one of his teachers at Ecole normale supérieure. Renouvier had been critical of the emergent utilitarianism, on the basis of his Kantian leanings. At the same time, Kant's theory of knowledge, based on the idea of a number of governing laws and principles in reality, was very important for Durkheim. Indeed, Durkheim was influenced by the utopian socialism of Claude Henri Saint-Simon (1760–1825) and, not least, Karl Marx (1818–1883).

Durkheim's unification of respect for the individual with social solidary stands at the center of his analysis, and as the basis for his notion of social stability. Durkheim investigated the possibility of developing a special form of solidarity in modern complex and individualized societies. He therefore criticized social individualism and egoism. He wanted to develop a moral philosophy that was based on respect for the human person and that could ensure integration of a fragmented society. Through his positivistic description, Durkheim reaches rather metaphysical conclusions and he does not always follow his own method, which is illustrated by his definition of suicide from a social perspective as well as his investigations into the social meaning of the holy, and also his analysis of religion as the basis for social community. It is this very thoughtful and metaphysical positivism that is so characteristic of later French philosophy, such as in the sociological descriptions of thinkers like Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009) and Michel Foucault (1926–1984). Indeed, as we shall see, this approach to social philosophy is very important for perspectives on business ethics and philosophy of management that explain different processes of institutionalization of norms and values in modern business and economic markets.

In *Les régles de la méthode sociologique* (1895) Durkhiem defines his sociological method. His starting point is holistic, because his aim is to establish the collective social facts (*les faits sociaux*) that determine social life. The social facts can be studied as objects independently of individuals.[37] Social reality is determined by a number of structural and material laws that are not psychological, but social, and that it is the task of sociology to describe. Durkheim emphasizes that social life is not to be understood as an unstructured battle between individuals, but that social and extra-individual facts express a social pressure that affects and socializes individuals. This social power is the foundation of the function and causal explanations of social life.

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[36] Raymond Aron: *Les étapes de la pensée sociologiques, Montesquieu. Comte. Marx. Tocqueville. Durkheim*. Pareto. Weber, (1967), Gallimard, Tel Quel, Paris 1989, p. 319.

[37] Emile Durkheim: *Les régles de la méthode sociologique*, (1895) Séconde édition, Quadrige, PUF, Paris 1937, p. 19.

Durkheim's three main works are: *De la division du travail social: Etude sur l'organisation des sociétés supérieueres* (1893), *Le suicide: Etude de sociologie* (1897), and *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse: Le système totémique en Australie* (1912). All three demonstrate a sociology that wants to break with Cartesian subjectivity by investigating collective social facts as its basis. Durkheim is critical towards a social philosophy that takes its point of departure in individual freedom and autonomy. His main idea is that the individual is born out of society, which has its own reality that is independent of individuals. It is implied in Durkheim's realism and holism that the totality goes before the parts and that social totality cannot be reduced to its elements. In other words, the social world comes before individuals.

The question is how a social community emerges and how consensus is reached to live together. In *De la division du travail social* Durkheim distinguishes between organic and mechanical solidarity.[38] These two extreme forms of solidarity express what keeps society together. In a community with organic solidarity the community is kept together because individuals have not yet been separated from each other. Organic solidarity, in contrast, keeps a society together with differentiated individuality. In this way it does not build on mechanical unity, but on organic consensus. In this sense, organic solidarity is based on the mutual dependence of individuals in a well-developed society. Durkheim was worried about the increasing individualism in his contemporary society that he conceived as a threat to organic solidarity. At the same time he was convinced that increased professional consciousness and community in the workplace was a condition for meaningful integration in modern society and, indeed, the theory of organic solidarity can be conceived as an analysis of the institutionalization of freedom in modern societies. From the perspective of business ethics and philosophy of management Durkheim proposes a theory of organizational unity in differentiated societies.

This implies that the individual is not what is historically primary, but emerges in historical development.[39] In primitive societies people live together in an organic unity where they all have close emotional bonds to each other. The contrast between mechanical and organic solidarity corresponds to the contrast between primitive societies and societies where there is separation of work. In the segment structure of primitive society's traditions and local norms are the driving force in the collective consciousness, which forms a system that conditions the individual conception of life. In primitive societies collective consciousness dominates individual consciousness. The group dominates the members of archaic societies. Durkheim argues that collectivist societies, where everybody—historically speaking—looks alike, are the primary societies. Mechanical solidarity precedes organic solidarity.

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[38] Emile Durkheim: *De la division du travail social. Etude sur l'organisation des sociétés supé rieueres,* Paris 1893.

[39] Raymond Aron: *Les étapes de la pensée sociologiques, Montesquieu. Comte. Marx. Tocqueville. Durkheim. Pareto. Weber*, (1967), Gallimard, Tel Quel, Paris 1989, p. 320.

In his sociology of law Durkheim distinguishes between two types of legal regulation: the repressive and oppressive law that punishes the crime and the restitutive and cooperative law that represents the reforming social legal regulation aiming to reinstitute and develop social order. In a society with mechanical solidarity, collective consciousness is expressed in repressive law. As action, a crime is defined by collective consciousness, which also renders the social sanctions. The aim of the sanctions is to make people scared, satisfy the common desire for revenge, and maintain the collective consciousness about what is lawful and unlawful. It is the aim of the restitutive, or cooperative, legal consciousness to reestablish social order as it should have been (according to the concept of justice).

Durkheim is critical towards classical contract theories by Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) and Rousseau. Society is not a social pact between individuals, but is built on social differentiation and different forms of solidarity that mediate a collective conception of right and wrong. A differentiated society, in contrast to an archaic one with its higher degree of social and moral unity, is characterized by the intensified exchange of communication and social goods.

It is Durkheim's intention to find the cause of the development of social differentiation in modern society. He refuses Comte's hypothesis that social development is based on human intentions to acquire happiness. It is not certain that modern human beings are happier than their predecessors in primitive societies. Instead, Durkheim—somewhat critical to Bergson—refers to Darwin's idea of the struggle for survival as important for social development. Social differentiation and division of work makes society more efficient and permits more and more people to survive. The division of work should be seen as a way to make collective work more efficient and increase the number of individuals who can survive, which leads to increased communication, social exchange, and moral density.

At the same time it is social differentiation that is characteristic of modern society, and is a condition for the creation and institutionalization of human individual freedom. In a society with social differentiation collective consciousness loses its strength and this means that the individual can enjoy certain autonomy in judgment and action. This also includes that the most important problem in individualist societies—the effort to maintain a minimum of collective consciousness to avoid social dissolution. But even in the differentiated individualist society, where everybody sees themselves as autonomous and free, the individual must consider him or herself as a part of social community, in other words as an expression of collectivity. Such a society can only exist with organic solidarity, that is, with individual responsibility and a certain degree of collective moral responsibility that goes beyond the ordinary social contract. This also means adhering to a number of social norms and collectively sacred values and obligations that individuals respect and that put them in relation to the social unity.[40] With this connection, Durkheim proposes his argumentation for a well-developed social ethics as the basis of organic solidarity in modern differentiated societies.

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[40] Ibid., p. 330.

Durkheim's famous study of suicide, *Le suicide: Étude de sociologie*, began a long tradition of reflection about suicide in French philosophy and can be considered in close relation with the study of the social division of work. Even though he does not think that people in a society with organic solidarity would be less happy than in a society built on mechanical solidarity, Durkheim is aware that human beings in modern societies are not necessarily more satisfied that those in traditional ones. He points to the increasing number of suicides that express something abnormal in relation to social integration. For example, he considers the case of economic crisis and bad adaptation to work as an expression of the pathologies of social life that are based on modern social differentiation. While collective life was the necessity of common integration in traditional societies, there is no equivalent to this in society that builds on individuality and organic solidarity. This leads to disintegration of social groups that is the basis for more social pathologies. Durkheim says that the solution for the social pathologies in modern society is the creation of groups that favor the integration of the individual in collectivity.[41]

In his study of suicide Durkheim wants to show the extent to which the individual is governed by collectivity. In this context, suicide is particularly interesting because nothing is more individual than to take one's own life. Durkheim's provocative thesis is that even when the individual is alone and in despair wants to take his or her own life it is still society that influences the unhappy consciousness. Both passive (e.g., a hunger strike) and active suicides (e.g., shooting oneself with a revolver) can be interpreted from this perspective. It is a fact that the suicide rates in a given group of people remain relatively constant. Durkheim uses this fact as the basis for his theory that the real causes of suicide are not psychological, but social. Given this it is possible to refute psychological or biological theories about suicide. Suicide is not hereditary, nor is it based on genetic or psychological resemblances with other human beings; instead, it is based on a number of social conditions.

On this basis, Durkheim distinguishes between three main types of suicide: (1) egoistic, (2) altruistic, and (3) abnormal. Individuals who are excluded from society and social groups, and who want to commit suicide because of despair or lack of will to live, commit egoistic suicide. On the contrary, altruistic suicide is an expression of the total dependence of the individual on the social group, for example in the Indian practice where a widow is required to commit suicide by being burnt to follow her husband in death, or a collective suicide (e.g., soldiers in a war). Abnormal suicide is a result of social disintegration and is present in times of crisis where it expresses a social pathology due to problems of survival and changed conditions of life due to social differentiation, individualization, and the emergence of new mechanisms of integration.

According to Durkheim the solution to the social pathologies of modernity is to find a way to reintegrate the individual in the social. He discusses the possibility of integration through the family, or a religious or political group, but he does not think that any of these options have any great perspective to offer the individual

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[41] Emile Durkheim: *Le suicide. Etude de sociologie,* Paris 1897.

seeking to adapt to society. Durkheim instead proposes work life as the basis of social integration and the development of social solidarity in differentiated societies. He maintains that a morally integrating and disciplinary force is necessary to keep society together. Every human being has endless desires and discipline therefore is necessary as the primary moral force of society. Indeed, it is professional life, the norms of business ethics, and organization of work life that, according to Durkheim, provide this important integrating force of modernity. In this sense the development of a moral economy and business ethics is an essential dimension of the institutionalization of individual integration in modern society.

Durkheim provides us with the sociological foundations for a theory of professional responsibility, since the norms of integration demand moral engagement. In other words, professional responsibility finds its basis in Durkheim's theory of social integration. Durkheim's sociology can help to bring back professional responsibility involving accountability. In modernity, norms of professional responsibility and accountability are important in all governance systems. In the health care sector, for example, nurses and physicians are guided by this responsibility. Similarly, social workers in the welfare state are also required to follow norms of professional responsibility. It can be argued that this kind of responsibility based on the social integration of universal norms functions as a basis for governance. New public management (as an example) cannot function without professional consciousness of responsibility and accountability in the public institutions and private organizations of the welfare state.[42]

2.5 Durkheim and the Institutionalization of the Moral Economy

Durkheim lays out his sociology of religion in *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse: le système totémique en Australie*. He develops a theory of totemism as the basis for religion. It is characteristic of totemism that it incarnates collective beliefs in human society. Phenomenon of collective significance are endowed with a great religious force. This could, for example, be rationality that operates as a new kind of religion.[43] Another case is the revolutionary cult of patrimony, freedom, and reason after the French revolution. Durkheim's sociology of religion is at once both an expression of and a synthesis of science and religion. The value that society attributes to consciousness is dependent of what the social community installs as criteria for truth and falsehood.

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[42] Tone Dyrdal Solbrekke and Thomas Englund: "Bringing professional responsibility back in", *Studies of Higher Education*, 36:7, pp. 847–861, p. 849.

[43] Emile Durkheim: *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse: le système totémique en Australie,* Paris 1912.

In this sense, social forms are nothing more than the symbolic forms of society's social and moral interests that integrate the individual in the social group. The fundamental content of religion is the separation of the world into the holy and profane. A religious phenomenon does not necessarily have to build on a church. It is not transcendence, but the symbolic representation of the collective consciousness that is central. This happens with the recognition of what is holy and divine as an inner part of society. Symbols and rituals are expressions of norms for social behavior that express the social self-understanding of society. This can be analyzed in classifications of primitive societies as pure or impure.

Durkheim's social philosophy is characterized by the existence of social facts and collective consciousness as an independent reality. The rupture of this philosophy from Cartesian thought is manifested by the fact that its basis for the social world should not be conceived as something subjective. What is social is not a sum of individuals but is expressed in the connections, structures of meaning, and relations that are constituted among the individuals in society. Durkheim is worried about the threat of the dissolution of modern society because of human freedom and egoism. Durkheim formulates the demand to the social order as a question about socialization and about how to achieve consensus to keep community together. He thought that the institutionalization of freedom in modern society was very important because he endorsed freedom and autonomy in social institutions. He pointed to individual responsibility in organic solidarity that could contribute to avoiding fragmentation in the face of increasing social pathology. Durkheim conceived of socialism as an expression of a better organization of society that could solve the problem of collective morality.[44] Here Durkheim also saw business ethics, philosophy of management, and moral economy as important because organic solidarity was not only a matter for the state, but Durkheim hoped that development of professional ethics in work life and in the organization of society in social cooperatives could ensure the moral integration of society.

Durkheim offers a paradigm for analyzing business ethics and philosophy of management that aims to describe the social fact of the norms and morality of the economy in advanced differentiated societies. Durkheim also provides us with a program for analyzing forms of social solidarity and social pathology in advanced capitalist societies. We can perceive a tension in the description of different forms of mechanical and organic solidarity in different forms of society because business organizations can both contribute to the institutionalization of freedom through organic solidarity, but they can also maintain mechanical solidarity and contribute, therefore, to creating the social pathologies of modernity.

The critical theorist, Axel Honneth (b. 1949), has used the program of Durkheim to promote a moral capitalism. Honneth defines capitalism and its markets as the free economic exchange of goods and services. Historically speaking, it was the legal subject (most of the time a man with property) who had the right to exchange at the market. The basis for behavior at the market was strategic

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[44] Marcel Mauss: *Emile Durkheim et le socialisme*, Paris 1924.

utility maximization and the calculation of cost/benefits. According to Honneth, Durkheim followed Hegel by investigating the normative dimensions of the capitalist system in order to go beyond it and propose a new economic order with a different value orientation for economic institutions.[45] Honneth finds a paradox in this line of questioning, which asks why the market should obey social norms outside the market when it is about individual utility and utility maximization. The answer for Honneth follows Durkheim and his conception of the differentiation of norms in societies with organic solidarity. Intersubjective norms govern the market when it is viewed through normative institutionalism, where morality is considered to be a part of the economic exchange.

Honneth emphasizes that, today, new conditions of consumption and production contribute to the legitimacy of the market through the consumer. We see this in the way that market globalization is realized through mass consumption. This development can also been seen in the emergence of the morally and legally responsible critical consumer: the "consumer citizen".[46] Honneth also considers the labor market as central to the emergence of a moral economy. The capitalist organization of work has, historically, implied manipulation and oppression of the workers. Once workers organized themselves into movements, they then engaged in struggles for recognition and social freedom in the labor market. This fight for social freedom implies a struggle for cooperation and recognition in the labor market.[47] The organization of workers into unions is an important dimension of how freedom is established in the capitalist system. It is important to humanize the work in this world. In particular, democratic organization of the economy and of business can contribute to this. Honneth argues that social freedom in the organizational sphere of corporations and business is dependent on the struggle for recognition by the workers. It is important to contribute to this humanization of work.

Honneth and other social theorists have also been interested in the concept of social pathology, which is central to the work of Durkheim and can also be used for organizational analysis in business ethics and philosophy of management. It is in this context that Durkheim's understanding of suicide as a social phenomenon provides the basis for analyzing social pathologies in the business organization. Phenomena such as stress, burnout, work problems, and so forth can be seen as social pathologies rather than individual problems. This allows the possibility of changing organizations in the direction of individual and collective well-being.

Moreover, with his work on totemism, Durkheim has provided us with the theoretical basis for understanding religious phenomena in organizations. When we deal with concepts like corporate religion and spirituality, in contrast to Bergson who sees these phenomena from the inside as valuable experiences, we can analyze them as social facts and as elements that shape corporate social identities. This sociology of religion permits us to look at the norms of organizations as expressions

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[45] Axel Honneth: *Das Recht der Freiheit*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt 2011.

[46] Ibid., p. 377.

[47] Ibid., p. 431.

of collective totemism and, furthermore, we can ask the following questions: To what extent does such totemism contribute to increased social pathology? Is there a possibility of a new institutionalization of freedom through the clarification of the social norms of organic solidarity in modern organizations?

2.6 From Durkheim to Marcel Mauss (Collège de Sociologie)

Durkheim's social philosophy has influenced structuralist and functionalist movements in American sociology and ethnology. His work was of groundbreaking significance for Alfred Radcliff-Brown (1881–1955) and Talcott Parsons (1902–1980). He had a direct influence on the young generations of French historians from the Annales School after the First World War, among others Marc Bloch (1886–1944), Lucien Febvre (1878–1956), and later Fernand Braudel (1902–1985). Durkheim's thinking about suicide can, in a negative sense, be traced in the work of French existentialists who analyzed individual loss of meaning in a disintegrated society. Structuralists, in particular Lévi-Strauss, and their critics, such as Foucault, have also been inspired by Durkheim in their understanding of different social phenomena.

Another classic representative of French social philosophy is Lévy-Bruhl, who theorised society from an ethnological and ethnographic perspective. As a former pupil of École normale supérieure he also belonged to the socialist environment of Jean Jaurés. He testified for Captain Dreyfus in the Dreyfus affair. Lévy-Bruhl was a republican patriot associated with foreign affairs in the First World War. He worked on the notion of responsibility and 1904 he became professor of the history of modern philosophy, but his main interest was the history of primitive populations. He argued that it was the task of sociology to investigate the concrete variations of human moral experience.[48] In particular, Lévy-Bruhl argued that the mentality and worldview of primitive populations was different from those conceived as civilized. Their mentality is, however, not inferior: they just think differently.[49] There is not one form of reason and thought, but original people have a collective consciousness that is prelogical. It extends beyond the principle of contradiction and the distinction between subject and object, and does not conceive of the subject and separation of individual and group. The mythical world of the primitive goes beyond time and space and is determined by a fundamental principle of duration, which is reminiscent of Bergson. From the beginning of the 1920s, during the last 20 years of his life, Lévy-Bruhl developed this philosophy of primitive thinking and accompanying notions of prelogical thinking and participation in a magical, emotional, and mystical concrete experience of the world in

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[48] Lucien Lévi-Bruhl: *La morale et la science des moeurs,* Paris 1903.

[49] Lucien Lévy-Bruhl: *La mentalité primitive*, Paris 1922.

magic and symbols. Lévy-Bruhl was criticized by Durkheim, among others, for exaggerating the distinction between primitive and civilized ways of thinking, and for challenging rational philosophy too strongly by maintaining that the affective and magical worldview has a truth content that challenges our present logical and rational worldview.

Durkheim's nephew, Marcel Mauss, was also one of the founders of anthropology and ethnology who has had great influence on French philosophy. He started his career teaching at École pratiques des hautes études and later competed with the Thomist, Etienne Gilson (1884–1978), as professor at Collège de France. Mauss was a pupil of Durkheim and they worked closely together in order to realize the sociological program in ethnology and anthropology. Mauss was also a socialist and belonged to the political group around Jaurés and the socialist teachers and students at École normale supérieure. After Durkheim's death,[50] Mauss developed the idea that the social nature of human beings is the basis for society. Mauss wrote a book about Durkheim's theory of socialism that documented the social dimension of Durkheim's philosophy.

The application of Mauss's thought in business ethics and philosophy of management is potentially very profound since it opens to a broader concept of economy, namely integrating broader concepts of exchange, like generosity, gift exchange, and altruism.[51] Mauss helps us also to ask questions about the religious basis for economic relations, in the same way as Weber provides an analysis of the concept of Protestant ethics and the spirit of capitalism. In this context, Mauss helps us to understand the spiritual and institutional dimensions of the economic exchange system.[52]

Mauss's most important contribution is his investigation of the notion of the gift and its role in exchange in primitive societies, which he developed in *Essai sur le don: Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaiques* (1924). Mauss presents an archeological and historical investigation of different phenomena as the basis for present society and social organization in order to understand the formation of social institutions. Mauss's comparative archeology and sociology of modernity shows how elements of original social organization can be recognized in modern society. This implies a holistic conception of society where social institutions should be explained on the basis of their cultural context. The totality should be reconsidered as a part of every single social phenomenon and every single social phenomenon could be analyzed as an indication of the coherence of the whole in order to understand the totality. In particular, Mauss combines structural analysis of social figures with an evolutionary and hermeneutic perspective on social development.[53]

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[50] Marcel Mauss: *Emile Durkheim et le socialisme*, Paris 1924.

[51] Kolm, Serge-Christophe and Jean Mercier Ythier: *Handbook of the Economics of Giving, Altruism and Reciprocity*, Volume 1, London: Elsevier B.V. 2006.

[52] Marcel Henaff: "Religious ethics, Gift Exchange and the Ethics of Capitalism", *European Journal of Sociology*, Volume 44, Issue 03, pp. 293–324., 2003, p. 313.

[53] Claude Lévi-Strauss: "Introduction à l'Œuvre de Marcel Mauss" in Marcel Mauss: *Sociologie et anthropologie*, PUF, (1950), Paris 1985, p. IX.

Essai sur le don begins with an analysis of gift exchange in original societies as foundational to social institutions and follows with an analysis of the notion of the gift in different cultures (Germanic, Roman, and Indian) from the perspective of mythology and legal principles in these cultures. Mauss demonstrates the resemblance in the conception of gift exchange in all these different cultures and social forms and shows how it differs from modern utilitarian and functionalist conceptions.[54]

When we investigate the notion that receiving a gift obliges us to give back, it is useful to look at the North American Indian custom of the potlatch, which has been observed among some tribes in Vancouver and Alaska. In potlatch ceremonies, rival tribes institutionalized rules around generosity that led to an aggressive fight for recognition, where the best tribe was the one who gave the best gift.

In the primitive societies of Polynesia, Mauss observed that the whole legal and economic system was based on the obligation of giving and receiving in rituals around marriage, birth, disease, puberty, death, and so forth. The exchange of the gift took place in a religious and mystical context. The gift had an essentially religious significance. To receive something from other people was to receive something of their spiritual substance, their souls.[55] It expressed a divine mediation between the receiver and the giver of the gift. In primitive society, we do not make the distinction between sacred and profane or the spiritual and material. Gifts have, therefore, a sacred dimension that implies a spiritualization of all social and economic exchange.

In contrast to a pure market-based money economy, social and economic dimensions are mixed in a unity in the metaphysics of the gift. Originally, the economy was not based on a utilitarian and functionalist process. An economic exchange was instead an exchange between spiritual human beings searching to recognize each other. The Trobiands, a group of Pacific Islanders, demonstrate a custom that signals the central significance of the gift for trade. Only after the kings and tribal heads exchange gifts can the remaining members of the tribes engage in economic transactions.[56]

As a social relation, gift exchange contains both demands to those who give and to those who receive the gift. You cannot refuse to receive gifts and in some situations there is an obligation be thankful and to give a gift in return. To give a gift expresses respect for the other as a spiritual being, for his or her autonomy and for his or her existence as a spiritual being. The gift is something that makes one recognize the other as a respectable human being. Gift-giving has, therefore, great moral significance in primitive societies. This happens, according to Mauss, in modern societies as well, but for moderns the secularization process has led to forgetting the spiritual significance of the gift. Today we do not see the gift as an expression of the soul of the giver and we do not feel an unconditional obligation to give back.

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[54] Marcel Mauss: "Essai sur le don. Forme et Raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaiques" in Marcel Mauss: *Sociologie et anthropologie*, PUF, (1950), Paris 1985, p. 145ff.

[55] Ibid., p. 148.

[56] Ibid., p. 161.

One can, however, find aspects of the archaic conceptions of gifts and exchange in other historical and modern societies. In the Viking culture there was always an implicit demand to give a gift in return. Roman law is built on the idea of friendship and on the noble personality of traders. This means that business and exchange cannot be separated totally from the morality of the gift. European systems of commercial and business law presuppose some aspects of trust and the integrity of the traders, which is an important element of the spiritual gift relations. In the law of primitive society one can also observe elements of the idea of the gift that are repeated in the economy and law of modern society. In the traditional morality of business ethics and of trade we can perceive that the idea of mutual recognition and sympathy in exchange is a fundamental aspect of the economy of the gift.

In Indo-European mythology, we find the Mahabharata, a mythical story about the creation of the world that contains a description of divine generosity and the exchange relationship between God and human beings.[57] Here, God gives the world and its holy things to human beings. In such creative theology, God represents an "infinite generosity" that gives human beings their existence and the world with its material things. All material goods, for example food and land, are personalized, because they express a divine spirituality. The resources of nature receive a spiritual dimension, because they are a gift from God, which means that they are more than material objects.

After describing the function of the gift in the archaic, Greco-Roman, and European conceptions, Mauss analyzes the importance of the gift in original Germanic societies.[58] Here, the function of the gift is shown in intimate human relations, economically, socially, and generally in society. He explores what happens when gifts lose their function: become *gabe* (or 'poison' in German). To see how fundamental the law of the gift is in Germanic culture, one can look at how the taboo of violating the law of giving and receiving is expressed in stories about an evil fairy, who represents a narrative expression of this perversion of the idea of the gift.

2.7 The Gift in Modern Society, Economics, and Business

What are the potentialities for understanding business ethics and philosophy of management on the basis of the notion of the gift as it is proposed by Mauss? In fact, this approach contributes a social conception of the economy that has been forgotten by the liberal approach to markets and economic exchange. By placing gift exchange as an aspect of economic exchange, which is fundamental to the social constitution of society, Mauss contributes with an important insight. Different

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[57] Ibid., p. 243.

[58] Ibid., p. 250.

aspects of the classical metaphysics of the gift can be found in modern societies. There are a number of conventions of gift giving that are essential to social relations in a generalized social economy. We can mention wedding, baptism, birthday presents, which have a spiritual significance for social relations. Mauss mentions charity movements to help the poor in times of crisis as expressions of modern generosity.[59] But the state also provides examples of such kinds of mutual gift giving, as receiver and giver through taxes and social or health insurance. In addition, economic markets as such should not be considered as based on one-sided profit maximization. Corporations participate in gift-based social exchange. They receive from society but are also required to give back in the form of good service, products, or through philanthropy.

Mauss is, however, also aware that the basis of social relations in mutual gift giving has increasingly been forgotten in modern societies and that the principle of the gift has a tendency to be ignored in social exchange. Mauss therefore wants to reinstitute a concrete morality of mutual recognition of the gift and the principle of gift giving in the place of abstract desacralized law and economics. As a proposal of a new moral maxime for social life together, he cites and old Maori saying that as long as one gives as much as one receives, everything will be all right.[60] Mauss thinks that it is unfortunate that modern law and economics and globalized business capitalism seen to have fully forgotten the sacred and spiritual dimension in the exchange of gifts.

Mauss's philosophy of the gift has had huge influence on later French philosophers like Sartre, Bataille, Lévi-Strauss, Derrida, and Bourdieu. An important question is whether it is possible to re-establish the gift as the foundation of social, economic, and business relations in modern society. In other words, it is possible to live according to the utopia of spiritual mutuality in modern society. Sartre proposed something along these lines by arguing for generosity—where people mutually help each other—as a basic value in existentialist ethics.[61] Derrida sought to re-establish the utopia of the gift by surmounting the identity logic of exchange. He criticized Mauss and modern society for reducing the gift to economic exchange where one never gives anybody anything without requiring getting exactly the same back. In fact, trade negotiation in capitalism is in danger of ending up in such a pure identity of exchange, changing social relations from gift-based generosity to money-based instrumental calculation. Derrida proposed that that we need to go beyond economic exchange towards a real gift of pure generosity without conditions. But then again, it is a paradox of economic philosophy that this pure generosity is impossible.

Generally, the question is: What is the meaning of gifts and social exchange for business and capitalism, and modern society? Should we criticize business for eliminating the spiritual dimensions in the definition of exchange in economic

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[59] Ibid., p. 263.

[60] Ibid., p. 235ff.

[61] Jean-Paul Sartre: *Cahiers pour une morale*, Gallimard, Paris 1983.

systems? Moreover, it is an issue for business ethics to address the proper role of business in relation to gifts and the spiritual dimensions of material economic relations. In this context, Mauss maintains that real human relations presuppose social exchange based on equality and spiritual recognition. It is an integrated part of our social economy that there is always potlatch and circulation present in what one gives and receives. There are many important ethical issues at stake in this concept of the gift. A gift economy is still essential in modern capitalism and it is a basic morality of exchange that reinforces social integration.[62] With his deep analysis of the gift, Mauss provides the basis for concrete analysis of gift relations within business ethics and philosophy of management.[63]

2.8 Introducing Hegel in French Social Philosophy: Alexandre Kojève

After the First World War, the philosophical doctrines of Bergson, Durkheim, Maurice Blondel (1861–1949), and Léon Brunschvicg (1867–1944) were well established. At the same time, French philosophy in the 1930s saw the emergence of a radical new philosophy, through the surrealism of André Breton (1896–1966) and the emergent German phenomenology and existential philosophy of Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) and Martin Heidegger (1889–1976). In particular, Kojève, a Russian immigrant, contributed to this new paradigm with his famous lectures on Hegel's philosophy of the phenomenology of the spirit (*Phänomenologie des geistes*, 1807) at École pratique des hautes études in the years 1933–1939, where he managed to combine an interpretation of Hegel with phenomenological and existentialist themes. The lectures were published by Kojève's friend Raymond Queneau (1903–1976) with the title *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*.

Kojève introduced Hegel in a criticism of Bergson's vitalism and Brunschvicg's idealistic theory of knowledge. The lectures presented an anthropological reading of Hegel's philosophy of the historical battle of recognition that was inspired by Marx and Heidegger. Kojève's passionate presentations of Hegel's philosophy became a great philosophical event in the 1930s in Paris and many of the followers of the lectures were among the famous personalities, in particular Merleau-Ponty, Breton, Bataille, Raymond Aron (1905–1983), Albert Camus (1913–1960), Simone de Beauvoir (1908–1986), Lacan, and Jean Hyppolite (1907–1968). Sartre did, however, not participate in the lectures even though he often worked on many of the same Hegelian themes as Kojéve.

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[62] Kolm, Serge-Christophe and Jean Mercier Ythier: *Handbook of the Economics of Giving, Altruism and Reciprocity*, Volume 1, London: Elsevier B.V. 2006.

[63] Jeanette Lemmergaard and Sara Louise Muhr: "Regarding gifts-on Christmas gift exchange and asymmetrical business relations", *Organization 18*(6), pp. 763–777.

Kojéve's reading of Hegel is marked by Socratic irony and a classical under-standing of philosophy as wisdom. He was well aware that his reading of Hegel was not innocent philosophy of history and it formed the basis for the formulation of his own philosophy. Kojéve was also influenced by Hobbesian realism and the absolute conception of the state. In addition, one can find the influence of Friedrich Nietzsche's (1844–1900) philosophy of the superman who fights to combat nihilism after the fall of metaphysics.

Kojéve's interpretation of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* emphasizes Hegel's concept of dialectics. Kojève can be said to "humanize" Hegel's concept of history and the desire of consciousness for absolute knowledge. Kojève argues that dialec-tics is about human reality (*la réalité humaine*) and not about nature, which only receives meaning in relation to human activities. In a criticism of Bergson, who conceived nothingness as a pseudo-idea and of Brunschvicg, who conceived Hegel as a hopeless romanticist, Kojève emphasizes the negativity of human consciousness as nothingness and posits desire for recognition as the basis of the meaning of the world.[64]

Kojève emphasized the dialectical development of history as determined by opposite forces a negative movement between the same and the Other. In history, the subject is in a creative and negating movement back towards itself through the creative movement of giving meaning to the world and history. Dialectical logic is a story about how human beings reach the unconditioned and absolute in a universal homogenous state, where human beings are no longer alienated and where society has overcome the force of nature.[65] Hegel's philosophy is the story of the human fight to reach absolute knowledge. This is a struggle to overcome the oppositions that are present in being. The real has a dialectical dimension because it, in addition to identity, includes an element of negativity.[66]

Kojève provides us with a general theory of modernity and the struggle for recognition, which may be used to form a concrete development of ethics and the morality of organizations, institutions, and corporations. Kojève's general theory of society can further be used to understand the basis for business in modern capitalist society.

According to Kojève human desire for recognition is realized in the tension between the same and the Other, a theme that became very important in later French philosophy.[67] Human desire is conceived as a desire for another desire. It is a desire for a freedom that is based in recognition by the freedom of another human being. In the tension with nature, human beings transform the Other as a part of reality. In the encounter with the Other, we realize the individual in the universal through negativity in the teleology of history.

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[64] Alexandre Kojève: *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, (1947), Gallimard, Paris 1968, p. 16ff.

[65] Ibid., p. 301.

[66] Ibid., p. 473ff.

[67] Vincent Descombes: *Le même et l'autre*, Minuit, Paris 1978.

When humanity reaches absolute knowledge human beings are, according to Kojève, close to the divine. The end of history is at the same time the final aim of history. This philosophical synthesis was later criticized by postmodern philosophers,[68] who argued that the individual is absorbed in an abstract philosophical system. Absolute knowledge is a story that expresses a metaphysical violence and madness. It constitutes both humanism and ideological terror.

Human history and the desire to be free is a struggle for recognition. *Phänomenologie des Geistes* must be read as a philosophy of human historical practice. Kojève is close to a Marxist understanding of history where the class struggle between master and slave is the driving force of the historical development. Negativity is expressed in human historical work and action. Human self-realization is a struggle for life and death. This is not an animal fight since human desire is a desire for another desire, a desire for recognition. As political beings, humans desire dignity and respect. Our self-consciousness needs another consciousness to be free and the aim of the struggle is, therefore, not death but the struggle until death that leads to the submission of the slave to the master.

At the same time, the struggle for recognition in history is a struggle among individuals, classes, and nations.[69] All human beings must risk their lives in the search for recognition if they do not want to end up as slaves. The masters will, in the beginning, win the bloody fight if they dare to risk life, but the slaves refuse to die and they surrender with and submit, therefore, to the masters. We face two subjects, the victor (the master) who is free and another person (the slave) who is alienated and oppressed. The master has won the battle by confronting the slaves with death. The fear of death makes the slaves work in the service of the masters. Now the master is recognized as the master, but the slave cannot get recognition from the master. Rather, he or she finds recognition by realizing him or herself in the immortal works of humanity, art, religion, and science. Now the problem is that the master cannot get the recognition that he or she desires. The slave recognizes the masters in a way, but this is not real recognition because the slaves are in prison and not free. Only a free subjectivity at the same level can give the master true recognition. At the same time the master has no relation to the world of things. He or she does not work, but only lives in pleasure. Unlike the slave, the master cannot find recognition through self-objectification in the outer world.

In contrast, the slaves have no problem in finding recognition through transforming their outer worlds and by being objectified in an Other.[70] At a deeper level, the slave reaches immortality by working, creating, and transforming the historical and cultural world of which they are a part. Kojéve says therefore that history is of the slaves and their victory over the masters.[71]

The development of the dialectics of recognition must be understood as a world historical movement towards a universal and homogenous state with peace for all

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[68] Ibid., p. 45.

[69] Alexandre Kojève: *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, (1947), Paris 1968, pp. 13–15.

[70] Ibid., p. 445ff.

[71] Ibid., p. 26.

citizens.[72] The struggle for recognition is present in all historical civilizations that have emerged and disappeared. Political ideologies in different historical periods form and objectify the class relations between master and slave. Kojève emphasizes the importance of the question of the end of history in his interpretation of Hegel's philosophy. The universal state expresses the end of politics as a struggle for recognition. According to Hegel and Kojève the French revolution was the preliminary culmination of the battle for recognition where the revolt of the slaves against their masters led to the bourgeois state. At the end of history the philosopher and the politicians are united in absolute knowledge, which Hegel expressed by comparing Napoléon Bondaparte (1769–1821) and world spirit. This development towards the end of history is an eschatological movement that only ends with modernity and human beings being realized in the universal state as gods in a historical paradise.

At the end of history, the ideological struggle has ended because the state is the realization of individual freedom and eliminates the oppositions that were the driving forces of history. Now, everybody, even the philosophers, are satisfied. The bourgeois state with its liberal market economy is the end of the struggle for recognition. It emerges as a realized utopia where reason (Hegel states that "What is real is rational."[73]), morality, virtue, and the desire for recognition are realized in a higher unity of absolute knowledge.[74] This means that the universal state is the end of the struggle, the end of philosophy, and the culmination of negation. But it also implies its opposite, namely destruction, death, and, technology. The problem is, however, that absolute knowledge and the end of history also means the death of philosophy, because there is nothing more to know.[75]

With Socratic irony, Kojève show the ambivalence of the end of history, which is also the end of human beings because humanity is defined by its struggle for recognition through history.[76] Here, Kojève is inspired by Nietzsche's idea that the morality of slaves is nihilistic, because humanity is gone when no one struggles for recognition anymore. At the same time, the end of history, with its satisfaction of desire, is not necessarily a happy time because human beings have no longer something to struggle for in their lives. As a consumer, the modern individual is not very different from an animal, because it is only consuming and has no particular political dignity left.[77] However, there is no way back. The democratic liberal economic order has become the absolute political order and with this philosophy as a reflection about the political struggle in history has ended. Kojève explored the consequences of this. After the Second World War, he left his philosophical work to become a public official in the French ministry for external trade and chief negotiator with both the European Community and GATT.

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[72] Ibid., p. 380.

[73] G. W. F. Hegel: *Philosophie des Rechts* (1818–1832), Reklam Ausgabe, p. 56ff.

[74] Alexandre Kojève: *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, (1947), Paris 1968, p. 540ff.

[75] Ibid., p. 468ff.

[76] Ibid., p. 388.

[77] Ibid., the reference, p. 436ff.

In addition to inspiring many generations of existentialists and poststructuralists, Kojève's philosophy had an important impact on classical political theory. *Tyrannie et sagesse* (1954) recounts a famous debate with the German-American political philosopher Leo Strauss (1899–1973) and clarifies Kojève's thought on the relation between classical and modern political philosophy.[78] In this book, Kojève is critical of Leo Strauss's belief in classical wisdom—expressed in his study of Xenofanes (426–355 BC)—from the perspective of the end of history, and argues that the wise tyrant is impossible in the homogenous state that is built on equality and recognition. Strauss argues that Kojève has no concept of practical reason because his philosophy is based on Marx, Hobbes, and Hegel. This debate is a very good illustration of the opposition between a classical and modern conception of the ideal political regime.

The importance of the work of Kojève for philosophy of management is illustrated by the work of the American philosopher Francis Fukuyama (b.1952). Strongly inspired by Kojève, Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man* (1990) discusses the fall of communism as an expression of the end of history. According to Fukuyama the liberal democracy, with its capitalist market economy, represents the end of the political struggle between ideologies. This is not necessarily happy, because it implies the dissolution of every metaphysical dimension in human life. What is left is only technology, utilitarianism, and pragmatic decision making in the market economy.[79] In the universal and homogenous state big ideological battles no longer occur. We are supposed to be living in a post-human and posthistorical time. So what values should be valid for the postpolitical human being when technology and slave morality have conquered? Kojève refers to Japanese culture, which he thinks is superior, as presenting a solution of the problem of the loss of humanity in nihilism. In the Japanese culture human beings find a peaceful happiness that gives harmony to the soul[80] Kojève was more pessimistic about resolving the contradictions of democratic liberalism and a capitalist market economy because he conceived the end of history as a tragic time, where humanity must continually fight nihilism without being able to realize itself in struggles for recognition in politics or in the wisdom of thought. Instead of political struggle, Kojève chose the work in bureaucracy and enjoy the pleasures of bourgeois life as an economic agent.

Kojève's philosophy has had strong impact on modern French social philosophy. His thinking was developed by philosophers like Jean Hyppolite, professor at the Sorbonne from 1949, director of the Ecole normale supérieure from 1955, and professor at the Collèege de France from 1963 to 1968, who initiated a great French tradition of the study of social philosophy.[81] Hyppolite combined Hegel and Marx

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[78] Alexandre Kojève & Leo Strauss: *Tyrannie et sagesse*, Plon, Gallimard, Paris 1954.

[79] Francis Fukuyama: *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York 1990.

[80] Alexandre Kojève: *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, (1947), Paris 1968, the footnote, p. 436ff.

[81] Gwendoline Jarczyk & Pierre Jean Labarrière: *Les prèmiers combats de la reconnaissance, Maîtrise et servitude dans la phénoménologie de l' esprit de Hegel*, Aubier 1987.

and was inspired by the existentialist Hegelianism and Marxism of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty.[82] Alongside Hyppolite, Eric Weil (1904–1977) deserves mention as another important social philosopher who was inspired by Hegel. He developed a political philosophy based on the paradox of the universal and totalitarian state, opposed to human struggle for self-realization in a concrete historical context.[83]

As suggested, Kojève gives us a general theory of recognition that can be used for different purposes in organizational analysis. One example is the ethical framing of human resource management (HRM) from the perspective of philosophy of recognition. With the theory of recognition we have a framework for cultivating human dignity in organizations. We can say that HRM should avoid focusing too much on workers as human capital and reify them as instruments for economic profit. HRM practices should include respect for human dignity and personal autonomy, and HRM systems should respect dignity by becoming socially integrative through recognition.[84]

2.9   Georges Bataille: Hegelianism and Economy of the Gift

Georges Bataille (1897–1962) is known for radicalizing Kojève's Hegelianism and combining it with elements from surrealism, psychoanalysis, and sociology of the gift, read from a Nietzchean perspective.[85] He worked as a librarian, but at night he lived the bohemian nightlife in Paris. Batalle is interesting for social philosophy and political economy because he contributes with a surrealistic and psychoanalytic reading of social philosophy from a Hegelian perspective. Among his early writings *L'histoire de l'oeil* (1928) caused a scandal because of its combination of eroticism, surrealism, and sadomasochism. It illustrates the philosophy of subjective transgression that characterizes Bataille's thought.

Bataille was a member of the surrealistic group Contre-Attaque. In 1936 he created, together with Michel Leiris (1901–1990), the legendary Collège de sociologie, which had as its aim to develop social philosophy, for example through a critical analysis of fascisme. This is demonstrated in Bataille's *La structure psychologique du fascism* (1934), which focuses on social affectivity and social crowds, and was the basis for his social philosophy in *La part maudite* (1949) and in *La souveraineté* (1956), where sociality and social organization are conceived on the basis of the concepts of generosity, work, and sovereignty.

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[82] Jean Hyppolite: *Génèse et structure de la phénoménologie de l'esprit,* 1946 and *Etudes sur Marx et Hegel*, 1955.

[83] Eric Weil: *Logique et philosophie* (1950), *Philosophie politique* (1956) and *Philosophie morale* (1961).

[84] Gazi Islam: Recognition, "Reification and Practices of Forgetting: Ethical Implications of Human Resource Management", *Journal of Business Ethics* (2012) 111: pp. 37–48, p. 37.

[85] Michael Richardson: *Georges Bataille*, Routledge, London 1995, p. 19ff.

Bataille's contribution to business ethics and the ethical economics is to develop a new framework of understanding economic exchange. He provides us with the concept of the general economy this is defined as an economy of all aspects of human life.[86] At the same time, this implies a criticism of neoclassical economics, based on Marx, Durkheim, and Mauss. According to Bataille, the economy should be understood as life, surplus, desire, and energy.[87] The general economy is, therefore, also an economy of surplus and of the generosity of the gift. With his concept of the economy as expenditure and energy, Bataille helps to analyze the current economic system.[88]

Bataille's main work about subjective experience, *L'expérience intérieure* (1943), develops a philosophy of self-transgression, sovereignty, and generosity, which is also the topic of *La litterature et le mal* (1957) and *L'erotisme* (1957). These later works contribute to subjective desire and self-transcendence as the basis for his social philosophy, which can be conceived as a kind of sexual materialism. Sexuality is conceived as the basis for human experience and for social organization in exchange and the community of work.

Bataille's theory of potlatch as social practice is developed in *La part maudite*. It opposes the heterogeneous logic of self-sacrifice found in gift exchange against the homogeneous close reproduction of the social world in work and production. In this sense, the fascist regime can be seen as a combination of heterogeneity and exaltation of affectivity with the homogeneous, capitalist production of utility, profits, and industrial work, regulated in a systemic geometric circulation.[89] The monopoly of state power maintains homogeneity in society and fights heterogeneity, which expresses itself as reason's other in social organization. Fascist society is a homogeneous heterogeneity, combining the affectivity and order[90] characterized by the dialectics of masters and slaves. This can be seen in the cases of Hitler and the Roman emperors who created divine cults around themselves in which they incarnated the idea of state rationality, kept together by ideological mythology.

Marxism inspired Bataille when he stated that the development of fascism was based on the wish of the bourgeoisie to gain profit and ensure the productivity of the economy. The capitalists wanted to avoid the destruction of industrial society by supporting a charismatic sadistic chief who would act as the basis of a strong state power that who would not change the property rights to the means of production. But the capitalists forgot that fascism was based on irrational violence and destruction, which also soon turned against the capitalists themselves as these

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[86] Asger Sørensen: "On a universal scale: Economy in Bataille's general economy", *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 38(2), pp. 169–197, p. 170.

[87] Ibid., p. 181.

[88] Mayfair Mei-hui Yang: "Putting Global Capitalism in Its Place: Economic Hybridity, Bataille, and Ritual Expenditure", *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (August/October 2000), pp. 477–509.

[89] Georges Bataille: "La structure psychologique du fascisme" in *Oeuvres complètes 1*, p. 339ff.

[90] Ibid., p. 358.

sadists sought total control over society. A similar process, echoing Bataille, was present in Stalinist communist society. As a political sovereign, Joseph Stalin (1879–1956) became the symbol of maintaining heterogeneous homogeneity in order to ensure production and accumulation, where work became the aim for human beings and where totalitarian sovereignty destroyed the workers search for subjective freedom and autonomy.

This consideration of sovereignty in totalitarian regimes reflects Bataille's general social philosophy. In *La part maudite,* Bataille investigates the relation between the limited and general economy, inspired by Mauss's description of the gift as a basic category that simultaneously expresses economic and symbolic exchange. Bataille analyzed consumption (*dépense*) as the absolute and most sovereign gift, and considered it the highest point of society. There is, thus, a close connection between the gift, expense, and the economic unity of society. At the same time, the religious, the holy, and the heterogeneous are hugely important for social creation and solidarity. The social cannot, therefore, solely be understood on the basis of an economic equivalence and utility logic. Even in the most utilitarian and homogeneous society we can perceive lack of usefulness, generosity, and victimization as, in reality, the basis for maintaining utility. The market economy and business world, with its tension between philanthropy and profit, can indeed be considered as an example of this dialectics of utility and generosity.

Bataille illustrates this connection between generosity and social formation with historical examples of primitive society. Even though there was no wealth accumulation, some of these societies committed apparently self-destructive and meaningless actions, such as sacrificials acts that expressed the sovereignty of expense (*dépense*). The heterogeneity of homogeneity in totalitarian regimes (e.g., fascism, Nazism, and communism) also expresses this complex relation between the useful and useless. Bataille mentions the Marshall Plan for Western Europe after the Second World War as an example of unmotivated generosity that demonstrated the economic superiority of the US.[91] Bataille's mythological, economic theory is in line with conceptions of expansive state consumption as the basis for developing social wealth put forward by John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946). In any case, sovereignty is manifested in the ability of individuals and societies to transgress economic necessity.

In this sense, the economy of the gift in Bataille's philosophy explains many phenomena of philanthropy of business. It also gives us the basis for a sexual materialistic approach to organizations and institutions, both private and public, and allows for analysis of organizations and organizational values from the perspective of tension between generosity and transgression, homogeneity and heterogeneity, and in terms of maintaining the sovereignty of masters in the battle between masters and slaves.

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[91] Georges Bataille: "La notion de dépense" in *Oeuvres complètes 1*.

Bataille's work has been criticized by Jürgen Habermas (f. 1929) in *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne* (1985) for representing a dangerous irrationalism.[92] In response, Bataille's thought shouldn't be viewed as an invitation to violence and the ecstatic transcendence of homogeneity in senseless heterogeneity, rather it is a statement about how social formations, institutions, and organizations are continually built on the tension between the forbidden, the holy, and the sacred, which constitutes foundational rules like interdiction of incest and property rights. Bataille's philosophy strongly influenced the structuralist and poststructuralist philosophy of Lévi-Strauss, Foucault, and Derrida. In particular, it is worth mentioning Réné Girard's (b. 1923) philosophy of religion in *La violence et le sacré*,[93] which develops the connection between sacrifice and utility in relation to modern societies.

Applied to the context of business ethics and philosophy of management we can say that Bataille's philosophy contains many fundamental concepts that can be used to analyze and understand essential features of the economic system as a tension between exchange and gift, homogeneity and heterogeneity, and excess and generosity versus exploitation and oppression, as well as concepts of sovereignty, recognition, and transgression that can be used to illuminate our understandings of the social foundations of the market economy.[94]

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[92] Jürgen Habermas: *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt 1986.

[93] René Girard: *La violence et le sacré*, Grasset, Paris 1972.

[94] Omid Nodoushani (1999): "A postmodern theory of general economy: The contribution of Georges Bataille", *Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies*, 5:2, pp. 331–345.

Chapter 3
Personalism and Existentialism: Their View on Business Ethics, Organizations, and Institutions

What can personalism and existentialism say about business ethics, organizations, and institutions? In fact, personalism, which is marked by a Catholic point of view combined with the patriotism of the French Republic, characterized many business people and traditional French directors of business from the First World War through the 1960s. The industrial bourgeoisie were marked by a social consciousness that was rooted in a Catholic personalism, where firms were conceived of as families. The head of the business was the natural paternalist leader and because the employees were considered as part of the family, the paternalist director had duties of social responsibility to take care of them. Indeed, the Catholic personalist and existentialist philosophies of Emmanuel Mounier (1905–1950) and Gabriel Marcel (1889–1973) relate to this tradition although they both make remarkable criticisms of traditional personalism in their social philosophies.

This criticism of the traditional bourgeois figure is further developed with the emergence of atheistic existentialist philosophy after the Second World War. Philosophers and novelists like Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Albert Camus radically questioned the bourgeoisie as a class in society. Not only did they challenge Catholic norms, values, and the paternalist tradition of hierarchical relations in firms, but they also criticized the meaning of work in society through their deeper questioning of the meaning of life and of human existence. The existentialists represent the rediscovery of human freedom and choice as the basis for the meaning of life.

They challenged the alienation of the worker in industrial firms, but they also challenged the self-understanding and perceived identities of all human beings in our roles as workers and in life in general. The existentialists were critical towards ideas of human progress and rationality represented by the engineers and military builders of the French Republic. With Sartre and Camus we see the existentialist interrogation of the bourgeois. Simone de Beauvoir penned an existentialist feminism that focused on the recognition of women in the family and society, leading to the modern situation of women entering the labor market under the same conditions as men.

The Belgian economist and philosopher Christian Arnsperger (b. 1966) made an effort to draw on the implications of these personalist and existentialist approaches in order to understand contemporary political economy and capitalism. His work will be considered as a current application of personalism and existentialism to contemporary capitalism.

3.1   Personalist Existentialism and Political Economy

The Pope Pius VI at the end of the eighteenth century argued for a return to Thomas Aquinas, which paved the way for Catholic personalism in business to find its basis in new Thomistic philosophy.[1] During the nineteenth century this approach became very important and later it influenced the beginning of the modern Thomism, which was very influential. In France, the movement was represented by Jacques Maritain (1882–1973) who was an important neo-Thomist philosopher. He held an important role as French ambassador to the Catholic Church from 1945 to 1948 and was extremely influential in the formulation of the international human rights declaration.[2] Maritain continued the work on classical ontology from Plato (424/423–348/347 BC) and Aristotle (384–322 BC) and his Thomistic social philosophy became the foundation for a critical personalism emphasizing that respect for human dignity must precede the interests of the state or other social or economic institutions; therefore, did not think there was a contradiction between Thomistic social teaching and the personal rights of the individual. Maritain represented a modern progressive Catholicism that affirmed the friendly paternalistic responsibility of the head of the business organization as a fundamental value.

An important new philosophy at the time between the two world wars was Gabriel Marcel's Christian existentialism, which stated that philosophy should move towards the concrete.[3] Marcel came from a rich bourgeois family, but he became a writer and intellectual. Human concrete and metaphysical experience of life should be at the center of philosophy.[4] Like Jean Nabert (1881–1960), who investigated the inner human experience of freedom, Marcel considered reflection as a possible mode for conceiving one's own existence. Marcel continued the philosophy of Maurice Blondel, who approached thought as an effort to understand human existence in action and perception.[5] In *Journal métaphysique* (1927) Marcel proposes a philosophy of the ontological mystery. *Être et avoir* (1935) and *Du refus à l'invocation* (1940) develop an existentialist philosophy,

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[1] Frderick Copleston, S.J.: Volume IX. *Modern Philosophy. From the French Revolution to Sartre, Camus and Lévi-Strauss*, Image Books, New York (1974), 1993, p. 250ff.

[2] Ibid., p. 254ff.

[3] Jean Wahl: *Vers le concret: études d'histoire de la philosophie contemporaine*. – Paris, 1932.

[4] J. Lacroix: *Panorama de la philosophie française contemporaine*, PUF, Paris 1968, p. 9.

[5] Ibid., p. 15.

inspired by Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855). Marcel's point of departure is the concrete human being who investigates 'being' and 'having' in relation to other human beings. My incarnation in my body, my history, and my relation to other human beings are essential.[6]

Marcel's existential philosophy places the belief in the Christian God and a higher meaning of life in the center of the understanding of the determination of existence. Faith, hope, and love are essential elements of the mystery of Christianity. The reality of the divine opens the human capacity for courage and gives hope to the despairing, tragic existence. There is continuity between the personal and the transcendent, between the empirical and absolute self, and between communication and the mystery of faith.[7] God gives the appeal to human freedom as a gift, which is the basis for hope and for the love of self and other. In this concrete philosophy of existence, love becomes the basic principle and the essential ontological givenness that reflection can reach through faith, hope, and love is the meaning of life. This is manifested in the mystery of the Christian trinity, which expresses the presence of the soul in God as one's highest aspect.

Even though Marcel's social philosophy is not really fully developed, this turn to the concrete requires that business and the economy operate with full respect for the dignity and integrity of the human person. Marcel's philosophy lays a foundation of existential values as the basis for a good employment relation between manager and employee.

As a conceptual foundation for philosophy, the concept of the person as the image of God (*imago dei*) is relevant for management today.[8] Maritain's personalism centralizes the importance of the human person as the foundation of management, arguably providing the concept of the wise manager who is concerned for the wholeness of the persons he or she manages as human beings. This stands in contrast to technical and economic reductionism in management. Here, it is not only economic self-interest, but more fundamentally concern for the dignity of the other and life together in community, that is behind all human political and economic activities. This personalist approach has, indeed, a religiously Catholic spiritual dimension.[9]

The socially engaged intellectual Emmanuel Mounier gave this Catholicism a social and political dimension. He defined his personalism as a defense of realization and the flourishing of the human person. His philosophy can be seen as connected with a growing interest in ethics and value-philosophy that is concerned with the metaphysical foundations of values, following the spiritual

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[6] Gabriel Marcel: "L'Etre incarné comme repère central de la reflexion métaphysique, in Gabriel Marcel: *Du refus à l'invocation*, Gallimard 1940.

[7] Paul Ricœur: *Gabriel Marcel et Karl Jaspers, Philosophie de mystére et philosophie de paradoxe*, Le temps présent, Paris 1948, p. 301ff.

[8] Helen Alford: "The practical wisdom of Personalism", *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 29 No. 7/8, 2010, pp. 697–705.

[9] Gilbert Lenssen: "Practical wisdom for turbulent times: exegesis beyond historical and canonical concerns", *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 29, No. 7/8, 2010, pp. 686–696.

Kantianism of Charles Bernard Renouvier (1815–1903). Mounier wanted to develop a philosophy of the human person based on one of Renouvier's last books, *Le personnalisme* (1903).

Mounier studied philosophy from 1924 to 1927 in Grenoble and then travelled to Paris to take the competitive exam (*agrégation*) for being allowed to become a professor at the Sorbonne, where he placed second after Aron. From 1933 to 1939 he taught at the Lycée français in Brussels, but soon became a public intellectual, especially known as the founder of the famous journal *Esprit* in 1932, which became a bastion of his humanistic social philosophy. In *Esprit,* Mounier argued for a personalist and communitarian revolution that should confront the established disorder.[10] His personalist socialism—inspired by, among others, Pierre Joseph Proudon (1809–1865)—was important in socialist politics in the 1930s, not least in relation to Léon Blum's alliance of left-wing movements, the Popular Front. During the War, Mounier was critical of the Vichy regime and his journal was closed and he died early in 1950 after overwork, which led to two heart attacks.

Mounier wanted to unite socialism and Christianity by forming a politics that could respect the individual and community at the same time. In his masterpiece, *Traité du caractère* (1946), Mounier summarizes this philosophy of the human person.[11] Personalism is a philosophy of engagement that opens up towards the other human person in a critical dialogue and searches for common realization in a society of citizens. In this sense, Mounier wanted to protect creative freedom and reinvent the Renaissance in order to re-establish action as political and social engagement.[12] Mounier's personalism is first of all an action philosophy that argues for freedom, justice, and democracy. A person is a free and bodily incarnated, but spiritual, being that is not determined by biology or materiality. In contrast to some existentialists, Mounier does not see the person as separated from human community.[13] What is central in personalism is the communication between human beings and human community. Personalism seeks to respect each human being by creating a political and social community, where persons can engage in mutual friendship and love for each other.[14]

Mounier's personalism also represents the hopeful realization of the ethical ideals of Christianity. Inspired by Bergson's ideas of the relation between mechanics and mystics, Mounier argued that technical progress is not necessarily evil. History is ambiguous and determined by our actions. It is an idea that represents Mounier's so-called tragic optimism, which was inspired by the melancholic optimism of socialist Jean Jaurès (1859–1914) regarding the possibility of improving the world. History is characterized by a close connection between personalization and socialization. Progress is connected to protecting human rights, such as

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[10] Emmanuel Mounier: *Revolution personnaliste et communautaire*, Paris 1935.

[11] Emmanuel Mounier: *Traité du caractère*, Editions du Seuil, Paris 1946.

[12] Emmanuel Mounier: "Refaire la renaissance", *Esprit*, 1932.

[13] Emmanuel Mounier: *Introduction aux existentialismes*, Paris 1947.

[14] Emmanuel Mounier: *Révolution personnaliste et communautaire*, Paris 1935.

human autonomy, dignity, and integrity, and political freedoms, like the liberation of former French colonies around the world.

Mounier was skeptical towards the many paradoxes present in models of society during his time. Personalism contains a criticism both of the liberal and communist social systems. Liberal society is based on consumption, where the economy is a closed system that follows its own conditions. The primacy of production oppresses human beings and workers, and it should be the economy that serves human beings instead of serving a society of production.[15] Mounier conceived capitalism as an inhuman system that leads to alienation and loss of freedom. Here, the rich people systematically become richer while the poor become poorer, and none of them become free.

Mounier took and ironic stance towards bourgeois society, which is based on a mentality of consumption and where money is the one value. Here, the motto is "I buy, therefore I am." By all means, Mouniers criticized the bourgeoisie for being overly determined by material values. The bourgeois citizen has no love, belief, or passion, but is only determined by the desire to possess, to make money, and gain reputation. Mounier argued instead for collective distribution of the goods in opposition to private property rights. He emphasized that workers and artists are the leaders in a society based on a real economic and political community.

He wanted us to imagine a personalist revolution in society that puts concern for the human person the highest value. This presupposes radical changes in society's structures and replacing the culture of consumption with spiritual values. Mounier was, to a certain extent, in favor of personal property rights, even though he principally favored collective ownership over the means of production. Instead of anonymous structures of decision-making, Mounier argued that employees should have more responsibility for and influence over their work.

Mounier conceived of an organized corporation based on personalism, that is, mutual responsibility and collaboration. He wanted to make society more human and dissolve the opposition between individual and community by creating more opportunities for the individual to have his or her say in community. Instead of only being focused on profits, companies and social institutions should be concerned with concrete human needs. At the same time, common ownership of the means of production would signify that the worker was to be treated with dignity and given responsibility instead of just being an element in an anonymous machine.[16]

Mounier's personalist civilization and cultivation of society was intended to generate unconditional respect for the rights of human self-expression and self-realization. Mounier understood very well the need to respect human dignity and infinite value as an alternative to both communist and liberal political systems, both of which had forgotten the concern for humanity. Personalism wanted to change human beings and realize the necessity of common engagement in order to strengthen democracy with human beings at the center of everything.

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[15] Emmanuel Mounier: "Propriété capitaliste à la propriété humaine", Esprit, Avril 1934.

[16] Ibid.

As mentioned above, Mounier's philosophy—among others mediated by Jacques Maritain—informed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, but it also had great significance for the development of French and Italian societies as a foundational political ideology. Because of the Mounier's early death, and due to the growing importance of existentialism in French intellectual life, personalism was less in fashion as a philosophical movement after the Second World War.

The personalist approach is a useful corrective to liberal individualism. From this perspective, business is not only aimed at increasing individual wealth but is ultimately oriented towards the greater good of the whole of community.[17] It sees the practical wisdom of the manager as a contribution to the good of humanity, with an ultimate spiritual and ethical aim of fostering a good community of respect for the dignity of all human beings. From this perspective, corporate social responsibility not only aims to strategically legitimize the firm, but rather it reflects this general need to engage with community, which is an integrated part of good business.

3.2 Existentialism: Jean-Paul Sartre's Freedom and Contingency

The emergence of existentialism can be explained as a reaction to the chaotic situation in Europe around 1945, but it was also a general philosophy of life responding to the condition of modern human being. Sartre and de Beauvoir were the most famous of the existentialist who lived in the jazz clubs and cafés along the Rive Gauche in Paris. Belief in human freedom, choice, responsibility, and the possibility of confronting life without illusions was popular after the Second World War. The philosophy of the existentialists represented a critical reaction to the established university philosophy, but also to surrealism and psychoanalysis, which were very popular at the time. Existentialism was a criticism of the bourgeois lifestyle and self-understanding, and dominant working life structures at the time.

Sartre has been called *the* philosopher of the twentieth century[18] and also the last classical philosopher.[19] He developed a totalizing concept of existence and the meaning of life that was also related to the events of the twentieth century. His philosophy relates to the problem of humanism. He put human freedom and consciousness in the center of his philosophy at the same time as he refused the idea of a human nature. As human beings, we are not predetermined, but free to choose and to create ourselves. Due to his manifold abilities, Sartre was an important influence on the literary, philosophical, and political movements of his

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[17] Helen Alford: "The practical wisdom of Personalism", *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 29 No. 7/8, 2010, pp. 697–705.

[18] Bernard Henri Lévy: *Sartre: Le Siècle de Sartre*, Grasset, Paris 2000.

[19] Alain Renaut: *Sartre: Le dernier philosophe*, Grasset, Paris 1993.

time. He was the driving force in liberating philosophy from the university and creating the intellectual as a person with a broad appeal and influence on society.

Sartre's existentialist philosophy is relevant to a variety of important business and management questions: What is personal responsibility in management? How do we think of authenticity in leadership and work? What is true self-management and choice of life in the workplace? How do we conceive of business life as an authentic existence? What is the ethical place of decision-making and choice in organizations? What are relevant concepts of the self and the meaning of life in relation to particular management practices? How do we think of bad faith and self-deception in relation to management? How can we use the existentialist method of phenomenological ontology to approach problems within business, organization, and marketing?[20]

In his autobiography, *Les mots* (1964), Sartre describes his life a part of the bourgeois world in the beginning of the twentieth century. His father died when he was very young and he was raised by his mother and his grandparents, in particular his grandfather who educated him in literature, history, and philosophy. He describes childhood as a kind of dream world where the encounter with the fantasy universe of the book broke the triviality of everyday life.[21] Furthermore, this is a platonic world of ideas where the ideal reality in dream and art becomes the real world of meaning. For Sartre, the creative arts and philosophy are an expression of human freedom and the capacity to endow the world with meaning.

This idealism continued to characterize Sartre's throught. He maintained, without compromise, the importance of maintaining absolute human consciousness, the freedom to create oneself, and the endless desire to achieve what is eternal and immortal. But Sartre's philosophy has also an understanding for the paradoxical and tragic in human existence. Since the ideal of the infinite and eternal, or creating oneself, is unachievable, human existence becomes a futile passion.[22] Sartre's thought is marked by an ironic, satirical feature of critically and heroically exposing the false self-understanding of the bourgeoisie by showing the real conditions of existence: the absolute freedom that human beings in anxiety and self-deception do not want to face.

Sartre was a pupil at École normale supérieure from 1924 to 1929, at the same time as he studied at the Sorbonne. After his studies he spent 1 year in Berlin in 1933 where he discovered the German phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger, which he integrated with the philosophy of Kierkegaard and Bergson to form his new existentialism.[23]

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[20] Janet L. Borgersen & Jonathan E. Schroeder: Ethical Issues of Global Marketing: "Avoiding Bad Faith in Visual Representation", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol 36, No. 5/6, 2002, pp. 570–594.

[21] Jean-Paul Sartre: *Les mots*, Gallimard, Paris 1964.

[22] Jean-Paul Sartre: *L'Être et le Néant*, Gallimard, Paris 1943.

[23] Alain Renaut: Sartre: *Le dernier philosophe*, Grasset, Paris 1993, p. 30ff.

Simone de Beauvoir describes in her autobiographical novel *La force de l'âge* (1960) how Sartre discovered phenomenology.[24] Together they had a rendez-vous at a café at Montparnasse with Aron, who from 1931 to 1933 had being studying in Berlin. Aron told Sartre about Husserl's and Heidegger's phenomenology and Sartre became very tense because it was exactly the kind of concrete philosophy that he had been searching for. He went to Berlin to study phenomenology and accordingly he explored the concept of intentionality from the perspective of Husserl's idea of "to the things themselves" (*Zu den Sachen selbst*). On this basis he developed the existentialist idea of the transcendence of the ego and of human subjectivity as negativity and freedom.

In his description of human subjectivity in *L'essai sur la transcendance de l'ego* (1937) Sartre defines consciousness as immediate spontaneous self-transcendence, a prereflective act and reflective self-consciousness that relates to this revelation of being. This prereflective cogito is an impersonal spontaneity and transcendental field that precedes the psychic 'I', ego, and self in the world. Meaning does not emerge as something unconscious deep in consciousness, but through the intentional encounter of self-consciousness with the world that constitutes an impersonal field of revelation.[25]

In connection with this theory of consciousness, Sartre developed the basic themes of existentialism. It was in particular the problems of the meaningless and contingency of the world and human self-deception and loneliness were at the center of his famous first novel, *La nausée* (1938).[26] Nausea is a bodily disgust that expresses a basic existential mood. When I have nausea I meet the contingency and meaninglessness of the world, because the system of meaning breaks down and I feel the contingency of being. In *La nausée*, this is illustrated by the main character of the novel, Roquentin, who goes through an existential crisis where nausea constantly arises leaving him with a profound feeling of meaninglessness of the world, being, and his own and other people's bodies.[27] Roquentin experiences the true conditions of human existence where there is no connection between things and meaning, where the world and its things are contingent.[28] In his existential crisis Roquentin comes to understand the absurdity of existence that comes from the incompatibility of consciousness and world and from the fact that consciousness is not at home in the world. Roquentin finds only relief when he sits on a café and listens to a jazz melody because he can imagine that the singer and the band are engaged in creative freedom, and through the music give meaning to the world.[29]

After a short stint in the army during the war, Sartre returned to Paris and from 1941 to 1943 wrote his philosophical masterpiece, *L' être et le néant: Essai*

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[24] Ibid., p. 125, Simone de Beauvoir: *La force de l'âge*, Gallimard, Paris 1960.

[25] Jean-Paul Sartre: *Essai sur la transcendance de l'ego*, Gallimard, Paris 1937.

[26] Jean-Paul Sartre: *La nausée*, Gallimard, Paris 1938.

[27] Ibid., p. 16.

[28] Ibid., p. 181ff.

[29] Ibid., p. 247.

d'ontologie phénoménologique (1943) inspired by Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger. This work is an analysis of human existence from the point of views of phenomenology that describes the essential structures of consciousness as transcendence and spontaneous revelation. Sartre emphasizes that existence precedes essence.[30]

Consciousness is defined as intentionality and negativity. Consciousness gives meaning to the world by negating it: Nothing haunts being ("Le néant hante l'être").[31] Human reality is characterized by relating to life by endowing it with meaning. Meaning comes from human reality and nature. The world and its objects have no meaning in themselves, but can only have meaning from the perspective of human life projects, and the human search for meaning in work, art, and action.

Sartre illustrates this connection between negativity and human creation of meaning with a famous example. I have a rendez-vous with my friend Pierre at a café.[32] I go to the café, but Pierre is not there. Now I start to look for Pierre, but still cannot find him. I look around in the café, which has become the café where Pierre is not present. It is Sartre's point that the café receives its meaning from the absence of Pierre. Consciousness is defined as an impersonal field of lack in being, a nothingness in the middle of the ontological positivity. This means that negativity creates meaning and difference between being and nothingness. It is the negativity and capacity of differentiation of consciousness that creates difference and nothingness, and in this way creates meaning in the world.

Sartre connects negativity, consciousness, and freedom. Consciousness is defined as being-for-itself (*l'être-pour-soi*), which is in opposition to being-in-itself (*l'être-en-soi*). Being-for-itself exists as a prereflexive consciousness that is self-transparent and immediate. As being-for-itself, consciousness is an intentional, self-transcendent relation that is confronted with the material reality, being-in-itself. The description of consciousness as negativity and prereflexive transcendence is Sartre's heritage from a philosophy of consciousness that is also destroyed because of the description of consciousness as negation, absence, and nonidentity.

As a form of freedom and an impersonal intentional field, consciousness relates to itself as being and creates the concrete psychic 'I' in the world, with its history, social status, and other essences. According to Sartre, freedom is a radical choice in a situation. To be free means to be able to choose how one will relate to oneself and the world. Sartre illustrates this in his short story *Le mur* (1939), which is about a group condemned to death who each have to choose their relation to their possible death.[33] Some cry and express despair, others are silent and decisive, and others search for possibilities to escape. According to Sartre, this shows how we are free to choose how we will live. Human beings are either free or not; there is

[30] Jean-Paul Sartre: *L'Être et le Néant*, Gallimard, Paris 1943, p. 61.

[31] Ibid., p. 52ff.

[32] Ibid., p. 82.

[33] Jean-Paul Sartre: *Le Mur*, Gallimard, Paris 1939.

nothing in between. We are forced to be free.[34] Human beings are placed as "a worm" (*un ver*) in the middle of being, as nothingness surrounded by massive being-in-itself.[35]

One has to imagine human freedom surrounded by a world of endless emptiness that one desperately tries to give meaning, but that remains without it. Being-in-itself is contingent and always too much. The world is absurd, except for the meaning that human reality gives to it. Being in-itself absorbs human reality in indivisible positivity and this is in sharp contrast to the nothingness of freedom.

Sartre says that human beings as being-for-itself is a desire to be immortal and almighty. The negating freedom searches for presence and to be identical with itself. There is an inharmonious relation between human freedom as desire and lack, and the effort to find meaning in the world.[36] Human reality strives to be identical with itself (as God), in other words to transcend the opposition between for-itself and in-itself and to be the condition for its own existence, thereby overcoming the contingency of existence. But the desire is, according to Sartre, impossible and unhappy. It is tragic that we strive for presence and identity, which can never be accomplished because of the fundamental opposition between being-for-itself and being-in-itself. To be authentically present for oneself can never be realized and the fundamental condition of human existence in the world is absence. Sartre expresses this by saying that humanity is a "futile passion" (*une passion inutile*).[37]

This is emphasized by the fact that human beings must always be in conflict with one another. In addition to being-for-itself and being-in-itself, being-for-the-Other is a third ontological category of being in the world. Sartre emphasizes that the Other is outside my realm. One meets the Other, but one does not constitute the Other.[38] Sartre describes being for the Other negatively through phenomena such as shame, guilt, and pride.[39] Through the encounter with the Other, I experience the limits of my own existence as being-for-itself and I experience how the Other sets limits to my freedom.

Indeed, it is the gaze of the Other that makes me aware of my bodily existence embedded in a situation, that I am only being-for-itself. When we meet the gaze of the Other we feel shame and run away as soldiers who flee from the enemy. The gaze of the Other makes me an instrument that is dependent on his or her being.[40] The other human being makes me feel like being-in-itself, like an objectified thing that is a part of facticity. This makes me aware of my being in a situation where my freedom and existential choices are determined by a world of things and actions of other human beings.

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[34] Jean-Paul Sartre: *L'Être et le Néant*, Gallimard, Paris 1943, p. 591.

[35] Ibid., p. 57.

[36] Ibid., p. 129.

[37] Ibid., p. 708.

[38] Ibid., p. 307.

[39] Ibid., p. 276.

[40] Ibid., p. 326.

Accordingly, human beings live in a paradoxical relation between situation as possibility and limit, necessity and contingency, because we relate freely to the situation.[41] Existential choices happen in situations according to projects and values around which human reality is oriented. The concrete self is constituted by its projects and engagement in life. Identity is a result of the choices made in reference to projects and values in life. According to Sartre, human personality and character are based on an original free choice that is the basis for all other choices in life. The original choice makes a unit of motives, actions, values, and goals.[42] Fundamental units of emotions, values, and worldviews are conditioned by the original choice.[43] Sartre argues that personality is created in the tensions between freedom, situations, and original choice as an expression of the existing in the middle of the world of human beings. On this basis, Sartre developed existential psychoanalysis in order to understand original choice by concrete individuals.[44]

This determination of freedom as a project and engagement in a situation means that human beings are nothing but "what they do for themselves." We ourselves are responsible for how we live and who we are through our existential choices and projects in life. Although in *L'être et le néant* Sartre is critical of happy relations between human beings, in *L'existentialisme est un humanisme* (1946), he argues that freedom means absolute responsibility and that free human beings engage themselves for the whole of humanity.[45]

This was an attempt to reject those critics who argued that existentialism would lead to subjectivism and relativism. On the contrary, Sartre argued that freedom means every human being is fully responsible for his or her choice of form of life and existence.[46] Even if God is dead it still matters what we do. The existential choice becomes even more important because it sets a norm of freedom for all human beings. Sartre tried to formulate existentialism as humanism, implying that the authentic choice means respect the freedom of the Other.[47] I cannot choose my own freedom without also having to take care of the freedom of the Other. The authentic choice implies a struggle for freedom and engagement for the freedom of the Other.

This struggle for freedom is in tension with the description of the tragic conditions of human existence in *L'être et le néant* where the subject searches to realize itself as being-for-itself even though it is ontologically impossible. This paradox has led to the characterization of Sartre's philosophy as the "ontology of bad faith" where unhappy and tragic existence is a generalized condition of life. Bad faith means self-deception, insincerity, and inauthenticity[48] and consists of not wanting

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[41] Ibid., p. 567.

[42] Ibid., p. 512.

[43] Ibid., p. 531.

[44] Ibid., p. 720.

[45] Jean Paul Sartre: *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme*, Nagel, Paris 1946, p. 26.

[46] Ibid., p. 36.

[47] Ibid., p. 84.

[48] Jean-Paul Sartre: *L'Être et le Néant*, Gallimard, Paris 1943, p. 82.

to realize that if one is free one is nothing and never can be the same as a concrete self in the world. A human being is characterized by "being what it is not, and not to be what it is." The assertion "existence precedes essence" means that freedom precedes the objective being and personal characteristics. But this implies that human beings can never escape from bad faith and that we will always live lives of self-deception and nonidentity.

When one thinks that one is in good faith one is really in bad faith because it is impossible to escape the conditions of freedom. Sartre gives many examples of human beings that flee from freedom, among others the famous analysis of a waiter at a café in *L'être et le néant*. At work this man plays his role as waiter. By making himself into a waiter he is in bad faith because in reality he is not a waiter, but freedom and nothingness, which relates to him as being in the world. In this sense he is always, as suggested by the poet Paul Valéry (1871–1945), characterized by the "divine absence of human beings."

However, instead of falling into a mood of tragic acceptance of self-deception Sartre suggest that human beings should engage in life and play their roles authentically according to their choices. Existentialism becomes a philosophy of play where human beings loose themselves in their existential engagement for the meaning of life. The aim is to create a beautiful life, as the creative artist who gives his life meaning through the creation of an immortal world. This is a good illustration of Sartre's idea of "one is what one makes out of oneself," in other words, that one is personally responsible for creating oneself and living up to the aims that one has chosen.

Sartre's conception of the free and authentic choice implies the revolt of free human beings against despair, but existentialism refuses the existence of God. One is captured by self-deception if one searches for meaning in the existence of God. Sartre was a convinced atheist and throught that the concept of God is self-deceptive because one cannot be eternally existent and an absolute necessity, and at the same time be one's own cause and create oneself out of nothingness.

Indeed, many of the themes in *L'être et le néant* reflect the difficulties of finding meaning for modern people. This is reflected in Sartre's descriptions of contingency, meaninglessness, and the human being as battle and conflict, where one mutually tries to destroy the Other. This is also manifest in the fact that Sartre's world is of the city. All of his examples revolve around cafés, cigarettes, waiters, and problematic love affairs. Indeed, one of the myths about Sartre's philosophy is that most of his writings on existentialism were written at the *Café de Flore* and *Les Deux Magots* in Saint-Germain des Prés, in the center of Paris.

After the Second World War, existentialism became fashionable in France and most of Europe. *L'existentialisme est un humanisme* contributed to the popularization of Sartre's philosophy as a response to the identity problems of modern humanity. Sartre said that human beings have never been as free as during the war.[49] The paradox was that the emergency conditions of war make it difficult to

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[49] Bernard Henry Lévy: Bernard Henri Lévy: *Sartre: Le Siècle de Sartre*, Grasset, Paris 2000.

continue staying in bad faith. People had, therefore, to face life and choose between good and evil in a concrete situation. Sartre published many theater plays and novels, and he travelled globally (to the US in 1945–1946), which contributed to making existentialism world famous.

One of Sartre's famous plays from 1943, *Huis clos,* describes the relations between human beings, being-for-the-Other, that Sartre analyzed in *L'être et le néant.* Here, being-for-the-Other is described from the perspective of the destructive gaze that objectifies the Other. *Huis clos* is about three people, two women and one man who live in a strange hotel searching for mutual recognition and harmony. The man tries to love one woman and the woman searches to love the other woman, but they do not succeed because there is always somebody to stir up resentment or to ridicule. In reality they are in hell and the mutual objectification will continue forever. The play ends with the famous words: "L'enfer c'est les autres."[50]

Sartre was a strong public intellectual of his times with presence in philosophy, literature, and theater. Together with Simone de Beauvoir and Merleau-Ponty, he established the review *Les Temps Modernes* (1945), which became the premiere journal of engaged political and Marxist existentialism. In the immediate aftermath of the war, Sartre worked on the ethical implications of existentialism as a philosophy that affirms existence. He had considered *L'être et le néant* as an ontology of human reality, but he did not envision this ontological description of human existence—with its very tragic description of existence—as exclusive of ethics. In fact, Sartre announces in two very much-debated footnotes the possibility of a moral conversion, and he states that in later works he will define an ethics of the basis of the ontology.[51]

However, given the tragic ontology, the idea of ethics was for Sartre also a gigantic turning point, where moral conversion requires a totally new relation between human beings and the world. The question is whether the notions of negativity and self-transcendence of consciousness, and the conception of the relation between human beings as struggle and conflict, can function as a foundation for ethics. Such an ethics would have to overcome meaninglessness and contribute to affirmation of the world, existence, and the recognition of the liberty of other human beings.

In *Cahiers pour une morale* (1947–1948: published posthumously 1983) Sartre struggles with these problems. It was characteristic of his doubts about the possibility of ethics that this moral philosophy was never published and that Sartre instead became more and engaged in Marxist and social philosophical problems that culminated with the work *Critique de la raison dialectique* (1960). In *Cahiers pour une morale,* Sartre investigates the implications of a true and authentic life and relation to other human beings. One who reflects authentically (*reflexion purifiante*), that is, who sustains interest in the conditions of authenticity and true

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[50] Jean-Paul Sartre: *Huis clos,* Gallimard, Paris 1943.

[51] Jean-Paul Sartre: *L'Être et le Néant,* Gallimard, Paris 1943, p. 111 and p. 484.

life, realizes that the description of human negation of the world as pure negativity is only one aspect of the ambiguous conditions of human existence.[52]

The point is that the negation of reality cannot escape a confirmation and affirmation of the world. When human beings create themselves and the world they encounter new dimensions of being and therefore create new meaning in life. With inspiration from Antoine de Saint Exupéry's conception of life as continuous adventure, as when a pilot flies through the sky and under the stars towards new horizons, Sartre states that negativity not only reveals meaninglessness, but it also involves a new process of creation where consciousness makes discovery in being, and new dimensions and conditions of meaning for freedom are revealed. This affirmation of existence presupposes that one must learn to see life and the world as a work of art that emerges in freedom.[53] It is the ability to see new dimensions in being, to create new meaning in the world, and in the context of signification, that constitutes the fascinating adventure that human freedom really is.

This leads to a radical re-evaluation of the relation between human beings that no longer should be understood as negation, objectification, battle, and conflict. In *Cahiers pour une morale*, Sartre analyzes respect and recognition as different ways to relate to one another in mutual freedom. He investigates the ethical dilemmas of violence, prayer, imperative demand, and so forth. Sartre argues that the relationship of the appeal for help and help given particularly makes an ethical relation possible. Here, ethics is defined as mutual giving and receiving between free human beings. According to Sartre, generosity in the relation is the most important element. Ethics should be based on free and generous gifts between human beings where one gives oneself and the world to the Other without expectation of return.[54]

Sartre illustrates this relation with a concrete example. A man stands on the back step on a bus in Paris.[55] The bus has stopped at a bus stop and now it is ready to go. A man comes running after the bus and appeals with his hand to get on the bus. Spontaneously, the man on the bus gives his hand to the man as a response to the appeal. This happens without any prejudgment and only from the desire to help another free human being fulfill his project of getting on the bus. Sartre considers this situation-determined relation as an expression of an authentic relation of mutuality between human beings where freedom involves lack of presupposition and expectation of anything in return.

This example shows that existentialist ethics is a radical ethics based on mutual gift relations, where the gift is not reduced to economic exchange, but leads to recognition of the Other as a condition of freedom. Without this condition, one's freedom is destroyed. Ethics consists, according to Sartre, in the promotion of the freedom of the other human being and contributing to the creation of their freedom by supporting the Other's project on his or her own premises. This can be compared

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[52] Jean-Paul Sartre: *Cahiers pour une morale*, Gallimard, Paris 1983, p. 12ff.

[53] Ibid., p. 499ff.

[54] Ibid., p. 515.

[55] Ibid., p. 293ff.

with the effort to understand and live in a work of art. One helps the human being to become themselves, realize his or her projects, and live according to their values.

A basic value in existentialist ethics is therefore generosity, an ability to give meaning to the world and to the other human being. In this connection the individual also tries to recognize the other as freedom and subjectivity. Even though the singular human being has another project and another meaning in life, one should try to recognize the other human being as a work of art that one understands without judgement. Generosity is the well-known capacity to have surplus, and to give meaning to the world and other peoples' lives without expecting anything in return. According to Sartre, generosity fundamentally expresses a confirmation of existence.

It is, however, a question whether this ideal of ethics in a situation of mutual respect for freedom can harmonize with Sartre's ontology regarding fundamental human conditions of objectification, struggle, and conflict. After all, Sartre became aware of the impossible status of ethics in relation to his ontology. At the same time, he became aware that the conditions for mutual freedom and generosity depend on social and political relations that should have been investigated from the perspective of Marxism and social philosophy of history. This was the reason why Sartre never published *Cahiers pour une morale* and instead started a number of social philosophical discussions, which has led many observers to interpret his conversion not as a moral turn but as a conversion from existentialism to Marxism.

A book that illustrates the tension between existentialism, ethics, and social philosophy in Sartre's existential psychoanalysis is *Saint Genet: comédien et martyr* (1952), his study of the French writer and poet, Jean Genet (1910–1986). In this work, Sartre uses his conceptions of moral philosophy (i.e., freedom, authenticity, being-for-the-Other, recognition, generosity, and solidarity) in order to understand Genet's existential comedy between negation and loss, confirmation and creation.[56]

Sartre analyzes Genet's life and existential choices. Genet is considered as someone who accomplished a consequently amoral project by choosing the categorical imperative of evil. In other words, he rejected the "essence" ascribed to him by society, which consists of those who see themselves as "the just and serious," and who identify with the laws and rules of society. Genet consistently chose to identify with the Other of society—the thief, homosexual, and prostitute—in order to be his own master through negativity.[57] However, Genet quickly discovered that it is difficult to choose an absolute imperative of evil, because in concrete situations good and evil turns around and it is impossible to be absolutely evil.

Genet moved, therefore, from action to aesthetics and tried to reach evil though the imaginary, and to challenge the established bourgeois values of justice and seriousness. Art becomes a way to show the evils to the Other in society. Accordingly, Genet's art becomes an appeal to generosity and freedom. Sartre argued that

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[56] Jean-Paul Sartre: *Saint-Genet. Comédien et martyre*, Gallimard, Paris 1952, p. 177.

[57] Ibid., p. 75.

it is impossible to live according to evil as an absolute value, because good and evil are in tension with each and may turn into one another according to time and place. The one who relates to the Other, radical evil, suddenly represents good in a critique of those who define evil. The ethical confirmation of the other person becomes a paradoxical consequence of the negation of all social norms. In this way, the book about Genet represents an appeal to criticism, solidarity, tolerance, and generous affirmation. Sartre argues that Genet becomes a generous and helpful human being in his attempt to liberate himself to freedom through art: "Who looses, wins" (*Qui perd, gagne*).[58]

Accordingly, these considerations show how Sartre broke with his early existentialism during the 1950s. He gave up his attempt to develop an ethics and moved away from phenomenological ontology towards social philosophy. This was connected with his political and social engagement that started already in 1946 when he wrote the article, "Materialisme et revolution." Sartre always engaged in the battle for the weakest in the contemporary social and political debates. He defended the French communist party and fought for the freedom of the oppressed. This culminated with his second major masterpiece, *Critique de la raison dialectique*, which is a complete departure from *L'être et le néant*. Sartre considered Marxism to be the indispensible philosophy of our times (*la philosophie indépassable de notre temps*) and he thought that one had to liberate oneself from social determinations, institutions, and hierarchies in order to really be free.[59]

Sartre had such immense influence on modern French philosophy that everyone (existentialists, Marxists, structuralists) saw it as their duty to distance themselves from him. Ricœur criticized his pessimistic philosophy. The communists considered him as bourgeois and Lévi-Strauss totally refused his conception of freedom.[60] Among poststructuralists, one also finds the desire to go beyond Sartre. In *Les mots et les choses* (1966), Foucault polemically argues against Sartre's idea that human beings as free subjects are an "historical configuration." Derrida announced in 1968 that the "subject," in Sartre's terms, was already totally dead. However, taking a closer look one can also see Sartre's influence on poststructuralism, for example in Foucault's concept of the gaze in *La naissance de la clinique* (1963). Moreover, the concept of difference and the ontology of difference in Derrida's and Deleuze's thought would not be possible without the influence of Sartre's ontology.

Accordingly, if we want to give some indications of the possible applications of Sartre's existentialist philosophy in relation to business ethics, organizations, and the general economy of society we could start by emphasizing the fundamental question of the meaning of individual lives in relation to the role that individuals play in their jobs in organizations and institutions. There is the general question of how capitalism and modern economic systems operate in bad faith to promote advertising and sell products in the economic system. In fact, the existential concept

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[58] Ibid., p. 175.

[59] Jean-Paul Sartre: *Critique de la raison dialectique*, Gallimard, Paris 1960.

[60] Claude Lévi-Strauss: *Anthropologie structurale*, Gallimard, Paris 1958.

of desire as infinite corresponds very well to some mechanisms used in marketing and publicity, which aim to sell products knowing fully that they will never satisfy the endless desires of consumers.

Sartre questioned the meaning of life in relation to projects in business and in work life. Following his thought, we can analyze how individuals build meaningful relations though the roles and identities they create at work, as this is an iteration of the problem of the individual search for meaning. Sartre's philosophy provides a basis for analyzing struggles for recognition and mutual objectification through the gaze in work life and institutions. His ethics also has implications for a philosophy of institutions and organizations where generosity, but also freedom and individual responsibility, are inescapably related to the role of individuals in institutions.

Applying Sartre's existentialist philosophy to philosophy of management prompts a discussion of the problems of authentic leadership and of authenticity in the economy. In contrast to so many recent proposals of authentic leadership as something about being true to a core self, Sartre helps us to understand the problems and dilemmas of using the concept of authenticity as the basis for business ethics and for corporate social economy. Every time organizations present themselves as truly virtuous, responsible, and authentic they seem to forget the tension in authenticity between not being what you are and being what you are not. Rather, Sartre emphasizes that authenticity implies being engaged in the world and being true to the understanding of the values and dilemmas that constitute the true self. Authentic leadership is about engaging authentically with the existential choices facing a manager.[61]

Accordingly, as a diagnosis of the problems of dehumanization and alienation in modern society expressed in existential despair, the existentialist philosophy helps to face the dilemmas of authenticity very deeply. Joseph Pine and James Gilmore contribute to the integration of Sartre's philosophy in the experience economy.[62] They argue that authenticity is a basic requirement in the economy but that it is difficult because authenticity may, as Sartre suggests, very often change into inauthenticity when you try to present yourself as authentic. There is a certain ironic twist to authenticity. Indeed, it is much easier to be authentic when you also confirm yourself as inauthentic. In many ways we can see the concept of the experience economy, according to Pine and Gilmore, as a kind of expression of existentialism in a postmodern economic context. They argue that the market economy is a kind of stage where experiences of authenticity are sold and required: "In the experience economy every business is a stage and therefore work is a theatre."[63]

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[61] John Lawler and Ian Ashman: "Theorizing leadership authenticity: A Sartrean perspective", *Leadership* 2012 8: 327.

[62] J. Pine and J. Gilmore: *The experience economy*, Harvard Business School Press, Harvard 1999. J. Pine and J. Gilmore: *Authenticity. What Consumers really want*, Harvard Business School Press, Harvard 2007.

[63] J. Pine and J. Gilmore: The experience economy, Harvard Business School Press, Harvard 1999, p. x.

In this context, organizations and businesses are required to manage authenticity. In this sense, we can say that we have experienced a generalization of the existentialist experience in our economy. The moral emphasis in the experience economy can be said to be a requirement to provide authenticity to the customers and help to transform them to be authentic in their lives. As leadership should be authentic the relation to customers and other stakeholders should also rely on the requirement of authenticity. The true mission of a corporation in an existentialist economy is to contribute to help the customer to acquire authenticity so that consumers, but also employees and other stakeholders, get a better and more authentic life from their interaction with the business corporation.

3.3 Simone de Beauvoir, Ethics, and the Second Sex

It is well known that de Beauvoir was Sartre's life accompanion. She worked closely together with him while at the same time developing her own work on existentialism, ethics, and feminism, most notably through her important book, *Le deuxième sexe I-II* (1949). Simone de Beauvoir studied philosophy at the Sorbonne together with Sartre and Maurice de Candillac, Aron, and Merleau-Ponty. She became friends with Sartre in 1929 when he lived in a room at Cité internationale universitaire de Paris. They both passed the agrégation exam in philosophy that year with Sartre coming in first and de Beauvoir second.

In 1943 she published her first book, the short story collection, *L'invitée* (1943). Later came the novel, *Tous les hommes sont mortels* (1946). Her early philosophical work, *Pyrrhus et Cinéas* (1944), which was written in the middle of the 1940s at de Flore, reflects her close collaboration with Sartre. At the same time, her work holds a more open conception of human existential possibility and thus differs from Sartre. De Beauvoir also wrote about literature and metaphysics on the basis of a speech that was later published in *Les Temps Modernes*. This was the basis for *Pour une morale de l'ambiguité* (1947), which seems to contain the existentialist moral philosophy that Sartre never wanted to publish.

During the 1940s, de Beauvoir became more and more interested in anthropological and social issues that are presented in her main work, the *Le deuxième sexe* (1949). In the 1950s and in towards the beginning of the 1960 she published three, *Les mandarins* and the two autobiographical works: *La force de l'âge* (1960) and *La force des choses* (1963). In these works she describes her life with Sartre and her different ideas of an official existentialism, and attempts to explain what Sartre's thought through his different writings.

Sartre and de Beauvoir were most closely connected in the 1930s and 1940s when existentialism was the most popular. In the 1950s, a larger distance emerged between them. De Beauvoir did not fully accept Sartre's interest in psychoanalysis and social philosophy that he put forth in his book about Jean Genet. De Beauvoir maintained that *L'être et le néant* was the essential part of Sartre's work and she did not like *Critique de la raison dialectique*. Moreover, she did not understand the

Sartre's late passionate engagement with Gustave Flaubert,[64] who she thought was the opposite of Sartre. However, she was called "la grande Sartreuse" and "Notre-Dame de Sartre" and she was always very close to Sartre.

The questions that de Beauvoir's philosophy helps to ask of management are, first of all, related to the role of women in business, professional life, and society. It can be argued that de Beauvoir's feminist existentialist philosophy can be used as the methodological framework for the study of the role of women at work and in the professions.[65] In particular, de Beauvoir's philosophy provides a strong theoretical framework for understanding why women are under-represented in senior business and board positions and in certain professions like finance and accounting. The existentialist perspective is different from the usual essentialist perspective because it recognizes the importance of individual choice and of recognition as elements of women's situation in society.

In *Pyrrhus et Cinéas*, de Beauvoir investigates the relation between individual experience and reality. De Beauvoir develops the concept of liberty from *L'être et le néant*. She discusses the relationship between freedom and responsibility and the possibility of raising the free human being to understand his or her existential situation. Inspired by Sartre, de Beauvoir formulates a theory about responsibility and authentic choice in the moment.[66] She understands existence as an ambiguous tension between freedom and specific situations and she refuses the idea that the divine can give meaning to human life. Even if God existed, he could not answer the human search for meaning in life.[67] De Beauvoir also refuses that we should be able to find meaning in life in the participation of the individual in the common movement and solidarity of humanity towards a higher aim through organizations or institutions.

Even though we live facing death and in search of authentic choice, human beings are not alone in the world.[68] De Beauvoir considers the other human being as an absolute aim in existence. The self should answer the appeal of the Other for meaning in life.[69] She points to generosity as an authentic mode of existence that confirms the freedom of the other person.[70] Here people can meet in mutual recognition of freedom. Existential communication is the basis for this mutual recognition. If I believe in freedom it will also be important for the Other. Freedom is necessary to create a human world. Human beings need to fight for freedom,

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[64] Jean-Paul Sartre: *L'idiot de la famillie*, I–III, Gallimard, Paris 1972.

[65] Peggy Wallace: "Career stories of women professional accountants Examining the personal narratives of career using Simone de Beauvoir's feminist existentialist philosophy as a theoretical framework", *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, Vol. 4 No. 1, 2009, pp. 62–84.

[66] "Pyrrhus et Cinéas" in Simone de Beauvoir: Beauvoir, Simone de: *Pour une morale de l'ambiguéité*, Gallimard, (1947) Paris 1983, p. 257.

[67] Ibid., p. 276.

[68] Ibid., p. 302.

[69] Ibid., p. 313.

[70] Ibid., p. 325.

to exert will, and to act for freedom.[71] Human beings can only be free in the struggle for the freedom of the Other and self-transcendence towards the Other.

In *Pour une morale de l'ambiguité* (1947) de Beauvoir develops these ideas with focus on the concept of ambiguity. Speaking about tragic ambiguity, Beauvoir continues Sartre's idea from *L'être et le néant*, describing human reality as a futile passion. Ambiguity is defined on the basis of the presence of mortal human beings with freedom in a world of dead matter. Following Sartre, she defines ambiguity as an endless desire for existence, a desire to be God. It is this lack that can be defined as existence.[72]

The foundation of existence is human freedom and we must accept a manifold variety of human beings with different value conceptions. The morality of ambiguity is therefore a morality that a priori refuses to view separated existences as connected while simultaneously allowing singular freedom as the basis for law.[73] This morality of freedom is possible in the middle of passion for life, as when the artist captures the conditions of existence and creates the authentic openness for the Other.[74] To will something into existence requires people who give meaning to being and to human projects. Freedom is openness to the project of the other. The relation between the 'I' and the Other is, like the subject-object relation, a basic truth.[75] Concrete realization of the morality of ambiguity happens in the human relation and in the struggle for freedom. The morality of ambiguity is founded on freedom that revolts against oppression in community, organizations, and institutions. Freedom is the absolute value of the morality of ambiguity.

From 1946 to1947 de Beauvoir lectured at US universities and broadened her theoretical horizons. This helped to constitute her consciousness as a woman and existentialist. When she was back in Paris she started to work on the *Le deuxième sexe*, a philosophical book about the condition of women which combines social anthropology with her philosophical argumentation in the investigation of sexuality, family relations, work conditions, et cetera.

Le deuxième sexe became a very important defense of a theoretical and philosophical feminism that functioned as the foundation of the struggle for liberation of women in the twentieth century. When it was published in 1949 the book changed the conditions for the discussions about sex and gender because Beauvoir argued that women have no predetermined nature, but are phenomena formed in a complex interaction between biological, social, and psychological relations.

This was a revolutionary point of view that was very provocative and made the book much more present in public debate than Sartre's *L'être et le néant*. When it was later published in a shorter version in the US it became a bestseller

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[71] Ibid., p. 354.

[72] Simone de Beauvoir: *Pour une morale de l'ambiguité*, (1947) Gallimard, Paris 1983, p. 17.

[73] Ibid., p. 25.

[74] Ibid., p. 102.

[75] Ibid., p. 104.

with even more success than in France. The debates that emerged from the book made de Beauvoir quite controversial.[76]

Le deuxieme sexe asks, from the perspective of social anthropology and history, how women woman became "the second sex," that is the Other, or alterity, as a lack in relation to the world and the life of men.[77] The book consists of two parts. The first part about "myths and facts" is separated into parts about destiny, myth, and history, and describes the conception of human beings and women drawing upon biology, psychoanalysis, and historical materialism. In the section about destiny she analyzes the conditions of the existence of women. The section about historical development describes the conditions of women from primitive societies through the middle ages and the French revolution to the suffragist movement in France in 1945.[78] In the section about myths, dreams, and prejudices, she explores the divergent conceptions of female beauty, women as unattainable objects, mothers, and Madonnas or whores, by a number of important contemporary writers.

The second part of the book, "the lived experience," is separated into three parts. Firstly, she describes the development of women from childhood to youth. After this, she investigates sexuality and lesbianism. Then de Beauvoir describes the situation of woman, marriage, motherhood, and old age. She then goes on to analyze the possibilities of leaving this condition through narcissism, a great love, or the mystical experience. Finally, de Beauvoir describes the independent women and the possibility of women's liberation from oppression[79] She argues that the condition for women's emancipation is the total independence of women and recognition of female freedom as human beings at the same level as men.

Le deuxième sexe was inspired by Kojève's interpretation of Hegel and Jean Wahl's (1888–1974) analysis of unhappy consciousness in Hegel's philosophy.[80] However, one can also find elements of Bataille's theory of the tensions between homogeneous and heterogeneous social structures. De Beauvoir's argumentation for the emancipation of women is based on the master-slave dialectics.

She argues that women historically have not been part of the struggle for recognition. Women have been isolated as the "absolute Other," that is the object of desire that is always beyond reach. Man confirms himself as human in relation to another man, but women stay the Other in this relation. Neither Hegel nor Kojève discuss how the relation between the sexes relates to the master-slave dialectics. The woman is, according to de Beauvoir, outside these dialectics.[81] The woman and

[76] Deirdre Bair: *Simone de Beauvoir. A Biography*, (1990) A Touchstone Book Edition, New York, 1991, p. 408.

[77] Simone de Beauvoir: *Le Deuxième Sexe I. Les faits et les mythes*, Gallimard, Paris 1949, p. 13ff.

[78] Ibid., p. 207.

[79] Simone de Beauvoir: *Le deuxième Sexe II. L'expèrience vécue*, Gallimard, Paris 1949.

[80] Jean Wahl: *Le malheur de la conscience dans la philosophie Hégelienne*, Paris 1929.

[81] Lundgren-Gothlin, Eva: *Kön och existens: studier i Simone de Beauvoirs Le Deuxième Sexe*. – Göteborg: Daidalos, 1991, p. 112ff.

the slave should not be considered as equal, but rather women are the absolute Other without mutuality in relation to the man.

The sovereign power of man over woman changes her into an object so that she cannot attain power. The historically primordial relation between men and women has, according to de Beauvoir, not presupposed a community of self-conscious individuals. They only became individuals through the struggle of the slave-master dialectics. The master risks his life and is thus confirmed by the slave. The slave is recognized through self-objectification in his work. Similarly, while women exist as the ones who give life, they do not risk their lives.[82]

In addition to taking her starting point in Kojève's dialectics of recognition, de Beauvoir was also inspired by Marxism. Marxism conceives human nature as a socially productive activity and alienation is an important notion for understanding human existence. De Beauvoir emphasized the biological and economic aspects of the human situation: "One is not born as a woman. One becomes a woman."[83] De Beauvoir conceived of woman as an historical idea. This implies that the female role is a product of society as whole. It is the historical and economic conditions that give power in social institutions. Human beings are objectified and alienated through work as a creative process.

Accordingly, Beauvoir applied the Marxist notion of work in parallel with the Hegelian master-slave dialectics to explain why woman become the Other. Sexual difference is something that is created historically, but it is conceived as absolute. The woman is created in an historical project as a part of the collective self-creation. Originally, man and woman lived together in a community (*mitsein*), but this changed based on historical conditions.

The oppression of women was easy to introduce because of the biological weaknesses of women. In hunter-gatherer societies, the man procured food while women were giving birth to children. In the Stone Age, an agrarian culture was created where human beings were bound geographically, which precipitated the oppression of women. De Beauvoir argues that originally there was a maternal culture with a female god of fertility; however, this god was soon rendered taboo. As a woman was no longer equal to a man she was changed into something else, to something Other: nature, life, and fertility.

In *Le deuxième sexe* we can see elements of Sartre's philosophy. One must confirm oneself as subject in order to become oneself. It is human transcendence that positions human beings as subjects. Man and woman choose themselves and each other in the situation; however, woman has become isolated as the Other in relation to the man, who is conceived as the subject in the center. De Beauvoir does not criticize Sartre directly, but combines his philosophy with a philosophy of history that is not present in *L'être et le néant*. This implies that de Beauvoir reached other conclusions about human emancipation. She thought, contrary to

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[82] Ibid., p. 114ff.

[83] Simone de Beauvoir: *Le Deuxième Sexe I. Les faits et les mythes*, Gallimard, Paris 1949.

Sartre, that freedom is not absolute and that the relation between human beings should not necessarily be conceived as battle and conflict.

Man is absolute, while woman is always relative Otherness in relation to the man. At the same time, man dreams about satisfying his unsatisfied desire by meeting the total Other. But this is not possible for him because he has changed women into an object. Man is not happy in his master position because he needs the female recognition and the existence of absolute otherness in order to become himself.

De Beauvoir can refer to the moral ambiguity of generosity and mutuality in order to criticize the oppression of women by man. The man is, in reality, as alienated and unhappy as the woman, because he does not meet her as an independent human being who of her own free will loves and recognizes him as a free subject. The relation between the sexes is therefore not free. It is characterized by narcissism, oppression, or a kind of love where man and women treat each other as objects. De Beauvoir was inspired by Sartre's description of sadomachocistic love, where the ideal of love as the fusion of liberties is replaced by mutual oppression and exploitation, as well as an eternal tension between hate and love.[84]

Given the morality of ambiguity, de Beauvoir nevertheless argues that it is possible to reach mutual recognition and love between man and woman. She is convinced that human beings can go beyond the alienating and inauthentic relations of oppression. Freedom is so strong that it is possible to go beyond the force of the situation and recognize each other as free and independent human beings.

A condition for realizing this community is that women are conceived as freely deserving subjects in the same way as men. De Beauvoir states that women must become subjects of their own desires. Like a man, a woman must learn to have free sexuality where she can confirm her independent desire for recognition. Women should also be recognized and confirmed as free and self-conscious human beings in their love relations with men so that both can really live an authentic life and be themselves in relation to one another. Here, the other human being is respected as a real Other, as they are in their humanity. Recognition presupposes two subjects who are free and different. Authentic love implies that each person in the relationship mutually accepts the other fully as they are, as finite and mortal human beings.

De Beauvoir emphasizes that the presupposition of this recognition is that the woman is materially and economically independent of the man. At the same time, she should create her own life and live after her own aims and convictions without making man decide. De Beauvoir is aware of the biological, material, and historical limits of the relations between the sexes.[85] Only when women have been emancipated from the oppressive limits of the situation can the sexes find one another again in friendship, devotion, and understanding.

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[84] Jean-Paul Sartre: *L'Être et le Néant*, Gallimard, Paris 1943, p. 448.

[85] Lundgren-Gothlin, Eva: *Kön och existens: studier i Simone de Beauvoirs Le Deuxième Sexe*. – Göteborg: Daidalos, 1991, p. 299ff.

Le deuxième sexe is important because the work focuses on alterity, which is a central theme in French philosophy. Because of her connection and her friendship with the black American writer and civil rights activist Richard Wright (1909–1960) and his wife, De Beauvoir includes the conditions for black American women in her analysis. This can be considered in relation to Sartre's *Réflexions sur la question juive* (1946) or *Saint Genet: comedien et martyr*, which describe the exclusion of the Jew, the criminal, and thief as the Other in relation to the established social community.

De Beauvoir's later philosophical work, *La Veillesse* (1970), takes up a similar problem of the exclusion of a group of human beings in their Otherness and alterity: the elderly. She argues that even though old age is a manifest human reality, the condition has never been analyzed philosophically in its totality. In consumption society, old age has become a source of shame that it is not dignified to talk about. Older people are pariahs for society. They are excluded from a world that worships youth, beauty, and strength. Old age is a universal element of the human situation, but nevertheless many older people live in loneliness and boredom without being able to use their freedom.[86]

De Beauvoir argues that it is necessary for a radical change in the relation to older people if they are to be respected as human beings during the last years of their lives. Old age is a biological phenomenon that has psychological consequences for the existential situation. It makes it necessary to accept all the weaknesses, pains, and diseases that medical technology cannot fight. This is so serious that it is no longer death, but old age that stands in opposition to life. If old age should is to have a meaning we need to give human beings opportunities to fulfill the existential projects that created meaning earlier in life. This is the basis for a humanistic policy of aging.[87]

Until the end of her life, de Beauvoir was involved with the struggle for human rights and for the rights of those who are excluded from society as Others.[88] She was important for modern feminism based on equal recognition between women and men. She did not think that the body was important in the relation between women and men so she argued against a separational feminism that based feminism on the biological and bodily difference between women and men.

De Beauvoir's existential feminism, based on the philosophy of recognition, was later criticized by feminists, such as the Lacanian psychoanalyst Hélene Cixious (b. 1937) who maintained the radical difference between men and women and wanted to develop a feminism based on female thought and writing. This is also the case with the structuralist and semiotician Julia Kristeva (b. 1941) who wanted to base feminism on a semiological theory of signs and on a philosophy critical of the subject.

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[86] Simone de Beauvoir: *La Veillesse*, Gallimard, Paris 1970, p. 13.

[87] Ibid., p. 570.

[88] Ibid., pp. 510–513.

Feminists after de Beauvoir argued that, based on her definition of otherness in relationship, she could not avoid male thinking. From this point of view, de Beauvoir did not have the theoretical instruments to conceive feminism from the point of view of a woman and she could not really capture the importance of the bodily differences between men and women for philosophy.

Luce Irigaray (b. 1932) was among those later feminist philosophers who did a lot to overcome male-centered thought in their understanding of female emancipation. They strove to formulate a feminism that transcends the premises of male thought and conceives philosophy from the point of view of the female in women's nature.

In *L'éthique de la différence sexuelle* (1984) and *Être deux* (1997), Irigaray develops an ethics based on touch and sexual difference (the gentle touch) as basic for what it is to be human. Inspired by Lévinas, Irigaray radicalized de Beauvoir's philosophy of recognition by conceiving the woman as the Other without making her equal to the man's body.[89] This gentle touch is central because it goes beyond itself to the experienced body of the Other in the borderland between person and thing. The sensual sexuality the body is freely given and received in relation to the. This prelinguistic openness is the expression of a nonviolent, searching, and attentive relation to the other human being who is respected as Other. Human beings become themselves in the encounter with the Other, in the free intimate lovelife with the Other. The basis for ethics is not in the public life of mass society but in the singular meeting between man and woman, and it is here that the difference with the Other, and not the hell of self-identity, makes happy existence possible.

Irigaray's focus on the significance of sexual difference problematizes our culture of equality and identity where everybody is equal.[90] But at the same time, the foundation of ethics in the given condition of human nature is much stronger than in de Beauvoir's thought. One could argue that Irigaray, in a world where technology has become an integrated part of cosmos as techno-cosmos, searches after lost immediacy by founding ethics in the body and touch, and by being sceptical of de Beauvoir's refusal to see any importance in human embodiment.

Recently, in her book in *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler (b. 1956) challenged Beauvoir's and Irigaray's positions and showed how we need a more complex theory of gender if we want to have equality between the sexes. Butler seeks to formulate a social constructivist position that goes beyond both Beauvoir and Irageray, and founds feminism on a more articulate freedom of the individual to form his or her own sexual identity beyond the given conditions of biology or society.[91]

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[89] Luce Irigaray: *Être Deux*, Grasset, Paris 1997, p. 53.

[90] Ibid., p. 97.

[91] Judith Butler: *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, London 1990.

De Beauvoir's existentialism provides an important perspective for organizations that strive to be based on equality of the sexes and mutual respect and recognition. The philosophical anthropology of the necessity of mutual freedom and recognition that is proposed by de Beauvoir is the basis for arguing nondiscrimination and gender equality on today's labor market. In this context, de Beauvoir's philosophy provides an existentialist approach to the role of women in business organizations where they often are in positions inferior to men. Analyzing women's Otherness as described by Simone de Beavoir, it is possible to capture the existential dimensions of the differences by the sexes. Accordingly, her approach is applicable as a methodological framework within many different disciplines, for example human resource management (HRM) and change management.[92] Indeed, de Beauvoir's arguments about exploitation and the need for mutual recognition supports the defense of affirmative action as a priority for women in organizations and boards. Existential feminism provides an approach for analyzing oppression and the exclusion of alterity in organizations. This does not only have to be women but any other oppressed groups. De Beauvoir reminds us that this kind of oppression is not pregiven or natural but is a result of social conditions, and as such it can be changed. Indeed, it must be changed if we want to respect human freedom in organizations.

3.4 Existentialism and Economics: Christian Arnsperger

More recently, the Belgian philosopher from the Center for Ethics and Economics at the Université de Louvain, Christian Arnsperger, has proposed an existentialist philosophy of business and economics, inspired by Heidegger, Sartre, and de Beauvoir. His lays out his thought in *Critique de l'existence capitaliste: pour une éthique existentialist de l'économie* (2005) and *Éthique de l'existence post-capitalisme: pour un militarisme existentiel* (2009). He proposes an interpretation of the existentialism of Sartre and de Beauvoir that can be applied to the present economic situation.

It's a form of existential rebellion against capitalism. The problem of actual economics is its rationalism, which is inauthentic. The project of the existential analysis of economics is defined by the question of whether our economic actions mark our existential finitude or whether it is possible to go beyond capitalist economics towards an authentic human society.[93]

The existentialist philosophy is, according to Arnsperger, therapeutic for capitalism by considering the problems of the market economy as existential questions

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[92] Melissa Tyler: "Women in change management. Simone De Beauvoir and the co-optation of women's Otherness" *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 18, No. 6, 2005, pp. 561–577.

[93] Christian Arnsperger: *Critique de l'existence capitaliste. Pour une éthique existentialist de l'économie*, Les éditions du Cerf, Paris 2005, p. 12.

linked to human finitude. Technology and economic logic represent an inauthentic refusal of human finitude, in service of resignation and fatalism. In reaction to new age and corporate religion the existentialist approach proposes an existentialist thought about economics and an existentialist ethics. This approach begins with the consciousness of our human alienation and false consciousness about our capitalist economic existence. Going beyond Hegel, Marx, and Freud, the existentialist approach to economics shows the fundamental alienation behind the economic system in terms of fundamental ontology.

Arnsperger proposes his invitation to an existentialist criticism of the ethics of economics as based on five essential concepts:

1. To exist is to live together with other mortals.[94] Here, existential philosophy addresses the meaning of existence and what it is to exist with other human beings. We can stress that economics from this point of view is a way to live together among human beings.
2. To live in a society is to experience the double human finitude of oneself and the Other.[95] This means that we encounter the morality of the Other when we meet society, but this also a reminder of our own mortality.
3. An important way to judge a society is to ask how it conceives the management of the double finitude, and by what means it constitutes humanity and conceives the appropriate distribution of the means of existence among individuals.[96] One can judge capitalism from this principle. Arnsperger asks the question whether the idea of accumulation of capital, based on interaction between workers and capitalists, is really an existential principle. He argues that it is not, because it presupposes that the capitalist possesses capital and property while the worker is required to possess competences. Without these properties one cannot be a part of the economic system. A person who has no competences and no capital can be neither employer nor employee, and has no social existence.[97] Arnsperger argues that this shows that economics has an inauthentic concept of human being because in the dynamics of capitalism people are seen as consumers, work resources or capitalists, and workers or property owners.
4. The capitalist economic system can be considered as a way to distribute goods between persons in a way that ignores this fundamental finitude. In the logic of cooperative competition the winners acquire a kind of illusory finitude, where they imagine themselves to be immortal at the expense of the losers. Arnsperger argues that this illusory strife of immortality from the inside of the system seems to be the essence of rationality while in reality it implies an existential inauthenticity and radical existential loss. As consumers, entrepreneurs, or as capitalists we are realizing different modes of existence that cover our fundament

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[94] Ibid., p. 19.

[95] Ibid., p. 20.

[96] Ibid., p. 21–22.

[97] Ibid., p. 22.

existential angst and hides our temporal finitude. Consumption, money keeping, and savings and investments all represent alienated existential ways of relating to our fundamental existential freedom.[98]

5. In this sense, capitalism feeds the same anxiety that gives it its force. We accumulate capital in order to compensate for our finitude, but this is circular because the increased accumulation and consumption create more anxiety. This circle of competition, production, and consumption in capitalist societies can, from this existential perspective, be read as pathology of capitalism that shows the inauthenticity of this social form.

On this basis, Arnsperger proposes his existential philosophy of economics as an ethics of economics that operates as a radically existentially engaged social therapeutics. This ethics of economics investigates economics as a mode of existence based on the notion of utility, inspired by Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and the French existentialists. The aim is to analyze inauthenticity and authenticity in the economic system. The mode of economically authentic existence means to be true to one's real economic condition of existence that is radical finitude and contingency.

Accordingly, it is necessary to damask the inauthentic dimensions of the economic and social system of society. In fact, economics by its very nature can be defined as an existential science expressing a vision of a plurality of experiences of finitude and desires of infinity in human life. Arnsperger argues that it is possible to define economics existentially as the science of the management of finitude. Referring to the definition of the British economist Lionel Robbins (1898–1984), Arnsperger argues that economics is defined as "the discipline that studies the affection of limited means to satisfaction of unlimited needs."[99] This means that the core of economics is the preoccupation with need and based on a lack of resources. Economics implies a more or less authentic realization of the social construction of finitude because it is the condition of human existence behind human action. In this context, Arnsperger introduces the concept of existential heroism versus the inauthentic, alienated existence of the capitalist economic agent. As suggested by Sartre (and also Ernest Becker), although we are finite beings, humans are characterized by a strong desire for the infinite. The repetition of the intentionality of economic agents may be inauthentic (opportunistic and manipulative) or authentic, creating an existential hero in the economic system.[100]

Arnsperger develops an existentialist philosophy of five essential forms of economic existence, the economy of: (1) violence, (2) sublimation, (3) social order, (4) dynamics, and (5) alienation.[101] The economy of violence is a vision of economy as the struggle for survival and self-preservation, and of aggression in a state of

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[98] Ibid., p. 23.

[99] Ibid., p. 47.

[100] Ibid., p. 55.

[101] Ibid., p. 57ff.

nature. The economy of sublimation is the peaceful sublimation and integration in society of the economy of the Protestant ethics and the morality of consumption. The economy of the social order is the accomplished sublimation. The economy of dynamics is the dynamic innovation of the economic system, represented by the entrepreneurial vocation, creativity, and innovation. The economics of alienation is the alienated and inauthentic economic figures in all the different stages of economic development. It is also possible to interpret existential figures in terms of a psycho-analytic play of violence of destruction (Thanatos) and desire for infinity (Eros). At the same time, it is possible to observe existential heroism and communities of existential heroes emerging in the different economic systems.

Arnsperger also proposes a conception of economic and social injustice on the basis of existential anguish and inauthenticity. The lack of social justice and inequality in society are both due to a lack of existential authenticity. In fact, economic inequality is reinforced by the character of human existence. Homo oeconomicus is an expression of the existential alienation and narcissism of personal desire, since the subject acts according to the desire of being *causa sui* and infinite and is therefore inclined to opportunistic behavior forgetting concern for other human beings. The opportunistic tendency expresses the search of the individual for the privacy of the absolute 'I.'[102] In searching to be eternal and have absolute power, and in order to overcome the contingency of existence, the individual forgets the Other and the concern for distributive justice. Arnsperger affirms: "Capitalist existence is the denial of the body and death transformed into competition, performance, consumption, and growth."[103]

Accordingly, we need to reinvent economic existence. We need an economics of existential care, as opposed to economic instrumental reason. An authentic existential economic rationality would have no need to deny existential anguish or to hide finitude. It should instead seek to avoid sublimation of the existential condition in the economic system where the illusion of infinity is lived as the essence of capitalist economic rationality.[104] We need, therefore, to criticize the hedonistic interpretation of consumption, which is fueled by existential anguish about death. Modern consumerism is characterized by a dialectics between need and desire that is installed to hide the eternal emptiness and meaninglessness of life. Similarly, we need to criticize the ethos of saving as another strategy of inauthentic escape from death and finitude. By saving money, the individual seeks to overcome time and mortality, but this is a phantasm and no amount of money can help avoid death.[105] In addition, hard work is not a way to overcome mortality. As Hegel and

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[102] Ibid., p. 90.

[103] Ibid., p. 98.

[104] Ibid., p. 109.

[105] Ibid., p. 118.

Kojève suggested, human beings search to be immortal through work and also creativity. Work and labor emerges in capitalist economics as an effort of the individual to overcome anguish and nothingness. Indeed, economic rationality, as such, is an unconscious effort to overcome anguish and give the illusion of immortality to the individual.[106]

To overcome all the sublimations of capitalist economics Arnsperger proposes to revive the Heideggerian idea of authentic existential community. In this community we need to develop a noninstrumental concept of economic reason. Here, business ethics would not be enough to overcome the existing market structure because it takes too much for granted in capitalist economics.[107] We need, instead, an authentic existential understanding of reciprocity and human exchange where human beings respect the dignity and liberty of each other.

We need to transform the basic concepts of capitalism to give existentialist economics concrete meaning in the world. Arnsperger suggests that the concepts of market, profits, competition, expansion, and money-focus should be transformed into exchange, solidarity, collective organization, ecology, and the free gift. These new axioms propose an existentialist authentic relation to the world where the economy of gift exchange replaces the market, and where respect for the Other in solidarity is put ahead of profit orientation. Stimulating the individual to work for the common good and collective organization is put in the place of competition. Free gift giving, generosity, and exchange become the focus, instead of money.[108] Instead of being strictly instrumental, this economy would adopt Marcel Mauss's concept of gift, exchange, and reciprocity (*donner-recevoir-rendre*). We would need to redefine the desire of the market in terms of real authentic human relations.

This real authentic society could be a poor society that could be happy because it does not make itself so dependent on material wealth and understand material objects as spiritual. Such a society would be based on a human economy of authentic exchange replacing the anguish of capitalism, and would make it possible for everyone to accept their material and existential finitude.[109] However, Arnsperger does not stop with this analysis of existentialist economics, but proposes to accomplish it with an analysis of existentialist politics.[110]

We find this analysis developed in the book, *Éthique de l'existence post-capitalisme: pour un militarisme existentiel* (2009), where Arnsperger proposes an existentialist liberal political philosophy on the basis of his criticism of the axioms of capitalist economics to overcome the alienation of our present societies. In this political existentialist philosophy, we need to overcome the anguish of

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[106] Ibid., p. 124.

[107] Ibid., p. 157.

[108] Ibid., p. 151.

[109] Ibid., p. 195.

[110] Ibid., p. 222.

homo oeconomicus in capitalism with anthropological change towards authentic existence and install a new existentialist social democracy that proposes liberal critique of capitalism from an existentialist point of view. This would involve overcoming alienation and sublimation in economics and politics from the point of a spiritual critique of capitalism.[111] This militant critique of capitalist economic reason would be based on the creation of new existentialist communities that follow an ethics of radical democratization of economy and society.

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[111] Christian Arnsperger: *L'éthique de l'existence post-capitalist. Pour un militantisme existential*, Editions de Cerf, Paris 2009, p. 30.

Chapter 4
The Phenomenological Tradition: Experience, Body and Ethics

The philosophy of Sartre and de Beauvoir was, in some important dimensions, inspired by the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger. The existentialists contributed to increasing attention in the 1940s and the 1950s to the phenomenological method. Sartre's analysis of such classical philosophical themes as freedom and consciousness, and his concrete analysis of the gaze, love, and death, were based on phenomenology. In addition to Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Lévinas were instrumental in developing a particularly French tradition of phenomenology. Others, like Ricœur, combined phenomenology with hermeneutics. Even though there still is a very strong French phenomenological tradition it lost dominating significance in the 1960s and 1970 when Marxism and structuralism criticized the so-called idealist subject philosophy of phenomenology. However, poststructuralists like Derrida and Lyotard, who had worked on phenomenology, formulated their own philosophy as a criticism of Husserl and Heidegger.

The two most influential phenomenologists, Merleau-Ponty and Lévinas, were inspired by themes of the philosophy of existence, even though they also disagreed with many aspects of Sartre's philosophy. In opposition to Sartre's emphasis of absolute human freedom and the negativity and transcendence of consciousness in relation to its environment, Merleau-Ponty emphasized the connection between freedom and situation. While Sartre emphasized the tension between body and consciousness, between being-for-itself and being-in-itself, Merleau-Ponty made human bodily connection with the world central in his philosophy. Human consciousness and reflection emerge from this connection with the world. Lévinas dealt with a number of phenomenological themes in a totally different way than Sartre. He criticized Sartre's conception of human freedom, and in particular Sartre's skeptical conception of the possibility of ethics. Lévinas made the ethical demand from the other human being a central condition of human self-relation and opportunity to live an authentic life.

Indeed, Merleau-Ponty and Lévinas provide us also with some existentialist concepts, but they go beyond that and help us to understand fundamental aspects of meaning creation in organizations and institutions. Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of the body can be considered as a social theory of sense-making in organizations and

institutions. With his inspiration from Kojève's problem of history and institutions, Merleau-Ponty contributes with a thoughtful proposal of how to understand the relation between organization and institution that can be proposed as an alternative basis for organizational analysis and understanding of institutions that challenges mainstream institutionalism.

From this perspective, phenomenology proposes a philosophy and methodological approach to the social sciences that is different from mainstream approaches. The phenomenological approach presents another methodological and ontological approach to social phenomena that is more deeply reflective about social institutions.

This can be said to be further developed by Lévinas who proposed a phenomenological concept of ethics that contrasts with dominating positions of ethics in business. Lévinas developed Sartre's notion of infinite existential responsibility into an ethics of responsibility. Lévinas's ethics is built on the radical responsibility for the Other and this responsibility is the foundation for individual action. Lévinas contributed with an ethics of the close encounter that opens for infinite responsibility. With regard to organizations, this is another approach to ethics that challenges dominant utilitarian or deontological conceptions of ethics in business.

The possibilities of phenomenology in organizational research are many and very fruitful. Phenomenology describes the world of organization and as such we can argue that it deals directly with the ethics of organizations and institutions. With phenomenology the researcher can really see and describe the ethical dimensions of organizational life. Phenomenology not only constructs reality but describes the world as it is given, ontologically determined by intentionality. As such, there is an element of morality in the phenomenological description that is different from traditional qualitative research based on a construction of reality from interviews.[1] With the phenomenological description of reality or cases in organizations the researcher can capture the normative aspects of situations and thereby combine ethics with ontological phenomenology through phenomenological case-studies. Phenomenological description provides us with a thick description of the human life-world, which includes its ethical dimension. Phenomenology can, therefore, be very important for analyzing cases in business ethics.

4.1   Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Body and Perception

In opposition to the existentialist philosophers, Merleau-Ponty had a traditional academic career. In 1935, he was employed at École normale supérieure. He continued his research in Husserl's late philosophy, going to Belgium in 1939 to study Husserl's unpublished manuscripts. In 1952, and until his early death of a heart attack in 1961, he was professor of philosophy at Collège de France. In their

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[1] S. Brinkmann and S. Kvale: "Confronting the Ethics of Qualitative Research", *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, 18:2, pp. 157–181, p. 175.

youths Sartre and Merleau-Ponty were friends. Merleau-Ponty worked together with Sartre for 7 years (1945–1952) at the journal, *Les Temps Modernes*.[2] However, Merleau-Ponty was critical of Sartre's ontology and philosophy of consciousness, and skeptical towards his Marxist social theory and philosophy of history.

Merleau-Ponty's philosophy can be used as the basis for an ethical phenomenology in relation to organizations and institutions. He can be said to contribute with the foundations for the study of human embodied existence in organizations. From a wider perspective this can be seen as foundational for an ethics of embodied care and intentionality in organizations that contributes to the sustainability and integration of human beings in organizations and in the general context of the historical and biological world.[3]

In 1942, Merleau-Ponty published *Structure du comportement,* which is a description of human movement in the world, inspired by Gestalt psychology. He also worked on his philosophical masterpiece, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (1945), which is a phenomenological analysis of human perception and being in the world. Here, Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of the body is conceived as a theory of human bodily incarnation in the world. Merleau-Ponty continued to work together with Sartre until 1952, when he left the editorial committee of *Les Temps Modernes* because of his disagreement with Sartre's communism. In 1947, he wrote *Humanisme et terreur,* which distanced him from Marxist philosophy of history and moved him further away from Sartre. *Les avantures de la dialectique* (1955) sharply criticizes Sartre and this led to a permanent estrangement until Merleau-Ponty's death 1961. However, Sartre subsequently wrote a famous article in *Les Temps Modernes,* "Merleau-Ponty vivant," which remembers his greatness.[4]

In addition to his great interest in history and politics, in his later work Merleau-Ponty revised his thought in *La phénomenologie de la perception.* He considered, in *Le visible et l'invisible* (1964), a theory of the human body from a dialectical perspective and talks about the ambiguity of human experience of the world.[5] In *Signes* (1960), we can see that he tried to give his philosophy of the body a perspective from philosophy of language. He searches to integrate the structuralist thought about language in a reflection about the connection between language and experience of the world.

Even though Merleau-Ponty only mentions Sartre's philosophy in a few passages, and mostly in the end of *Phénoménologie de la perception,* this work can be considered as a criticism of Sartre's conception of Husserl's phenomenology and

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[2] Jon Steward: *The Debate between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty*, Northwestern Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, Northwestern University Press, Illinois 1998, introduction, p. xxviii.

[3] Sheldene Simola: "Exploring "Embodied Care" in Relation to Social Sustainability", *Journal of Business Ethics* (2012) 107:473–484.

[4] Jean-Paul Sartre: "Merleau-Ponty vivant", *Les temps modernes*, Paris 1961.

[5] Maurice Merleau-Ponty: *Le visible et l'invisible*: suivi de notes de travail/par Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1964); texte établi par Claude Lefort accompagné d'un avertissement et d'une postf.: Gallimard, Paris 1973.

human consciousness in *L'être et le néant*. Merleau-Ponty did not agree with Sartre's distinction between for-itself and in-itself, which he conceived as an expression of Cartesian rationalism that had not overcome the opposition between subject and object. Sartre's dualism between consciousness and the world was, according to Merleau-Ponty, not in accordance with the phenomenological method. According to Merleau-Ponty, the perception of the subject and the world are the same thing. Subjectivity is closely connected with the body and the world.

Instead of Sartre's conception of consciousness as transcendence, negativity, and freedom, which give meaning to a meaningless world, Merleau-Ponty emphasized the connection of consciousness and its belonging to the world through the perceptive body. Phenomenology is not constitution, construction, or analysis, but a description of the human primary experience of the givenness of reality. Where Sartre throught that transcendent objects independent of consciousness exist—pure being-initself—Merleau-Ponty emphasized that there is a close connection between the world and immanent experiences of consciousness. What is perceived has always already a meaning and significance that is revealed in the phenomenological description of experience. Perception is paradoxical because it at one and the same time expresses a direct experience of a pregiven world of meaning and the reflective conception of the world. When we sense a cube, we only see the front, but at the same time we imagine that the cube has a back.[6]

In opposition to Sartre's rationalism, Merleau-Ponty conceived phenomenology as a description of the perceptually given in consciousness. Merleau-Ponty was inspired by Bergson's philosophy of the immediately given in consciousness. Merleau-Ponty refused the idea of a reflective *cogito* that is outside the world. He tried to go beyond an abstract notion of consciousness as a rational recognition of objects and conceives, instead, the world as field of perception where the self is a bodily unit for-itself and in-itself.

Neither does Merleau-Ponty agree with Sartre that the world in itself is meaningless. The world appears for consciousness as an immediate contextual horizon of meaning and appearance that is present in the perceptions of the subject. Merleau-Ponty was skeptical towards all philosophical systems and wanted instead to describe the prereflective experience of the horizon of meaning and the world.

Merleau-Ponty also disagreed with Sartre's conception of human absolute freedom and denial of the unconscious. Consciousness should not be conceived as self-transparent spontaneity. It is, instead, a freedom that always is dependent on the being-in-situation of the body. Merleau-Ponty did not deny the existence of the unconscious, but he explained it phenomenologically as an ability not to know about oneself and the situation of the body. To forget a dream is an expression of the capacity of the reflective 'I' not to know about oneself. Phenomenologically, we cannot talk about a causal relation, but the dreaming self determines the conscious

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[6] Leo Rauch: "Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and the Hole in Being" in Jon Stewart; *The debate between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty*, North Western University Press, Illinois 1998, p. 13.

self. Freedom is not absolute, but consists in the openness of the situation for a manifold of possibilities of action.

This conception of freedom in situation leads to definition of intersubjectivity that differs from Sartre, who argued that the relation to the other human being is determined by a subject-object relation where there is mutual objectification and alienation among freedoms. Merleau-Ponty described, instead, the experience of the other human being as an encounter in a common bodily world. He did not want to end in Sartre's conception of being for the Other as objectification. In order for this to be possible, one must always already presuppose a common perspective in one's personal, prereflective, anonymous sphere of experience. The field of bodily experience of the individual precedes the bodily experience of the Other. This tension between loneliness and communication is manifested in the cultural objects that express a common world of a manifold of bodily experiencing individuals in a situation of bodily meaning.

According to Merleau-Ponty, Sartre's dualistic description of the body in *L'être et le néant* keeps him in a tension between immanence and transcendence, between inner and outer experience of the body. Instead, we always already exist as incarnated in our bodies that are the basis of our search for meaning and presence in the world. Merleau-Ponty thought that it is wrong to state that the body for the conscious subject appears as an object, an outer thing that makes us feel nausea and disgust.

Merleau-Ponty emphasizes therefore that bodily facticity is the foundation for the existence in situation of human beings. The body is the foundation of the perception, intentionality, and creation of meaning of consciousness. While Sartre emphasized the opposition between person and thing in the experience of the body as an alienating paradox, Merleau-Ponty emphasized the original ambiguity of the body.[7] Merleau-Ponty used the concepts of lifeworld and lived body to overcome the philosophy of the subject. Using Heidegger's concept of "being-in-the-world" he argued against the idea of the transcendental subject; rather, the foundation of meaning is the human encounter of the world through the body. One experiences the world at the same time from the inside and from the outside. One's body is both instrument and expression of inner experiences. We do not, therefore, live isolated in relation to the world. The subject is not separated from the world but experiences world as a mutual space together with other bodily individuals.

Phénoménologie de la perception is structured in three major parts that describe the different dimensions of the original experience of the body. The work begins with a criticism of the mechanical and dualistic theory of the relation between body and consciousness. After this, an investigation of being-in-the-world is presented, and finally there is an interpretation of the classical philosophical concepts like freedom and *cogito* from the perspective of the philosophy of the body. Merleau-Ponty describes the lived body as 'chair' or *corps propre* (inspired by Husserl's notion of

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[7] A. de Wahlens: *Une philosophie de l'ambiguiété, L'existentialisme de Merleau-Ponty*, Institut supérieur de philosophie de Louvain, Louvain 1970.

Leib). With this he refuses a materialist concept of the body. The lived body is not a mechanical object in the sense of an extended object in the world that can be described by geometrical and quantified concepts. As 'chair' the lived body is an expression of the original ambiguous experience of the world. Lived subjectivity cannot, therefore, be reduced to the body that is discovered by the natural sciences (i.e., medicine and biology), where the body is treated as a dead object that has no significance or value in itself. These sciences have not understood the central function of the body as expressing human experience of meaning through being-in-the-world.

That human existence receives is made meaningful through bodily being-in-the-world means: "I am not in front of my body, I am in body, or rather, I am my body."[8] One can emphasize that existence is not passive reception of the world, but active movement, where "I can" expresses human bodily existence. The consciousness is not an isolated *cogito*, but lives for itself independent of the body. It is instead through the body that consciousness unfolds itself. The experience of consciousness is closely connected with the bodily condition that sets the limits for creation of meaning.

This conception of experience separates from the Cartesian conception of perception by refusing a causal definition of sense. Sensualism and intellectualism do not overcome the subject-object distinction and cannot capture the original significance of the body in connection with the movements of the subject in space. According to Merleau-Ponty, there has been a tendency of the theory of perception to privilege the visual through the gaze and sight. This is, for example, the case with Sartre, who gives the gaze central significance and describes the touch from the perspective of the gaze. We should instead analyze the ambiguity of body where the one that touches and the touch melt together in a unity.

Merleau-Ponty emphasizes that human bodily unity with the world is prereflective. Looking at the prereflective character of consciousness we can see that perception is not only a reflection of the free existence of the subject, but there is another bodily self that exists behind the reflection that is synchronized with the world.[9] This prereflective anonymous experience of the world is not subjective self-consciousness and perception should not be conceived as an inhabitant of consciousness, but something that emerges in the unity of body and world.[10] Meaning is not constituted by an inner autonomous and isolated *cogito*, but the *cogito* only emerges later as a reflection about what happens in experience.

In this way, *Phénoménologie de la perception* radicalizes Husserl's concepts of reduction, constitution, and evidence. The phenomenological search for a transcendental foundation goes beyond the subject towards body and lifeworld as the foundation of meaning in the givenness of experience in the human natural unity with the environment. In this bodily perception of the world there is no longer any

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[8] *Phénoménologie de la perception*, Gallimard (1945), 1976, p. 175.

[9] Ibid., p. 250ff.

[10] Ibid., p. 275ff.

reason to doubt. Phenomenology has accomplished its task to find the foundation of meaning in the sensual unity of the body with the world.

Phénomenologie de la perception develops the phenomenological concept of intentionality, which can be understood as the experience of the world of significance. The perceptive body in relation to the world expresses an infinite possibility of significance. Human senses and emotions are described as a field of phenomena of significance (*champ phénoménal*) that presents itself for consciousness. Such a field of experience is not isolated within consciousness. As structures of significance, phenomena should not be considered as substantial physical features of consciousness. It is also a misunderstanding to conceive the experience of the subject of the world as introspection, where one looks into oneself.[11] The phenomena emerge in a unity of significance in the world without pre-established concepts or categories.

As expression of the structures of meaning of the lifeworld, the body creates a synthesis of the human experience. In the direct encounter with the world the different perceptions are collected in an overlapping unit. The body integrates the significance of things from the perspective of human interaction with them and in its experience of the world.[12] The body is the foundation of the human horizon of meaning. The *cogito* does not create meaning independently of the senses, but it is at the same time constituted and constitutive. In its constitutive experience human beings all the time find new meaning in being without having created or constituted this being.[13]

This original givenness forms the frames for the work of reflection on the significance of the world. This is defined by Merleau-Ponty as an original field of significance that constitutes the experienced life of consciousness. This field of significance is an intentional unit (*arc intentionel*), a horizon of meaning that forms our past, future, our human condition, our historical, physical, ideological, and moral situation.[14] Merleau-Ponty argues that the role of the body as field of intentionality implies that it, as unit of lived significance, cannot be described as a dead mechanical, material object.[15] Moreover, one cannot distinguish between expression and content in the lived experience of the body because they constitute a unity in the field of significance.

As an expression of human existence the body should not be conceived as a material object, but rather as a work of art that has a manifold meanings and invites interpretation.[16] In this way the analysis of human perception can be compared to the interpretation of a work of art. The philosophy of the body emphasizes the poetic dimensions of the ambiguity in human immediate experience of the world.

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[11] Ibid., p. 65.

[12] Ibid., p. 272.

[13] Ibid., p. 251.

[14] Ibid., p. 158.

[15] Ibid., p. 177.

[16] Ibid., p. 176.

This is the case, for example, with erotic touch where consciousness goes beyond itself and aims at concrete givenness of human experience. Here, the self is not an isolated subject, but emerges in sensual unity with the world through the Other.[17]

Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the impressionistic dimensions of the flow of the phenomena in primordial experience that science and reason cannot capture because they rationalize the original experience of the givenness of the world.[18] It is necessary to work with many nuances and variation in the experience of color to capture the infinite experience of the world. Merleau-Ponty refers to painting in order to capture the manifold nature of the bodily encounter of the world. Paul Cézanne's (1839–1906) paintings express such an attempt to describe the physiognomy of things and faces by the figurative recreation of their sensual unity in the work of art.[19] As in the work of art, our original experience of the world emerges in an open totality that can never be finished.[20] The experience of the world expresses a manifold significance that can never fully be captured by reason and reflective consciousness.

Merleau-Ponty refers already in the end of *Phénoménologie de la perception* to an historical and cultural context of significance as the basis for human bodily existence. During the 1950s, he became more interested in an interpretation of the philosophy of the body in terms of the philosophy of language. In *Signes*, he moves towards an interpretation of the bodily experience of the world in terms of the philosophy of language.[21] He connects the philosophy of the body with language as expression of the original experience of the body. Language presupposes a bodily intentionality that gives meaning. Merleau-Ponty emphasizes that this experience at its best is formed in a literary and artistic language. The author maintains his reader in a universe that unfolds many possible bodily existences.[22]

Merleau-Ponty understood the philosophical significance of language and wanted to go into dialogue with the contemporary philosophy of language. Even though, to a large extent, he considered language as an expression of bodily experience and the key to experience of the universe, this did not represent a rupture with the *Phénoménologie de la perception*, rather it expressed an important linguistic turn of phenomenology that he never managed to accomplish.

When Merleau-Ponty died in 1961 the unpublished manuscript for *Le visible et l'invisible* lay on his workdesk.[23] This work represents an interesting novelty in phenomenology because it integrates the philosophy of the body in a dialectics of

[17] Ibid., p. 183.

[18] Ibid., p. 205.

[19] Ibid., p. 372.

[20] Ibid., p. 254.

[21] Maurice Merleau-Ponty: *Signes*, Gallimard, (1960) Paris 1966, p. 84.

[22] Ibid., p. 95.

[23] Maurice Merleau-Ponty: *Le visible et l'invisible*: suivi de notes de travail/par Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1964); texte établi par Claude Lefort accompagné d'un avertissement et d'une postf.: Gallimard, Paris 1973.

meaning and significance. The book focuses around the limits of our visible experiences of the world, and it shows how the invisible contributes to the structuration of the visible. *Le visible et l'invisible* works on the conditions that something exists. Perception is now described as a belief in the senses (*foi perceptive*), in contrast to reflective thinking[24] Merleau-Ponty's project was to show the creation of structure by this belief in the senses as he continued his efforts to capture the original human experience of the world. One can also see how *Le visible et l'invisible* contributed to the creation of a new ontology by looking at another posthumous work, *La nature* (1968), that contains lectures about the relation between nature and body. Merleau-Ponty is here inspired by Husserl's reflections about primal history (*Urgeschichte*) and by the statement that a number of natural contexts (i.e., the relation to earth) play an important role for our experience of the world. In contrast to the natural sciences, Merleau-Ponty searches to formulate a new ontology that is based on human bodily experience of the world and nature.[25]

The fact that Merleau-Ponty's thought centered around the body, intersubjectivity, and the situation is also present in his last work *L'oeil et l'esprit* (1961), which seems to focus on the interplay between the visible and the invisible in relation to the original historicity.[26] According to Merleau-Ponty, contrasts do not fight each other. The body is a living continuation of the world, and of the same matter as the world. The artist, in particular the painter, is a privileged artisan who searches to capture the original historicity. Accordingly, Merleau-Ponty wanted to describe the body in situation with all its important dimensions of experience.

Merleau-Ponty's framework of a phenomenology of a body can indeed be used as a framework for the study of business ethics and ethics of organizations. Merleau-Ponty worked on formulating a concept of institution from the lectures "L'institution dans l'histoire personelle et publique."[27] This can be used to formulate a phenomenology of the historicity of organization and collective action. In contrast to a conventionalist concept of institution, Merleau-Ponty mentions the concepts of historicity, body, and time as concrete elements in the processes of institutionalization. According to Merleau-Ponty, institutionalization expresses what is interpersonal in history. We can talk about primal endowment (*Ur-stiftung*) in terms of phenomenological and Hegelian significance. Moreover, Merleau-Ponty referred to the Bergsonian distinction between open and closed societies as an example of processes of institutionalization in the course of history.

From the perspective of the phenomenological method truth can be described as a kind of revelation of being for the subject. Truth is defined as an effort to overcome dualisms between subject and object, body and consciousness, and between cognition and affectivity. The phenomenological method aims to describe

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[24] Ibid., p. 42ff.

[25] Maurice Merleau-Ponty: *La Nature, Notes, cours du Collège de France*, (1968) Seuil, Paris 1995.

[26] Merleau-Ponty: *L'oeil et l'esprit* (1961).

[27] Maurice Merleau-Ponty: *Institution et passivité*, Paris 2003.

the constitutive essence of phenomena as they appear to the researcher, who is situated and engaged in the social field that the he or she is searching to describe. It is the task of the phenomenological researcher to describe those essences in their ideal typical and constitutive structures.

In the study of organizations and corporations this phenomenological method can be used to analyze organizations. This implies integration of a philosophy of the body and freedom in the organizational analysis. This phenomenology can involve analysis of the organization as an existential community and of the structures of meaning and narratives that predominate in the interaction in organizations. The phenomenological theory of organization can also look at the responsibility and virtues of managers and leaders from the point of view of their existential experience and motivation. Phenomenological analysis of organizations includes a description of the formation of meaning in the social field based on a narrative method of experience. This includes the formation of meaning in constitutional hierarchies and describing their essence in imaginary variations. One can clarify the principles that organize daily life in organizations and institutions as relations of meaning and the intentionality of freedom for embodied agents.

The Danish philosopher, Ole Fogh Kirkeby (b. 1947), proposed a radical phenomenology as organization theory and organizational philosophy that is inspired by Merleau-Ponty. Kirkeby has proposed to use the phenomenology of the body developed in French philosophy as a foundation for an organizational ontology.[28] In the American tradition, the phenomenological and hermeneutical work of Karl E. Weick (b. 1936) on sensemaking has been important for translating phenomenological insights into the perspective of the study of organizations.

As the science of what is concrete, phenomenology represents an experience-based analysis of structures of meaning in the social world of human beings as they are living and acting in organizations. In this sense we can combine bioethics and business ethics with the integration of the human body with the whole living world. Accordingly, the philosophy of the body provides the basis for a phenomenological concept of sustainability, which differs from a utilitarian and technical understanding of human beings and their environment.[29] Such a concept of the ethics of sustainability based on the human embodied relation to the world sees a continuity of the human lifeworld and the world of organization, as well as the environment. It is this integrated relation between body, world, and nature that is the foundation of an ethics of sustainability based on embodied care for the living world.

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[28] Ole Fogh Kirkeby: *Management Philosophy. A Radical-Normative Perspective*. Heidelberg and New York: Springer Verlag 2000.

[29] Kemp, Peter, Lebech, Mette and Rendtorff, Jacob Dahl: *Den bioetiske vending* (The bioethical turn), Spektrum, Copenhagen 1997. Jacob Dahl Rendtorff and Peter Kemp: *Basic ethical principles in European Bioethics and Biolaw*, Copenhagen and Barcelona, 2000. Jacob Dahl Rendtorff: *Responsibility, Ethics and Legitimacy of Corporations*, Copenhagen Business School Press, Copenhagen 2009.

4.2   Emmanuel Lévinas: Phenomenology and the Ethics of the Other

As discussed above, Lévinas was one of the first philosophers who introduced Husserl and Heidegger in French philosophy. Lévinas had immigrated to France from eastern Europe and later became a French citizen. He developed Jewish thought on the phenomenological foundation. He put ethics and the relation to the other human being in the center of phenomenological reflection. His thought has been called humanism of the face, where what is central is the relational ethical demand that motivates the protection of fragile and vulnerable human beings. Lévinas proposed an interpretation of Jewish humanism as the foundation of modern existence.[30] Lévinas was, for many years, the director of the Jewish school École Normale Israelite Orientale in Paris. In 1963, after having defended his major work, *Totalité et infini: essai sur l'extériorité* as doctorat d'etat in 1961, Lévinas became professor of philosophy in Poitiers. After this he moved to the Nanterre campus of the University of Paris, and finally became professor in moral philosophy at the Sorbonne until his retreat in 1976.

Lévinas's philosophy opens a way to rethink the ethics of organizations.[31] Although it contains abstract phenomenological analysis, his thought can also be applied to the analysis of daily life in organizations. With his ethics, Lévinas contributes to the understanding of the foundations of organizational justice. Focusing on unconditional moral concern and care for the Other, Lévinas proposes a managerial ethics that is concerned with the relation to the Other. The ethics of the corporation should thus be based on such infinite responsibility for the Other, if we follow Lévinas.

In 1929 Lévinas published an article in *Révue philosophique en et France et l'é tranger* about Husserl's *Ideen*.[32] Later he translated and published, together with Gabrielle Peiffer, Husserl's *Méditations cartésiennes* in French in 1931. He addressed Husserl in the dissertation, *La théorie de l'intution dans la phénoménologie de Husserl,* where he analyzes Husserl's concept of intuition as an alternative to idealism and empiricism. He presents the eidetic reduction as a concept that makes an intuition of essences possible, where the consciousness, *cogito*, cannot be separated from its content, *cogitatum.*

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[30] Marie-Anne Lescourret: *Emmanuel Lévinas*, Champs, Flamarion, (1994) Paris 1996, p. 30.

[31] Papers from the conference: LEVINAS, BUSINESS, ETHICS, Centre for Philosophy and Political Economy, University of Leicester, 27–29 October 2005. http://www2.le.ac.uk/depart ments/management/documents/research/research-units/cppe/conference-pdfs/levinas/call.pdf

See also Campbell Jones (ed). Levinas, Business, Ethics, Special Issue, *Business Ethics. A European Review.* July 2007, Volume 16, Issue 3. See also Sarah Louise Muhr, Bent Meier Sorensen and Steen Vallentin (eds): *Questioning the Moral Foundations of Management*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2010, pp. 143–162.

[32] Emmanuel Lévinas: "Sur les Ideen de Monsieur Husserl" in *Revue philosophique en France et L'Etrange.r* (red. Levy Bruhl), Paris 1929.

In this way, consciousness transcends itself and encounters the Otherness of the object, the alterity in its concrete being-in-the-world. Lévinas emphasized that the subject exteriorizes itself in relation to the immanence of consciousness in the act of cognition. In this way, phenomenology helps to brake with immanence and meet life in the acts of cognition of consciousness. Lévinas integrated a concept of the infinite in his analysis of the concept of intuition.[33]

During research in Freiburg in the late 1920s, Lévinas also became aware of Heidegger's existential philosophy in *Sein und Zeit*. In 1932, Lévinas published an article about Heidegger's ontology where he emphasizes the existential turn towards being in the world.[34] Even though Lévinas had great respect for Heidegger, he also thought that Heidegger's philosophy is marked by lack of ethical reflection and concern for the other human being.

After having lived and studied in Paris in the 1930s, where he also became director of the Jewish school in Paris, Lévinas became an officer in French army, but was captured during the war and stayed for years in a German prison camp. He spoke of a happy little dog who, without discrimination, greeted everybody in the camp—Jews, Germans, and the French—and that this was the last Kantian in Nazi Germany.[35] The war was very tough on Lévinas. He endured tragic suffering because the Germans killed his whole family in Kovno. The philosophical thought of Lévinas is in sharp contrast to the crimes of the Germans; however, Lévinas's philosophy is marked by the experience of Holocaust. Lévinas developed a messianic hope in human reconciliation through Jewish thought as a humanist philosophy that is based on an absolute demand for respect and concern for the dignity of the other human being.

After the war, Lévinas published *De l'existence à l'existant* (1947), where his humanistic phenomenology is developed. At the same time, he wrote a number of articles based on his readings of the Bible, the Jewish writings (Talmud) and the Jewish law (Torah). These writings are published in *Difficile liberté: essais sur le judaïsme* (1963), which describes the difficult task of maintaining Jewish culture, belief, and existence. He considered Jewish thought as a proposal for humanism in the modern world. Jewery expresses a "difficult freedom" where one chooses oneself in the ethical demand of the Torah The encounter with the face of the Other expresses this freedom, where the messianic hope about salvation is based on the infinite responsibility for the other human being.

Lévinas also studied Jewish hermeneutics and principles of interpretation, which he published as *Quatres lectures talmudiques* (1968). This work attempts to understand the divine from a Jewish perspective. Here again, Lévinas emphasizes the categorical imperative for Jewry is the demand for responsibility for the

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[33] Emmanuel Lévinas: *Totalité et infini*, Den Haag 1961.

[34] Emmanuel Lévinas: "Martin Heidegger et l'ontologie" in *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger*, Paris 1932. Reprinted in Lévinas: *En découvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger* (1949), 1994.

[35] Ibid., p. 120.

Other. He considers Judaism as a wisdom that does not come from the Gods of the philosophers or from a religious or mythological belief. God is infinite and thus never escapes metaphysical or mythological totalization, but at the same time God is love and ethics. According to Lévinas, Judaism is not only a religion, but an understanding of being that reveals a truth about human existence.

After the war, Lévinas's criticism of Heidegger's ontology became more and more evident. He had been informed about Heidegger's acquaintance with Nazism in the 1930s and he was saddened that Heidegger had so little understanding for social justice and love for the Other. However, he did not think that *Sein und Zeit* in itself should be considered as a Nazi book. In the collection of articles, *En decouvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger,* Lévinas's criticism of Heidegger is more fundamental. Heidegger is himself captured by the Western ontology that he criticizes. The encounter with the infinity of the Other is beyond the horizon of being.[36] The existence of the Other has no ontological foundation in the existence of being-in-the-world (*Dasein*), as suggested by Heidegger. Following Lévinas being-in-the-world is defined from the perspective of the self, not from the perspective of the other. Dasein has, fundamentally, a technical relation to the world and things only emerge in the tension between Dasein and being. Heidegger's ontology cannot capture the other human being that we do encounter first and foremost as a face. The other human being is at the limits of the self as an ontological totality. The face of the Other is an opening in being that points beyond immanence towards the endless challenge of ethics.

This criticism of western ontology is presented in its totality in Lévinas's masterpiece, *Totalité et infini: essai sur l'exteriorité*,[37] which collects 25 years of phenomenological reflection (he started the work in an article from 1935, "De l'evasion"). This work was so original that Lévinas, at this point late in his career, became known as one of the most important French philosophers.[38] In the book, Lévinas discusses the tension between totality and infinity, and he tries to break with metaphysics and the totalitarian closure in relation to the infinite. As a work about exteriority, *Totalité et infini* can be considered as a reaction towards totalitarian tendencies in western philosophy.[39] Inspired by Bergson, Marcel, and another Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber (1878–1965), Lévinas tries to break out of the uniformity of being of science and ontology and to reconsider their closure with regard to the infinite, which leads to forgetting alterity and the inability to see Otherness.

Lévinas was strongly inspired by the Jewish-German thinker Franz Rosenzweig (1886–1929) who criticized Hegel's abstract systematic idealism in favor of an existentialist approach to the experiences of the individual. In *Der Stern der*

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[36] Emmanuel Lévinas: *En decouvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger*, (1949) Paris 1994.

[37] Emmanuel Lévinas: *Totalité et infini: essai sur l'extériorité*. – La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961. Le livre de poche, Biblo Essais, Paris 1990, p. 7.

[38] Marie-Anne Lescourret: *Emmanuel Lévinas*, Champs, Flamarion, (1994) Paris 1996, p. 216.

[39] Emmanuel Lévinas: *Totalité et infini: essai sur l'extériorité*. – La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961. Le livre de poche, Biblo Essais, Paris 1990, p. 30.

Erlösung (1921) he attacks the efforts of western philosophy to reduce God, the world, and human beings to thought and consciousness. These can be captured by concrete experiences of being part of the world. Rosenzweig conceives the Jewish star as a symbol of creation, revelation, and salvation that helps to go beyond the totalization of the world and history.

Following this, Lévinas proposes to go beyond the Hegelian philosophy of identity on the basis of his theory of the infinite.[40] *Totalité et infini* expresses a philosophy of alterity and absence, where the immanence of ontology is broken by the transcendence of consciousness that in particular is manifested in the ethical relation to the other human being. According to Lévinas the face of the other human being is a central expression of the infinite. If one conceives the other human being as a part of being, as an object among other objects, one exercises violence and one does not capture their radical Otherness. In this way, Lévinas's philosophy represents a reply to Sartre's pessimistic analysis of the gaze of the Other and the relation between human beings as struggle and conflict.

Following Husserl, Lévinas argues that scientific objectivity is secondary in relation to the experienced subjectivity and intersubjectivity that constitutes the relation between human beings in a common world.[41] In *Totalité et infini* Lévinas uses the phenomenological method of describing essences and intuition. Despite Lévinas's disavowal of him, Heidegger's influence can be seen in his criticism of Husserl's transcendental 'I' and the idealistic tendencies in Husserl's thought. Lévinas uses Heidegger's analysis of existence to overcome Husserl's subjectivism by showing that human existential temporality should not be understood as a subjective time consciousness, but as a part of human existence in the world. Heidegger's existential radicalization of Husserl's phenomenology, which was also proposed by Merleau-Ponty and Sartre, is in this sense developed by Lévinas. However, he is also critical to Heidegger's prioritization of ontology instead of the existential relation to the other human being.[42]

Totalité et infini is not only marked by the revolt in relation to the ontological tradition. Lévinas also defines what is human as pleasure without utility. Pleasure is to love life.[43] Lévinas criticizes reduction of life to work and technology and makes the bodily dimension central in order to understand what is human. Lévinas analyzes the erotic and the role of food in existence in a way that is reminiscent of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological analysis of the body as foundation of existence at a pre-objective and presubjective level (i.e., before things become objects and before we have a reflective attitude towards ourselves). *Totalité et infini* consists of phenomenological analysis of the sensual subject in the world of the home.[44] In relation to this starting point in lived body as foundational for existence,

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[40] Ibid., In the conclusion "L'Être est l'extériorité", p. 322.

[41] Ibid., p. 63.

[42] Ibid., p. 38.

[43] Ibid., p. 154.

[44] Ibid., p. 127ff.

Lévinas argues that Husserl and Heidegger have forgotten the significance of the body and of sensuality.

Instead, Lévinas proposes the "I-thou" relation between human beings as the basis for the meaning of existence. The concept of the "I-thou" relation implies that the self is always situated in a relation to another human being. Following Franz Rosenzweig, divine love is proposed as essential in Jewish philosophy. The imperative of love is an imperative to love God and reminds us of the star of reconciliation that expresses the demand of love between human beings. The star of reconciliation expresses the demand of love for one's neighbor that is expressed in the imperative of love. The face receives a metaphysical dimension as the demand to take care of the Other as other. This is what is fundamental and infinite in the existence of each singular human being. Ethics becomes "first philosophy" and the Other becomes the foundation for meaning in life, and for the happiness of the other human being.

Totalité et infini is full of concrete phenomenological analysis that describes the metaphysics of infinite love in relation to the philosophy of totality. Lévinas describes the close world of the home as a lifeworld that comes before the encounter with the Other.[45] Lévinas's philosophy should not be understood as pure philosophy of alterity, where the subject sacrifices him- or herself totally to the Other. It also contains a responsibility for subjectivity and for the right of the self to happiness, to sensual love, and to take part in family.[46]

It would be a misunderstanding if one conceives Lévinas's Kantian ethics of duty towards the Other as an absolute demand that tears the self apart. It is not a philosophy that is an enemy of the body struggling against the immediate sensual needs of the self. Lévinas's philosophy is instead about the lifeworld where we discover the world with our senses. Lévinas proposes a rather lyrical description of the relation to the loved one and of female sexuality in the home.[47] Lévinas conceives the human bodily sphere of intimacy as central in the phenomenology of the senses. In the intimate lifeworld, which is also the sphere of the home, one shuts out the dimensions from the outside, and one is not open for the external, for the infinite, for Otherness, and for the Other.[48]

It is important to emphasize that the self lives in this safe, intimate world that is motivated by enjoyment and affirmation of life arriving before the encounter with the Other. Here the relation to the Other is open and heartful. Lévinas's analysis is in radical contrast to Sartre's philosophy of negativity, which makes the fear of the Other and the struggle between human beings primary.[49] Rather, Lévinas emphasizes that the self unfolds in the enjoyment of and happiness with life.

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[45] Ibid., p. 162.

[46] Ibid., p. 168.

[47] Ibid., p. 288.

[48] Peter Kemp: *Lévinas*, Anis, Århus 1992, p. 27.

[49] Emmanuel Lévinas: *Totalité et infini: essai sur l'extériorité*. – La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961. Le livre de poche Biblo Essais, Paris 1990, p. 186.

Happiness emerges in liberation from dimensions of force and in the satisfaction of human sensual and intellectual needs. Human beings withdraw in the sphere of intimacy in order to enjoy life. The starting point does not have to be anxiety, or fear of living. In this immediacy, human beings can very well exists in the intimacy of lifeworld without existential worry.

In this universe of enjoyment of the home Lévinas relates to the woman as an openness to the Other. This can be seen as a realization of the desire for the Other. Here, the Other is not oppressive, but only witnesses something that goes beyond the sphere of enjoyment of the self. The house is defined as a site of hospitality for its owner and where femininity rules.[50] Lévinas's description of the feminine does not refer to a specific woman, but expresses a general ontological determination as the feminine as a part of the intimacy of the home.

However, this should not be conceived as philosophy of identity and as exclusion of the Other. Lévinas wants instead to criticize the philosophy of identity that does not include concrete human beings. Lévinas does not want to avoid the infinite. He sees existence in separation as something important in human life.[51] The sphere of the home is not closed to the outside. It is characterized by hospitality. It welcomes the Other who witnesses the infinite and human existence in relation to the infinite. This belief in human openness for the stranger is very different from what has been practiced in the philosophical tradition, which has been marked by a philosophy of identity that reduces the stranger to the identical and intimate. Philosophy has had a tendency to understand the Other, the nonidentical, and the different on the condition of the already given concepts of reason.

Philosophers like Parmenides (fifth century BC), Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger have been marked by this philosophy of identity: to let the Other disappear in the same, or be a part of different forms of structures of rationality. Such a neutralization of the Other has been a basic feature of ontology and metaphysics that makes the manifold into something particular and identical. When Heidegger spoke of being, this was considered as something identical and neutral that orders thoughts and things. Thought is here captured in the same totalizing figure that neither transcends or opens up to the infinite. Thought stays in the rationality of immanence and it refuses to open up to the stranger and to the Other.

In contrast to this philosophy of reduction, immanence, and limitation, Lévinas searched for the infinite. He thought that an infinite world exists that transcends all the pre-established categories of the subject. Descartes presupposed, for example, that an endless outer world exists before the subjective sphere of security, but Lévinas felt that he insufficiently theorized the radicality of the infinite. It should not be conceived as contemplation, but rather as a desire for the Other and the nonidentical. Lévinas wanted to go even further and consider the infinite as something radically external that goes beyond ideas and reason, and that transcends the whole sphere of the self. The desire for the infinite is a desire for the absolute

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[50] Ibid., pp. 164–165.
[51] Ibid., p. 104.

Other, as something that one cannot possess. In this way, his analysis of the concept of infinity led Lévinas to propose an alternative to the philosophy of totality. The possibility of the infinite shows itself in the relation of the subject to the Other. True love is active giving that transcendends itself and relates to the being and individuality of the Other.[52]

Accordingly, Lévinas argued that authentic meeting with the Other destroys the prison of the subject in the immanence of identify. But the "absolute Other" should not be conceived as a metaphysical totality, because this would only repeat the philosophy of totality; rather, the absolute Other should be considered as the concretely existing other (*L'absolument Autre c'est Autrui.*).[53] The Other is a concrete person that we meet face to face. Here, consciousness goes beyond its own immanence, because it is confronted with the infinite in the face of the Other. Consciousness transcends itself and goes beyond its immanence in the encounter with the reality of the other.

Totalité et infini made Lévinas famous in France. He was rather skeptical towards Marxism but he should have said that the value of the young students of 1968 was the "the value of the Other as absolute".[54] As he became internationally prominent in the 1970s, he received honorary doctorates from many universities around the world. Lévinas's philosophy of exteriority is even supposed to have inspired Pope Jean Paul II.

In addition to *Totalité et infini* Emmanuel Lévinas' ethical philosophy is presented in many of his later works, *L'humanisme de l'autre homme* (1972), *De Dieu qui vient à l'idée* (1982), *Entre nous: essai sur le penser-à-l'autre,* (1991), and *Ethique et infini: dialogues avec Philippe Nemo* (1982). In those books, Lévinas develops his conception of the radical separation between ontology and ethics. He makes the Jewish humanism of the other human being, the endless responsibility for the Other, into the central aspect of the realization of the self as human being.

The idea is that I can only be myself through the Other because the Other breaks with the immanence of the self and satisfies its desire for infinity. When the self emerges as the Other, this limits my right to endless realization. It means that the implication of the Other in my world precedes my cognition of reality. This means that I only really can be myself and meet my world as my own world through the encounter with the Other. But this also means the real presupposition of being a self builds on the recognition of the ethical demand.

The alienation of the Other in relation to the self is a condition for the realization of the self as self through the ethical relation.[55] This is why the self in the encounter with the face of the Other can no longer have a technical and objectified relation to

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[52] Peter Kemp: *Lévinas*, Anis, Århus 1992, p. 43.

[53] Emmanuel Lévinas: *Totalité et infini: essai sur l'extériorité*. – La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961. Le livre de poche Biblo Essais, Paris 1990, p. 214.

[54] Marie-Anne Lescourret: *Emmanuel Lévinas*, Champs, Flamarion, (1994) Paris 1996, p. 242.

[55] Emmanuel Lévinas: *Totalité et infini: essai sur l'extériorité*. – La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961. Le livre de poche Biblo Essais, Paris 1990, p. 28.

the world. Instead, demand for not killing and taking care of the Other emerges as central for consciousness. The imperative never to kill or murder and instead take care of the Other becomes, therefore, the most important ethical imperative.[56] In the end, ontology ought to presuppose this ethical encounter and ethics becomes first philosophy.

Accordingly, Lévinas places the face of the Other in the center of his phenomenological analysis. The eye's sight shows itself in the face and it manifests the light of being. We live in relation to things surrounded by a sphere of intimacy and homeliness. We become aware of the world and its vulnerability through ourselves. When the Other appeals to the self, the immanent pleasure is dissolved and the self goes beyond its immanent relation to itself. But the Other does not intervene, as in Sartre's formulation, from the outside to destroy the self; instead, the Other is a source of pleasure and happiness in life by rendering perspective on the self as relative. The meaning of the Other is in relation to the infinite.[57] The objectifying gaze does not characterize the face of the Other. Face-to-face encounter with the other manifests in the face of the Other coming from the outside. The face-to-face encounter witnesses something infinite that manifests itself in the life of the Other. It also witnesses the inviolability of the Other. The imperative not to kill becomes a general ethical demand of sympathy, care, and respect for the Other as in his or her vulnerability and fragility.

In connection with this, the encounter with the Other also reveals universal ethical duties. Lévinas further develops his ethics in *Autrement qu'être et au-delà de l'essence* (1974) (translated into English as *Otherwise than Being*).[58] In this context, Lévinas develops his concepts of the self in relation to the enjoyment and responsibility for the Other. Enjoyment is linked to egoism and suffering, but this also means that it is the relation to the self of enjoyment that is the basis for the ethical responsibility of the Other. Lévinas argues that it is necessary to have understood the meaning of the life of the individual, one's gift giving and enjoyment of the Other, to be open to the infinite responsibility for the Other. However, it is also necessary to go beyond the self in order to really be responsible for the Other. The other, who transcends, dominates, and relates to me is also the stranger far from me, and in this sense one for whom I feel devotion and responsibility. The relation between the self and the Other becomes asymmetrical. The Other implies a devotion of the self and the self receives responsibility for the Other.[59] Lévinas can, in this sense, distinguish between the real encounter with the Other and the reifying and violent meeting where one only considers the Other as an object and stays in the immanent sphere of the self. In real talk and communication one both transcends oneself and reaches the infinity of the Other that is expressed in the meaningful world of the Other. Both the living spoken word that reminds us about

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[56] Ibid., p. 235.

[57] Ibid., p. 205.

[58] Emmanuel Lévinas: *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence*. La Haye, Nijhoff 1974.

[59] Peter Kemp: *Lévinas*, Anis, Århus 1992, p. 51.

the speech of the other and the written words are "traces" that express the living speech of the Other, but that continuously must be overcome in order to make the other present in the universe of immanence.[60]

In *La mort et le temps* (1992) Lévinas accomplishes his criticism of Heidegger's philosophy. Following Bergson, he attacks Heidegger's theory about the connection between being and time.[61] In his ontological and metaphysical philosophy of totality in *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger conceives time as being-until-death. According to Lévinas, this conception of time is built on a pure philosophy of immanence, where time is exclusively seen in relation to the self, and time as the Other and infinite is totally excluded. Lévinas emphasizes that death also receives its significance through the Other. It is the death of the Other that makes the future mythical and marks the temporality of time. The Other emerges as a trace in time who also appears in the spoken word that we relate to. The trace of the Other in writing, speech, and time problematizes the world we dominate and relate to. Lévinas agrees with Sartre's description of the Other in *L'être et le néant*: the Other is not being (*trou dans l'être*). The Other transcends being. The Other breaks down my given order and becomes the origin of my understanding and access to the infinite.

The possible death of the other in time also signifies, therefore, that time is the consciousness that defeat is close and human freedom is threatened by destruction. The relation to death breaks the thought of totalization and opens an ethical dimension in human life. The Other manifests himself or herself as beyond being. According to Lévinas, death means that the closed totality that destroys the relation to the Other is transcended. Death is the end of the attempt of the subject to control its own immanent sphere. On the one hand, death is against the subject as a killer that will destroy existence. On the other, the traces of God evoke the endless responsibility for the Other because temporality and finitude reminds us about the finitude of life and the vulnerability of the Other.

As an extension of this defense for the "humanism of the Other," Lévinas's ethical thought can be said to be the foundation of a phenomenological political philosophy that breaks with the antihumanism of Marxism and structuralism. In this political philosophy, Lévinas argues for a post Judeo-Christian humanism that makes the difficult absolute responsibility of freedom conditional of existence on the other human person. In *A l'heure des nations* (1988), the messianic expectation of salvation expresses the search for the star of reconciliation.[62] The star symbolizes the vulnerability of human existential nakedness that expresses the infinite and absolute responsibility that is, at once, both existential and political. As a sad but also beautiful expression of this expectation, Lévinas died Christmas night in 1995.[63]

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[60] Ibid., p. 54.

[61] Emmanuel Lévinas: *La mort et le temps,* Grasset, Paris 1991.

[62] Emmanuel Lévinas: *A l'Heure des nations*, éditions de Minuit, Paris 1988.

[63] Marie-Anne Lescourret: *Emmanuel Lévinas*, Champs, Flamarion, (1994) Paris 1996.

Derrida, with his philosophy of time and difference, was clearly inspired by Lévinas. In connection with the ethical turn of deconstruction, Derrida has many times argued for a radicalization of Lévinas's responsibility for the Other in his or her otherness.[64] Derrida uses Lévinas's separation between ontology and ethics as the foundation of ethics as the unconditional respect for the Other as other. This idea of ethics as first philosophy has had an important impact on French philosophy after Lévinas.

Lévinas's phenomenological philosophy of ethics and responsibility contributes an important concept of responsibility that goes beyond a purely legal notion of responsibility in organizations. In his Talmudic lectures, Lévinas also proposed a philosophy of money that helps to link his phenomenology to economics. Lévinas contributed to the foundations of business ethics by giving us the theoretical means to formulate an extension of the concept of responsibility towards institutional or corporate responsibility, where responsibility concerns not only individuals but also deals with the responsibility of institutional collectivities.

According to Lévinas in *Totalité et infini* the fundamental responsibility for the other manifests itself in the break with the metaphysics of identity.[65] Lévinas moves from ontology towards ethics that he considers as primordial philosophy. In this primary philosophy, absolute responsibility for the other human being becomes a fundamental fact of life. Lévinas considers traditional metaphysics as a movement from being as essence and material being towards the other that is expressed in the indefinite conception of the infinite in the face of the Other. According to Lévinas, responsibility is something that imposes itself on the self with the view of the face of the Other. Lévinas says that one is captured (*ligoté*) or slave of the Other (*otage d'autrui*) when one has been confronted with the infinity of the demand of the Other in the face of the Other. With the phenomenology of the face, Lévinas shows us how the ethical demand is concretely manifested in human life.

We can say that we are not only responsible in the strict legal sense of attribution and imputation of an action. Responsibility is not only based on the fault or on an action that is not justifiable, and punishment is not sufficient as retribution. Our responsibility is much heavier. We are responsible for the survival of humanity in all our actions.[66] This development of the concept of responsibility can also be shown in the context of the modern welfare state. This is also the foundation of corporate social responsibility, or corporate responsibility with strong metaphysical and ontological foundations in the ethics of responsibility as proposed by Lévinas.

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[64] Jacques Derrida: *Politiques de l'amitié*, Éditions de Minuit, Paris 1994.

[65] Emmanuel Levinas: *Totalité et infini, Essai sur l'extériorité*, Grasset, Paris 1990 (1961).

[66] Paul Ricœur: "Le concept de responsabilité" i *Esprit* 1993. Aussi dans *Le Juste*, Paris 1994, p. 41ff. Ricœur montre que nous devrons trouver "La juste distance entre les trois idées d'imputabilité, de solidarité et de risque partagé". Voir aussi: Paul Ricœur sur Hans Jonas: *Lectures 1, Politiques*, Paris 1991. "Postface au temps de la responsabilité", s. 270.

On this basis, we can see how Lévinas's approach provides the basis for a new concept of justice and leadership.[67] It can be argued that good leadership is the practice of justice on the basis of the recognition of the universal responsibility for the ethical demand of the other. Justice should not be subordinated to managerial power and oppression, but include a wider concern for the humanity of vulnerable beings in organizations. The foundation of this concept of leadership is the ethical caring for the Other as a concrete dignified human person with a face expressing the ethical demand. True leadership justice is then grounded in the respect for the singularity of the Other.[68]

Lévinas's ethical philosophy can be used as the foundation for the definition of the concept of accountability within accounting research.[69] What is needed in the present moment of the globalization of the economy, with less national regulation, is a broader and more ethical concept of accountability and Lévinas can help us to develop this concept. Accountability is not only a technical term, but a fundamental term of moral responsibility. Lévinas's philosophy opens to something that is distinct from self-interest within economic theory and the practice of accounting.[70] Economic and corporate accountability must be based on this opening to accountability for the Other.

It can also be argued that ethical responsibility and awareness of the Other is essential in order to have innovative, creative, and dynamic experiences in organizations. In this sense, creativity and dynamism depend on openness to the Other.[71] In this sense, we should not only interpret the encounter with the Other in a strict ethical sense, but we can see openness to the Other as essential to the entrepreneurial and innovative processes in the firm.[72] The transformation of the self in creativity reflects this process of openness to the Other, because of the vulnerability and insecurity of this process of innovation.

Lévinas's managerial ethics is therefore a deontological ethics of responsibility that views the manager and the corporation as the ones who serve the well-being of the individual in the corporation. It is an ethics of alterity based on the concern for the Other.[73] It is the ethical duty of the manager to respond to the ethical demand of the Other and this is the basis for the construction of the traditional managerial concerns. Asymmetry, responsibility, and caring justice are essential concepts for the business ethics of Lévinas. This perspective on business ethics emphasizes how

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[67] Carl Rhodes: "Ethics, alterity and the rationality of leadership justice", *Human Relations* 65 (10):1311–1331.

[68] Ibid., p. 326.

[69] Tera Shearer: "Ethics and accountability: from the for-itself to the for-the-other", *Accounting, Organizations and Society* 27 (2002):541–573.

[70] Ibid., p. 542.

[71] Sarah Louise Muhr: "Ethical interruption and the creative process: A reflection on the new" *Culture and Organization*, Vol. 16, No. 1, March 2010, pp. 73–86.

[72] Ibid., p. 79.

[73] Mollie Painter-Morland and René Ten Bos: *Business ethics and continental Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press 2011, p. 156.

ethical responsibility goes beyond the sphere of the individual benefit towards infinite responsibility for the Other. The corporation has to search for genuine responsibility for the Other. Ethical leadership finds a foundation in this metaphysics of the Other.

Accordingly, from the phenomenological perspective we can say that the virtue of responsibility is liberated from its legal closure and that it becomes important as the foundation of the discussion of the intersubjective relation, sustainable development, and responsibility of science and technology. It leads further to state responsibility for economic life as an institutional responsibility for the common good in society.

Chapter 5
Marxism in French Philosophy: From Existence to Structure and Beyond

During the nineteenth century, a strong worker's movement emerged in France. In the twentieth century, a communist party (Parti Communiste Français, PCF) that was close to the USSR became prominent. Even though the worker's movement—notably, Léon Blum's alliance of left-wing movements, Front Populaire—introduced Karl Marx in the 1930s, there had been little focus on Marxism as a philosophy until the middle of the twentieth century, when the discussion of Marxism after the war became aligned with the developments of the communist states in eastern Europe and China. Raymond Aron (1905–1983), with his critical irony, described Marxism as "opium for the intellectuals."[1] Many intellectual figures in French philosophy took part of these discussions about Marxism and politics in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Marxist intellectuals could use Marxist philosophy to understand the modern economic system, the role of work in modern society, human alienation, the monopolization of capital, the relation between states and markets, the significance of the forces of production, technologization and automation of industry, and the manipulation of society through the needs and wishes of its citizens. In this sense, Marxism provides a critical perspective on fundamental dimensions of business ethics and philosophy of management. At the same time, they could use Marxism to relate to the problems of the time and to the role of western imperialism and the liberation of third world colonies from colonial powers, in particular in connection with the foreign policy of France and the war with Algeria in 1958. The problem was whether Marxism could be saved as a theory of history and society based on the historical mission that an empowered proletariat could help to create a free society, when it was clear that the communist states did not constitute an historical paradise, but instead were totalitarian and hierarchical mechanisms of oppression. Many intellectuals left the communist party during the 1950s because they became more and more skeptical of developments in the USSR. Most of these intellectuals

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[1] Raymond Aron: *Marxismes imaginaires, d'une sainte famille à l'autre*, Gallimard, Paris 1969 og Raymond Aron: *L'opium pour les intellectuels*, Paris 1955.

nevertheless had an impact on the formulation of the theoretical basis of the revolt in 1968.

The development of French Marxism after 1945 was particularly influenced by Kojève's lectures about Hegel, which were also inspired by Marx. Kojève opened the way for a totally new understanding of Marx by taking into account the theory of dialectics by the young Marx, and understanding Hegel as a concrete historical thinker, and interpreting the master slave dialectics as the driving force of history.

By reinterpreting Hegel's philosophy to be a description of the historical oppression of the poor proletariat, it was now possible to go from Hegel to Marx and understand history not as a struggle for recognition, but as a conflict between different classes. At the same time, a Marxist interpretation could help to see history as the struggle of humanity to master nature with help from work and technology. Kojève's existentialist and political reading of Hegel from a Marxist perspective contributed to the discovery of Marx as a philosophical classic.[2] By making the struggle for recognition and the effort to overcome human alienation a central element in both philosophies, a bridge between Hegel's idealism and Marx's materialism was established.

This connection between history and alienation had been analyzed by the Hungarian philosopher Georg Lukács (1885–1971) in his 1923 book, *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*, which focuses on alienation and reification of human beings. Lukács defined alienation as false class consciousness of the subject that determined its experiences, when it was captured in the contradictions between freedom and the necessity of bourgeois thought without having an understanding of the change in the concrete historical reality. Only as a self-conscious class could the proletariat overcome oppositions and become the driving force of history.

Lukács's concept of reification of the consciousness of the proletariat implied that consciousness has the character of being a thing, an object, or merchandise. Lukács, who in his youth had been inspired by Bergson's idea of immediacy in consciousness, had been reintroduced in France by Lucien Goldman (1913–1970), who analyzed reification of human everyday life and emphasized the active role of consciousness in creating the self-consciousness of the classes, and in the relations between individual and collective, economy and culture.[3] The dialectical philosophy should, according to Lukács, be used to analyze human alienation under the conditions of capitalism and investigate the possibilities of emancipation of consciousness under this objectification.

Kojève's reading of Marx influenced Henri Lefebvre (1901–1991), Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty. The question was whether it was possible to unite Marxism and existentialism and also whether it was possible for Marxism to predict and justify the developments in eastern Europe.[4] In the beginning, it was Merleau-Ponty who tried to unify Marxism and existentialism. After some time Sartre became more and more

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[2] Peter Kemp: *Marxismen i Frankrig*, Vintens forlag, København 1978, p. 67ff.

[3] Mark Poster: *Existential Marxism in Postwar France*, Princeton 1975.

[4] Peter Kemp: *Marxismen i Frankrig*, Vintens forlag, København 1978, p. 48ff.

involved in Marxism and communism while Merleau-Ponty became more skeptical due to Stalin's forced collectivizations and destruction of political opponents, and because of the imperialistic position of the USSR in the Korean War.

During his studies of Hegel and Marx in the 1950s, Hyppolite had a big influence of the reading of Marx inspired by Hegel that incorporates existentialist themes.[5] Among others, he used the concept of recognition to interpret Marx's historical materialism. But Hyppolite was also critical of Marx. He did not agree with Marx's conception of alienation, and he was also critical of the materialistic economic reductionism in Marxist philosophy. Hyppolite emphasized that Hegel's criticism of Adam Smith's homo oeconomicus is not so far from Marx. Hegel thought that capitalist economy changed human beings into machines and that workers became exploited in this form of production.

During the 1950s, the chief ideologist of the communist party and one of the most important intellectuals of eurocommunism, Roger Garaudy (1913–2012), mediated between Marxism and other contemporary humanistic traditions. Garaudy wrote a number of philosophical works. *La liberté* (1955) and *Perspectives de l'homme* (1959) discuss Marxism in relation to existentialism and Catholic thought. Garaudy criticizes Louis Althusser's (1918–1990) and Foucault's antihumanism in this work. Through critical Marxist consciousness the task is to create a realm of freedom. Garaudy argues that the humanistic core of existentialism and Catholic philosophy only really emerges in Marxism, which can help to overcome alienation and reach the total potential of human being. According to Garaudy, dialectics meant conflict, movement, and life.[6] He also defended Marxism after the fall of the USSR. He defended dialogue between civilizations and in 1982 he converted to Islam as a criticism of the power politics of the west. In his later years, Garaudy wrote critical books about western capitalism.

In contrast to this position, Lefebvre, who was professor at Nanterre University in Paris, argued against a determinist and scientistic reading of Marxist dialectics. His major works on Marxism were *Le matérialisme dialectique* (1939), *Logique formelle et logique dialectique* (1947), *Critique de la vie quotidienne I* (1947), *Problèmes actuels du marxisme* (1958), and *La production de l'espace* (1974). Lefebvre conceived Marxism as a philosophy of human possibilities of overcoming alienation in nature and society. Starting with the young Marx, he emphasized the human dimensions of Marxism in contrast to Marxism as a philosophy of economic laws. Lefebvre developed a philosophy of everyday sociology and founded the Marxist geography that shows how structure, ideology, and power are expressions of human bodily being in space. Lefebvre wrote a number of critical books, such as *Problèmes actuels du marxisme*, about the Marxism of Lenin and Stalin.

This debate about Marxism in French philosophy and social theory relates to philosophy of management and business ethics through the questions that it generally asks about the role of business and privately owned corporations in society. Indeed, it

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[5] These studies are collected in *Etudes sur Hegel et Marx*, PUF, Paris 1955.
[6] Roger Garaudy: *Karl Marx* (1964), Seghers, Paris 1972, pp. 132–133.

mobilizes the question about the problematic and dark sides of corporations in society, where corporations and capitalism may contribute to the alienation and oppression of the people. But it also raises questions related to the inefficiency of the state-governed economy and of the structure and development of social and corporate organization in society Indeed, the debate about Marxism provides us with the foundations of a theory of how to apply dialectics to the analysis of social and economic aspects of society, including business and organizations.

5.1   Maurice Merleau-Ponty: The Ambiguity of Dialectics

Merleau-Ponty's and Sartre's concepts of dialectics could be called existentialist Marxism. Even though Merleau-Ponty was critical towards Sartre, his thought is important for the unification of Marxism and existentialism. In the article "Materialisme et revolution" (1946), Sartre argues that it was necessary to combine existentialism and Marxism because the bureaucracy of communism had forgotten human beings and we needed a theory of revolutionary subjectivity. At the same time, in *L'existentialisme est un humanisme* (1946), he tries to define existentialism as humanistic. This did not convince the Marxists who thought that Sartre and Merleau-Ponty were alienated bourgeois intellectuals who fetishized subjectivity in a way that could not be combined with Marxism.

Merleau-Ponty's methodological proposal for the analysis of ethics of organizations and business ethics proposes a phenomenological account of human action and praxis that can be transferred to the analysis and understanding of the relation between society and organization. Merleau-Ponty can be said to develop a philosophy of social organization that is based on the recognition of the importance of human freedom for social action.

In *Phénoménologie de la perception* (1945), Merleau-Ponty criticizes the idea that Sartre's abstract notion of freedom could contribute to existentialism and Marxism. At the same time, he became more and more critical towards dogmatic Marxism. In opposition to Sartre's argumentation for revolutionary emancipation through historical materialism, Merleau-Ponty refuses a deterministic dialectics in *Humanisme og terreur* (1947), and he argues that in extreme situations one cannot see the difference between violence and morality, humanism and terror.[7] Instead, he argues that we can only justify Marxism as an ideology of waiting (*attentisme*), which critically waits on the right moment in history to realize freedom. Merleau-Ponty was not happy with Sartre's absolute concept of freedom. He emphasized that human freedom is dependent of situation and lifeworld, and that it is not the subjective but the objective conditions that condition revolution.

Merleau-Ponty was critical of a number of dogmatic ideas about the philosophy of history in dialectical materialism. The economic structures of industrial society

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[7] Merleau-Ponty: *Humanisme et Terreur*, Gallimard, Paris 1947.

had changed. One could no longer talk about a mechanical movement towards the classless society. Merleau-Ponty did not expect Soviet communism to liberate the oppressed classes. He wanted to find a third way between communism and anticommunism. He could therefore say that it was "impossible to be communist, but it was also impossible to anticommunist."[8] This philosophy considers history as an expression of the creative human community. Creativity and historicity must be connected in a concrete humanism based on the dialectics of the situation. Instead of accepting unconditional historical violence, in the revolutionary moment Marxism must be aware of its responsibility for concretely existing human beings.

Historical action is contingent and emerges in the situation that conditions the decisions. Merleau-Ponty did not refuse that violence is necessary in extreme situations, but he also thought that prudence is necessary and he doubted that violence can ever be justified. We cannot mechanically predict history, but can only capture different perspective on the manifold dimensions of actions involved in social action and social change in history and revolutions.

According to Merleau-Ponty, this implies a humanistic perspective on social change and a critical attitude to violence and terror. A dialectical thought that understands the ambiguity of the situation cannot be naïve, but must understand the conditions of real politics. At the same time, it must refuse a misunderstood Marxism that wants to make the goal justify the means and implement its ideology. Merleau-Ponty argued for a new humanist Marxism that is based on responsibility for the other human being, and that comprehends human concrete freedom as a third way between liberalism and communism.[9]

In the years after *Humanisme et terreur,* Merleau-Ponty became even more skeptical of Marxism. He articulated this in a criticism of the Marxist turn in Sartre's philosophy. With the articles "Les Communistes et la Paix" (1952–1953) and "Le Phantôme de Staline" (1956), Sartre approached a Marxist philosophy of history. After reading "Les Communistes et la Paix" 1954, Merleau-Ponty left the editorial committee of *Les Temps modernes,* and the disagreement between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty was very clear. Later, Merleau-Ponty published *Les avantures de la dialectique* (1955), which refuses the philosophy of history. Merleau-Ponty argues that Sartre's attempt to combine existentialism and Marxism is inconsistent. The idea of a universal movement in history is wrong. History expresses an open manifold sequence of events, which only can be described through a critical theory of history that analyzes many processes of rationalization. Merleau-Ponty finally refuses the idea of the proletariat's chosen historical mission as pure mythology.

Merleau-Ponty argued that Sartre, who expresses his ultra-Bolchevistic Marxism in "Les Communistes et la Paix," did not understand the significance of a common human historical and cultural world that is built up around our intercultural symbols. The meaning of existence manifests itself in the cultural mediations that

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., p. 177.

we call culture and history.[10] Merleau-Ponty deepened his philosophical criticism of Sartre in *Phénoménologie de la perception*. While Sartre emphasized "negation" and "engagement" as central concepts, Merleau-Ponty based human action on a closer connection between freedom and situation. Human freedom is always dependent on its situation. Merleau-Ponty refused Sartre's idea of praxis as based on an isolated, abstract freedom. He stated that human freedom is dependent on a common world (*intermonde*) that is the basis for concrete action and meaning creation.

During the 1950s, Sartre's even more radical Marxism consisted of a justification of communist politics from the perspective of the poor proletariat. Sartre emphasized the historical mission of the proletariat that was expressed in the leading role of the party towards revolution. The proletariat had to create itself out of nothingness as historical subject.[11] Merleau-Ponty thought that Sartre now wanted to justify Marxism from the perspective of his own philosophy. Sartre considered human beings as expressions of the historical self-creation of the proletariat through revolution. The party is pure negativity and the revolutionary moment becomes the humanistic truth.

Sartre considered violence as an expression of the permanent revolution of humanity.[12] Merleau-Ponty thought that Sartre ended up in a humanistic terror and that this justified violence for him. Sartre realized his pessimistic conception of struggle (between freedom and consciousness as spontaneous self-creation) as being something that also is valid for human social reality. But this is totally wrong because Sartre had a concept of a mediated world.[13] His philosophy only leads to irrational activism, which radically recreates human beings with the help of violence.

Merleau-Ponty argued that Sartre's philosophy of praxis becomes unreflected decisionism that praises violence and struggle. Sartre's concept of freedom is abstract and without content. Sartre can, therefore, only be at a distance from the concrete situation. He becomes a spectator; a kind of bourgeois sleazy rat that wants to be engaged, but will always be at distance from the reality of the proletariat. Merleau-Ponty argued that Sartre's involvement stays abstract and the he never can capture the oppression of modern man, because it an abstract engagement for everything and for everybody who cannot mediate human beings in the intermonde.

In this context, Aron argued that Merleau-Ponty and Sartre are, in reality, rather close to each other in their understanding of the situation.[14] This is documented by the fact that the later Sartre seems to have emphasized this development in *Critique de la raison dialectique* (1960), when he emphasizes that dialectics is based on human mediations in institutions, intersubjectivity, and culture.

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[10] Raymond Aron: *Marxismes imaginaires, d'une sainte famille à l'autre*, Paris 1969, p. 101ff.

[11] Maurice Merleau-Ponty: *Les avantures de la dialectique* (1955), Paris 1995, p. 135.

[12] Ibid., p. 185.

[13] Ibid., p. 192.

[14] Raymond Aron: *Marxismes imaginaires*, Paris 1970.

Merleau-Ponty proposed a vision of human action that is not based on dialectical necessity and universal laws. This has implications for a discussion of organizational ethics. If we want to understand situated action we need to focus on bodily encounters in the concrete world of meaning in the organization. Organizational development cannot happen with force and violence from without, but must happen from within: in the concrete movements of action and mutual involvement of the actors in the lifeworld of the institution or organization. Dialectics can be combined with phenomenology and existentialism in order to understand this mediation of subjectivity in the social world of human work and action, but the subjective experience cannot be reduced to objective structures of dialectics.

5.2 Jean-Paul Sartre: Circularity of Dialectics

Even though critical existential Marxism was a difficult position in the 1950s due to criticism by Merleau-Ponty and others, Sartre tried to formulate a synthesis between Marxism and existentialism in *Critique de la raison dialectique* (1960), which was the culmination of participating in the 15 year long debate about dialectical materialism in France after the war. In this work, Sartre asks about the possibility of formulating a dialectical philosophy of history. Volume one investigates the dialectical foundation for free praxis. The never fully finished volume two puts this in relation to the movement of history. Sartre wants to criticize a dogmatic Marxism. With a Kantian foundation he wants to give a foundation for a critical dialectics. He questions the conditions of dialectics. As a response to Merleau-Ponty's criticism in *Les avantures de la dialectique,* Sartre wants to rethink existentialism within Marxism.

The background of Sartre's investigation of the relation between individuals, groups, organizations, institutions, and history is how a society, for example communist Russian after the October revolution in 1917, ended in totalitarianism and terror despite its good intentions to realize the ideals of Marxist philosophy. According to dogmatic Marxism, this would be impossible because the dictatorship of the proletariat was necessarily supposed to lead to a classless society. This was a problem, of course, since the historical reality stood in sharp contrast.

Sartre's critical theory of the possibility of dialectics took its point of departure with this problem that expresses such a serious attack on Marxism. It is a good question whether it can be saved as a theory of action, organization, and institution building, and as a philosophy of history. Paradoxically, it is exactly the failure of Stalinism and dogmatic Marxism that manifested an historical and epistemological condition for the possibility of asking the question about the possibilities and limitations of dialectics, because the metaphysical myth about the eternal truth and infallibility of Marxism had been denied. However, this does not mean that Sartre defended the dictatorship of the proletariat or argued for a dogmatic theory of communist organization. On the contrary, critical Marxism is only possible when the ghost of Stalin has been definitively killed.

Sartre provides a general framework for analyzing organizations in society that can indeed be applied to capitalism and organization of the business firm; however, first and foremost, Sarte tried to provide the general foundations for a theory of social movement and organization.

The Marxist demonstration of the social conditions of individuals, organizations, institutions, power relations, political suppression, and the significance of material reality for human beings, are all necessary reflections as long as human beings remain oppressed. Only when human beings are no longer dependants on social necessity, when the kingdom of freedom has become a reality, could Marxism no longer have any actuality.

Nevertheless, Marxism should not forget that history and social organization is about singular human beings. The point of departure for criticizing dogmatic Marxism is that concrete freedoms in interaction with their concrete circumstances—not abstract totalities—are the motivating power or driving force of history. The multiplicity of individual actions constitutes the ontological preconditions for organizational development and for the teleology of history.

Sartre proposed his progressive-regressive method for analyzing social institutions, organizations, and of the laws of historical development. This method can be conceived as a development of existentialist psychoanalysis in *L'être et le néant*. Sartre's progressive regressive method is a type of historical hermeneutics of social institutions that tries to conceive individual action and innovation within an historical and institutional horizon.

In order to investigate the concrete role of dialectics in historical development, Sartre argued that it is necessary to determine the basic principles of human praxis. Primordial social reciprocity is created by human freedom, that is, praxis depends on human anthropology that is the ontological structure of human life based on wants and desires, and freedom negating nature in order to satisfy basic human needs. Nevertheless, sociality and history develop in battle and conflict, where primordial praxis degenerates into suppression and reification in institutions of domination. Sartre determined these oppressed forms of organization of subjectivity as "serial" practico-inert forms of community that constitute the social being of the self. When he investigated the emergence of these "perverted" forms of social intersubjectivity, Sartre wanted to unveil that historical processes of organizational totalization contain other possibilities of interaction in positive convergence with the forms of being of human freedom. The significance of this concept of practice for theory of organization is expressed in the relation between freedom and necessity and the role of counter finality in social practice. In other words, how positive reciprocity as an ideal for good organizational behavior turns into practico-inert forms, and how this tension contributes to our understanding of the work of dialectical totalization in the historical development of organizational forms.

Through his phenomenological analysis of work, Sartre discovered that one worker in fact works with the other in order to satisfy their common needs and wants, but also that the other worker can become an opponent who competes in

oppression and mutual alienation.[15] When the individual worker unveils the world as human freedom, project, and praxis, he or she is confronted with the being of other people and encounters a fundamental convergence between their projects, namely the goal to abolish their needs and wants by transforming material reality in work. It is through this transformational nature of work that we understand the significance of organizational structures and of the dialectical interaction with the nature of other human beings. This allows individual human freedoms to be united in a common project of overcoming shortages and satisfying needs and wants. This unification occurs in a praxis space (*champ pratique*). Social and organizational reality can be conceived as a plurality of such united groups of human beings (*pluralité d' unifications*).[16] This dialectical plurality develops further into a plurality of dialectical totalizations that naturally also counteract each other.

This phenomenological analysis of the relation between individual praxis and the social space is a regressive analysis that makes the determination of the basic forms of social reciprocity that are implicit in every intersubjective praxis in organizations and institutions possible. In order to determine this reciprocity, Sartre applied the concepts of anthropology from Lévi-Strauss and Mauss. Sartre distinguished between negative and positive reciprocity on the basis and analysis of gift exchange as a central category of socialization and institutionalization. The gift is the basis for understanding the role of reciprocity in every other social praxis.[17] The idea of the gift is paradoxical. One the one hand, the gift implies recognition of the other and it is an offer of friendship. On the other hand, however, the gift can originate in a conflict relation, an aggression that one searches to overcome through the materially mediated praxis in common work.[18] Reciprocity as a social phenomenon, a concretely experienced relation, presupposes therefore that the individual accepts and respects the Other as freedom and project of action. This reciprocity can be found in primitive societies as the basis for division of labor and social praxis, as such. Reciprocity should not be conceived as an abstract and idealistic relation, but as a concrete and material belonging together, that makes up a common project and implies a corresponding organizational structure and division of work.[19]

Sartre's anthropological determination of negative and positive reciprocity is characterized by considering social organization and institutions as a community of work, where the necessity and material conditions are emphasized as a condition for formation of community. At the same time, it is, however, his ambition to investigate the possibility for common freedom in social organization and in history in defiance of alienation and coercion. We can see parallels of this view in the origins of organizations and institutions in classical theory of socialization, for example in

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[15] Jean Paul Sartre: *Critique de la raison dialectique*, Gallimard, Paris 1960, p. 215.

[16] Jean Paul Sartre: *Critique de la raison dialectique*, Gallimard, Paris 1960, p. 217.

[17] Ibid., p. 219.

[18] Ibid., pp. 219–220.

[19] Ibid., p. 222.

the works of Rousseau, where social organization is conceived as alienation of an original natural freedom that was lost because of the necessity of work and now must be realized in the organizations of historical society. Sartre, too, seems to dream about reintroducing an original positive reciprocity where freedoms beyond alienation will find themselves again.

Sartre tries to conceive the development of organizational forms in history on the basis of these oppositions in practical space. Human reality is a battle against scarcity. Scarcity is necessary because it conditions totalization, but it is also contingent because it is possible to imagine another history without scarcity, and because the goal of human institutions in history is to overcome the necessity of work; however, the regularities of factual history determined by scarcity constitute the conflict between different organizations, human societies, and groups in their fight for obtaining material goods. When human beings are fighting against each other in order to overcome scarcity, totalizations in history are fulfilled.[20] In this process the concept of work is very important. Society emerges as a totality in interaction with material surroundings in human efforts to transcend necessity, their own needs and wants, and the basic condition of scarcity. Needs and wants, scarcity, and reciprocity are such intimately connected concepts for organizational development that they cannot be separated. In order to overcome needs, wants, and scarcity, reciprocity is necessary in order to develop efficient organizational forms, but this is also the origin of battle and conflict as formative processes for history.[21]

Sartre characterized the birth of history as the moment where radical evil determines the being of humanity as absence, deficiency, desire, needs, and wants. Scarcity is radical evil. The basic conditions of humanity are inhuman. Hunger and aggression are the conditions of society and the basis of the need for social organization. In this context, morality can only be conceived as an attempt to legitimize evil. Violence and evil between human beings is interpreted materialistically and is no longer only conceived from the perspective of the dialectics of freedom. More precisely, material substance and matter is integrated in the dialectics of intersubjectivity in organization, such as in the battle to take possession of nature, conquer scarcity, satisfy basic needs and wants, and of people to become masters over their own lives in order to get rid of deficiency and absence.

In other words, Sartre conceived the emergence of social organization and institutions as a process of unification that is conditioned by scarcity, but from the beginning is also an alienated unification that emerges in the fight against material scarcity. This is case with all social organization, whether we talk about primitive societies of nomads or highly developed technological civilizations.[22] Social organization emerges when a group of human beings are united in order to survive, in order to avoid death and negation as a result of scarcity. Economic communities, work communities, or production communities are all searching to overcome scarcity. The class struggle throughout the different courses of history is connected to the

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[20] Ibid., p. 223.

[21] Ibid., p. 243.

[22] Ibid., p. 246.

poor living conditions that human beings at different time and place have been confronted with because of scarcity. Scarcity changes human free praxis and reduces freedom to necessity so that a given social organization can survive. In this sense, Sartre conceived the study of organization, political economy, and management as the study of dealing with scarcity in history. He criticized forms of Marxism that only consider scarcity as determined by the mode of production.

In fact, it is this concept of alienation and absorption of individuals in practico-inert structures that characterizes "organizational man" in modern social institutions. We may look at seriality (*la serialité*); that is, the reduction of human beings to anonymous numbers in a line or series as an expression of total alienation of free praxis. By pointing to this example, Sartre wanted to show that battle and reciprocity are not really absent in this situation of apparent stagnation and harmony. For example, passengers waiting harmoniously for the bus could quickly come into open conflict if too many people suddenly wanted to board, or if the bus didn't arrive. The series of people waiting for the bus, does not usually unite into a group, revolting against its practico-inert being. Human freedom is powerless and dependent on the economic structures of society. Seriality implies a neutralization of the opposition between negative and positive reciprocity, because human beings become anonymous elements of the collective mechanical system.

How can we conceive different historical forms on the basis of Sartre's theory of the basis of human action? Sartre's reflections about group theory can be conceived as a systematic conceptualization of organizational development that represents an answer to this question. A group may be understood as a basic form of human organization. It constitutes a possible unification of human beings who oppose practico-inert passivity and the anonymity of seriality. A group is therefore a universal example of the possible reaction of freedom to facticity, and it can therefore be used to determine every form of praxis in its social and real forms, whether it is a work group, a firm, a corporation, a public organization, or a nongovernmental organizational form. Sartre's concept of group can be conceived as the reaction of human freedom to facticity, and be used to determine every other form of praxis simultaneously in its social and in its real forms, whether we talk about a work group, a corporation, or society conceived as a plurality of organizational groups in cooperation or conflict.

As a spontaneously emerging unity *the group in fusion* represents the emergence of freedom in a serial structure. It is a sudden *néantisation* of alienated and reified being of humanity. Sartre illustrated such group formation with the example of the assault of the Bastille during the French Revolution in 1789. The crowd in Paris was in a dangerous situation, a heated historical movement, where its life and existence were under serious threat. Fear drove the understanding that it was impossible to continue such a miserable life and that revolutionary revolt was the only way out. Freedom joined a mediated relation to the group as the foundation of common action that emerged as praxis-identity, determined by a specific aim and by the hope for a better future.[23]

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[23] Ibid., p. 481.

The group in fusion very easily meets contradictions that imply that it must develop a more firm structure if it wants to survive. The Bastille group was united in solidarity around death and fear for collective annihilation. The many dangers of the assault of the Bastille made it necessary for the group to ward off frustration and the tendency to dissolve by being conscious and maintaining itself as an acting unity. Even at the rudimentary level of the group in fusion uniting different freedoms spontaneously there is the danger of a tension between individual and common goals. Traitors can dissolve the unity of the group. And how can we maintain the unity of the group without falling back into seriality? Sartre described, in a melodramatic and ironic manner, how the members of the group invent an oath that puts individual freedom under an obligation to the group. In this sense the confederacy groups aim a maintaining group-unity in a common praxis.[24]

The common project is internalized in each of the group members through the oath sworn between them, which further maintains their freedom in relation to the aims of the group. According to Sartre, this is necessary because of the terror of the enemy and the fear that the group shall dissolve. The oath between sworn brothers is therefore determined by outer terror and inner necessity. Individuals have to testify that they submit themselves to the community by swearing an oath in order to prove their trustworthiness.[25] The oath is sworn with external powers as a sign of the obligation, for example in the name of God, even though these powers have nothing directly to do with the unity ritual of the group. An oath is not only a social contract, but a social arrangement establishing the unity of the group.

Although revolution announces a possibility of the difference of freedoms it is mostly the revolt of the group that fights against annihilation in a battle of life and death. The formation of social organization and Sartre's general ontology of organizations is based on the idea that organization emerges as a response to social necessity, determined and legitimized by common battle, fear, myth, and ideology. In the confederacy group there is already a tendency to eliminate human freedom, creating a tension between individual and organization. While the group in fusion manifests a real authentic freedom in the unity of individual and organization, the confederacy group presupposes a tension between the individual and organization and therefore emphasizes the individual's obligation to the group by committing individuals to organizations as sworn brothers (or sisters) who incorporate the values and rules of the organization. This is necessary in the dialectics of organizational development. If the organization wants to survive, it cannot remain an anarchistic group in fusion, but it must coordinate individual action and enlarge the common structures in order to promote common action as a permanent feature of the organization.

Therefore, *the organized group* can be conceived as a further development of the confederacy group. The unity of the group must be more efficient to maintain its victory over the enemy and in order to combat scarcity. The organized group

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[24] Ibid., p. 522.

[25] Ibid., p. 530.

witnesses the realization of free human praxis at the level of social organization of society. The organized group manifests the passage of the group from contingent structure to well-structured functional organization. Moreover, the organization is structured in different sections and the division of work implies programs for education and training in specific task for particular members of the organization.[26]

Sartre's concept of the organized group, or an organization as a coordinated and rule-governed structure, can be considered as a development of the idea of the 'we': a possible coordination of isolated human freedoms in order to accomplish a common project. This is emphasized but the fact that the free unity of a given work community is always defined as the negation of an external reality or is mediated through a third. It therefore never has an independent existence. The revolutionary group is united in the negation of practico-intern existing society. Social reciprocity is created in a fight against an enemy or in a conflict with material reality, and even internally in the group, the I-though relation is mediated through a third as the common unity of the group (*l' individu commun*).

These disintegrating moments of the organized group are the basis of the need for a closer cementation of the group as an organized whole. The group continues the process of sedimentation by changing the organization into an institution, which emphasizes the paradoxical duality of the group: On the one hand, this implies a development towards more power as a closed practico-intern unity and, on the other hand, a movement towards greater tension between individual and organization. New technologies for integrating the group must be developed, because there are potential tensions between the pluralities of freedoms that constitute the organization, and because these freedoms have a tendency to fall back into Otherness and alienation.

In other words, at this stage of instituting the group it has become a system dominated by anonymous structures of sovereignty. Human freedom is alienated, power is mystified, and once again we encounter mass society with its atomizing isolation of individuals in their serial roles and functions. This is the case for many large corporations and other organizations that have lost their innocence as emerging "entrepreneurial organizations" full of engagement and enthusiasm. At the same time, we should not forget that Sartre conceived the state as the victorious group that uses its own stagnating practico-inert systemic being to exploit and surprise other classes and groups in society. According to Sartre, the state is not a rational legitimate totality but simply the exercise of power of the victorious group over all others.[27]

Due to their serialization in differentiated functional structures, and even though they do not consider the sovereign group as legitimate, exploitation is possible because other groups have no means to overthrow the state. The state sovereign reacts to this powerlessness and marks the attempt of one group (e.g., managers, leaders, etc.) to solve the problem of shortage and scarcity with one form of social

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[26] Ibid., p. 548.
[27] Ibid., pp. 719–726.

organization. The members of society are required to bow and fall to their knees for the sovereign in order not to die, but also because the sovereign forms society in his/her picture. Humanity accepts serialization and the involvement in the praxis-process in life in order not to die. But the sovereign or the leader is a ghost, symbolizing the anonymous power structures of social organization and a system governed by the power of a few strong individuals who replace the dream and the hope of free praxis.[28]

Accordingly, existential Marxism proposes to use a critical form of historical dialectics of the progressive-regressive method to analyze the concept of free praxis on the basis of the combat over scarcity and shortage. This insight is used as the basis for developing the theory of organizational development in history, going from the group in fusion at the confederacy stage to the organization and institution as cemented forms of human interaction. In all these forms, the tension between human freedom and organizational action remains a central problem.

This concept of dialectics could be seen as a proposal for understanding historical development at the micro and macro level, which can have an impact in management theory when we want to understand organizations as conflict and historical structures. In this sense, we can use Sartre's theory of the ontological, dialectical, and logical structures of group organization in order to understand concrete organizational development in history. The question is whether we can determine the logic of development of concrete history and society as a plurality of organizational totalizations without ending with determinist and totalitarian explanations.[29] The answer is that the group as a metaphor for every organizational and social logic of development in its immanent structure of conflictual movement contains a tragic dynamic that potentially can lead to new structural forms, and that the social logic of oppositions in the praxis of freedom is a necessary condition for these transformations.

5.3   Althusser and Marxist Structuralism as Theoretical Antihumanism

As opposed to the humanistic criticism of antihumanistic communism by existential Marxists, Althusser developed a very different interpretation of Marxism. In contrast to existential Marxism, Althusser proposed suing structuralism to define Marxism as a strict scientific project. Althusser used the structuralist methods developed by Lévi-Strauss and his followers to criticize the humanistic Marxism of Garaudy, among others, that had influence on the communist party and reintroduced a strong antihumanistic Marxism. In this sense, Althusser developed the structuralist criticism of Marxist existentialism that Lévi-Strauss had put forward

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[28] Ibid., p. 745.
[29] Ibid., p. 753.

against Sartre. Lévi-Strauss had argued that Sartre was captured in a subjectivist Cartesianism based on the classic *cogito* and could therefore not be scientific. Lévi-Strauss did not think that Sartre's concepts of praxis, fields, and parxis-inertia could give an adequate description of social structure. At the same time, structuralists criticized existential Marxism for turning into historicism. Lévi-Strauss said that Sartre's theory about the French revolution was not science, but remained a mythical narrative. Lévi-Strauss did not recognize that Sartre had introduced the concept of structure in his philosophy of freedom.[30] Althusser's philosophy contributed to this criticism of Sartre by making a sharp distinction between historical reality and Marxism as a structural science that describes the social, economic, and material structures of society.

Althusser's contribution to business ethics and philosophy of management is to provide us with a Marxist and structuralist foundation for the study of management and business organizations as ideological forms of capitalist social organization. This is not only the basis for social critique, but rather a basis for asking philosophical questions related to the business corporation as a form of alienation and exploitation of people in complex modern society.

Althusser's structural Marxism was based on Marx's later work, and Althusser argued that we find an epistemological change in the late Marx that breaks with the humanism of his earlier thought. At the same time, we can see a strong influence on Althusser by Freud, and later Lacan, because Althusser no longer believed in the idea of the conscious subject as the driving force in history, society, or science. Althusser's antihumanism represented a criticism of the concept of the intellectual as a public moralist, as presented by intellectuals like André Malraux (1901–1976) and Sartre. Althusser thought that Marxism should be conceived as a strong theoretical science that presented the universal laws of society without any relation to ideological and political praxis.

Althusser describes his life in the book *Autobiographies* (1992).[31] He was born in Algeria and came from a rich bourgeois family. He was imprisoned for 6 years during World War II. After his release he started his study of philosophy. Upon passing his agrégation exam, Althusser became a professor at École normale supérieure, where he stayed all his professional life.[32] Althusser became world famous in the 1960s and 1970s, but his personal life was not so happy. He was psychologically ill and suffered from recurrent depression. In 1980, his life took a tragic turn because he killed his wife during a period of depression.[33] This was the end of his academic career. He was subsequently hospitalized, but released 3 years later. He lived quietly in Paris until his death in 1990.

Althusser was very close to his students and an important teacher of Foucault, Derrida Lucien Sève (b. 1926), Etienne Balibar (b. 1942), and Jacques Rancière

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[30] Mark Poster: *Existential Marxism in Postwar France*, Princeton 1975, p. 330ff.

[31] Louis Althusser: *L'avenir dure longtemps suivi de Les faits*, Autobiographies, Paris 1992.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., p. 11ff.

(b. 1940). At the beginning of his career influenced by classical political philosophy and he worked in particular on Baruch de Spinoza's (1632–1677) distinction between concept and reality and he wrote an early book on Charles Louis de Secondat Montesquieu (1689–1755). At the same time, he was influenced by the phenomenologist Jean-Toussant Desanti (1914–2002) and the Vietnamese philosopher, Tran Doc Thao (1917–1993), who was also professor at École normale supérieure for a period of time. Althusser illustrates Thao's thought through an anecdote from his teaching where he said "You are all transcendental egos and as transcendental ego's you are all equal."[34] Althusser was, with his Spinozistic point of departure, very critical towards phenomenology and the efforts of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty to describe the real world and the immediacy of the body. As he said, the concept of dog does not make any noise.[35]

Althusser's wife was a communist, and with her he engaged in communism, becoming a member of the communist party until 1980. In the 1960s, he became the most important philosopher of structuralist Marxism that became fashion among university students and Althusser argued for a scientific Marxism that was not historical philosophy. From 1964 to 1965 Althusser published his major works: *Pour Marx* (1965), which was a collection of articles written in the 1950s, and *Lire le Capital* (1965), which was published together with his students Rancière, Pierre Macherey (b. 1938), Balibar, and Roger Establet (b. 1938).

Althusser proposed a structuralist reading of Marx's materialism and economic thought. He felt that dialectical materialism should be cleansed of Hegelian and existentialist themes. He wanted to change the dialectical method into a structural model of analysis. Althusser founded his structuralist philosophy on a concept of epistemology that was inspired by Spinoza, who sharply distinguished between the concept of thought and the empirical reality that should be captured by concept.

This structuralist approach refuted Sartre's dialectic as ideology and criticized the humanistic concept of alienation in the sociology of Lefebvre. It was considered to be ideological to speak about subjective freedom in history. Sartre was conceived as a bourgeois humanistic idealist.[36] In this way, Althusser delivered the theoretical foundation for the critique of ideology that became very popular at Western universities.

Althusser's method consisted of presupposing a break and discontinuity between Marxism as a historical ideology and a theoretical structural system. Dialectical materialism is a theory about forms of praxis in the social formation. Society consists of different praxis forms (*pratiques*) that are submitted to structural transformations in historical development.

Althusser argued that Marx made a distinction between logic and history. The analysis of logical structures is not empirical even though it captures different forms of knowledge. Althusser distinguished between what is real and the ideas of

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[34] Ibid., p. 168ff.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Mark Poster: *Existential Marxism in Postwar France*, Princeton 1975, p. 354ff.

knowledge that are the essence of reality. Echoing Spinoza, he conceived of a true idea as different from its object. A concrete circle is different from the idea of the circle even thought the idea of the circle contains the essence of the empirical circle. In knowledge, reality is reproduced with a logical structure that is, at the same time, different from history and from the concrete life of the subject. Epistemology is a generalizing production of knowledge that captures the object through abstraction.

The production of knowledge moves through a number of generalizations in order to capture the dynamics of the forms of reality. Conceptualization is a necessary break with the empirical reality. Marx's break with the individual in order to propose a structural perspective on surplus value is an expression of such a generalization.[37] The distinction between ideology and science as a decisive form for this conceptual development is another. Philosophy should not properly be about consciousness but express a production of concepts. It is required to function as an apparatus of thought that reflects the natural and social reality. Althusser rejected historical materialism by emphasizing that theory should not be reduced to reality.[38] Philosophy is not description of existing knowledge but the recognition of the conditions of possibility of this knowledge.

Pour Marx and *Lire le Capital* critisize every historical and subjective reading of Marx. Marx's thought is separate into four parts: the works of youth (1840–1844); the works of change (1845–1857); the maturing works (1845–1857); and the mature works (1857–1883).[39] Althusser held the opinion in his more youthful works, Marx was influenced by a humanistic liberal ideology and worked with an anthropological problem of human community, freedom, and alienation that was not yet scientific thought.

Althusser argues that only in his analysis of political economy in *Das Kapital* had Marx liberated himself from his early anthropological thought about history and alienation. Althusser wants to clean philosophy of the ideologization of thought as unscientific myths; therefore, he emphasizes that the late Marx makes an epistemological break with his early philosophy in order to develop Marxism as scientific philosophy.

The idea is that Marxism unmasks bourgeois ideology by showing how the political and cultural reality is determined by underlying economic structures.[40] Ideology is conceived as a system of structural representations that are determined by the material conditions of life, which are reflected in the imaginary representations of ideology. After all, the superstructure has its foundation in the economic basis even though we ordinarily admit that the political and cultural forms have a relative autonomy in relation to the conditions of production.

[37] Louis Althusser: *Pour Marx* (1965), Maspero, Paris 1975, p. 195.

[38] Jean-Pierre Cotton: *La pensée de Louis Althusser*, nouvelle recherché, Paris 1979, p. 95.

[39] Louis Althusser: *Pour Marx* (1965), Maspero, Paris 1975, p. 27.

[40] Louis Althusser: *Lire le Capital*, Maspero, Paris 1965, p. 85.

Althusser characterizes the dialectical mediation between basis and superstructure through the notion of "overdetermination." In the different relations of knowledge and through historical periods, the so-called epistemic relation between basis and superstructure is expressed in the way that the two structures mutually affect each other. The relations of production are, in the end, the driving force in the creation of the structures of society.

Althusser focuses on the conceptual structures in these different forms of knowledge and determines his philosophy, inspired by Lenin, as a kind of "hyperempericism," meaning that the theoretical superstructure is based on the economic and material conditions that reflect the oppositions in the complex social structures of society. Althusser conceives the historical epoch as a complex unity that is reflected in the power structures of the relations of production. He thinks that the historical reality of society is determined by some objective structural connections that lie behind the actions of conscious human subjects.

It is on this basis that he proposes a structuralist rejection of the concept of alienation by the humanists. According to the structuralists, Marxist concepts of dignity and individuality represent ideological representations. Neither a subject nor human nature exist in a way that can be realized in a liberal state.[41] Existentialist Marxism belongs to ideological humanism that is an unconscious structural system of representation that reflects the dominating political power structure. According to Althusser, it is a necessary part of structural Marxism to go through this criticism of ideology in order to reach a new real humanism that is based on the scientific knowledge about the dialectical structures of society.[42]

In *Lire Le Capital* Althusser proposes his strict scientific reading of Marx. He emphasizes that Marx, by analyzing the logic of the structures of capital, contributed significantly to overcoming the naive anthropology of classical economists such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo (1772–1823), who took their starting point in individual actors. In contrast to them, Marx understood that the actions of the individual should be conceived structurally in relation to the forces and conditions of production. The actions of the individual are also a function of his/her relation to a social class. Marx revealed economic laws by seeing the combinations and structures that determine economic life. The economic system is considered from a perspective of totality, which conceives work and capital as function of general structural scientific laws.

Althusser pays particular consideration to Marx's analysis of surplus value as central in the economic creation of value. This is not an historical or empirical problem but a theoretical explanation of the conceptual presuppositions of the economy. Marx presented an analysis of the relation between work and use, exchange, and surplus value as an expression of the laws of the formation of capital. Althusser emphasizes that Marx presented the dialectical contradictions of this process. The concept of surplus value was not sufficiently analyzed by the classical economists. They did not

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[41] Louis Althusser: *Pour Marx* (1965), Maspero, Paris 1975, p. 159.

[42] Ibid., p. 254.

understand the formal basis of value formation in the conditions of production, and in different praxis forms of society. Althusser maintains that society as a totality consists of a complex interaction between relatively autonomous and different economic, political, ideological, technical, and scientific forms of praxis that altogether function as the material basis for value formation.

Althusser is critical towards Sartre's theory of the free action of historical subjects as negative totalizations of the existing totality. He develops instead a concept of causality between structures. Here, subjects are not free individuals; rather they appear as anonymous carriers of structures. They contribute to defining and distributing social relations. Althusser argues for a structural causality where praxis forms are produced and reproduced in a line of logically structured effects in accumulated oppositions.

From the perspective of his scientific reading of the logic of capital Althusser does not want to exclude social change in given totalities of societies. He mentions the Russian revolution as an example of one such kind of structural transformation. In interactions with the imperial state, all oppositions in the capitalist system resemble each other, and thus the communist revolution became the carrier of structural change.

Althusser describes structural transformations as an epistemological break that is installed by the explosion of a given cultural order.[43] These breaks emerge in tensional historical conjectures where the structural logic motivates the changes in forms of production. Althusser sharply refuses that this change is conditioned by a consciously acting subject. The late Marx understood that one can determine historical praxis by going behind human reality in order to determine the structural regularities of scientific laws. Society should not be explained from the subjective perspective of a particular individual, but as a structural reality that determines the actions of individuals.[44]

Althusser emphasizes that such a description of society's scientific structural regularities, which is the essence of the theoretical antihumanist approach, is the first step towards a real practical humanism that is not destroyed by ideological misunderstandings.[45] It is necessary to keep the head cold and the heart warm if the revolution is supposed to succeed.[46] This Marxist revolt against the rationally acting economic human being should be considered from the perspective of Lacan's critique of the narcissistic self-conscious subject. For both Lacan and Althusser, the criticism of ideological illusions is the first step towards real human liberation.

Althusser's structural Marxism places Marx in a classical tradition for political philosophy. Spinoza's philosophy of the universal and the particular, of truth as a

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[43] Louis Althusser: *L'avenir dure longtemps suivi de Les faits, Autobiographies*, Grasset, Paris 1992, p. 177ff.

[44] Ibid., p. 177ff.

[45] Ibid., p. 177ff.

[46] Jean-Pierre Cotton: *La pensée de Louis Althusser*, nouvelle recherché, Paris 1979, p. 112.

process without end, and as the drive of cognition (*conatus*), are as important for Althusser's materialism as what Heidegger calls paths in the forest (*Holzwege*).[47] Pictorially speaking, "the idealist knows where he is going when he takes the train, while the materialist jumps on the train without knowing its direction."[48]

Althusser emphasizes that history is process without a subject, a structural play between forms of praxis and classes that structure history. Marxism is the study of the social classes in relation to the hegemonic structure of the state. Here, we can distinguish between the power of the state that expresses the dominating class, and the ideological apparatus of the state, including the church, the family, the school, political parties, et cetera.[49]

Accordingly, Althusser provides us with a comprehensive structural social theory that proposes a Marxist critique of contemporary ideologies in society. This is first of all a theory of political economy that tries to capture the essential structures of society; however, this theory can also be proposed as the foundation of institutional and organizational analysis. Here, it is important to focus on the hidden economic structures that determine the ideology of a specific organization. This ideology is expressed in the hidden power structures and value norms that are expressed by this organization. Following Althusser, we need to go beyond the humanistic interpretation to reach the hidden and unconscious power structures of the organization in order to provide a real emancipatory potential to organizational life and existence. Althusser combines Lacan's concept of the unconscious with a broader social and political critique of an ideological perspective on organizational analysis.

5.4   Rancière, Balibar, and Badiou: Marxism Today

Authors like Rancière, Balibar, and Alain Badiou (b. 1937) can each in different ways be said to present a political philosophy that continues the Marxist philosophy of Althusser. Rancière was a professor at the University of Paris-VIII in the suburb of Saint Denis in Paris, where he worked on a radical concept of democracy and the concept of politics in the process of emancipation. Applied to organizations, this approach proposed a democratic restructuration of organizational practice and process.

Balibar was a professor at the University of Paris-X, Nanterre. He has worked on different elements of Marxism in political theory during his career. Like other Althusserians he was also inspired by the radical political philosophy of Spinoza. In addition to his work on Marx, the recent book, *Violence et civilité: lectures et*

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[47] Louis Althusser: *L'avenir dure longtemps suivi de Les faits, Autobiographies*, Grasset, Paris 1992, p. 211.

[48] Ibid., p. 161ff.

[49] Nicos Polantzas: *Pouvoirs politique et classes sociales*, (1968) Paris 1971.

autres essais de philosophie politique from 2010, has been an important contribution to political philosophy.[50]

Badiou, who describes himself as a Leninist and Maoist, may also be conceived as a philosopher who belongs to this Marxist philosophy coming from the readings of Marx and Althusser. Badiou is a strong defender of solidarity with the working class in his political philosophy, which includes *Peut-on penser la politique?* from 1985.[51]

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[50] Etienne Balibar: *Violence et civilité. Lectures et autres essais de philosophie politique*, Éditions Galilée, 2010.

[51] Alain Badiou: *Peut-on penser la politique?*, Paris, éd. Seuil, 1985.

Chapter 6
Structuralism, Structural Anthropology, and Social Theory

The structuralist movement in French philosophy and in the human and social sciences emerged during the 1950s and 1960s. The structural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss led among others to the new developments of these sciences. Lévi-Strauss proposed a new structuralist foundation of anthropology by taking into account the recent innovations in the structuralist linguistics of de Saussure and his followers. This structuralist insight combines the tradition of sociology and anthropology of gift exchange from Durkheim and Mauss.

The structuralist anthropology approach is based on a generalization of the structuralist analysis of language to all the human and social sciences. Indeed, it may also be possible to use these kinds of analysis in the theory of organization and business ethics,[1] if we take into account a general definition of structuralism as "the science of the unconscious systems that are constituted by signs and symbols formally united with the aim of organizing the space of social exchange between human beings."[2] Structuralist analysis of organizations is about uncovering the symbolic meanings and dimensions of discourses in systemic connections. The foundation of structuralism is the recognition of a social order of structures, symbolic orders, and unconscious representations of meaning in symbolic and imaginary systems.

In the context of business ethics and philosophy of management, structuralism represents a general frame and perspective for analysis of organizations, corporations, and institutions. We can say that structuralism offers a theoretical basis for the analysis of belief systems and myth in organizations that constitute the necessary ideological basis for the work of organizations.[3] Accordingly, structuralism proposes a general methodology for the study of meaning and form of organizational systems.

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[1] Olivier Maslef: "L'analyse structurale des organisations: Le cas de la théorie des conventions", Xième Conférence de l'Association Internationale de Management Stratégique, pp. 13–15 Juin 2001.

[2] Ibid., p. 5.

[3] Peter Case, Heather Höpfl and Hugo Letiche: *Belief and Organizations*, Palgrave MacMillan, London 2012, p. 27.

The most important structuralist thinkers include the linguists Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), Louis Hjemslev (1899–1965), Algirdas Julien Greimas (1917–1992), and Roman Jakobsen (1886–1982), who provided the linguistic foundations for this kind of analysis. Lévi-Strauss (structural anthropology), Roland Barthes (1915–1980) (theory of literature) and Lacan (structural psychoanalysis) took up this approach. Together they, provide the basis for a powerful system of thought that has huge potential for application to the analysis of corporations and organizations in business and organizational ethics.

The structuralist and poststructuralist tradition emerged in the 1960s as a criticism of existentialism and Marxism. It was a reaction towards the engaged praxis philosophy that was proposed by philosophers like Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Camus, de Beauvoir, and others who had proposed a humanist philosophy of human engagement in changing the world and its organizations. Existentialism stood for a philosophy of human freedom and choice of the right action in situations. It proposed the idea of the subject as a self that was dissociated from the social and collective structures of society, and it was presupposed that the self was capable of mastering these structures. According to the existentialist, the individual is separated from society and the body is isolated from social and collective structures of society. Phenomenology takes the point of departure from the relation between the subject and the world, or the subject and the other human being. The body is an existential reality and unity of perception with the world where the perception and feeling of the subject in relation to the world is a part of human freedom. In the Marxist existentialism of Sartre, and also in the creative philosophy of Cornelius Castoriadis (1922–1997), this leads to a Marxist philosophy that wants to lead human beings to a better world in the kingdom of ends through revolution. This is, for example, the case with the concept of engaged literature, where the idea is that literature should contribute to human freedom by proposing a better world. In the conception of the intellectual in Marxist existentialism and creative Marxism as proposed in Castoriadis' imaginary social science, philosophical reflection is a matter of critically and engaged distanced relation to the university world and to the political life of the present.

In an important lecture given in Baltimore, Maryland, The end of man (*Les fins de l'homme*) in 1968, Derrida argued that the structuralist revolution in the 1960s was a reaction to the existentialist humanism that actually represented the barbarians, because reason, rationality, and existential choice were conceived as the metaphysical foundations of life. Derrida considered this to be barbarian because no such thing as the autonomous bourgeois self could exist, and the subject should be considered as an illusion that relies on the false presuppositions of Western metaphysics. A similar criticism of the bourgeois subject seemed to be behind existentialism and existential Marxism was present in Althusser's *Lire Marx*, where he argues that the concept of authenticity and authentic choice in existentialism was pure ideology and based on a bourgeois conception of rationality that had no reality in society. Moreover, Foucault argues in the *History of Sexuality* that the existentialist subject's free sexuality, which was proposed as a kind of liberation of the subject, is in reality and expression of the alienated self and the objectification of

the body as a part of this self-alienation. A similar criticism of the existentialist and Marxist tradition can be found in the work of Lacan, who argued that authenticity is impossible and that human beings cannot obtain authenticity. Rather, we are governed by the unconscious structures of sexual desire that we do not master. At the social level, the master of structuralism, Lévi-Strauss, argued that time and history do not really exist, but that the same fundamental social structures are the basis for every society. From this perspective, Bourdieu later tried to unify self and structure by arguing that the human body and self are not free-floating, but the body is constructed as a social inscription where the self is bound to the social and social structure of the organizations and institutions in society.

According to Barthes, literature should not be analyzed through interpretation of existential dilemmas, but instead be conceived as a structure of relations. According to the structuralist conception of literature, literary interpretation should not be based on existential hermeneutics, but on a typical description of the mythical structures and hidden unconscious sexual desire in the structures of significance in the text. With this, Barthes criticized the engaged existentialist concept of literature and argued that literature has no reference to a human existential reality, but rather expresses an independent, world-creating poetic self-reference.

The anthropological and philosophical investigations of Lévi-Strauss constitute the general foundation of this criticism of existentialism. At the same time, structuralism can be considered as a kind of radicalized existentialism where even the existentialist self and the time of the Enlightenment represents a will to dominance and alienation of the particular human being. Structuralism represents a criticism of existentialist and dialectical philosophy as a philosophy of history, as a kind of identity philosophy and metaphysics that does not take into account the real basis for human social interaction. Instead of being based on the idea of the free human subject and the struggle for recognition in the course of history, human and social sciences find their foundations in the developments of the sciences of languages and linguistics.

Structuralism marks a fundamental change of the hermeneutic-historical approach in the human sciences towards a turn to language and structure. This approach analyzes the functional and linguistic structures of the social instead of looking at the inside of the human subject as proposed by phenomenology. In this context, the structuralist approach criticizes phenomenology and dialectics for being based on a logic of identity that reduces the same to the other, such as when knowledge is considered as a production of the conscious 'I' that appears a *cogito* with control over him- or herself. This idea of the absolute subject that is the basis for representation through the negative intentionality of the free subject is submitted to criticism by the structuralist approach. Instead of basing the meaning of phenomena on the representation of the phenomena for an absolute subject, the origins of meaning and structure are considered to be the nonrational, madness, folly, and myth as the origin of meaning of representation. Here, structuralism becomes deconstruction (Derrida), or destruction (Heidegger), in the sense that it concerns the origins of the structures of meaning beyond the illusions of the self-control of the conscious subject.

As structural and linguistic poetic analysis, structuralism adopted many of the distinctions from the modern linguistics of de Saussure and Louis Hjemslev (1889–1965), and generalized their ideas to theories about poetic discourses of narratives and structures. In a structural analysis of poetry and literature, like the one that was proposed by Greimas, the task is to conceive the elements in their structural relations to the unity. In this context, structuralist analysis of poetic language looks at the different possibilities of composition, including mathematical structures, relations between connotation and denotation, and how these relations represent dominant ideologies of society. Through a structural analysis, a representation of ideology emerges as the representation of the society through the discourse that is expressed in the structural analysis. Thereby, the structural analysis of poetic texts proposes elements of representation for a cultural analysis with different models of representation. The different dimensions of structures allow for the use of structural analysis not only of poetic texts, but all forms of social expression in different societies. This type of analysis was proposed by structural anthropologists and ethnologists like George Dumezil (1898–1986), who looked at functional systems and representation and symbolic reproduction of social order in Indian society through an analysis of concepts like sovereignty, family, production and so forth.

Structuralism generalizes the structural analysis of texts to include all kinds of social institutions, structures, and functions. Structures can be analyzed as representations of a totality, with the linguistic code according to the idea that language is a system of differences. Accordingly, structuralism proposes a systemic and functionalist analysis of organizational systems that focuses on the organization of linguistic codes. Structuralist anthropology proposes an analysis of business phenomena, such as public relations from the perspective of integration of the firm in a general social field as an anthropological project.[4] In the European School of Public Relations, for example, analysis of a firm's public relations is based on ethnographic and anthropological analysis of the company's relation to society.

Moreover, this kind of analysis refuses the idea of a subjective rationality and an historical development from the perspective of language as a structure of differences. Rather, the system of structures shows us that there is a mythical meta-language, a structural meta-language, that is present in fictional texts, but also in philosophical and scientific systems of representation. In this sense, there is a logos and mythos as a basic order and structure of texts and social institutions. Indeed, the implications of the structuralist approach for the study of social interactions and structures of organisations, firms, and corporations can be quite strong. It may be possible to look at the organization from the structuralist perspective and be open the mythical and discourse meta-language of the organization in order to understand the deep logics of the function of this kind of organization or institution.

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[4] Jordi Xifra: "Public relations anthropologies, French theory, anthropology of morality and ethnographic practices", *Public Relations* Review 38, pp. 565–573, pp. 566–567.

6.1   Structure and Language as a System of Signs

Structuralism begins with the linguistic concept of structure based on mythos and logos as metadimensions of language. As de Saussure argued, language should be conceived as a system. Hjemslev said the sign of language starts with spoken language, but the sign is not an object, a concept, or a sound.[5] There is no relation between the sound and the sign. The sign has two parts, the signifier and the signified (*le signifiant* and *le signifié*), which can be described as expression and content, where the sign is a unifier of the signified and signifier. The sign is defined as an inner opposition in an order of differences. In Saussure's theory of language, he emphasized the arbitrary position of the sign. The sign is an historical and social convention derives its meaning from the history and traditions of the community.[6] It is the community of language that determines the formation of the signs. The sign does not exist in itself before language. Signs are not a collection of singular parts, but founded in a community of language, but this also means that there is nothing external that determines the formation of signs, nothing that represents an internal relation between expression and content, *signifiant* and *signifié*. It is the internal connection that defines the relation between the signs.

The system of language is nothing in itself, but it is a part of language as a system of differences. The sign is constituted through what is different from it.[7] Meaning is based on this negative dependence of the sign as difference; different elements of content and differences at the level of expression; the exchange of one element of content with another; the indeterminacy and determinary of the elements; and this differentiation and production of differences. The arbitrariness of the sign opens for variations of signification in language. Language is a system of inner differences and relations of dependencies. The distinction between signified and signifier corresponds with the distinction between *langue* and *parole*, and also relates to the distinction between structure and event (*évènement*). It is related to the fact that language construction is based on a material of signification that is different from the concrete use of language.

On this basis, we can distinguish between language system and language use. As a system of rules, the system of language is a social institution that is based on social bonds between individual language users and the use of expressions in their articulation of language. Such analysis is important for the application of structural anthropology as an ethnographic method for analyzing the business corporation.[8] On the one hand, the individual can use language to create new

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[5] F. de Saussure: *Cours de linguistique générale*, éd. Payot, Paris 1995.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Jordi Xifra: "Public relations anthropologies, French theory, anthropology of morality and ethnographic practices", *Public Relations* Review 38, pp. 565–573, pp. 566–567, p. 572.

meaning and significance, and on the other, the individual is dependent on the system of language in the way that the factual use of language is created through the praxis of language users.

Here, the phenomenological approach would emphasize that the use of language created in the event of language is a condition for the formation of the system of language. Merleau-Ponty has, in this context, emphasized that the use of language realizes the possibilities that are implemented in the system of language. Ricœur follows this when he distinguished between structure and event, where the linguistic event creates a structural meaning in the system of language in the sense that there is dialectical relation between the language system and the use of language.[9] We are faced with the event of speaking that creates new meaning and through this creation this language event changes the structure of language. However, most structuralist theoreticians ignore this dialectics of event and structure in favor of the analysis of structure, because the event is a temporal condition of structure that is outside the structure of language and therefore has no real interest for the structuralist sciences that describe the structures of languages.

This is the case in the way that de Saussure deals with the opposition between structure and event. According to de Saussure, the situation is ambiguous.[10] On the one hand, we are faced with an objectivist methodological abstraction related to the structure of language, and on the other, meaning emerges in a concrete social reality. The external conditions for the system of language do not concern the formation of the system of language, as such, which is a structure of words and signs related to each other in a system. Accordingly, it is possible to make a comparison between the game of chess, where its rules (i.e., the structures) that are important. The value of the particular elements (e.g., queen, castle, etc.) is determined by the rules and structures of the game. It is not important whether they are made of wood or ivory, or where the game is played. The language is an immanent system and it is determined by the immanent rules of language that are present at any time in any language, as suggested by Hjemslev and de Saussure with their structuralist theories of language.

In this sense, structuralism involves a theory of the function of language for the structure of society. The basis for society is the determination of the system of language as a social institution of structures of meaning that express, as a system of signs, the collective and communal ideas of culture. All forms of signs can be analyzed in this way: rituals, traffic signals, social interaction forms, politics, clothing, habits, norms signals, differences in uniforms, professional behavior, work life, an so on. Accordingly, structuralism also provides us with an important basis for analyzing social forms of organization in firms and corporations as systems of signs. The system of signs is presented in primitive society as a cultural language that witnesses the form of life and culture, as structured in forms of

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[9] Paul Ricœur: *Le conflit des interprétations. Essais d'herméneutique I*, Le Seuil, Paris 1969.

[10] F. de Saussure: *Cours de linguistique générale*, éd. Payot, Paris 1995.

oppositions between male/female, outside/inside, raw/cooked, warm/cold, and pure/impure. Different forms of oppositions are present in different societies that express different articulartions of systems of signs. In the same way, organizations and institutions are structured according to different fundamental oppositions that can be described with structural analysis.

Jakobsen proposed a structuralist model of communication. He wanted to apply a structural analysis of systems of signs as a transfer of messages on satisfying conditions.[11] As a model, this allows the view of effective communication as comprised of different steps: (1) Input to the communication channel, or the source of information. (2) Output and the possibility of decoding the code of symbols based on a differential concept of communication (such as Morse code). (3) The code precedes the message in the transfer of signals, and the code is independent of the message and of the receiver (4) The code is also independent of the sender. (5) It is the privilege of the sender to determine the content of the message, but sometimes the sender is not totally master of his or her own discourse because the unconscious is structured as a language, as Lacan argued. Accordingly, the signified comes before the signifier and the language is the medium. (6) The signified comes out of the unknown and it goes beyond itself towards nonsignificance, with a mystical code as the basis for significance. This is what is expressed in the concept of the Other in psychoanalysis, which refers to the unknown and oppressed in the communication, such as when Freud talked about the hidden content in the joke (*Der Witz*). (7) In its expression, the subject submits itself and its desire into the code and the system of language. (8) Accordingly, the reference and its presentation refer to an expression that is the basis for the unconscious function of language.

With this model it is possible to develop structuralism into a semiotics or a semiology that is a structuralist analysis of different systems of signs and discourses, and the structures of meaning that they generate, for example in economic, social, legal, political, and organizational systems and cultures. Here, management is conceived as a discursive practice.[12] Linguistics is the general model for such a semiological study of social praxis. It provides a system of functionalist discourse analysis to approach the analysis and study of organizational behavior. Semiotics is a science of the structures of language and its different structures of significance in relation to the social, cultural, and organizational formations of meaning. Structuralism as semiotics gives us powerful tools for analyzing unconscious fundamental structures of organizational interactions.

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[11] Roman Jakobsen: *Eléments de linguistique générale (1 et 2)*, Éditions de Minuit, Collection Double, Paris 1981.

[12] Martin Cornberger, Steward R. Klegg and Chris Carter: "Remaking the polyphonic organization. Management as a discursive practice", *Scandinavian Journal of Management 22*, 2006 (3–30).

6.2   Claude Lévi-Strauss and Structural Anthropology

Lévi-Strauss is considered to be the founder of structuralism. He developed a theory of the unconscious structures of society and social interaction, inspired by the tradition of sociology and anthropology of Durkheim and Mauss. In fact, we can argue that his structuralism is a further development of the concept of reciprocity implied in Mauss's *Essai sur le don*. In the sociology of the gift, the gift relationship (*donner-recevoir-rendre*) is conceived as essential for social exchange, and a number of structures and forms of actions can be found in this social exchange. Similarly, we can apply Bataille's analysis of heterogeneity and homogeneity of social exchange in relation to the social exchange conceived in structuralism. Lévi-Strauss developed his structuralist theory on that basis, while at the same time being inspired by Rousseau's philosophy of immediacy in nature. As Derrida argued, this led him to focus on purity and a tendency to consider civilization as alienation. Moreover, Lévi-Strauss can be said to be inspired by the classical metaphysical tradition of *mathesis universalis* from Spinoza and Leibniz, without explicit mentioning this tradition.

In his structural anthropology, Lévi-Strauss developed a theory of the grammatics of culture based on structural codes of social exchange.[13] He also analyzed the fundamental oppositions, rules, and codes that constitute the universal code and social grammatics of a society. The most important concept is, following Mauss, the notion of social exchange that is essential for social communication. In structural anthropology, it is the concept exchange between families and, in particular, the exchange of women that is the essential concept. Lévi-Strauss developed his social theory on this basis and proposed a universal code for exchange in society. This insight into the formation of structures is used to analyze the essential structures in different contexts in different societies. Human myths and self-presentation in mythical language are the ideologies of the self-understandings of societies and show the cultural variations and unconscious structures as a universal code and cybernetic system of communication that underlies the daily life of society.

Starting with the analysis of family structures of primitive societies, Lévi-Strauss generalized the use of structural analysis to sociology, anthropology, and an ethnology where the analysis of family relations (*structures de parenté*) are considered as paradigmatic cases of the analysis of structures in society.[14] These structures can be analyzed because their significance is given in language that is presented as an ahistorical universal structure and system of significance that can be analyzed by the linguistic method applied to social theory. Accordingly, this method was used to

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[13] Claude Lévi-Strauss: *Anthropologie structurale*, Paris, Plon, 1958; nombreuses rééd. Pocket, 1997.

[14] Claude Lévi-Strauss: *Les Structures élémentaires de la parenté*, Paris, PUF, 1949; nouv. éd. revue, La Haye-Paris, Mouton, 1968.

explain family structures in primitive societies where every part is analyzed as an element in a structural whole of production of difference.

Applied to business studies and the business ethics of public relations we can say that Lévi-Strauss contributed to the foundation of a European school of the study of business and public relations. What is essential in this approach is that business studies and the study of public relations, as well as of business ethics practice, is conceived as an anthropological discipline based on ethnography and the study of culture. This approach finds its basis in Lévi-Strauss's thinking because he defined anthropology as the study of human beings in all their aspects.[15] In this structural anthropology, the foundation of business interaction is considered to be "social man" and consideration of business and public relations as a cultural practice that can be studied accordingly.[16]

In his major work, *Anthropologie structurale* (1958), Lévi-Strauss proposes this structural anthropology as a method for understanding the social formation of primitive societies.[17] He looks at the tribes of Polynesia and the family system, and he emphasizes the importance of the brother of the mother and his relation to the nephew for conceiving the basic structure of society. The different elements of the family are connected in oppositions where there is a negative and positive relation in every generation between father and son, brother of the mother and son of the sister. From this, Lévi-Strauss deduces the universal law of the system that the relation between the mother's brother and her son is like the relation between father and son, and this show how the system of family structures is like a language system of signs and mutual dependencies. The importance of the brother of the mother comes from the fact that the system is based on social exchange of women and of the interdiction of incest, because it is necessary to communicate between the different groups of society to maintain social structure.

In *La penséé sauvage* (1962), Lévi-Strauss describes the structures of thought in primitive societies. Lévi-Strauss criticizes Sartre's concept of existential dialectical materialism in *Critique de la raison dialectique* as a theory of praxis in the development of history.[18] Lévi-Strauss argues that existential Marxism wants to distance human beings from the nature that they cannot escape. According to Lévi-Strauss, it is an illusion to talk about an historical freedom that is realized through historical development. According to Lévi-Strauss, this praxis philosophy marks a kind of impossible transcendental humanism that is based on an impossible philosophy of history that will not accept that human beings are conditioned by the unconscious structures of society. Lévi-Strauss proposes a direct criticism of the existentialist idea of human historicity as determinant for what is human. Moreover, he is critical of the implicit devaluation of original societies in relation to modern

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[15] Jordi Xifra: "Public relations anthropologies, French theory, anthropology of morality and ethnographic practices", *Public Relations* Review 38, pp. 565–573., pp. 566–567, p. 567.

[16] Ibid., p. 572.

[17] Claude Lévi-Strauss: *Anthropologie structurale*, Paris, Plon, 1958; nombreuses rééd. Pocket, 1997.

[18] Claude Lévi-Strauss: *La Pensée sauvage*, Plon, Paris 1962.

societies in the philosophy of history, and of the conception of history as a linear and continuous development. The structuralist approach proposes another concept of history that implies a revolt against the philosophy of history. It considers history and ethnology as complementary sciences, because what is historical is less important in structural explanation that operates with the long duration (*la longue durée*) where particular structures can last over thousands of years. In opposition to the philosophy of history, ethnology and structural anthropology investigate and define the unconscious and structural conditions for human social life.

Accordingly, Lévi-Strauss argues that the goal of the human sciences is not to constitute human beings as historical and metaphysical, but rather to dissolve and reduce us to the social structures of society. The aim is to replace culture with nature and understand how the physical and biological conditions of survival have determined the formation of culture; in particular, the universal prohibition of incest in social exchange and the family system (*système de parenté*) as a social institution based on a collective unconscious structure are manifestations of such natural conditions of human social existence.

Such dissolution of humanity into nature represents the dissolution of human beings into their immediate bodily world and revolt against the existentialist concept of human beings based on a philosophy of subjectivity. In opposition to Sartre's humanist existentialism, Lévi-Strauss proposes a structuralist antihumanism that shows how reality is much more than subjectivity and consciousness. In this battle over humanism, Lévi-Strauss criticizes the occidental concept of logos and rationality that exclude irrationality and what is abnormal. Behind our conscious subjective world we find the structures of the unconscious that are behind our rationality.

In this sense, we can say that the system of language is beyond the will of the subject. The speaking subject is determined by certain collective structures that come before the will and consciousness of the subject. By analyzing the collective unconscious social structures it is possible to understand what it is that really conditions the social actions of the subject, because the unconscious social structures function as the mediating element between the self and the other.

Indeed, we are faced with a number of unconscious structures of mediation that function as the basis of the social structure.[19] Here, we can define these structures as a system of symbols and a structural system of communication as determinant for the social field of interaction. In this system, there is a field of collective structures that is determined by the structure of language that precedes the social interaction of the individual. In this sense, the notion of structure is something that precedes human will and consciousness, but also human praxis and action. There is the danger that structures become something real that determine action beyond our grasp. This structural truth about human being and action is revealed in myth and ideologies behind conscious action. In this sense, anonymous structures seem to be conceptualized as a closed self-regulating system that precedes human self-understanding, yet

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[19] Francois Dosse: *Histoire du structuralisme. Tome 1: Le champ du signe*, La Découverte, Paris 1991.

are nevertheless essential determinants of human social action and interaction. Accordingly, the concept of structure based on analysis of signs and discourses can be promoted as a powerful methodological tool for describing social reality in social organization and institutions. With this we can also apply structuralism to the analysis of organizations, corporations, and firm.

Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology implies a radical criticism of the concept of the subject and the idea of the autonomous self; however, the concept of structure is very strong, so following Ricœur we can characterize structuralism as a transcendentalism without a subject.[20] From this perspective, structuralism is a concrete science of the conditions of human social interaction.

Lévi-Strauss defined reciprocity as essential to social exchange in the interaction between nature and culture. The interdiction of incest, which has nothing to do with biology, is a major social rule indicating the duty of exchange. It constitutes the symbolic move from nature to culture. Culture is a new order based on the need for reciprocity and social exchange.

We can therefore define structuralism as a philosophy of the collective unconscious. It seeks to describe the unconscious and symbolic in the social system between nature and culture. It is a theory of communication and signs that creates collective unconscious structures in social exchange. The unconscious is the category of the structural and symbolic exchange. Structuralism describes the laws of the unconscious in order to understand the universal structures of social organization. In this sense, consciousness is the hidden enemy of the human sciences because it prevents the scientist from capturing the real semiological structures of human interaction. The structuralist sciences aim at reintegrating the human sciences in the natural sciences through scientific study of the borders between the social and the natural, the conscious and the unconscious.

Lévi-Strauss's method can therefore be described as a positivist description of the unconscious universal structures behind our societies and social action. This is considered as a logic of the concrete, as of the sensual experiences of the world in primitive societies. This is present in the analysis of mythologies in original societies, which can further also be applied to modern societies and social interactions. The mythical thought is like a *bricolage*, manifold expressions in different variations based on fundamental structures.

Lévi-Strauss proposed the structural analysis of myths and mythologies as a way to understand the unconscious structures of primitive societies. There are a limited number of myths in primitive societies and they are determined by a prelogical way of thinking that manifests in a number of archetypal positions expressed in the myths. The myths are reflections of a human dream-like universe that express structural relations. In this way, they express structures of human relations that can be detected in the analysis of the different oppositions and relations in the myths. The myths contain imaginary descriptions of the creation of culture and

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[20] Paul Ricœur: *Le conflit des interprétations. Essais d'herméneutique I*, Le Seuil, Paris 1969.

symbols and they express a number of structural transformations and combinations that explain the structures of human societies.

In *Tristes tropiques* (1955), we see how Lévi-Strauss follows Rousseau in his idealization of the original life in harmony with nature.[21] The book includes a paradox of the modern scientist, Lévi-Strauss, wanting to join the original natural conditions of human beings. This can be seen as a continuation of Rousseau's criticism of the Enlightenment. In *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité parmi les homes,* Rousseau, the first real French anthropologist, celebrates nature as a kind of paradise where human beings lived in a unalienated society of real social reciprocity.

In his text about Rousseau and the human sciences at the end of *Tristes tropiques,* Lévi-Strauss describes the ethnologist as alienated in a hostile world where he or she is aiming to return to him- or herself. With Rousseau, he aims to find a sensible *cogito* in a bodily unity with the world as opposed to the Cartesian *cogito.*

Ethnology aims to return to the original society, where human beings were not enslaved by scientific modern culture and could live in a harmony between nature and society. Lévi-Strauss searches after an original mutuality and reciprocity where there is harmony and unity between self and other, nature and culture, the sensible and the rational.

Accordingly, *Tristes tropiques* is characterized by humanism nostalgic for the lost unity between human beings and nature, the self and Other, and all the other oppositions that characterize modern culture. Structuralism wants to go back to the primordial unity of human beings and nature, and overcome the decadence of modern civilization.[22]

Lévi-Strauss's structuralism has been submitted to a number of critical reflections. First of all, there is the general metaphysical critique of structuralism as a new metaphysics, as proposed by Derrida in *De la grammatologie* (1967). Derrida argues that Lévi-Strauss alienates original speech from a primordial authenticity through his criticism of societies of writing in *Tristes tropiques.* Despite this claim that he does violence to writing in a search for an original essence of language, Rousseau had already proposed something similar.[23]

There is also the criticism that structuralism becomes a kind of ideology of universal structure, because it is critical to its own theoretical foundations. Indeed, according to the hermeneutic criticism of Ricœur, it may be a problem if the anonymous system of language is made into a methodological principle. The danger is that the system becomes a game that closes on itself.[24] Language should rather be conceived as a result of events and living speech acts. In opposition to phenomenology and existentialism, this is used to exclude any idea of human beings as conscious subjects with freedom and choice.

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[21] Claude Lévi-Strauss: *Tristes Tropiques*, Plon, Paris 1955.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Derrida, Jacques (1967): *De la grammatologie*, Gallimard, Paris 1967.

[24] Paul Ricœur: *Le conflit des interprétations. Essais d'herméneutique I*, Le Seuil, 1969.

This may be conceived as a problem because it is impossible to conceive of structure without intentionality. From the point of view of history, it is a problem that structuralism excludes any kind of historical reflection. Anonymous structure replaces time and temporal development. Behind the event and apparent innovation there is always structure and structural abstraction as a possible explanation of the historical development. History is reduced to something that can be explained with concepts of structural change and structural abstraction. Accordingly, structuralism provides an explanation of organizational dynamics from the point of view of structural change and modification.

6.3   Structuralism and Contemporary Society: Roland Barthes

Barthes was a literary critic and professor of literature at Collège de France. He applied the structural linguistics and structuralist method to writing and poetry in relation to the sciences of literature and language. Barthes proposed an analysis of writing (*écriture*) and signs, and of the relation between sign, writing and reality in relation to poetry and literature, but also the use of language as mythology more generally in society. Barthes not only looked at myths and mythology in anthropology and religion, but in contemporary society in all spheres of society, and indeed also in marketing, publicity, and communication. The myth is not defined by its content, but rather by the way in which it presents its message, where it tries to maintain the truth of the content of the sign. Barthes proposed a generalized semiotics in the sense that there are no formal or content limits, nor substantial rules for the sign. In this way, everything can be said to be a myth and mythology. This approach can be used as a social semiotics of the study of signs, symbols, and discourses in corporations.

In *Mythologies* (1956), Barthes develops this generalized structuralist and semiotic analysis of myths and mythologies.[25] This implies a combination of Marxism and a criticism of bourgeois and petit-bourgeois ideology that structured and represented a number of bourgeois myths that people live in and live by. With this criticism Barthes, who was originally inspired by Sartre's existentialism, also takes over some elements of the existentialist critique of inauthentic life in the sense that he criticizes the ideological superstructure of society. Barthes argues that it is the object of the bourgeois myth to neutralize relations that in reality are ideological. This is the ambiguity of the relation between form and content in the myth, which is false in the sense that it naturalizes ideological relations by changing something that could be different into a presupposed truth. Therefore, in the analysis of the mythical object, structuralism and semiology have a critical political

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[25] Roland Barthes: *Mythologies*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1957 – rééd. augmentée, 2010.

function in showing all the myths of daily life of French society as it is expressed in newspaper articles, publicity, marketing, expositions, business, sports, and so forth.

Barthes proposes a semiological model as the basis for analyzing myths and fragments of myths in modern society. In the myth we find a correlation between meaning and content in language. But the myth is as a semiological instrument characterized by a particularity: it constitutes a secondary system of signs, implying that what is a sign in primary language becomes expression in secondary language. The myth belongs to the language of connation and not of denotation, in the sense that it does not refer to anything specific, but develops its own reality of truth and justification.[26]

Barthes mentions many examples. One is the myth of the family of man where all human beings are considered as collected together in one nation or race that is naturalized as a unity and as something given that precedes economic, social, and political oppositions. Barthes mentions the photography of the black child that smiles and plays in the middle of his or her poverty. When such a photo is used for marketing purposes, it loses its real content and is given an ideological and mythological significance.[27] Another example is a black person who is in uniform and celebrates the French flag. Here, the ideology of nationalism, tolerance, and generosity of the French state is celebrated. A system of connotation is developed where the picture opens for signification related to the greatness of the French imperial system. Other examples include the purported reality of Martians and UFOs, which are considered to be real because they lack any denotative content. We can further mention the Marxist propaganda of students or others that functions as expression without denotation or content.

Barthes argues, with reference to de Saussure, that the myth can be considered as *parole* in opposition to *langue*. It is a system of communication. It is not content or substantial denotation, but a signifier that develops a system of signification. Because the myth emerges as a kind of *parole*, everything that is described by the myth can be promoted as discourse. Accordingly, there is no formal limitation of the concept of myth or discourse. Everything can be a myth, and this is developed into a discourse that is applied as a social and mythical application of structures of significance.

Sometimes historical objects change into myths, as when Baudelaire developed a mythology in his poems about women. There are very old historical myths, but no myths exist that are natural or eternal. Human beings present their history as naturalized myths, as an interpretation of the existence in relation to the past. However, the historical dimension does not mean that a myth or mythology is truth. It is historical exactly because it is a discursive construction, and the myth is never an expression of the nature of things in themselves.

Myths can be expressed in *parole* as an oral message with connotations naturalizing an ideological vision of the world, but the myth can be represented otherwise.

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

It can be represented in a written discourse, but also as other kinds of signs in photography, films, reportage, sport, theater, or everything else that contains signs that contributes to the creation of a mythical *parole* and discourse. The picture as discourse is also a representation. Mythical representations are created out of material that is already formed. Indeed, the mythical connotations of pictures as communication systems may be more developed than writing. The picture contains writing and the picture becomes writing from the moment it has received significance.[28]

In this sense, the myth as discourse in an organizational system can be conceived as a semiological and discursive system. Barthes combines Marxism, psychoanalysis, and structuralism in proposed analysis of the emergence of structures of significance in mythological connotations. Semiology or semiotics is defined as the science of creation of significance. Semiotics is the science of the forms. It should not be considered as a normative science of values, but a study of forms that is independent of decision-making about their contents. In this sense, semiology is a formalist science that, with sharp distinctions, studies the different discourses and semiotic systems, not as a substantial normative discourse or a philosophical metaphysics, but as a specific scientific discipline, eventually with help from other sciences like Marxism, linguistics, and psychoanalysis. Semiotics or semiology is therefore an historic and human science that studies the development of systems of signs in the public sphere, the press, radio, television, and illustrative sciences as manifold forms of communication that manifest themselves as discourses and semiological systems with different connotations and mythological expressions.

In Barthes' description of the mimetic production of significance there is a distinction between the signifier and the signified, and the sign. In the production of meaning, they have different positions, as for example a bucket of roses that gives meaning to my passions. Here, we can distinguish a triple structure between roses, passion, and the sign of this. The signifier is empathy, but the sign is full of meaning. For example, I can give several meanings to a stone, but I can change it into a sign with a particular significance.[29]

Accordingly, there is a functional relation between the sign, the signifier, and the signified. According to de Saussure, it is the concept that is the signified and the sound of the spoken word as a sound of the concept is the signifier. In the relation between picture and concept, the sign is a concrete entity as a totality. For Freud, as an example, the dream is the functional connection between two concepts, where something stands for something else. It is a concept that covers significance by transference. The third term in the dream constitutes the relation between the two first concepts. It is the dream in its totality with the missing action or the neurosis that constitutes compromises between form and function, and is built up as a semiological system of meaning, significance, and transference. So what is special

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[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

in the myth is that it creates a second-degree semiology, characterized by the sign, the signifier, and the significance that are transferred to a new associative relation between concept and picture.

Barthes emphasizes how a semiological system, as a mythology, contains the possibility of naturalizing the myth.[30] In this way, the myth transforms history into nature so that the myth is considered as an expression of a kind of eternal, natural reason, and is taken to be a factual truth. The myth is a language that rationalizes the concept. It is an interpretation of an object language that creates a new system of connotation.

In this sense, poetic language fights with mythological language, because modern poetry—in contrast to classical poetry—seeks to escape the mythological function. Modern poetry wants to create new connotations beyond the semiology of language, while the myths are founded on a semiological naturalization of the meaning of objects. Poetry aims to overcome the factual and mythical system of meaning through modernist writing as a semiological system against naturalization by the myth. However, the best weapon against the myth is the artificial myth as it is constructed by the great writers, for example in Flaubert's aesthetics where there is a play between the semiotic and the real that creates a poetic reality different from the mythical reality.

Barthes situates the analysis of the role of mythologies in modern, capitalist society as an important task of semiotic and structuralist analysis. The mythologies of the present capitalist society express the effort of the bourgeois class to naturalize their particular existence in society. The bourgeois class is the social class that will not be mentioned. It is in every myth of society and its norms are created as natural laws that determine the roles of all other classes that get their inspiration from the bourgeois class. Through the efforts of the bourgeois class to change history into nature, the bourgeois class proposes the capitalist market system, the end of history, the Enlightenment, and the scientific revolution as fact, although it is nothing but a naturalized mythology.

In this sense, the ideology of the bourgeoisie is naturalized with the help of the system of signs, where the ideology of the bourgeoisie is presented as a nonpolitical language implying naturalization of the worldview of the bourgeoisie as the most important. We can say that the ideology through mythologization is transferred from antiphysis to pseudophysis. What happens in mythologization is that the myth naturalizes false consciousness of capitalism as the truth of society. The formation of mythologies in consciousness is the naturalization of false consciousness in a pseudophysis and hypostatization into something absolute and typical in the connotative system of the myth.

The nature of the sign is arbitrary and contingent, but in the bourgeois myth signs are changed into rational reasons and basic truths about society. In business and capitalism examples of this include concepts of individual freedom, rational choice, maximizing economic behavior, and individualism that are naturalized as truth.

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[30] Ibid.

In line with Barthes' Marxist inspired structuralism in *Mythologies*, which proposes a reification of consciousness as naturalization in modern consumer society, individualism is proposed as truth, but in reality it is nothing but a naturalization of false consciousness that implies increased alienation of human beings in modern society.[31] The capitalist society implies that individualism and capitalism in bourgeois society are naturalized as factual truths of modernity.

Accordingly, Barthes proposes the semiological analysis as a universal instrument for analyzing myths and mythical language of modern capitalist societies, which is constructed as a pseudophysis of human desire and action, based on the concept of individualist consumer society. This approach may have important significance in business ethics as an instrument for analyzing discourses and the formation of mythologies in firms and corporations. There are many naturalized mythologies in business life that may be used by certain people to maintain their positions and power, or simply remain as old truths that everybody has forgotten to question. Mythologies live in business, and it is important that we use discourse instrument to describe them and analyze their structural content. Barthes' semiotics provides a powerful instrument for understanding social and moral codes, and rich symbolic meanings in organizational systems, marketing, and in the consumer industry.[32]

6.4   Jacques Lacan and the Freudian Turn of Structuralism

Lacan is known for applying structuralist method to psychoanalysis. He developed Freudian psychoanalysis on the basis of contemporary philosophy, and he maintained the importance of the concept of the unconscious in psychoanalytic interpretation. Lacan developed a theoretical and scientific approach to psychoanalysis in theory and practice. Lacan was inspired by insights from linguistics, anthropology, psychology, mathematics, and philosophy in order to develop psychoanalysis as a general theory about humanity. Lacan was also inspired by the phenomenology of Hegel, Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty, which had an impact on his theoretical distinctions between the imaginary, the symbolic, and the reel. With Lacan, there is a link to the social world because our relation to desire can be seen as a social phenomenon, and desire can be analyzed in the structures of meaning in social interaction. Lacan argued that the aim of psychoanalysis is to get closer to the knowledge of the real (*le réel*), which is at work in all human

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[31] Ibid.

[32] See for example Matthiew M. Haigh: "Deconstructing Myth: low-carbon sustainability", *Social Semiotics,* 23(1):44–66, 2013. Or Stuart, Elnora W.; Fuller, Barbara K. "Clothing as communication in Two Business-to-Business Sales Settings", *Journal of Business Research* 23:269–290, 1991.

expression and experience, and that lies behind the human experience of meaning and existence.

Lacan's approach opens many possibilities within business and organization studies. He provides us with a general framework of the critical study of capitalism and organizations from the psychoanalytic perspective. Psychoanalysis provides an analytical framework for the study of many different concepts, including enjoyment, work, stress, subjectivity at work, gender, and creativity.[33]

Lacan was educated as a physician and psychiatrist, and he became member of Sociéte Psychanalytique de Paris in 1936. He was, however, excluded from this society and the international society of psychoanalysis in 1953 because of his disagreement about their rules for therapy and the role of the psychoanalyst. He then created his own school of psychoanalysis, École Freudienne de Paris in 1964. Lacan became particularly famous for his seminars at the Sorbonne that started in 1953 and continued to his death in 1981. His most famous writings were *Écrits* from 1966 and his collection of writings from his seminars that are collected in over twenty volumes and still in the process of being published.[34]

Lacan's project can be seen as a development of the Freudian approach to psychoanalysis by making philosophical interpretation of major concepts like desire, subject, libido, phallus, pleasure, (*jouissance*), sexuality, the unconscious, the imaginary, the real, the symbolic order, and the sinthom. In 1953, Lacan's seminars introduced his use of structuralism in psychoanalysis following the theories of Lévi-Strauss and applying models from linguistics to the human and social sciences in order to develop psychoanalysis as a general philosophical theory. Lacan's famous theory is that the unconscious is structured like a language and this makes it possible to apply the methods and theories of linguistics in psychoanalysis in order to detect the unconscious.

The major achievement of Lacan is therefore to integrate the analysis of the unconscious in relation to structuralist analysis. He gives us the theoretical tools to analyze the unconscious and the discourse of the other in structural analysis. The human subject is between the unconscious and the conscious, and the symbolic order makes it possible to decipher the unconscious in language. Desire is basic to the unconscious, but although we can satisfy our needs and our demands, desire can never be fulfilled. It remains a lack in our experience. Lacan adopts the Freudian distinction between the 'I,' the ego, the id, and the superego. The superego has a

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[33] Alessia Contu, Michela Driver and Campbell Jones: Lacan with Organization Studies, *Organization* 17 (3): 307–315, 2010, p. 307.

[34] Lacan's major writings include: Lacan, J. (1953–54): *Les écrits technique de Freud*. Paris: Seuil, 1975. Lacan, J. (1954–55): *Le moi dans la théorie de Freud*. Paris: Seuil, 1978. Lacan, J. (1955–56): Les psychoses. Paris: Seuil, 1981.

Lacan, J. (1959–60): *L'éthique de la psychanalyse*. Paris: Seuil, 1986. Lacan, J. (1963–64): *Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse*. Paris: Seuil, 1973. Lacan, J.: Écrits. Paris: Seuil, 1966. Lacan, J. (1969–70): *L'envers de la psychanalyse*. Paris: Seuil, 1991. Lacan, J. (1972–73): Encore. Paris: Seuil, 1975. See also R. Rasmussen: *Jacques Lacans psykoanalyse. En indføring*. København: Munksgaard, 1994.

double appearance as a part of the symbolic order and is closely related to the interdiction related to culture and society; however, it is also related to the law in the sense that the superego respects the law, but also is a function of desire. It therefore implies the desire to transgress the law in pleasure (*jouissance*).

Lacan's early contribution to psychoanalysis was the theory about the mirror stage, which developed Freud's concept of narcissism into a theory of child developmental psychology. In his analysis of the mirror phase, Lacan shows how the human unconscious desire is developed. When the child sees the picture of itself in the mirror it gets the illusion of self-mastery because it considers itself as an object of the desire of the mother. This is, however, soon removed because the child discovers that it is not the only object of desire of the mother who instead also desires the father. This leads to an Oedipal crisis and the emergence of the symbolic order, and the law of the father who is the object of the desire of the mother and creates the meaning of desire in language. The law of the father, the phallus, is the law that breaks the relation between mother and child and puts the child into the symbolic order of lack and desire. It is the father who takes away the child from the mother and places it in the symbolic order.

Children's sexuality is different from the sexuality of adults because both males and females have genital stimulation equally related to male and female. It is only when they are taken out of the mirror stage that they realize the importance of the phallus as a signifier. Through the law of the father, the phallus is the central organizing principle of the unconscious. It is the lost object, or the big Other; the ultimate notion of desire. The phallus is the empathy signifier that is at the end of the chain of signifiers. Castration is a symbolic concept that deals with the impossibility of pleasure. Femininity and masculinity are two positions that take different relations to the phallic pleasure.

Lacan used de Saussure's linguistics and Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology to analyze the unconscious. Lacan applied the concepts of signified and signifier to explain the emergence of symbols in history and culture. Language is a place for symbols of desire and the unconscious relations between people. In this sense, the unconscious is structured like a language. When Lacan says that there are no sexual relations, he means that the relation of desire in social relations is mediated through language and symbols. In psychoanalysis, Lacan states that normality is also a neurosis, which indicates that the aim of psychoanalysis is to give the individual the opportunity to live with the fact that the narcissistic dream of self-sufficiency and unity of the self is an illusion. Lacan sees the subject as an illusion and a production of an unconscious desire for self-mastery. Lacan states that there is distinction between the self as product of history and culture, and the self that relates to itself in self-reflection. This means that the subject is decentered and that there is a problematic and tensional relation with the Other in relation to the self.

Since he states that the unconscious is structured like a language, Lacan uses the methods of structuralist linguistics to show how the unconscious affects a signifying chain of meaning that is created by displacing signifiers. This can be explained through tensions between metaphor and metonymy. While metaphors show similarity by substituting one word for another, metonyms represent contiguity through

this displacement. According to Lacan, the unconscious works through the tensions of meaning created in metaphor and metonymy. We can say that the signified is conscious and the signifier is unconscious, which constitutes the meaning of the signified. But Lacan is even more radical since he argues that it is unconscious desire that is the original signifier that leaves traces in the chain of signifiers and the chain of signifiers refers back to the original, unconscious desire, which remains a lack and refers to the real behind the conscious that can never be fully grasped by consciousness in interpretation.

Lacan is indeed inspired by Freud and can be said to produce a philosophical nonscientistic reading of Freud. Sexuality of desire takes many forms in its original context; therefore, there is no way to define a particularly "normal" sexuality. The significance of sexuality requires many and new forms, and the productions of meaning of the unconscious in the chain of signifiers vary in accordance with new elements of pleasure. Psychoanalysis develops a broader concept of sexuality linked to an extended concept of pleasure. Accordingly, it is quite difficult to maintain one concept of sexuality as normal and elides a strict distinction between normality and perversion. Symbolization of sexuality involves the imaginary of our infinite unconscious desires that take many forms. The imaginary acts as a projection of the ego upon the Other into the symbolic so-called big Other, which refers to the unconscious. This is the Other as the unconscious phallic drive that is structured as a language. In this sense, alienation is constitutive of the imaginary order that is constructed out of the transgression of the mirror stage. In the structure of the imaginary, Lacan refers to the big Other, which is the most important signifier in the chain of signifiers behind the emergence of significance in the structures of meaning. The real is at the limits of the symbolic and imaginary order of significance. The real, the unconscious, and the big Other are all concepts that illustrate the limits of the imaginary and the symbolic chain of signifiers.

The sinthom (*le sinthome*) is the real core of our access to pleasure, where we are confronted with angst (*angoisse*) in our own experience of pleasure. This is confrontation between pleasure and pain, between the law and the transgression of the law. The concept of pleasure contains a combination of pleasure and pain since it is a paradox that we feel that something is missing in the satisfaction of desire, which is infinite. The synthom is the way that we organize our pleasure. It is a creative use of our synthom in order to create pleasure. In this sense, *jouissance* is a kind of pleasure that goes beyond the Freudian pleasure principle.

Lacan develops his major theories in the different articles collected in *Écrits* (1966).[35] In this book, he proposes the program of the structuralist and linguistic analysis of the unconscious as the system of psychological fantasies in a symbolic and imaginary order. It is the task of psychoanalysis to describe the chain of significations in the experiences of the subject. As Freud described the relation between the imaginary and the real in relation to the unconscious, the analysis of

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[35] Lacan, J.: *Écrits*. Seuil, Paris 1966.

psychological associations and significations gives us access to the unconscious, where the unconscious is structured as a language.[36]

In this sense, the unconscious should not be interpreted in a naturalistic way, but as a symbolic reality; an unconscious symbolic language, as in the case of dreams. That the unconscious is structured like a language means that it is structured like a semiotic system. The signifier is always displaced by the object of desire. You can get what you need, but you can never get what you want. Desire is an endless deference of that which cannot be desired into discourse. Metaphor and metonymy are in an interactive play in discourse. There is a correlation between chains of signifiers in the unfolding of meaning in metonymy. Sinthom is the awareness of the lack of an object of desire expressed in discourse.[37]

Accordingly, psychoanalysis is a science of the structural laws of the significance of the unconscious. What is important is to give a linguistic analysis of the structures of signifier and signified, of the unconscious and its manifestation as a language. The phallus is the empty signifier behind the symbolic order in culture and society. In the subject, pleasure is present in the transgression of the law that is at the same time constituted by the law. The law of the father is the law that gives the subject reality in the sense that the phallic principle is the basis for the symbolic order. Lacan analyzes the work of the Marquis de Sade in *Ecrits*, as an illustration of this relation between the law and the principle of pleasure.[38] In this sense, the unconscious replaces the law of the superego and becomes the law of the subject that wants to satisfy the unconscious desire. In Freud's words "Where I was, will it be" ("Wo ich war—soll es werden").

What are the potential applications of Lacan's theoretical concepts in the context of management and organization? His thought provides an analytical framework for understanding different organizational discourses from the perspective of the unconscious and the phallic symbolic order behind the imaginary ideology of the organization. Here, Lacan's psychoanalysis provides the basis for critical management studies of power, alienation, and subjectivity at the organizational level. In general, Lacan's concepts of discourse, being, and desire, as well as the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real, all have applications at the organizational level.[39] We can perceive tensions between desire and the Other in organizations, management, and leadership.[40]

Indeed, this kind of analysis not only must be critical in the negative sense. There is also a potential for understanding *jouissance* at work from a psychoanalytic perspective. We can argue that Lacan gives the structuralist analysis of organization

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Caspar Hoedemaekers: "Toward a Sinthomatology of Organization?", Ephemera 2008, Volume 8 (1):58–78.

[40] Caspar Hoedemaekers: "Traversing the empty promise: Management, Subjectivity and the Other's Desire", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol 22, No 2, 2009, pp. 181–201.

a psychoanalytic dimension that enables us to capture the unconscious structures of human subjectivity, desire, and pleasure at the organizational level.[41]

It is possible to use Lacan's psychoanalytic theory as the basis for a symptomatologist analysis of work; however, this analysis should not only focus on symptoms in a critical sense, but also on sinthoms, that is, the attachment of the subject to being in a sense that gives it enjoyment. Lacan's structuralist psychoanalytics provides a basis for such an analysis with its concepts of the real, the symbolic, and the imaginary, and with the idea of sinthom. With this we have the basis for a "sinthomology" of organizations, where we can analyze what gives enjoyment in work and organizational sense.[42] This could be used, for example, to analyze the phenomenon of stress, which can be enjoyed as a expression of *jouissance*.[43]

A further potentiality of Lacan's work for the analysis of organizational ethics may be to relate Lacan to the discussion of ethics in organizational psychology.[44] Organizational psychologists use the terms of personal and collective identity, respect and recognition, feelings of shame, loss of dignity, and inferiority. These concepts are applied to understanding relations of mutual esteem and recognition of subjects in organizational life. Moreover, introducing values and ethics in organizations is supposed to make employees feel more satisfied.

With this emergence of organizational ethics, human relations are very important. In particular, there is a focus on the roles of individuals in organizations, as entrepreneurs and innovators, as managers, and as subordinate employees. Much of the literature on organizational ethics is today based on theories of recognition (Honneth) and Appreciative Inquiry (Oliver), and this is combined with discourse theory and epistemologies of social constructionism.[45]

Taking its point of departure from these trends in ethics and organizational psychology, another approach could be to consider organizational ethics from the point of view of Lacan's concepts of psychoanalysis.[46] This approach addresses the understanding of the relation between identity and integrity in organizational ethics from the perspective of Lacan's concepts of the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real. Recent concepts of organizational ethics can be discussed as ideology, and phantasmatic and phallic notions in the psychoanalytic terminology.[47]

It is possible, for example, to analyze leadership from a Lacanian perspective. The leader-follower relation can be seen as a kind of symbolic father-child relation,

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[41] Caspar Hoedemaekers: "Toward a Sinthomatology of Organization?", Ephemera 2008, Volume 8 (1):58–78, p. 59.

[42] Ibid., p. 58.

[43] Martin Bicknell and Andreas Liefooghe: "Enjoy your Stress: Using transactional Models of Stress", *Organization* 17 (3), 2010.

[44] Haslebo, Gitte: *Etik i organisationer*, Dansk psykologisk forlag, København 2007.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Harding, Nancy: "On Lacan and the Becoming-ness of Organizations/Selves", *Organization Studies*, 2007.

[47] Lacan, Jacques: *Écrits*, Gallimard, Paris 1966.

where the leader is the primal father figure.[48] The traditional paternalist forms of leadership can be seen as illustrations of the phallic-father relation. However, even in the concept of authentic leadership, which tries to move beyond asymmetrical power relations, the so-called postmodern father figure may be conceived as based on the symbolic order of dominance, since the father figure directs self-control and positions the follower as subject.

In such a context, it is possible to address the role of discursive formations and imagined identities as they contribute to the creation of the roles of the organizational self. This has been done in relation to organizational change and psychoanalysis.[49] In this context, we can also mention research in human resource management (HRM) that applies Lacan's philosophy and his theoretical antihumanism by showing that Lacan's concept of subjectivity provides a criticism of the distinction between human and inhuman in HRM-practices. In the light of the framework for analysis that Lacan established in *Écrits*, the subject may ontologically be deeply fragmented, fragile, and disturbed.[50]

The idea is that ideology of organizations is related to the economy of the unconscious, of the desire to become oneself that is at work in the organization. How is the self-Other relation created in the organization, and how do concepts of recognition shape these roles and relations? How can we define a possible psychotherapy of collective relations in organizations?

The application of Lacan's concept of desire to organizational contexts can also be developed by applying his concept of the master-slave relation to relations of recognition, guilt, and shame in organizations. The different concepts of the entrepreneur, the manager, and the employee can be analyzed from the perspective of Lacan's psychoanalysis of the subject, with the notions of enjoyment and pleasure as the focus.[51] In general, such structural psychoanalysis of discourse aims at revealing the hidden structures of the unconscious within the formation of meaning in organizations. It is the task to uncover the discourses of the unconscious in organizations in their different imaginary and symbolic orders. Here, the work of Lacan functions as an important analytical tool to understand the structures of the desire and the Other, imaginary ideology, hidden symbolic structures, and enjoyment and alienation as foundational for organizational ethics.

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[48] Jana Costas and Alireza Taheri: "Return of the Primal Father" in Postmodernity? A Lacanian Analysis of Authentic Leadership, Organization Studies 12: 33:1195.

[49] Kate Kenny: "Heeding the Stains: Lacan and Organizational Change", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol 22, No 2, 2009.

[50] Rasmus Johnson and Rasmus Gudmand Høyer: "Lacan and the Lack of Humanity in HRM", *Organization* 2010 17:331–244, p. 342.

[51] Jones, Campbell: "The Sublime object of Entrepreneurship", *Organization*, Sage 2005.

6.5   Structuralism, Ethics, and Organizational Analysis

With this presentation of the main theories and approaches in structuralism we can now proceed to defining some central aspects of structuralism and their application to business ethics and organizational analysis. Indeed, we defined linguistic analysis on the basis of the theories of de Saussure, Hjemslev, and Jakobsen, who defined language as a system of signs in the tension between signifier and signified. It was Lévi-Strauss who generalized this to instruments of analysis in social and human sciences. Strauss combined the insights of structuralist linguistics with the social theories of Durkheim and Mauss.

While Mauss never managed to develop the theory of the gift, it was Lévi-Strauss's contribution to use Mauss's approach to develop a general theory of social exchange based on structural analysis. While Lévi-Strauss mostly used structural analysis within classical anthropology in order to study social relations and family structures in primitive societies, as well as the structure of thought and mythologies of those societies, these approaches may well also apply to structures and mythologies of modern organizations and societies. This approach was partly taken up by Barthes, who applied structuralist and semiotic analysis to the ideologies of everyday social life. The methods of structuralist and semiotic analysis were extended to psychoanalysis with Lacan's proposal to conceive the unconscious as a language and introduce analysis of the symbolic, the imaginary, and real in relation to identity and recognition of the personality in structuralist analysis. With the structuralist Marxism and critique of ideology by Althusser, it became possible to add a strong social dimension to structuralist analysis in the sense that Marxist concepts were used to analyze social structures, society, and organizations.

It may be argued that the structuralist project not only implies describing unconscious structures, but that there is also a humanistic and moral dimension to Lévi-Strauss's thought.[52] There is an implicit Rousseauism in Lévi-Strauss's philosophy, where he argues that society should respect the life of the wild and primitive. There is a kind of natural contract between humanity and nature, and in contrast to modern life, the wild cultures—with their mythical language—respect this contrast. The most important categorical imperative is to respect the diversity of lifestyles and cultures with their different semiotic and mythological systems. It is particularly important to recognize the rights of those who cannot claim their rights. Accordingly, Lévi-Strauss wanted to move beyond the universal humanism of the West towards a more radical humanism based on respect for difference and rights.[53]

We can say that this kind of search for a humanistic ethics that moves beyond the established concepts of humanism is also present in the structuralist positions of Barthes, Lacan, and Althusser, in the sense that they criticize the humanism of the

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[52] Marcel Hénaff: *Claude Lévi-Strauss et l'anthropologie structurale*, Belfond, Points Essais, Paris 2011, p. 373.

[53] Ibid., p. 373.

bourgeois subject in order to reach a more real liberalization of the self through the use of the structuralist analysis of social reality. An attempt to define something common among these different approaches has been proposed by Deleuze,[54] who developed some criteria for structuralism that can be based as the foundation of structural theory.

The symbolic is based on the distinction between the real and the imaginary. Fundamentally, a social system is characterized by a symbolic and imaginary content of meaning relating to the unconscious. In structuralist analysis there is a dialectical play between these notions. The real is confronted with the work of the imaginary. There is a tension—dialectics and opposition in the play between the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real in the structuralist analysis of chains of signification. It is in this context that Lévi-Strauss proposed the analysis of the unconscious structures of social life. Barthes showed the implied unconscious and symbolic significations in our imaginary mythologies of social life. In his Marxist structuralism Althusser presented an analysis of the unconscious determinations in the structures of economic and social life in society and organizations. Lacan showed us how our imaginary and symbolic life relates to the big Other of the symbolic father, where the name of the father is institutionalized as a fundamental order and object of desire that determines the symbolic representation through structures of significance.

This raise the important distinction between the "local" and the "positional." The elements of a structure have no value of designation and therefore no ontological significance, as such. Meaning and significance are defined as a position. Meaning is a relation and it has no substantial definition. Rather, meaning is placed in a topologically structured unfolding space with different relations. The relations of meaning should be considered as places in a structural space that come before the objects and living things that populate them. The scientific model of structuralism is not quantitative, but topological and relational. The space is defined as a topologically structured space, such as the space that structures the relations of production, as suggested by Althusser. Moreover, according to Lacan, desire is a structural relation and not an aspect of the particular subject. The signifiers of mother and father are parts of a structural model acting as symbols without being anything substantial. The subjects are moments of the chain of signifiers that determine the elements of their acts.

Accordingly, significance is constituted out of elements that do not in themselves have significance. Significance is a result, not of language, but of an overdetermination in relation to the interaction between structures and units. Accordingly, meaning in structures should be conceived as a game of power relations. The work of structures is like a metaphorical play and structural analysis clarifies these structures. Instead of referring to a transcendental divine meaning, structuralism represents a materialism, a new atheism, where structures replace God

[54] G. Deleuze, "A quoi reconnaît-on le structuralisme", in François Châtelet (dir.), *Histoire de la philosophie VIII. Le XXe siècle*, Hachette, 1973 [édition de poche: coll. 'Pluriel', 2000].

and humanity at the position of the transcendental signifier. This relates to the distinction between the differential and serial. Here, the linguistic basis of structuralist analysis is important. The structural analysis looks at the differential and serial relations of meaning as they appear between the elements that create meaning in mutual symbolic and imaginary relations. The concept of structure implies a reciprocal determination of the singular elements of the differential relations. This is basis for structurally analyzing myths or mythological elements of discourse in organizations. In this sense, the basis for structure is not an external subjectivity or intentionality, but the subject is the structure itself, which is constituted through the serial and differential relations between the elements of the structure. Accordingly, meaning is constituted in differential production in the structure. Structures are defined as unconscious elements that are related to each other in a system of differentiation. The structure plays a role in this interaction as a relation between objects without existing itself, as such. As a system of differences, the structure produces itself in serial differentiation.

The organization of the serial elements in a system of differences is the basis of the structural system. The serial elements are constituted in symbolic terms with their own metaphors and metonymies, where the series are formed by symbolic terms and their differential relations between structures in a space of significance. The structure emerges as a series of events that is open for analysis in relation to each other. Accordingly, a structural analysis of organization looks at the series of symbolic and imaginary significances relating to the structures of the organization. In particular, this has been developed by the discourse analysis movement. We can here refer to authors like Erstesto Laclau (b. 1935) and Chantal Mouffe (b. 1943), who have recently proposed the program of discourse analysis of organizations.[55] This program has been further developed by Norman Fairclough (b. 1941), who developed a critical discourse analysis of socially mediated discourses.[56] It is interesting how these approaches to discourse analysis are founded on many of the same presuppositions as structuralist analysis, and in this sense they represent a refinement of the methods that had already been laid out by the structuralist proposals for analysis.

In particular, the method of analysis proposed by Slavoj Žižek (b. 1949), which combines insights of Lévi-Strauss, Barthes, and Lacan can be said to deliver elements of structural analysis that can also be applied to organizations and business ethics.[57] Žižek uses elements of structuralism, Lacanian psychoanalysis, and structural Marxism in his theory of ideology and subjectivity in contemporary society. This approach can also be applied to the analysis of organizations and

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[55] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe: *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (Verso, 1985). See also Louise Philips and Marianne Jorgensen, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, Sage, London 2002.

[56] Fairclough, Norman (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman; Fairclough, Norman (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press; Fairclough, Norman (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis*. Boston: Addison Wesley.

[57] Slavoj Žižek (1989): *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Verso, London 1989.

organizational forms. In this sense, we can argue that Žižek is the major representative of structural analysis in today's intellectual debates.

Even though we can see how important the structuralist approach is for analyzing organizations and business ethics today, we can also point to an important criticism of the approach: that structuralism implies a generalization of some essentialist structures to reality, but this does not really apply to the multifaceted reality of the modern world. To this criticism, a reply may be that structuralism, as based on a system of differences, should indeed imply a dynamic model of discourse. This is a weakness in classical structuralism, but later theories of structure (e.g., Bourdieu following Sartre) have attempted to develop this in a more dynamic way. In this approach, the structure is interpreted as a dynamic function of human action (praxis), and not only as a static order of the unconscious. It may be a criticism of structuralism that there is a strong tendency to reify a given structure as something ahistorical and pregiven that cannot be changed. In order to deal with this it is important to apply structuralism to organizations in a way that takes into account a dynamic concept of structure, and not only conceive of structure as something atemporal and ahistorical. This implies that human beings create structures and cannot just conceive them as something objective and essential.

Ricœur put forward by a more general criticism of structuralism in his hermeneutic philosophy.[58] This criticism argues that Lévi-Strauss and his followers are too negligent of the dialectics between event and structure, which is very important for the creation of meaning and significance. Ricœur argued that the word is an event of language and that it is the subject with intentionality who uses language to create meaning. Even though the subject may not be fully conscious of the meaning expressed in symbols and metaphors, it is the subject who creates the meaning that is expressed in the language event. According to the hermeneutical position, structure in itself cannot create meaning. Ricœur proposed to integrate structural theory into hermeneutics in the sense that structure and intentionality are linked to one other. The system of language is used to express aspects of human intentional life in society and organization. There is both a structure to explain, and a deeper meaning of symbols and imaginary expressions of meaning to understand (*expliquer mieux, c'est comprendre mieux*).[59] This is a difficult challenge for structuralist analysis of organizations.

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[58] Paul Ricœur: *Le conflit des interprétations. Essais d'herméneutique I*, Le Seuil, Paris 1969.

[59] Ricœur, Paul: *Du texte à l'action*, Le Seuil, Paris 1987.

Chapter 7
Poststructuralism, Organizational Analysis, and Business Ethics

The poststructuralist tradition involves many philosophers who take their point of departure from a criticism and development of some of the structuralist ideas, but interpret them in their own direction. In particular, poststructuralist approaches combine the transgression of structuralist perspectives with broader analysis of social phenomena and social institutions. These approaches can therefore have important relevance for philosophy of management, business ethics, and the ethics of organizations. Among different poststructuralist approaches, the following philosophies will be considered: Foucault (power and governmentality), Deleuze and Felix Guatteri (1930–1992) (capitalism, desire, and control society), and Derrida and Jean-Luc Nancy (b. 1940) (deconstruction of business ethics and corporate social responsibility). These constitute some important very distinct approaches to organizations and business in society. They all part from a critical attitude towards structuralism, while at the same time adopting some of its important insights. Foucault developed his own project of analysis that situates structures in historical genealogies and considers power as an important element of the formation of structure. Deleuze and Guattari situated structure from the perspective of a general theory of capitalist society. Derrida and Nancy open the possibility for a deconstruction of the implicit metaphysics of structuralist analysis that focuses on movements of differentiation and dissemination within the systems of structures and signs. Accordingly, we will now present these theories and their consequences for business ethics and organizations.

7.1 Michel Foucault: Power, Subjectivation, and Governmentality

Foucault was professor at Collège de France from 1970 to 1984. Foucault's critical philosophical work on subjectivity, history, and power in institutions has become extremely influential in the human and social sciences, and in critical management

studies.[1] Among French philosophers, Foucault's work is among the most widespread in organization theory.[2] Moreover, Foucault contributed to business ethics by articulating how normativity shapes the subject as a moral subject in organizations.[3] Indeed, this philosophy addresses topics of discipline and managerial leadership, which are important for the management sciences.[4] Foucault can be said to propose a general methodology for the analysis of ethics and of normativity in organizations and institutions, for example for analyzing concepts like governmentality, self-management, and biopolitics.[5] Indeed, this implies a description of the conditions for neoliberalism based on biopolitics and personal power technologies and the power of governmentality.[6]

In *Histoire de la folie* (1961), Foucault proposes an analysis of discursive formations that is developed into an archeology of paradigms in *Les mots et les choses* (1966) and *Archéologie du savoir* (1969). This is developed into a genealogy of social structures of domination in *Histoire de la sexualité I–II* (1976–1984). The problem of power is central in this genealogical approach because the truth of the social is explained by structures of power determined by social practices and institutional logics.

Foucault came from a bourgeois provincial family. His father was a famous surgeon. Foucault studied at École normale supérieure, where he was a student of Althusser and Hyppolite. He was interested in the history of philosophy, but also in psychiatry and psychology. Foucault became interested in the history of madness, which was the theme of his doctoral work published in *Histoire de la folie* and which informed his work on the foundations of medicine. With his publication of the *Les mots et les choses* in 1966 he became one of the leading figures of poststructuralist philosophy. Foucault was homosexual and he was also very active in relation to the upheaval of 1968, but this did not prevent him from being elected as chair of Collège de France as professor of the history of the systems of thought. Foucault worked on the problems of power and biopower, and on the history of sexuality linked to ethics of the concern for the individual. Foucault died of diseases related to AIDS in 1984.

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[1] Edward Barret: "Foucault and the Politics of Critical Management Studies" *Culture and Organization*, September 2004, Vol. 10(3), pp. 191–202.

[2] Renate E. Meyer and Eva Boxenbaum: "Exploring European-ness in Organization Research" *Organization Studies 31*(06) 737–755, p. 745.

[3] Mihaela Kelemen and Tuomo Peltonen: "Ethics, morality and the subject: the contribution of Zygmunt Bauman and Michel Foucault to "postmodern" business ethics", *Scandinavian Journal of Management*. 17 (2001), pp. 151–166.

[4] Eric Pezet: "Discipliner et gouverner: influence de deux themes foucaldiens en sciences de gestion", *Finance Contrôle, stratégie*, Vol. 7, No. 3, Septembre 2004, pp. 169–189.

[5] Alexander Carnera: "The affective turn: The ambivalence of biopolitics within modern labour and management", *Culture and Organization*, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2012, pp. 69–84.

[6] Trent H. Hamann: "Neoliberalism, Governmentality, and Ethics", *Neoliberal Governmentality*, *Foucault Studies*, No. 6, pp. 37–59, February 2009.

The social and political power in society is reinforced as a discourse of truth, as can be seen in the case of madness, where the scientific and social concept of madness is determined by the dominant powers of society.[7] In western society madness has a social function as an instrument to exclude the Other from the rationality of society. By analyzing madness and its representations, Foucault described genealogies and the construction of social discourses in society as something different from a natural, pregiven order.[8]

The archeology in *Les mots et les choses* develops description of the forms of discourses in *Histoire de la folie* by defining different epistemological formations that replace one another. There is a fundamental difference between the historical epistemical formations. In this context, the archeological analysis concerns the fundamental concepts that govern social interaction and life in an historical epoque.[9] In particular, Foucault distinguishes between the classical and modern historical époque, and he argues that there is radical epistemological break in the outlook of these different epistemic paradigms.

Foucault's archeology of knowledge represents an analysis of the emergence of the scientific discourse in relation to human social activity, conceiving the scientific discourse as an integrated element of the social discourse. In *Archéologie du savoir,* Foucault presents his concept of historical genealogy and the continuation of epistemological paradigms in history. Foucault argues that there is an essential historical discontinuity between the paradigms of knowledge.[10]

The historical, genealogical, and archeological analysis looks at the different constructions of meaning (*énoncé de signification*) in the formation of discourse in history that conditions the concepts in the epistemological paradigms. The *énoncé* is defined as units of significance that are formed according the rules in the totality of the discursive field.[11]

The discourses are units of signification and they are made of the signs that form their significance according to the differences in the system of signification.[12] The discourse functions as the horizon of the rationality and worldview of individuals, but the structures and rules of signification are not transparent for the subject that is determined by them. It is the discourse that speaks through the individual, rather than the individual who speaks or thinks.[13]

It is this discursive approach that can be proposed as a methodology for analyzing business and organization. Foucault's work can be applied in order to understand organizational communication and public relations. His discourse perspective focuses on the production of meaning, strategy, and power, by presenting hegemonies

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[7] Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, Gallimard 1972.

[8] Michel Foucault: *Les mots et les choses*, Gallimard Paris 1966, p. 13.

[9] Ibid., p. 15.

[10] Michel Foucault: *Les mots et les choses*, Gallimard, Paris 1966, p. 12.

[11] Ibid., p. 107.

[12] Ibid., p. 67.

[13] Ibid., p. 104.

of discourse and sociocultural technologies of the self, and organizations produced in discourses.[14] In this sense, from the perspective of Foucault, organizations can be viewed as discursive constructions.[15]

The different discursive formations that Foucault analyzes in *Histoire de la folie* and *Naissance de la clinique* (1963) include structures of domination of individuals. They are present in objectification, and they include individuals in the sense that individual difference is also subject to domination in the social discourse. In *Histoire de la sexualité* Foucault formulates the methodological foundations for the genealogy of power and social domination. Here, the analysis of social discourse moves from the archeology of knowledge to the genealogy of power that characterizes Foucault's specific analysis of social domination of individual corporeal difference. Foucault's reflections are particularly concerned with the future of the individual in domination. We can nearly speak of an existentialist origin of Foucault's thought.

This archeology of discursive forms is a geneology of power, where the structures of discursive formation are conceived as structures of power. The formation of discourses can be said to be driven by anonymous wills to power, as a will to knowledge that is very similar to Nietzsche's concept of "will to power." The discursive formations are, however, contingent in the sense that there is no truth condition outside their historical formation. They are rather incarnations of a will to formation of structural forms that are different in each epistemological paradigm, in the sense that there is no transhistorical point of view on the truth of the different structural formations.

This methodology for analyzing structural formations and discourses is used by Foucault as a criticism of the concept of knowledge in the philosophy of the subject. There is no subject who is free and rational with transparent self-consciousness, as proposed by Descartes and the modern tradition of the philosophy of the subject. The Cartesian idea of rational subjects conceives the world as a possible rational representation of the subject and leaves out the empirical and corporeal existing self, which is outside the rationality of the Cogito. Madness and Otherness are particularly excluded from this rational philosophical discourse.

Foucault argued that the origins of modern rationality, and its sharp distinction between rationality and madness, can be found in the philosophy of Descartes, whose strict separation between rational thought and individual corporal existence placed madness outside the thought of the rational subject. Indeed, modern humanism and belief in technological rationality have adopted this distinction.

Foucault questioned the modern project of anthropology and of the idea of the philosophy of the subject based on a modern epistemological paradigm. This paradigm emerged with the change of the *epistémé* of the classical historical epoque (fifteenth to seventeenth centuries) to the modern historical epoque (eighteenth to

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[14] Judy Motion and Shirley Leitch: "A toolbox for public relations: The oeuvre of Michel Foucault", *Public Relations Review* 33 (2007), pp. 263–268.

[15] Aurélie Leclercq-Vandelannoitte: "Organizations as Discursive Constructions: A Foucauldian Approach", *Organization Studies* 32(9), pp. 1247–1271.

twentieth centuries), and it contributed to the formation of a particular modern concept of the human being that became the object of study of the human sciences. This paradigm was defined in contrast to the classical concept of human beings that views them as a part of the natural world. In contrast to this, it was now work, life, and language, that became transcendental concepts.[16]

Accordingly, Foucault argued that Kantian anthropology of the free and responsible subject, with the conditions of cognition in time and space, replaced the classical concept of human beings as part of a larger world of representation. At the same time, the modern concept of humankind as subject of action and cognition, and dominator of the world, became the condition for the modern scientific conception of the world, its objectification of things, and of technological domination of the world. However, this reference to the subject as dominant in the world implies a certain forgetfulness of being beyond human subjectivity.[17] This is the case, for example, with structural analyses of language where human beings are language users, but language has no meaning in itself beyond the use of it by human beings.

Foucault argued that modern culture conceives human beings and human sciences from the perspective of themselves. The concept of human being as suggested by Descartes, Kant, and phenomenological, existential, and structuralist philosophy is a configuration in the modern *epistemé*.[18] The modern subject is characterized by the tautological distinction between the empirical and the transcendental.[19] The empirical subject is nothing but a double of the transcendental subject of the human and social sciences where the subject of cognition only reflects itself in empirical reality.[20] With this presentation of the origins of the philosophy of the subject, Foucault moved beyond the philosophy of the power of the subject towards a new and other kind of humanism that is not based on the discourse of the will to power (or the will to know) of transcendental philosophy.

7.2   Structures of Power in Modern Society

This attempt to analyze structures of power and formulate a new humanism is clearly developed in *Histoire de la sexualité 1–3* (1976–1984), where Foucault discusses sexuality as a form of oppression in the modern age in order to address the question about the extent to which sexuality may function as a procedure of power (*dispotif du pouvoir*), rendering it an oppressive rather than liberating discourse. The idea of sexuality as oppressive begins with the criticism of the Victorians in

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[16] Michel Foucault: *Les mots et les choses*, Gallimard, Paris 1966, p. 237.

[17] Ibid., p. 324.

[18] Ibid., p. 337.

[19] Ibid., p. 330.

[20] Ibid., p. 335.

nineteenth century, who used sexuality as a form of discourse to oppress citizens.[21] In particular, the new forms of sexuality and sexual liberation following the revolution of 1968 were directed against this idea that sexuality is oppressive. However, according to Foucault these norms were not only liberating but also implied a new form of power discourse related to sexuality. This new discourse articulated that sexuality should not be hid, that people should not have a perverse sexuality, and that people should be free and natural in relation to their sexuality. The modern hypothesis of oppressive sexuality functions rather as the confirmation of a certain form of discourse about sexuality that is based on a specific scientific and technical discourse about the use of the body in modernity.

Accordingly, modern culture has invented a discourse about the realization of the subject through sexual realization by making oppressed sexual desires and the drives of the subject transparent. Culture has institutionalized the idea of the concept of the subject as something that should be liberated through scientific, psychoanalytical, and philosophical discourse. In the concept of modern liberated sexuality it is possible to find a generalized criticism of oppressed desires based on the Enlightenment idea of the subject liberated from alienation through release of sexual prejudice and hidden desires. Foucault argues that the whole project of total liberation of the subject in self-realization can imply an oppression of human beings and that the modern techniques of sexuality may imply a sophisticated submission and oppression of the individual human being.

Foucault finds traces of the discourse of oppression of individuals through total self-realization in the discursive forms that are present in the Christian (particularly Catholic) religion, which includes a so-called pastoral power.[22] Foucault uses this concept to denominate the attitude of the Catholic priest who maintains a paternal attitude, making the individual say everything about his or her sins and perversion, and every other morally wrong action during the confession. Indeed, the modern discourse about sexuality implies an imperative that is imposed on the self for self-realization. This is an essential concept of the power discourse of the culture of subjective self-realization of desire that establishes it as the norm of modern society.[23]

In fact, the analysis of discourses of medicine and imprisonment in *Naissance de la clinique* and *Surveiller et punir* also present the same tension between self-realization and power. In the discourse of modern medical sciences, the clinic does not really present the liberation of the individual; rather, it contains the realization of the domination and scientific normalization of the individual. For the first time, the clinic allowed a scientific discourse about the human body to be possible, where the individual—through objective investigation—can be described scientifically, and where the human body and madness become objects of science.

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[21] Michel Foucault: *Histoire de la sexualité 1, La Volonté du savoir*, Gallimard, Paris 1976, p. 18.

[22] Ibid., p. 27.

[23] Ibid., p. 30.

In the prisons of modernity, we are confronted with the same function of power and discourse. Through imprisonment it becomes possible to have power over and normalize the individual, who becomes a part of the established social discourse through self-awareness of their wrongdoing and through regret as an instrument of self-control. Moreover, similarly sophisticated instruments of power and domination are present in public space where self-management and self-control make the individual conform to social discourse and exclude madness and irrationality by being absorbed in the common norms of society.

In this way, society developed sophisticated instruments to dominate the individual through anonymous discourses of power. The individual is conceived as difference in relation to the social order, according to Foucault. The public space is presented as domination, and public action is determined by the public function of a specific social order. If a positive concept of humanity is possible it is presented through alienation, insanity, and social difference. The individual is characterized by an insanity that is not possible to normalize or destroy through social power.

Accordingly, personal difference is presented as a kind of personal identity that breaks with the social order, as critical individual existence that always represents a difference with regard to the social order. The idealism of Foucault is not represented by rationality and good will, but by insanity and the body, which are not dominated by science and the rationality of social organization.

A criticism of Foucault is that his thought represents absolute irrationalism, the consequence of which is a world where everything is permitted, even mass murder, or the totalitarianism of fascism and Nazism. From this perspective, the liberation of madness (*la folie*) seems to be very dangerous for maintaining the social. Foucault seems to presuppose that insanity, as such, is not bad, only that the perversion of it comes from the social. The individual who is not dominated by the social seems to rely on a specific harmony. How can he or she have a normative conception when there is no point of view that surpasses the discursive conditions? We need to examine Foucault's social ontology in order to know to what extent it is possible to unite individual corporeal difference with a vision of social and political community.

A problem for understanding Foucault's conception of the community and of the relation between organization and ethics is that he does not present an explicit normative position in his philosophy. He analyzes the rules of formation for discourse in the western world and the epistemic structures of its historical and social development. Foucault's theory of discourse presents a vision of social interaction, and in this way it becomes the basis for analyzing social and ethical discourses of society and organization. This quasi-ethnological perspective represents an access to the social world as political and social organization. According to Foucault's position, politics refers to the formation of sociality and ethical materiality as the norms of society, which expressed through its organizations, corporations and institutions.

The genealogical approach presented by Foucault becomes a speculative analysis of the political and social structures of the West. Gaining distance from one's proper tradition becomes very productive for understanding the political

power structures that are hidden. Accordingly, discourse implies a dynamic action that cannot be reduced to structure. We can perceive the emergence of a dialectics of the same and the Other within the structuralist perspective, as proposed by Foucault in *Histoire de la Folie*.[24]

He conceives of history as a progressive isolation of the Other, which is the madness. History is a dialectics of the negative recognition in which one isolates the Other in other to keep society together. History represents a dialectics of exclusion in order to keep the unity of the political community. It is through exclusion that society preserves the unity of the political, organizational, or institutional community. In this way, Foucault's social thought represents a criticism of the logic of identity that is present in society and in the formation of social and institutional structures in society.

7.3   Archeology and Genealogy of Power

In particular, this archeological and genealogical approach shows how political, social, or organizational community isolates its difference through the process of unifying and structuring society through discursive orders. The anonymous structures of power are produced through the specific epistemic formations and keep the community, organization, or institution together around its own logic of power, of identification with itself. Accordingly, the political, institutional, or organizational community is produced unconsciously as a part of the epistemic structure of a particular historical époque.

Accordingly, we can say that Foucault presents a Hobbesian vision of the political community and of the institutional and organizational structures of community. Society and organizations are hold together by different structures of power at different levels of social organization. Individuals are blind and anonymous actors in the social system of power. Totalitarianism is marked by just such a social organization based on unconscious domination by different anonymous structures of power.

This kind of domination is not conscious, but is formed as part of the discourse that determines the particular sociality of the historical conditions of society, thereby contributing to the reduction of individual difference. In this sense, we can say that the relation between individuals is formed as different relations of domination in historical situations. Indeed, it is necessary to analyze these relations of domination in order to understand the formation of the social, organizational and institutional order. The power of normalization of the social, the organizational, the institutional, and of the political is formed according to the different spheres of society.

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[24] Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la folie à l' âge classique*, Gallimard, Paris 1972.

Foucault does not, however, present us with a complete analysis of the exclusion of the Other in relation to the identity of the same. The different forms of analysis represent particular cases of a general structuralist dialectics of the exclusion of the Other in relation to the sociality of the same. Indeed, the community, institution, or organization is governed by an unconscious will and anonymous identity formation that structures society according to a particular logic of domination. This is, for example, the case with *Histoire de la folie,* where Foucault analyzes madness based on an understanding of this kind of structural determination from an historical perspective.[25]

Beginning in the classical age, mad people were no longer conceived as proper participants in the social community. They were considered as sick and requiring treatment in order to make them sociable for community. Psychiatry should be interpreted as a science that aims at normalizing the mad in order to make them capable of being a part of society, a community, or organization.[26]

In the same way, *Surveiller et punir* represents a genealogy of the modern practices of punishment. The aim is to explain the social function of punishment,[27] specifically, how increasing the importance of the role of the soul in punishment implies an intensification of corporeal punishment and, more generally, the use of new technologies of domination. Moreover, the idea of individual moral improvement becomes an important aim of the intensification of domination, in order to capture the individuality of the prisoner. Foucault explains the importance of the soul in the social organization by noting how the body as a form of imprisonment is a major instrument of political control.[28]

With this analysis, Foucault analyzes the formation of power and domination in order to improve the moral formation of society. The idea of improving the soul is nothing but an intensification of the domination of the individual by society and its organizations and institutions. In the same way, the legal order in organizations and institutions is used to promote the participation of the individual in the order of social organization of the society. The punishment of the body through different social technologies in different institutions can be conceived as a political technology of social domination.

Foucault argues that the body is placed directly in the political field of confrontation. In this context, we have to deal with a political technology of the body.[29] Foucault analyzes the genealogy of disciplinary society on the basis of the analysis of the prison, which follows on his analysis in *Naissance* de *la clinique,* where we see a description of the relations between scientific discourse, power, and domination. From this perspective, the clinic represents a specific manner of dominating the individual body. The subject becomes him- or herself through the domination of

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Michel Foucault: *Surveiller et punir, Gallimard*, Paris 1975, p. 28.

[28] Ibid., p. 34.

[29] Ibid., p. 31.

the individual in the clinical context, where the individual is socialized to the rationality of society. The scientific discourse about the social emerges in the clinic and represents a closure in relation to individual difference. Foucault emphasizes that politics deals with control of individual life, groups, or societies, including life of the race or of psychological life. In this politics of life, the medical polarity of the normal and the pathological is at the center of control.[30] We can talk about a convergence between political ideology and medical technology.[31] The psychopathological hospital takes part of a process of social domination that searches for identity in social relations. The analysis of the sexuality shows how social domination of the individual is introduced through the sexualization of the social relations. The relation to the Other is determined as a relation of sexual machines, and individuals are forced to satisfy their desires indefinitely through this objectification and sexual normalization.

Foucault's analysis of power allows for a criticism of the dominant ideology of communication and dialogue. This is the possible application of the analysis of Christian pastoral power in *Histoire de la sexualité*.[32] This kind of power should not only be conceived as a criticism of the modern philosophy of subjectivity, but as more broad criticism of the doctrine of emancipation of modernity. The problem is that the hermeneutic concept of rationality, which aims at understanding and dialogue, may in itself imply a rationality of domination. Foucault criticizes such a rationality of understanding, arguing that the intersubjectivity of understanding, of confession, and of mutual domination implies a new kind of power. This is because the politics of understanding implies the incorporation of the realization of the Other in relation to self in the sphere of the identity of the self, instead of respecting the other as Other.

This may also be the case for organizations and institutions where a politics of understanding and mutual self-realization through dialogue becomes an idealistic politics, where the Other is included in the same, obliged to self-realization in mutual understanding. An implicit presupposition of agreement in the politics of understanding presents a kind of power that can destroy difference in relation to the Other, by effacing the individuality of the participants in the dialogical communication and search for understanding.[33]

From this perspective, dialogical politics represents a new form of discursive domination. Foucault argues that truth is not free by nature, but dependent on and controlled by intersubjective power. He mentions the confession as an example of this power relation.[34] We can say that power is always there as something that imposes itself on intersubjective relations in society, organizations, and institutions. According to Foucault, there is power everywhere. Justice is also a representation

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[30] Michel Foucault: *Naissance de la clinique*, PUF, Paris 1963, p. 36.

[31] Ibid., p. 37.

[32] Michel Foucault: *Histoire de la sexualité 1, La Volonté du savoir*, Paris, Gallimard, 1976, p. 28.

[33] Ibid., pp. 89–90.

[34] Ibid., p. 86.

of power in terms of legal discourse imposing a certain order through the legal institutions and in society.

Indeed, the definition of power by Foucault is very global. This implies the possibility of banalization. The risk is that if all social structure is based on power, how can we then distinguish between good and bad power? Accordingly, Foucault's position, apart from the development of different and very complex forms of power, has a tendency to become too global and too general. It also becomes a problem to know how Foucault, too, is not determined by the very structures of social power that he aims at analyzing.

We can ask how this is possible when we know that the subject is dependent on obedience to the state through the domination of the individual in the different discourses that cover the power structures of society. We need to conceptualize power before the law if it is the power that is the incarnation of the law. The power imposes itself in the adaptation of discourse. Foucault says that power is everywhere, that it embraces everything, and that it comes from everywhere.[35]

We can see how Foucault operates with a global definition of power. Power not only comes from the State, but imposes itself as logic of identity on intersubjectivity. Social domination, including its institutions and organizations, is realized through logic of objectification in the technology of discourse. Foucault argues for a nominalist concept of power that is not something that somebody possesses. Power should rather be used to explain a complex strategic relation in a specific society.[36] Accordingly, each individual who finds him- or herself in a particular discourse is caught by a particular power of discursive domination. Society, and its organizations and institutions, is not unified in belonging. It is a unit of violence and of individual domination. Foucault asks whether we should turn around the famous statement that war is politics by other means to say that politics is war with other means.[37]

In fact it seems like every social, organizational, and institutional order is a social formation of power and domination. It is seemingly impossible for the individual to isolate him- or herself from such a social order. The power of identity and of socialization comes from all sides in society where it is at work in corporations, firms, and other public and private institutions. But power also works in civil society, in the family, and in more or less apparently humanitarian relations. This power can even capture the individual through self-control and self-management, where the individual is responsible for imposing the disciplinary techniques on him- or herself. Here, we face a kind of power that is capable of capturing the individual through their individuality. Moreover, power is immanent in discourse, but it does not have a stable character; rather, it changes according to each discourse and takes part of each discourse formation expressed in science, imprisonment, schooling, medicine, in private corporations and firms, and in public administration, organizations, and institutions.

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[35] Ibid., p. 121.

[36] Ibid., p. 123.

[37] Ibid., p. 123.

This very global definition of power leaves little place for a politics of prudence or for a common praxis. Rather, praxis is conceived as a new form of power: a form of war. From this perspective, concepts of prudence and of practical reason express the power of the aristocracy who manage to impose their power on the weak in society.

Accordingly, the question of whether there exists a conception of practical reason and ethics in Foucault's philosophy seems to be heading in the wrong direction. At the same time, the development of a dialectics of the same and the Other can be seen as a kind of recognition of the individual *and,* through the analysis of madness, of the other as Other. We are faced with a dialectics of the social that is not really conceived as an isolation of the difference of the individual. This kind of practical reason can be said to imply a normativity that wants to include respect for the difference of madness in social life in organizations and institutions. Foucault really is a kind of liberal searching for the freedom of the individual in society; however, at the same time, he stays very pessimistic with regard to the possibility of the realization of this liberty in society.[38]

Nevertheless, Foucault searches for an ideal of practical reason and for ordinary social practice that goes beyond domination. This politics would be very critical of the identity logic of the discourse of the same. This would be a very free discourse opening in relation to the same and to difference.

Accordingly, it is very difficult to find an ethics of individuals, organizations, or institutions in Foucault's philosophy, because his philosophy attempts only to propose a descriptive analysis. It seems impossible to find a basis for criticism outside of discursive formations. We can say that Foucault moves from an ethics of rules of the institution towards an ethics of the self, with a focus on care for the ethical self.[39] It is only in *Histoire de la sexualité* that Foucault attempts to develop an ethics as a response to the technical rationality of domination. Foucault proposes to go back to the Greeks. He wanted to find this ethics in corporeal practice and in the relation of the self to others, as this was developed in Greek thought.

7.4   Ethics Beyond Biopower?

With this return to the Greeks, Foucault argued that there is a kind of aesthetic ethics in the Greek philosophy and worldview. This is a kind of ethics that is different from other forms of Greek rationality, because the point of departure is

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[38] Richard Rorty proposes in *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, to determine Foucault as a "liberal ironist". This expresses very well this relation between strict power society and the search for another social practice as proposed by Michel Foucault.

[39] Andrew Crane, David Knights, and Ken Starkey: "The conditions of our freedom: Foucault, organization and ethics", *Business Ethics Quarterly*, Volume 18, Issue 3. 2008, pp. 299–320.

individual corporeal difference.[40] Ethics takes its starting point from this individual difference. This ethics searches for another kind of relation to desire and to oneself in the Greek culture, which differs from western technical and scientific rationality.

Foucault turns to antiquity in order to show how the relation of the self to the Other in antiquity is totally different from the relation to modernity. Foucault argues that in antiquity, the practices of the self were problematized through the criteria of an aesthetics of existence.[41]

Foucault proposes a concept of practical reason and ethics that is based on individuality: the needs and desires of the individual body before the domination of these desires through socialization. We can say that Foucault proposes to search for the ethics and poetics of existence that is implicit in certain texts of antiquity.[42] The ethics of antiquity differs from every kind of deontological and Christian ethics, because it is not an ethics of duty, but one of individual prudence that is proposed as the foundation of the relation between the individual and the world, and intersubjectivity. In a world where practical rationality implies domination, the only authentic relation to oneself and the Other is presented in the individual prudence of taking care of oneself (*souci de soi*).

According to Foucault, in the ancient Greek world pleasure was a question of the good use of prudence. Pleasure was not dominated by morality, but was defined through an aesthetics of personal teleology. It was a question of the good use of sexuality for its integration in the teleology of the authentic self. According to Foucault, the art of good use of pleasure is presented as the capacity to deal with pleasure and desire from the point of view of prudence.[43]

From this perspective, the individual realizes him- or herself as a moral subject through the good practice of prudence, according to the right measure and dignity.[44] With this approach, Foucault provides a foundation for morality in individual aesthetic well-being. Intersubjectivity is only possible to the extent that it is in harmony with, and defined as, the sum of individual well-being. This follows from the historical teleology of the bodily individual in his or her corporeal difference.

This aesthetics of the self has no universality. It only concerns the particular historical individual and his or her relation to the Other. To the extent that one's esthetic qualities are in harmony and the Other, one wants to take part in the personal aesthetic project. Foucault says that the art of existence (*l'art de l'existence*)[45] is dominated by the principle that one has to take care of oneself: It is the principle of the concern for the self that determines the necessity of decision-making and

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[40] Mollie Painter-Morland and René Ten Bos: *Business ethics and continental Philosophy*, Cambridge 2011, p. 83.

[41] Michel Foucault: *Histoire de la sexualité II, L'usage des plaisirs, histoire de la sexualité, tome II*, Gallimard, Paris 1984, p. 19.

[42] Ibid., p. 70.

[43] Ibid., p. 203.

[44] Ibid., p. 105.

[45] Ibid., p. 57.

the developments that organize practice.[46] Accordingly, in the Greek world, social practice was founded on the personal concern for oneself. Aesthetics, morality, and politics were determined in individual difference and in the personal aesthetics of existence. Existence was presented as an "art of living" that goes beyond every positive deontological morality.

This concept draws inevitable comparisons to Nietzsche's concept of the superman (*Übermensch*), who has left every morality behind him and only lives according to a personal aesthetics, with concern for individual bodily difference. Foucault's ethics concerns individual well-being and our rights in society; however, we may find it difficult to argue that the principles of personal liberty and aesthetics of existence can ensure common happiness in society, because it is very difficult to find a concern for the Other in Foucault's philosophy. Individual aesthetics includes facing violence in relation to the Other.

In this context, it is problematic that Foucault can deal with figures of excess of individual esthetics, like Caligula and Nero, who used their individual freedom to abuse other human beings. How can Foucault reconcile this aesthetics of violence and decadence resulting from individualist ethics with an aesthetics of the personal art of living?

Foucault would probably reply by showing that the possibility of the formation of the self determines the relation between the self, the social, and the Other. In this context, the concern for the self may imply concern for the Other because this care defines what it is to be human. Accordingly, personal aesthetics are presented as the concern for the self as an object of desire. It is important to show how this concern for the self implies the transition to the social life together in community.[47] The concern for the self becomes a social practice and, accordingly, it implies concern for the Other. Put differently, the ethical obligation towards the Other is constituted in the mutual and reciprocal concern for the self. We can say that reciprocity as mutual gift should be constituted through this mutual aesthetical relation to the self based on mutual obligations of exchange and concern.[48]

Foucault argues that the ancient medical practice represents a paradigmatic example of this practice of the body, which contrasts with the will to know of the technical rationality of modern medical science. The politics of the art of existence is, by contrast, based on personal engagement in the activities of the city-state. We find such a conception of politics in the work of the late Greek philosopher Epicurus who argued that politics is constructed on the basis of a personal aesthetics of pleasure.[49]

From this point of view, governance should also be concerned with self-care, since this an important concern for politics and leadership.[50] The close relation

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[46] Ibid., p. 57.

[47] Ibid., p. 67.

[48] Ibid., p 69.

[49] Ibid., p. 108.

[50] Michel Foucault: *Histoire de la sexualité III, Le souci de soi*, Paris, Gallimard, 1984, p. 140.

between political activity and personal destiny implies that it is necessary to form an ethics that makes it possible to constitute a moral subject in relation to social, critical, and political activities in different contexts.[51]

To the extent that the aesthetics of the self is a social practice, the transition between politics and an aesthetics of the self can be conceived as an art of existence. A political aesthetics is Foucault's answer to the problem of how to conceive the rationality of politics, leadership, and good governance. From this perspective, the aesthetics of leadership and good governance receives its foundation in the concept of concern for the self, based on individual corporeal difference and the art of existence. The only possibly rational political and institutional leadership and governance refers to the self as an existential project in relation to which politics and leadership represent an effort to go beyond the suffering and technological domination of the individual. The collective idea of the concern for the self and the poeticization of culture constitute Foucault's answer to the problem of personal aesthetics as one of violence. The question remains, however, whether this is sufficient to ensure the common good for community?

This question becomes even more serious when we consider Foucault's proposal for an aesthetics of leadership from the perspective of his philosophy of history and concept of modernity. At the moment of the passage from the Christian age, the culture of concern for the self was lost. The decline of the Greek city-states and the decline of the Roman Empire implied the decline of politics and leadership based on the aesthetics of the self. In order to understand the possibility of Foucault's practical aesthetics and reason, we have to take into account this development of political philosophy in history.

In his political philosophy of leadership, Foucault integrated an implicit philosophy of history. His analysis of the different forms of epistemic formations can be presented as a description of the development in history of different social paradigms and epistemic forms. The archeology and genealogy of a particular historical époque depends on the relation of these discursive forms with other paradigms of knowledge.

It is necessary to analyze the transitions between these different discursive formations in order to understand their development and historical changes. Foucault's philosophy of history is characterized by an emphasis on the lack of necessity in historical development. Foucault argued that the fundamental changes in history are contingent and that there is no logic of development in the concrete historical movement. History has no aim, but it is an eternal movement of different historical formations and social orders that organize the relations between body, individual, and intersubjectivity in different ways. These historical discursive formations of power are characterized by a tendency to reduce individual differ-ence. We can say that inside the logic of the discursive formations, a logic of the reduction of the Other to the same is formed. This logic is formed by the discourse

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[51] Ibid., p. 116.

of power, and in this way it is presented as a logic of necessity inside the discursive formation, even though the discursive formation, as such, must be considered as contingent. Within the discursive formation it seems to be very difficult for the subject to break with the discourse, while the Greek aesthetic practice presents another possibility in relation to the body that is different from that of modern technology. This utopia of the Greek aesthetic practice functions, however, as a radical criticism of disciplinary technologies of modernity because of the historical dependency and contingency of discourse.

With this historical analysis, Foucault proposed essentially an analysis of the developments of ethics and leadership within the western world. He referred to three main ages or paradigms: modernity, the classical age, and antiquity. These periods are compared through Foucault's work. Modernity is mainly defined by its relation to the social structures of the western world. The social and political situation in the West implies an intensification of power structures and domination of the individual through the will to knowledge of cultural and scientific progress. The will to knowledge and to domination does not liberate humanity towards progress and perpetual peace: rather, the modern project of Enlightenment includes the destruction of autonomous individuality.

There is an internal contradiction in Foucault's philosophy. He criticizes modernity for being the time of the oppression of individuality, but this period also marks the emergence of individuality. In this way, modernity simultaneously implies liberation and domination in relation to the traditional structures of society. To avoid contradicting himself, Foucault was obliged to propose his ethics within the conditions of modernity, which implies a fundamental recognition of this society, because this ethics of freedom is fundamental to the conditions of modernity.

Foucault also seemed to have forgotten that the aesthetic individualism coming from German idealism and Nietzsche fundamentally represents a modern project.[52] In this way, the project of modernity not only implies domination, even though it is necessary to affirm that there are aspects of oppression in modern thought. We can say that the rationality of domination is implicit in the Enlightenment isolation of its Other from its rationality, as in madness, the body, and individual difference. As he described the western project, Foucault argued that this social order has been constituted with different confrontations of power and integrated in the political order.[53]

Foucault used his concept of biopower to describe how governmentality strategies intensify the domination and power in modernity. Biopower is the essence of the power of private and public institutions and organizations in modernity. Although Foucault may not have always employed the concept directly, his theory opens a path

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[52] This for example the criticism of Luc Ferry in his book Homo Esthéticus and of Habermas in his book about the Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: *Philosophische Diskurs der Moderne*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1988.

[53] Michel Foucault: *Histoire de la sexualité III, Le souci de soi*, Gallimard, Paris 1984, p. 135.

for analyzing governance technologies of power.[54] This concept of biopower is developed at the end of the first volume of *Histoire de la sexualité*. The will to power over life and death is expressed in this concept, which really could be determined as a kind corporealization of the Hegelian dialectics of recognition.

The emergence of this new kind of logic of power in organizations and institutions of state and civil society in modernity implied a transformation of the power over life and death in modernity. The new forms of governance are central to self-management in the neoliberal state.[55] Governmentality is calculated management of life, for example through the creation and the self-control of the individual or the organization in neoliberalism, which is illustrated by the use of accounting and evaluation technologies.[56] These technologies are formed as systems of self-control and self-management for individuals and organizations. The question of power is expressed in contexts, such as the survival of the power of the body and of the right to the life of the body in relation to the intensification of the anonymous power strategy that manifests itself in modernity as biopower. The management of the state is based on the management of life and death of human beings through domination with biopower.[57]

The concept of biopolitics as central to governmentality and leadership can be said to imply a kind of Darwinian and Hobbesian perspective on humanity in modernity. Governmentality structures include the management of life and death through the concept of biopolitics. We can say that the Hegelian struggle for recognition is changed into a struggle about the individual body and the corporeality of the individual. The question of biopower concerns the problem of how relate to the human body through the technological domination of the individual in the discursive totality of modernity. This is present in governance, leadership, and management, where different disciplinary technologies are at work. However, as a response to the domination of biopower, it is still the aesthetics of self and the ethics of concern for the self that represents Foucault's response to the culture of biopower in modernity.

In fact, the analysis of the aesthetics of the self as a critical response to the domination by biopower and disciplinary technologies endows the genealogical and archeological approach to biopower in social institutions and organizations with a positive dimension. Foucault's philosophy of management supports just such a critical analysis of the biopower and disciplinary technologies in organizations and institutions of society.[58] This implies an examination of the archeologies and genealogies of different discourses and norms in particular organizations. It also implies the value of analyzing the genealogy of neoliberalism as a social

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[54] Jim Jose: "A (con)fusion of discourses? Against the governancing of Foucault", *Social Identities*, Vol. 16, No. 5, September 2010, pp. 689–703.

[55] Peter Triantafillou: *New Forms of Governing. A Foucauldian Inspired Analysis*, Palgrave Macmillan, London 2012.

[56] Caroline Lambert and Eric Pezet: "Accounting and the Making of Homo Liberalis", *Foucault Studies, Special Issue on Foucault and Accounting*, No. 13, pp. 67–81, May 2012.

[57] Michel Foucault: *Histoire de la sexualité III, Le souci de soi*, Paris, Gallimard, 1984, p. 144.

[58] Campbell Jones: Foucault's inheritance/inheriting Foucault, *Culture and Organization* 2002, vol 8 (3), pp. 225–238.

formation.[59] Indeed, organization and management should be viewed as the realization of different governmentality strategies of biopower. The aesthetics of the self is represented as the revolt of the body against modernity. Here, there is an opening for another way of understanding management and leadership. In this way, the descriptive archeological and genealogical analysis allows for a conceptualization of management and leadership beyond the domination of biopower. Apart from his historical and perspectivist viewpoint, Foucault was searching for an ethical approach to governmentality that goes beyond the structures of biopower.

7.5　Gilles Deleuze (and Felix Guattari): Capitalism, Desire and Control Society

Deleuze and his friend and co-author, Guatteri, are also considered important figures in the poststructuralist movement of philosophy. In particular, they worked together on a project criticizing capitalism and social philosophy in the 1970s. As a philosopher, Deleuze can be said to belong to the tradition of philosophy of history from the Sorbonne, with inspiration from Sartre, Wahl, Hyppolite, but also Georges Canguilhem (1904–1995).

Deleuze studied philosophy at the University of Paris. He studied with professors like Ferdinand Alquié (1906–1985), Canguilhem, Maurice de Gandillac (1906–2006), and Hyppolite. He taught high school philosophy from 1948 to1957. In 1957 he became assistant at the University of Paris and professor at the University in Lyon. He received his doctorate in 1969, with de Gandillac and Alquié as his supervisors. After this, he was employed at the University of Paris-XIII, Vincennes and Saint Dennis, until his retirement in 1987. In particular, he became well known for his at the university, which became events during the 1970s and 1980s. Deleuze committed suicide in 1995 due to an incurable respiratory disease.

Deleuze's work can be said to include three major parts. Firstly, in the 1950s and 1960s, he presented readings of major philosophers, such as Hume, Nietzsche, Bergson, and Spinoza, who continued to be major inspiration to his own systematic philosophy. During this time, he also wrote books on Proust and Kafka as literary figures who influenced his philosophy. Secondly, in the 1970s, he developed his own philosophy in *Différence et répetition* (1968) and *Logique du sens* (1969). Together with Guatteri he wrote his major books on social philosophy, *Anti-Oedipe* (1972) and *Mille plateau* (1980). Thirdly, we can mention his works on art, films, and literature in the 1980s, including his books on film and aesthetics. Finally, towards the end of his life he wrote an important book with Guattari entitled *Que-est-que c'est la philosophie?* (1991). He also developed his critique and

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[59] Terry Flew: "Michel Foucault's The Birth of Biopolitics and contemporary neo-liberalism", *Thesis Eleven* 2012 108(1), pp. 44–65.

continuation of the project of Foucault with a short essay on control society (*Société de contrôle*).

Deleuze can be said to contribute an antimethod of problematizing to organization theory.[60] Organization theory is realized through thinking as practice on the basis of a geopolitical approach in the tension between the kind of critique that Deleuze and Guatteri called deterritorialization and reterritorialization.[61] Organizations are conceived of machines of desire with their subsequent dilemmas, problems, and paradoxes. Alternatively, the ideology of management can be unmasked.[62] We can say that Deleuze developed his concept of organization from a fundamental ontology of intensification of the study of social phenomena.[63]

With inspiration from Bergson, Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Hume, Deleuze emphasized that the project of philosophy is to create new concepts.[64] Indeed, Deleuze had a peculiar way of reading previous philosophers. He articulated his approach by saying "that you have to come up behind the philosopher and make a monster child of him," in the sense that you present a radical new interpretation of his work. At the same time, Deleuze proposed an antisubjectivist empiricism, in particular with his reading of Hume that went against the dominating trend of phenomenology when it was written in the 1950s. Analogous to Ricœur's concept of *Le cogito brisé,* Deleuze argued that the subject is always broken and surpassed by the movement of life. Following Canguilhem and Nietzsche, it is the creation of life that was fundamental for Deleuze's empiricism. In fact, Deleuze conceived of his empiricist philosophy as the wild creation of concepts that one has never seen or heard of before ("la folle creation des concepts qu'on ait jamais vue ou entendue").[65]

It is important to notice that Deleuze saw Sartre as a very important philosopher. As a young man during the war he read *L'être et le néant* and he considered *Critique de la raison dialectique* to be one of the most important books of its time. We can also find a connection between Sartre's philosophy and Deleuze's empiricist project. In particular, Deleuze was inspired by Sartre's concept of the self in *La transcendence de l'ego* (1937). What is at stake is that Sartre proposed the impersonal transcendental field behind the ego in the world. In fact, a risky interpretation of Sartre's existentialist philosophy may even argue that original

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[60] Bent Meier Sørensen: "Immaculate defecation: Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in organization theory", *The Sociological Review. Special Issue: Sociological Review Monograph Series: Contemporary Organization Theory*, edited by Campbell Jones and Rolland Munro. Volume 53, Issue Supplement s1, pages 120–133, October 2005.

[61] Ibid., p. 122.

[62] Stefano Harney: "Why is management a cliché?", *Critical Perspectives on Accounting 16* (2005), pp. 579–591.

[63] Bent Meier Sørensen: Gilles Deleuze and the intensification of social theory, Ephemera 2003, Volume 3 (1):50–58.

[64] Gilles Deleuze: *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie ?*, en collaboration avec Félix Guattari, Les éditions de Minuit (coll. "Critique"), Paris 1991.

[65] Arnaud Bouaniche: *Gilles Deleuze. Une introduction*, Agora, Paris 2010, p. 62.

choice of the subject goes on in a kind of impersonal transcendental sphere. Indeed, the self in the world is not outside the world, but beyond a personal sphere of subjectivity. This means, according to Deleuze, that Sartre opens the way for an anti-idealist and immanent conception of the relation between self and world. There is no subject from which the world is constituted; rather, there is an impersonal transcendental field of life behind the subject. This supported Deleuze's radical empiricism, where the self is immanent in the world and where it does not constitute the world from the outside. This is illustrated by his early work on Hume where Deleuze focused on the practical institutionalization of body and praxis in the world. In a sense, the book about Hume describes how institutional practice emerges from the point of empirical philosophy.

Deleuze opposed empiricism, difference, immanence, and pluralism against the metaphysical tradition of transcendental subjectivity and the one as the basis of the many. To philosophize means to invent new concepts as new possibilities of life. Following Deleuze, we can say that philosophy has to face what gives thought (*donne à penser*).[66] In his wonderful introduction to the work of Deleuze, Arnaud Bouaniche (b. 1971) argues that this is where we find a similarity with Ricœur's idea from the 1960s that the symbol gives rise to thought. Although Deleuze did not share Ricœur's religious horizon, he also searched for something that moves philosophy beyond what is constituted by philosophy and that is beyond the sphere of the subject.[67]

7.6   Deleuze as a Classical Philosopher

In *Le Bergsonisme* (1966), one can see Deleuze's efforts to go against the currents of phenomenology, structuralism, and Marxism that were dominant in intellectual life at the time. Deleuze tries to develop an antisubjectivist ontology through his reading of Bergson's philosophy.[68] Instead of focusing on the experience and constitution of the world by the subject, Deleuze emphasizes the ontology behind the subject with the concepts of *durée* and creative evolution. Intuition as method and his efforts to see problems from the vantage of time, rather than from the point of view of space, are essential in Bergson's philosophy. At the same time, Deleuze can see elements of a philosophy of difference in Bergson that aims to find multiplicity in temporal development. According to Deleuze, the past becomes pure ontology while life is *élan vital,* as a process of differentiation in *la durée*, a concept that allows Deleuze to ground his conceptual empirism on multiplicity, difference, and heterogeneity as conditions of human experience.

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[66] Ibid., p. 78.

[67] Ibid., p. 79.

[68] Gilles Deleuze: *Le Bergsonisme*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1966.

With its emphasis on life, Bergson's philosophy also supports Deleuze's interest in naturalism, whereas Hume, Nietzsche, and Spinoza were all focused on nature behind the consciousness of the subject. Alongside Nietzsche, Spinoza argued that we have to reconsider the role of human beings in nature as undetermined potentiality and life.

Deleuze produced notable work on Nietzsche in his book *Nietzsche et la philosophie* (1965), where he presents Nietzsche as a critical philosopher of the philosophy and ontology of difference.[69] Together with Foucault, Deleuze edited the collected works on Nietzsche in French and they became good friend. Foucault appreciated the work of Deleuze so much that in a review of the latter's thesis, Foucault wrote: One day the century may be Deleuzian ("un jour peut-être le siècle sera deleuzien"). After the publication of the first volume of Foucault's history of sexuality, however, they came to disagree profoundly on the concept of desire.

In the context of developing a philosophy of difference, Deleuze also referred to the philosopher Gilbert Simondon (1924–1989) who is said to have helped formulate a new ethics that centralized the multiplicity and indeterminancy of life. What interested Deleuze about Simondon's philosophy was his focus on the multiple, relations as a criticism of the power of the subject, and his investigation of the conditions of the emergence of novelty in the social field. Simondon's concept of the conditions of individuation, where he considered it an ethical task to demystify human beings and secure our place in nature and life, was also an important influence.[70]

The philosophy of Spinoza contributes to the development of this naturalism, because Spinoza, with his immanent philosophy, articulated the explanations of the norms of life. Together with Canguilhem, the naturalist and biologist Jakob von Uexküll (1864–1944), was also important for Deleuze's naturalism.[71] In this context, ethics is something more than judgment; it is an appeal to creation of a new world. The concept of creation in the naturalist context is central to the work of Deleuze.

Including his doctoral thesis, *Différence et repetition* (1968), and *Logique du sens* (1969), Deleuze's major work moves from the history of philosophy to the development of his own philosophy. There is an implied criticism of Hegelian and Marxist dialectics in the aim of these works, in which Deleuze is also critical of phenomenology and structuralism.[72] Deleuze proposes a critique of the Hegelian logic of identity from the perspective of the philosophy of difference. This also involves a criticism of the Platonic concept of representation and of the metaphysical argument about the identity of identity and difference. Against Plato, Deleuze argues that the simulacrum of the sensual world, which resembles the ideal world,

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[69] Gilles Deleuze: *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1962. Gilles Deleuze: *Nietzsche*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1965.

[70] Arnaud Bouaniche: *Gilles Deleuze. Une introduction*, Agora, Paris 2010, pp. 97–98.

[71] Ibid., pp. 100–102.

[72] Gilles Deleuze: *Différence et répétition*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1968. Gilles Deleuze: *Logique du sens*, Les éditions de Minuit (coll. "Critique"), Paris 1969.

has real existence in the sense that it is not possible to make a distinction between the model and the copy.[73] Deleuze wants to present a philosophy of difference through a system of simulacra where he reverses the Platonic philosophy and the relation between idea and its copy.

This philosophy of difference and repetition searches for the heterogeneous, the Other, and the nonidentical in the system of identity. To create difference is to remove something from a given model and differentiation is the reproduction of the copy of a model. The history of difference is a history of repetition, as suggested by Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Deleuze argues that it is because being, as such, is multiple that a philosophy of difference is possible. Accordingly, there is really no identity, but only difference that—echoing Bergson and Nietzsche's concept of the eternal recurrence, where difference is repeated in time—can be understood as the vitality of life.

With *Logique du sens* Deleuze continues the project from *Différence et repetition* in order to explain the genesis of meaning in a critical dialogue with structuralist philosophy.[74] The essential discovery of the structuralist tradition is a principle of production of meaning that does not refer to the intentionality of the subject, nor to reality, as such, but to the relations between signs in the system of language.[75] According to Deleuze, and following Ricœur, structuralism can be seen as a new transcendental philosophy where significance and meaning are conditioned by a transcendental field without a subject (Ricœur) that is pre-individual and prepersonal. In this sense, the event and meaning become the same thing.

In order to illustrate this, Deleuze refers to battle as the model of the event. From the point of view of subjectivity, a battle is not a consciously controlled event. It is something that happens. In the same sense, the event is the condition that makes language and thought possible. Deleuze wants to move away from a psychological subjectivism.

In fact, the concept of the "body without organs" (*le corps sans organs*) also goes beyond a subjectivist and phenomenological concept of human desire. The body without organs implies that there is desire without reference to a specific self or subjectivity. Desire is rather something that, like an impersonal machine, goes to limits of the subject and beyond. Madness, ecstasy, and desire of the body without organs is something that is beyond the idea of the subject, as proposed by phenomenology and psychoanalysis.

After the works on ontology and meaning, Deleuze began to focus on political and social philosophy. In two of his works on Spinoza, *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression* (1968) and *Spinoza: Philosophe pratique* (1970), we can already see elements of the development of Deleuze's philosophy into a political philosophy.[76] Deleuze focuses on Spinoza's thought as a practical philosophy about the ethical

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[73] Arnaud Bouaniche: *Gilles Deleuze. Une introduction*, Agora, Paris 2010, p. 110.

[74] Gilles Deleuze: *Différence et répétition*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1968.

[75] Arnaud Bouaniche: *Gilles Deleuze. Une introduction*, Agora, Paris 2010, p. 131.

[76] Gilles Deleuze: *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression*, Les éditions de Minuit (coll. "Arguments"), Paris 1968.

and political conditions of existence. The desire for life is essential in the philosophy of Spinoza and ethics is an element of the desire and force to exist.

It is also at this time that Deleuze started to work closely with Guatteri, whom he had met towards the end of the 1960s. Guatteri was working with psychoanalysis and became a leftist political activist after 1968. Like Deleuze, in his youth Guattari had been inspired by Sartre. Later, he worked closely with Lacan and became fascinated by the concept of the machine in relation to the unconscious. Guatteri worked at a clinic for psychoanalysis, La Borde, where he was also a kind of director, when he met Deleuze. Notably, Guatteri developed the concept of *transversalité* to discuss how institutional transfer of meaning and action occurs when people arrange themselves according to the norms of institutions.

7.7   Criticism of Psychoanalysis and Social Theory

In fact, there are elements of Spinoza's philosophy in the work that Deleuze and Guatteri wrote together, *Anti-Oedipe* (1972). Here, desire is conceived as productivity and the vitality of nature serves as a criticism of power. Deleuze and Guatteri propose a political philosophy that is a fight against oppression and includes political engagement by the authors.

The most important concept in this political philosophy is the concept of *agencement*, which refers to the affective and perceptive power that is capable of transforming the world. Politics is such an enactment of this power. The project of *Anti-Oedipe* continues the critical project of Deleuze and Guatteri towards transcendental concepts like the subject and reason as the basis for meaning in the world. Instead, subjectivity should be considered as emerging in life and in creative evolution.[77] In particular, the book criticizes psychoanalysis for being dependent on a traditional concept of the subject that refers desire and the unconscious back to subjectivity. According to Deleuze and Guatteri, the Cogito is broken and we need to go beyond the philosophy of the subject to the radical empiricist concept of subjectivity in order to capture subjectivity in the middle of life.

In this sense, *Anti-Oedipe* presents a theory of power, state, and society that searches to capture the basis of society as *agencements* in the social field. The book is not only a work of political theory, but also represents a criticism of structuralism and psychoanalysis.

This criticism of psychoanalysis is represented by a new theory of desire, where desire is conceived as politics and the foundation of social production. Accordingly, the social is expressed through desire.[78] Such an *agencement* of desire in the social

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[77] Gilles Deleuze: *L'Anti-Œdipe – Capitalisme et schizophrénie*, en collaboration avec Félix Guattari, Les éditions de Minuit (coll. "Critique"), Paris 1972.

[78] Arnaud Bouaniche: *Gilles Deleuze. Une introduction*, Agora, Paris 2010, p. 150. Anti-Œdipe, p. 36.

is the foundation of the ontogenesis of the social. Accordingly, desire is the production of reality and politics is ontology of desire, because desire is the production of the social and because the social is reproduced through desire.

The sociology of Tarde, who proposed a dynamic concept of the social process, inspired Deleuze and Guattari's ontology of desire and the social. In order to develop such an analysis of the micropolitical processes of the social, Deleuze and Guattari propose the concept schizo-analysis in order to analyze the production of desire in the social field. Schizo-analysis is a reaction to the traditional concept of psychoanalysis that is based on the Oedipus complex, where the subject has to present its oppressed desires through the confrontation with the remote and authoritarian psychoanalyst.[79]

The concept of schizo-analysis can be seen as an effort to liberate the analysis of desire from the constraint of the philosophy of subjectivity. To accomplish this, Deleuze and Guattari discuss rhizomatic structures. The rhizome is a body of knowledge that has no roots and represents an organization with many elements and no hierarchical structure. In this sense, schizo-analysis represents an antifoundationalist methodology and approach to social phenomena.

Schizo-analysis of rhizomes is a semiotic theory that looks at variations and mixtures, and traces transformations of signs in mixed structures. At the same time, schizo-analysis implies the study of the machines of desire that are at work in the production of the social, in order to go beyond the subjectivist and anthropomorphic representation of desire in society.[80]

With this type of analysis it is possible to conceive society—in the words of Simondon—as a metastable system that is in constant becoming. Schizo-analysis can look at the social as lines of escape (*lignes de fuites*), which express the nomadic role of the individual in constant movement and flux. It is in this context that Deleuze and Guatteri also mention the concepts of territorialization and deterritorialization, where the individual constantly territorializes or deterritorializes him- or herself. Territorialization and deterritorialization are, however, not only at work at the individual level, but indeed they work of the collective level of state public policy where states increase their powers through new territorializing strategies.[81]

The analysis of *Anti-Oedipe* is marked by the ontology that Deleuze developed in his earlier books. Society, as a metastable system, is in constant movement and always seems to vanish into new systems. New events are the element of creation and are confronted with the desiring machines that work in society. In fact, the revolutionary events of 1968 are also an expression of the machine. Only the revolutionary machine may also be a kind of war machine (*machine de geurre*) that works in opposition to existing creations. In the sense, there is infinite

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[79] Gilles Deleuze: *L'Anti-Œdipe – Capitalisme et schizophrénie*, en collaboration avec Félix Guattari, Les éditions de Minuit (coll. "Critique"), Paris 1972.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid.

confrontation between creation and anticreation, machine and desire, at work in society.

Anti-Oedipe is indeed a work about the philosophy of desire that includes a criticism of the dominant Marxist and Freudian philosophies in order to develop a new philosophical vocabulary. The analysis of *Anti-Oedipus* is, as the title suggests, a radical criticism of Freudian psychoanalysis.[82] At the same time, it is a philosophy that aims to represent the events of 1968 based on a kind of radical critical and leftist Nietzscheanism that seeks to liberate new forms of life and desire beyond the restrictions of the philosophy of subjectivity.

Deleuze and Guatteri's criticism of Freudian psychoanalysis (including Lacan's approach) aims to develop a new concept of desire and the unconscious.[83] Their most severe criticism of psychoanalysis is that it keeps people in an Oedipal prison of desire, where the individual becomes guilty and a slave of desires that have to purified through psychoanalysis. According to Deleuze and Guatteri, psychoanalysis ignores the creative and revolutionary potentials of desire because it turns desire away from the social field towards the subject that is governed by the mythology of Oedipus.[84]

Accordingly, by individualizing desire there is a close connection between psychoanalysis and capitalism, where desire is captured by the means of production of capitalist society. Instead, schizo-analysis seeks to liberate desire, as illustrated by the schizophrenic who cannot be cured by psychoanalysis. Desire is the essential driving force of society and of life.[85] This is also the case for politics, where the search for power is the result of desire. According to Spinoza, power should be explained in terms of the desire of both those in power and their subordinates. Revolution can also be explained by desire and mass psychology. Deleuze and Guattari were inspired by the work of Wilhelm Reich (1897–1957) and Bataille on mass psychology and desire, which analyzed how fascism is a result of the desire of the masses.

Nietzsche's thought is particularly important as the conceptual basis of *Anti-Oedipe*. In fact, there are resemblances between the criticism of the subject of psychoanalysis and Nietzsche's analysis and criticism of Christianity and slave morality. In fact, desire can be considered as a kind of Nietzschean will to power. Deleuze and Guatteri analyze the will to power as a matter of social production by desiring machines. The schizophrenic attitude represents a kind of reaction to capitalist production and reproduction of desire within the capitalist society. The schizo-analysis represents both a general theory of society and a kind of method for conducting political psychoanalysis of social phenomena.

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[82] Ibid.

[83] Arnaud Bouaniche: *Gilles Deleuze. Une introduction*, Agora, Paris 2010, p. 162.

[84] Ibid., p. 162.

[85] Gilles Deleuze: *L'Anti-Œdipe – Capitalisme et schizophrénie*, en collaboration avec Félix Guattari, Les éditions de Minuit (coll. "Critique"), Paris 1972.

In this way, there is a radical critical potential implied in schizo-analysis as social diagnostics. To be anti-Oedipus is a lifestyle ("Etre anti-Oedipe est un style de vie"), as Foucault said. In this sense, *Anti-Oedipe* becomes a book about a way to do philosophy and a way to live in a society dominated by the desiring machines of capitalist production.[86] With Nietzsche as the basis for a radical critique of contemporary society, the book generates a concern for a new ethics of living a nonfascistic life following the nomadic philosophy that moves beyond the domination of desire in the technological, administrative, and military machines of contemporary capitalist society.

While *Anti-Oedipe* is mostly a negative and critical book, we find in *Mille Plateaux* (1980) an effort to develop a philosophy of multiplicity that proposes an affirmative philosophy to deal with a reality beyond capitalist society. After *Anti-Oedipe,* Deleuze and Guettari worked on a book entitled *Kafka: pour une litté-rature mineure* (1975) where they developed many of the important concepts that they later proposed in *Mille plateaux.*[87] For example, they discuss what it meant for Kafka to be a minority as a foreigner writing in the German language.

Based on Gregory Bateson's (1904–1980) concept of plateaux, referring to many different positions and perspectives, Deleuze and Guattarri propose a new style of philosophical writing where the book is not a closed system of differences, but an opening towards new forms of *agencements*. This represents an effort to go beyond the structuralist and psychoanalytical projects of the time. *Mille plateaux* develops the concept of *agencement* in terms of analysis of movements in life (*lignes*). It also focuses on how one become's a minority (*devenir minioritaire*). Finally, it looks at the concept of the war machine and its relation to state bureaucracy.[88]

The concepts of *lignes* and *agencement* are used to understand production of desire in social machines and also to propose *lignes de fuites* and deterritorialization in the social system. The *lignes de fuites* implies efforts to become a minority in relation to the movements of power and territorialization in society. Territorialization is a movement of state power and individuals react to it by moving away with lines of escape or a nomadic philosophy. The lines of escape express a break and rupture with established movements of territorialization.[89]

The escape is in relation to the big establishments of power that dominate individuals through movements of territorialization. The concepts of space and territorialization are used to criticize the philosophy of history from Hegel and Marxism, which was much focused on temporality and temporal movements, and forgot the spatial dimensions of social development. Deleuze and Guattari also develop the concept of micropolitics, with the events of 1968 as a paradigmatic case. Micropolitics means that everything is political and that resistance can take

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[86] Ibid.

[87] Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari: *Mille Plateaux – Capitalisme et schizophrénie 2*, en collabo-ration avec Félix Guattari, Les éditions de Minuit (coll. "Critique"), Paris 1980.

[88] Arnaud Bouaniche: *Gilles Deleuze. Une introduction*, Agora, Paris 2010, p. 190.

[89] Ibid., p. 191.

place at every level of society. Indeed, *Mille plateaux* proposes a pragmatic political philosophy that combines schizo-analysis with the search for novelty in order to overcome the conformity and censorship of society.[90]

The idea of the minority and how to become one in the machinery of mass society is an essential concept in *Mille plateaux*.[91] Deleuze and Guattari distinguish the majority as a system of imprisonment of the creative forces in mass society that constitutes a disposition of domination and normalization. In contrast, the minority constitutes a totality of molecular singularities that preserve and develop the creative forces. The majority is the *agencement* of power that dominates over persons and their singularities. In contrast, the minority increases creativity and normalizes people in society. The majority is defined by essentialist concepts like man, male, adult, inhabitant of a city, European, Caucasian, and so forth, and this becomes the constituting norms of the machinery of mass society.

In contrast, becoming a minority implies the concern for the minority. This is, for example, the case for blacks, or women, or the immigrant who are figures of this minority. In fact, the war machine, as proposed in *Mille plateaux* and *Anti-Oedipe,* represents the minority struggle for recognition. Deleuze and Guettari emphasize that every creation is happening through such a war machine.[92] The war machine should not be conceived as will to power; rather, it is an opening for a process of creation and innovation. This war machine is radically outside the state system.[93] The minorities act like nomads in relation to the war machine and they express heterogeneity in relation to the war machine and the state bureaucracy. The minorities act in permanent lines of escape in relation to these war machines and state totalities. The war machine challenges the mechanisms of regulation and normalization. It functions like a guerrilla or like a revolutionary force that challenges the dominating power.

This nomadic and guerrilla activity may be done by artists, philosophers, scientists, and others who constitute a new nomadic potential at the limits of the established structures of power in a society.[94] These are nomads in all terms of the word, and are the basis of the creation of the new in society and politics.

This complex political philosophy contains many possible applications within business ethics.[95] One example is to integrate the concept of the event in business ethics.[96] Another example is Mollie Painter-Morland's (b. 1970) attempt to rethink

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[90] Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari: *Mille Plateaux – Capitalisme et schizophrénie 2*, en collaboration avec Félix Guattari, Les éditions de Minuit (coll. "Critique"), Paris 1980.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Arnaud Bouaniche: *Gilles Deleuze. Une introduction*, Agora, Paris 2010, p. 210.

[93] Ibid., p. 212.

[94] Ibid., p. 215.

[95] Mollie Painter-Morland and René Ten Bos: *Business ethics and continental Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press 2011, p. 24.

[96] Xavier Deroy and Stewart Clegg: "When events interact with business ethics" *Organization*, 18(5), pp. 637–653.

responsible management within the framework of this concept of capitalism as desiring production of machines.[97] With capitalism determined as desire-flow and making human beings, our bodies, and desire a part of this machinery, it seems very difficult to have responsible management because the individual is absorbed in the machinery of the system.[98] However, applying Deleuze's concept of the creative forces of the individual, desiring production, and concepts like lines of flight and territorialization and deterritorialization, something like moral responsiveness seems possible. This is something that goes beyond codes of ethics or role-responsibility and identity, and emerges as a concrete creative force of moral responsiveness to the other.[99]

7.8 Deleuze and the Arts

After his work in political philosophy, Deleuze became occupied with aesthetics, painting, and literary creation. He wrote a book on the paintings of Francis Bacon (1909–1992) focusing of the aesthetics of paintings and the explanation of the work of art.[100] In fact, the body without organs is used to explain the artistic creation in a painting. In his philosophy of painting, Deleuze is close to Merleau-Ponty because he agrees that it is task of the painter to make one see the invisible.[101]

Following the work on painting, Deleuze wrote his two-volume work on cinema and the nature of signs in movies and film.[102] In this work, he focused principally on the irreducibility of the cinematic experience of significance to a language structure. Deleuze explained the artistic creation in the cinema on the basis of the philosophy of Bergson. Deleuze emphasized that artistic creation is marked by a critical reaction to the given norms of society. This problem of the critical function of creation, inspired by Nietzsche, is also very present in Deleuze's work, *Le pli: Leibniz et le baroque* (1988).[103]

In the late work, *Critique et clinique* (1993), Deleuze proposes a "postscript on the society of control" that in fact seems to unite important aspects of his social

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[97] Mollie Painter-Morland: Rethinking Responsible Agency in Corporations: Perspectives from Deleuze and Guattari, *Journal of Business Ethics* (2011) 101:83–95.

[98] Ibid., p. 90.

[99] Ibid., p. 94.

[100] Gilles Deleuze: *Logique de la sensation*, 2 tomes, éd. de la Différence, 1981; réédité sous le titre Francis Bacon: logique de la sensation. Paris, Editions du Seuil (coll "L'ordre philosophique"), 2002.

[101] Arnaud Bouaniche: *Gilles Deleuze. Une introduction*, Agora, Paris 2010, p. 228.

[102] Gilles Deleuze: *L'image-mouvement. Cinéma 1*, Les éditions de Minuit (coll. "Critique"), Paris 1983.
Gilles Deleuze: *L'image-temps. Cinéma 2*, Les éditions de Minuit (coll. "Critique"), Paris 1985.

[103] Gilles Deleuze: *Le Pli – Leibniz et le baroque*, Les éditions de Minuit (coll. "Critique"), Paris 1988.

philosophy from the beginning of his work.[104] This work has direct relevance for the analysis of practices in organizations, for instance HRM, where human beings are reduced to human resource and potential capital for employment on the labor market.[105] The society of control is a development of what Foucault called the disciplinary society, where the individual is disciplined in the family, at work in the factory, in the hospital, and in prison as the ultimate model of discipline. However, according to Deleuze, the disciplinary society has faced a crisis in modern society after the Second World War because the disciplinary institutions have been submitted to reforms in order to replace the disciplinary society. Control, as proposed by Paul Virilio (b. 1932) and others, is rather based on invisible models of self-control and discipline in an open system. These forms of control are based on the free will of the individuals who take part in the systems of control.

In the society of control, the firm has replaced the factory. The factory was a closed space where the worker was captured in order to work. The enterprise or firm functions rather as a soul as cloud of interdependence that the workers are part of. The form of control is modulation of each worker according to a system of metastability that includes the worker in the work projects of the organization.[106] What happens is that while there was a contrast between the workers and the employees in the project of discipline in the factory, the firm and the enterprise create competition among the employees who are divided according to their search for salary according to merit. In this sense, the society of control is a test society where everybody is tested all the time, as in the case of schools.

Kafka explains very well the forms of control society in contrast to the disciplinary society. While the disciplinary society sees the individual as a part of mass society, the control society focuses on the individual. It is the self-control, or the self-management of the individual, that is essential for social control. It is indeed a kind of machine activity that characterizes the individual in the society of control. In this society of control, it is a capitalism of overproduction that works. Everything, even art is commercialized as an expression of this self-control. It becomes marketing that is the essential element of social control because while the human being is no longer in prison, he or she has become dependent on the market and the consumption of products. Ensuing economic dept is, then, a consequence and mechanism of control.

The universal modulation of the control society is realized through information technology as a modern system of social-technological control. The society of control uses the systems of control and testing to keep disciplining the individual, and the individual is controlled by quantitative instruments. In order to maintain control, society proposes the continuation of testing and education of the employees and members of society.[107]

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[104] Gilles Deleuze, "Post-scriptum sur les sociétés de contrôle", in L'autre journal, n° 1, mai 1990.

[105] Bent Meier Sørensen: "Defacing the corporate body, or Why HRM deserves a kick in the teeth", *Tamara. Journal of Critical Postmodern Organization Science*, Vol 3 (4) 2005, pp. 8–11.

[106] Gilles Deleuze, "Post-scriptum sur les sociétés de contrôle", in L'autre journal, n° 1, mai 1990.

[107] Ibid.

What are the implications of Deleuze's philosophy for philosophy of management and business ethics? In fact, his Bergsonism, Nietzscheanism, and Spinozist philosophy creates a new understanding of the creativity and life of organizations that is very far from a Weberian bureaucratic concept of organization. As an immanent system of life and creation, an organization is much more that a dead hierarchy of rationality.

Indeed, the antisubjectivism of Deleuze and the idea of the impersonal transcendental field help us to move from individual to organization when we look at organizational development. An organization should be understood as an immanent organism of life, a transcendent instrument for action, and representative of decision-making by rational subjects. This conception imposes a totally new conception of the relation between principal and agents in organization theory.

We can also refer to the potentialities of schizo-analysis in *Anti-Oedipe* in order to deal with organizations. This approach represents a strong critical potentiality by conceptualizing the human subject in organization theory and HRM. The view of the human being and the organization as machines of desire proposes a critical understanding of organizational processes and a new creativity of desire in organizations.

This is also the case with the critical analysis of territorialization and deterritorialization, as suggested by Deleuze and Guatteri. *Mille plateaux* can be read as a critical work about corporate power in globalization and the possibility of overcoming this power through new forms of creativity. The book *Empire* (2000) by Michael Hardt (b. 1960) and Toni Negri (b. 1933) can be said to take up this line of inspiration and develop the concept of territorialization in relation to new developments of globalization.[108]

Finally, there is also a strong potential for a philosophy of creativity in business present in the thought of Deleuze and Guatteri. Applied to philosophy of management and business ethics, we can say that the task of philosophy of management to be creative is analogous to the work of a painter and opens the world to the managers and people in organizations by creating new concepts so that the organization can be seen in new and surprising ways.

7.9 Jacques Derrida: Deconstruction of CSR and Business Ethics

The thought of Derrida can also be used to understand business ethics and philosophy of management. There is indeed a great sensitivity for ethics in deconstructive philosophy.[109] Like Foucault and Deleuze, Derrida's thought can be located in

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[108] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri: *Empire*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA 2000.

[109] Campbell Jones (ed.): "Derrida, Business, Ethics. Special Issue", *Business Ethics: A European Review*. Volume 19. Number 3. July 2010.

the poststructuralist tradition; however, he is also close to the phenomenological tradition in France, since he departed with his philosophy from critical deconstructive readings of Husserl and Heidegger. While the early work of Derrida was mainly characterized by critical deconstruction of philosophy and literature, we find in the later work from the end of the 1980s an opening towards an ethics and political philosophy that can be used to impact business ethics and philosophy of management.

Derrida grew up in Algeria in a Jewish-French family. During his youth, he read Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Sartre. In 1949, he moved to France to study and was accepted at the École normale supérieure in 1952. After his exam in philosophy, he went to the United States and was married in 1957 with Marguerite Aucouturier, who is a psychoanalyst. Derrida then became a teaching assistant at the Sorbonne until 1964. After this, he was employed at École normale supérieure until 1984, when he was appointed directeur d'Etudes at Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales. Derrida was one of the founders of Collège international de philosophie in Paris in 1983. From the 1970s, Derrida received many visiting professorships in the United States and from 1986 he was professor at the University of California at Irvine. Derrida became particularly famous for his philosophy of difference and theory of deconstruction.

As it has been pointed out, Derrida's philosophy has great potential as the foundation of business ethics.[110] Deconstructive business ethics starts with the ethical turn of deconstruction in the late 1980s when Derrida worked on ethics, inspired by the philosophy of Lévinas. In particular, Derrida follows Lévinas in emphasizing that ethics finds its meaning in the ethical relation to the Other and in the openness to the other as Other.[111] Relatedly, Derrida connects responsibility to gift-giving and concern for the Other. At the same time, there is no responsibility and decision without undecidability.[112] Also, deconstruction insists that business ethics is infinite and that an established code of ethics or law can never be enough, because justice always goes beyond positive law.[113]

In particular, Derrida's works on law and ethics (for example in *Force de loi* (1994) and the *Politiques de l'amitié* (1994)) present a notion of responsibility for the Other. This concept of justice is an aporetic notion that nevertheless always reappears as an open possibility in social and economic systems.[114] With this notion of ethics and justice, we can present another view on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate philanthropy that mediates and transcends the oxymoronic tension between ethics and profits.

In business ethics and philosophy of management we find the application of many different philosophical theories that have been very well worked out. We can

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[110] Campbell Jones: "As if Business Ethics were possible, "Within such limits". . ..", *Organization,* Volume 10 (2), 2003, pp. 223–248.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid., p. 240.

[114] Jacques Derrida: *Force de Loi*, Gallimard, Paris 1995.

mention Aristotelian business ethics, Kantian business ethics, and utilitarian business ethics. Nevertheless, we do not have many deconstructive approaches to business ethics and philosophy of management. This is a shame because such approaches can go deeper in order to understand the theoretical presuppositions of conceptions of organizations, organizational responsibility, and identity. With Derrida's deconstructive approach we have a possibility to look at the critical, negative, and ambiguous dimensions of philosophy of management, business ethics, and CSR.

In his theoretical philosophy Derrida proposed a sharp criticism of the metaphysics of the presence in western philosophy,[115] for example the belief in the self-presence of the subject in transparent identity and in the politics and ethics of true friendship, where the ideas of friendship and fraternity in mutual identity and common values are the basis of conceptions of justice and ethics. However, deconstruction emphasizes concepts of difference, singularity, and nonidentity, and this is a challenge to very harmonious and idealistic concepts of the possible achievements of business ethics and philosophy of management. From the deontological perspective there is always violence in business ethics, though it is always possible to hope for a better order and more just business relation that go beyond present conceptions of justice and responsibility.

In the historical sense, this implies that Hegel's idea of universal history, a necessary evolution towards an ideal and rational society and organization, seems to be subject to deconstruction. In *Glas* (1974), Derrida argues that the idea of realization of the just and right society, market, and political order is a kind of phantasm of universal history that has no place in existing society.[116] Only hope for a better society, based on responsibility, generosity, and emancipation from dead institutions can be possible, even in our secularized and rationalized society of the modern world.

Deconstruction is very critical towards classical ontology and the modern idea of reflective philosophy.[117] Reflective philosophy is based on the concept of the Cogito (*je pense, donc je suis*), which in turn is based on the self-confidence of reason and rationality. Accordingly, from the perspective of deconstruction, ideas of organizational transparency, organizational identity, or organizational integrity represent concepts from classical ontology that are submitted to critical scrutiny by the method of deconstruction. Organizational theory may be deconstructed by pointing to the way it searches to build organizations based on ideas of reason, virtue, the light, the sun, God, or the self-conscious or self-identical subject—to the extent the theoretical conceptualization of the organization is based on presence and clarity. The metaphysics of organization is a mimetical and technical thought that

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[115] Jacques Derrida: *La voix et le phènomène*, Gallimard, Paris 1967. Derrida, Jacques: *Politiques de l'amitié*, Gallimard, Paris 1994.

[116] Jacques Derrida: *Glas*, Gallimard, Paris 1974.

[117] Jacques Derrida: *La voix et le phènomène*, Gallimard, Paris 1967.

focuses on strategy and utility, instead of understanding and meaning, and therefore implies a certain forgetfulness of being.

We may say that this concept of the organization in organization theory is characterized by a certain metaphysical violence. In the essay "Violence et métaphysique" Derrida describes the relation between violence and metaphysics, which can help to understand what has happened to such an idealization of metaphysics. Idealizing thought is violent because it is built on suppression and exclusion. Deconstruction can therefore be characterized as an "economy of historical and metaphysical violence."[118] Deconstruction searches to rediscover difference and the Other in immanent metaphysical movements of totalization. It aims to clarify the metaphysical presuppositions that manifest themselves in theoretical systems. Deconstruction does not go beyond metaphysics, but instead it describes the impossibility of self-identical thought, which is manifested by a continual movement of dissemination and differentiation in metaphysics. Applied to concepts of philosophy of management and ethical organization, we may say that deconstruction always shows the internal dissemination and contradictions of such concepts.

Metaphysical theory and thought can be described from the perspective of the phonocentrism of metaphysics.[119] Writing has been suppressed in favor of living speech. Writing is a sign of absence, nonidentity, death and dissemination (difference). The fundamental condition of significance is *differance*, not difference, a kind of metaphysical movement of differentiation that is the condition for creating significance. The creation of meaning produced by *arche-writing* introduces difference and absence in metaphysical textuality and movement towards identity. We can say that a *difference,* as transcendental condition of significance, introduces a metaphorical play between presence and absence, the same and difference, in the production of meaning. Applied to theories of business ethics and organization, we may say that this means that there are always tensions built in to ideal and uniform texts about ethical organizations and CSR.

There is always a metaphorical play in such theories that search for the presence of the perfect organizations. These always contain an idealized Other who is left out or appears somewhat suppressed in the text about organizational ethics. The same may be the case when we make phenomenological analysis of events and actions in organizations. We can argue that much of the idealistic literature on business ethics and corporate responsibility may be "noble lies" in the Nietzschean sense, where truth is a metaphor, as it is expressed in *Épérons: les styles de Nietzsche* (1978).[120]

In fact, Derrida's philosophy provides us with a framework for deconstructing the moral identity of the organizational subject, which may be the basis for ascribing responsibility to organizations. Perhaps the notion of organizational responsibility is a metaphysical notion that goes back to the idea of the free and

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[118] Jacques Derrida: *De la grammatologie*, Gallimard, Paris 1967, p. 173.

[119] Jacques Derrida: *La voix et le phènomène*, Gallimard, Paris 1967.

[120] Jacques Derrida: *Épérons. Les styles de Nietzsche*, Gallimard, Paris 1978.

responsible subject. When deconstructivists emphasize the "end of man" they mean that it is the end of the philosophy of the subject. Deconstruction shows the movement of difference in the dream of reflection's rational self-unity. In Derrida's analysis of the *phono-* and *logocentrism* of philosophy, the presence to itself of the subject implies a doubling of the subject in the metaphysical identity of self-reflection. It is in this movement of self-reflection that we find the production of difference, implying that concepts of death and historicity become quasitranscendental concepts and notions that are essential for producing meaning.[121]

Applied to the idea of the moral subject, we may say that this subject is never a pregiven unity, but that there is always production of difference within the moral subject. The implied responsibility of "the corporation as a moral person" is never characterized by unity, but rather by a basic production of difference, metaphoricity, and dissemination. So there is really never one unified reference for the concept of CSR in the idea of the corporation as a moral person. Corporate subjectivity is characterized by the ambiguity of historicity; therefore, there is no unified moral identity and integrity of the corporation.

CSR is never purely ethical, but always profitable, and the idea of organizational integrity is a rather metaphysical notion that seems to presuppose the self-identity of the virtuous organizational subject. Looking at the concept of CSR and of corporate philanthropy in contemporary strategy literature we can observe how this literature makes the self-deconstruction of the concept of CSR clear. In their articles about corporate philanthropy and corporate social responsibility in *Harvard Business Review* (2003 and 2006) Michael Porter (b. 1947) argue that we need a strategic view on philanthropy and CSR.[122] They state that there can be a close link between profit-making and value-creation when philanthropy and CSR are integrated into corporate strategy. This blunt conceptualization of CSR is, however, also a good example of a deconstruction of the concept, since it is so closely linked to profits. In this view of CSR, we are back to Milton Friedman (1912–2006), who expressed the paradox that "the social responsibility of business is to increase its profits."[123]

Accordingly, CSR is a concept that expresses the oxymoronic character of business ethics, in the sense that ethical responsibility is always related to profits.[124] This view is opposed to a concept of philanthropy and CSR as based on benevolence and an original desire to do good in society, as it is expressed in scholarly work on integrity and business ethics, for example that of Harvard professor, Lynn

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[121] Jacques Derrida: *La voix et le phènomène*, Gallimard, Paris 1967. Jacques Derrida: *De la grammatologie*, Gallimard Paris, 1967. Jacques Derrida: *L'Écriture et la différence*, Gallimard, Paris 1967.

[122] Michael Porter and Robert Kramer, Robert: "Strategy and society, the link between competitive advantage and corporate social responsibility", *Harvard Business Review*, December 2006.

[123] Milton Friedman, Milton: "The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits", New York Times Magazine 1970.

[124] Campbell Jones: "Friedman with Derrida" in *Business and Society Review* 2007: 112(4), pp. 511–532.

Sharp Paine. In her work on organizational integrity she defends a concept of corporate integrity that is based on moral thinking and ethical views of the person and the role of the company in society.[125] Here, responsibility goes beyond strategic thinking. It is not only about profit-maximization, but includes a dimension of justice, and concern for and fair treatment of the other. However, from the point of view of deconstruction, we will always be able to find a profit motive within the idea of organizational integrity. We may argue that this is very clear when Paine says that integrity is a "strategic notion" and that she proposes a strategy for organizational integrity.

The critical philosophy of deconstruction implies a reading of the western tradition of political philosophy. We can deconstruct the tradition of business ethics through Derrida's reading of the western tradition of political philosophy, on which business ethics is dependent.[126] Moreover, we can elaborate whether there can be any concept of business ethics left after Derrida's deconstruction of the tradition of political philosophy. If we look at deconstruction in the western tradition of political philosophy we can say that deconstruction is a philosophy that aims to liberate existential singularity from technological reason and from the tendency of closure in metaphysics. There is a political violence of presence and being in the metaphysical tradition that implies closure and exclusion of writing, difference, death, time, and absence. Already in *De la grammatologie* (1967), we find this criticism of the metaphysical tradition, which focuses on the oppression of writing by culture. This idea was also put forward by Rousseau, who said that the introduction of writing destroyed justice and happiness in the primitive society.[127]

7.10   Deconstruction of the Political Community of Organizations

The point of departure for criticism of the western tradition of political philosophy by deconstruction is therefore a criticism of the identity and technological oppression of writing and difference as a social lack of authenticity. The metaphysical tradition condemns writing because it destroys presence and being. Against such politics of identity a deconstructive genealogy of morality will clarify the relation between the same and the Other, which is the foundation of political power.[128] By defining the role of arche-writing in the movement of identification of rationalization, it will clarify the violent presuppositions of ethics.

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[125] Lynn Sharp Paine: *Value-Shift. Why companies must merge social and financial imperatives to achieve superior performance*, McGraw-Hill, New York 2006.

[126] Jacques Derrida: *Politiques de l'amitié*, Gallimard, Paris 1994.

[127] Jacques Derrida: *De la grammatologie*, Gallimard, Paris 1967, p. 197.

[128] Jacques Derrida: *De la grammatologie*, Gallimard, Paris 1967, p. 202.

In particular, is the political project of modernity as put forth by Rousseau, Hegel, and Marx, which reintroduced human nature in the social and is characterized by metaphysical violence, that deconstruction wants to unmask. The political theory of modernity is based on an impossible vision of the happy intersubjectivity as the foundation for a postconventional rational politics and morality. But the dialectics of recognition is based rather on a metaphysical movement of exclusion and a political power of identity. We may say that political textuality in western society is based on the integration of the singular and the particular in the unity of the state.

We find the same movement of politics of identity searching to integrate the Other in the same in business ethics and theory of organization. In fact, the rationality of business ethics can be said to imply the idea of intersubjective rationality based on the force of the better argument and the idea of democratic practice as domination-free political rationality. For example, much values-driven management and ideas of organizational development are based on concepts of harmony and on the possibility of overcoming conflicts. Deconstruction argues instead that a communicative concept4 of politics cannot overcome conflict and difference. In *Sarl: société à droit limité*) (1990) Derrida can be said to develop this idea as a criticism of political sociology that can be applied to organizational theory.

This is done by criticizing the metaphysical presuppositions of the speech act theory of J.L. Austin (1911–1960) and John Searle (b. 1932), and in particular the use by Habermas of speech act theory.[129] The concept of communication in this theory is marked by the metaphysics of presence, and this tradition has forgotten concepts of writing, difference, and undecidability as elements that cannot be excluded from real speech. From this perspective, theories of organization and values-driven management, such as ethical and social accounting, are nothing but ideological instruments that are applied to exclude the Other and difference from the organization.

Derrida's investigation of the politics of friendship in *Politiques de l'amitié* (1994) can help to illustrate these points. Derrida takes his point of departure in Aristotle's definition of friendship as transition between ethics and politics.[130] In contrast to what is useful and pleasant, the virtuous friendship is based on a high degree of perfection. Friendship between free individuals presupposes mutual affection, identity, equality, faithfulness, and truth. This is the concept of friendship that Derrida thinks has determined the concepts of authenticity in western political philosophy, where political decisions pass in open communicative relations between equals (*communauté des amis*). This idea of society as relationships between a limited number of friends or citizens is the foundation of the concept of the republic in western society. The idea of cosmopolitanism as a universal realization of friendship is nothing but an extenuation of this concept of friendship.

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[129] Jacques Derrida: *Limited Inc*., Gallimard, Paris 1990.

[130] Jacques Derrida: *Politiques de l'amitié*, Gallimard, Paris 1994, p. 17.

In this sense, the system of the UN is an expression of such universal brotherhood (*humanisation fraternisante*).

Derrida uses the thought of German political theorist Carl Schmitt (1988–1985) to deconstruct this concept of politics.[131] Schmitt turned the definition of politics upside-down by arguing that politics is defined by the fact of having enemies. The enemy is therefore the real friend because the mutuality of politics is constituted through the enemy. Schmitt considered the problem of modernity to be that there is no real political enemy left, and this means the end of politics. Derrida uses this tension between friends and enemies to define the mutuality of politics. He finds that the tradition of political philosophy has been striving towards real friendship, while knowing that it is impossible, which had already been stated by Aristotle. Derrida reminds us of the paradoxical statement Oh my friends there are no friends ("Oh mes amis il y a nul amis").[132]

In *Voyous* (2003), Derrida discusses the foundations of democracy in light of the fight against international terrorism and the emerging war against Iraq.[133] The problem is the relation between democracy and sovereignty. Derrida states that all democratic states are vulnerable, and that we have to be aware of the risks of democratic governments misusing power. Democracies are in a peculiar situation: On the one hand, they are strong sovereign states, while on the other, they are founded in respect for the inviolability and infinite value of human beings.

Derrida conceives this tension between justice and sovereignty as a fundamental paradox in the democratic ideals of freedom, equality, and fraternity. Freedom is misused as totalitarian power, and equality implies a reduction of the difference that one has to respect. Fraternity can become a uniformization of citizens. The notion of democracy is basically full of conflict and ambiguity. At the same time, this means that in reality there is not such an absolute difference between democratic societies and rogue states. Democracies can easily break down and become rogue states when they move in the borderline between law and justice, and when as a sovereign state they use their universal power over others.[134]

The risk of mixing totalitarian state power and democracy is, according to Derrida, hidden in the basic structure of democracy. *Demos* means "citizen" and *kratos* means "power," rendering democracy as power in the hands of the citizens.[135] Democracy is therefore historically ambiguous and marked by undecidability. Independently of their specific political regime structure, different societies can be more or less perfect constitutions, be more or less democratic. Democracy implies self-legislation and expresses that people autonomously limit themselves. Democracy means freedom to do what you want and to decide over yourself. Democracy is circular, because the people govern over society like God

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[131] Ibid.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Derrida, Jacques: *Voyous*, Editions Gallilée, Paris 2003.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid.

governs over the universe, as the cause and effect of everything.[136] This imbues the form of democracy with a ceaseless will to develop its power. As deities, the people shall be almighty, but this also means that the people can forget and destroy ideals of justice and respect for human dignity by capitulating to the violence and power of the state.

Applied to the tradition of business ethics, the same tensions of community, democracy, and difference can be found in the tradition of business ethics. This tradition is marked by the effort to construct the corporation as a community of friends, but this is never possible. It is always characterized by the emergence of opportunism and competition as a game between enemies. So the very idea of business ethics and philosophy of management as based on the community of friends is an oxymoron because there is always the possibility of conflict and competition included in the relation between the friends in the corporation. The challenge of deconstruction is therefore to develop a concept of business ethics that can integrate conflict, difference, and opportunism in the heart of the theory of good collaboration between friends.

How can we understand this tension between strategic and ethical concepts of responsibility in light of Derrida's philosophy? In fact, we may conceive the strategic concept of responsibility as a kind of metaphysical violence, reduced to be an element of the sphere of economics. The logic of identity, as expressed in Derrida's essay on Lévinas "Violence et métaphysique" (1967), reduces the Other to the sphere of the same, to identity. The strategic and instrumental concept of responsibility can be said to have this characteristic of reducing the other to the same. However, looking at the concept of responsibility and justice as they appear in Derrida's other essay, *Force de loi* (1990), we can see how responsibility and justice always go beyond the economic sphere of reduction and exchange. This may in fact also be the case with the economic concept of CSR, which can arguably never be exclusively conceived as an economic and strategic concept. There is a subversive element of the concept of CSR that show the way to another economy, namely the economy of the gift.

When we apply deconstruction to Friedman's saying about CSR that the "social responsibility of business is to increase its profits," its plausible to suggest that he was aware of the play between instrumental techniques and idealism in the concept of responsibility. The violence of CSR is that it serves profits. This is present in the statement of Friedman that responsibility is fundamentally a subversive doctrine.[137] In this sense, Friedman is already deconstructing the term in his contradictory statement. He is challenging the idealism of CSR by saying that it is only possible within the concept of profits, but there is also another side of this deconstruction. Friedman is also making a challenge to instrumentalist versions of the concept because he conceives that business has a responsibility to respect the ethics of a free

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[136] Ibid.

[137] Campbell Jones (2007): "Friedman with Derrida" in *Business and Society Review* 112(4), pp. 511–532., p. 517.

society. In this sense, the view of business expressed in the idea that the "social responsibility of business is to increase its profits" is quite similar to Derrida's statement: "Oh mes amis, il n'y a nul amis." It is a statement that shows the ironic complexity of responsibility in business combining economics and ethics. We may say that this is the indication that CSR is already deconstructing itself.[138]

Another way to conceive this is to argue that CSR is inherently ambiguous and that it functions as a supplement to the contaminated metaphysics of the corporation as solely profit-seeking. In this sense, the tension between corporate profit-seeking and social philanthropy can be seen as a constitutive ambiguity of CSR.[139] From this perspective, CSR supplements the logocentric discourse of profit-seeking as the essence of the metaphysics of capitalism. In its tension between egoistic profit-seeking and social concern for community, CSR illustrates the necessary ambiguity and undecidability of the role of the firm in a democratic society.

7.11 Justice and Responsibility in Deconstruction

If we apply Derrida's concept of responsibility to business ethics and philosophy of management, we discover that responsibility goes beyond the instrumental concept and constitutes a fundamental responsibility towards the Other. This is an infinite responsibility that is beyond the tension between instrumentalism and philanthropy within the CSR concept. The fundamental responsibility for the Other that Derrida takes over from Lévinas implies a responsibility for the singularity of the Other. Responsibility implies the openness for the Other and the infinite otherness of the Other. Applied to the CSR concept, we may argue that there is always a more fundamental responsibility that transcends CSR's instrumentalism. This responsibility is never-ending and goes beyond every predetermined or specific concept of CSR. This generosity of responsibility is fundamental and can never can be deconstructed.

In the same sense, we can point to a concept of justice in deconstruction that goes beyond the contradictions of the politics of friendship. This may in fact also represent a view of second-order integrity that can never really be deconstructed. This approach finds inspiration in Derrrida's conceptualization of justice in *Force de loi*. In his deconstruction of the law, Derrida aims to show how different legal norms contain movements of totalization and violence that confirm the logic of exclusion manifested in the politics of friendship.[140] The problem is, how is it possible to think of justice as something that transcends the politics of friendship and the positively given norms in a specific order of law? There is a distinction

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[138] Ibid., p. 523.

[139] Cameron Sabadoz: "Between Profit-Seeking and Prosociality: Corporate Social Responsibility as Derridean Supplement", *Journal of Business Ethics* (2011) 104:77–91.

[140] Jacques Derrida: *Force de Loi*, Gallimard, Paris 1995.

between justice and violence, and justice is the realization of an ethical principle beyond the legal order.

Derrida discusses the tension between violence and counterviolence, with particular emphasis on the relation between law and justice, by investigating some aporias in Walter Benjamin's (1892–1940) text *Zur Kritik der Gewalt* (1921), which contains a description of the relation between violence and law in relation to state formation.[141] The problem is that the state legitimizes and institutionalizes violence through law and legal order. Though the democratic state should represent justice, it suddenly becomes a totalitarian terror state. This leads to counterviolence, which manifests in protests or riots that serve the aim of justice. In this context, Benjamin speaks about a messianic hope and divine justice as the incarnation of this counterviolence. According to Derrida, this leads to a paradox signifying that divine justice always transcends violence in a concrete legal system. But then it will be impossible to reach divine justice in the middle of the mythical violence of the state. The foundation of a state becomes an aporetic project, because justice always transcends factual legal systems.

Through the reading of the text of Benjamin concerning the critique of violence, Derrida discusses the monopoly of violence and the foundation of authority. According to Benjamin, we need to replace the violence in history with the messianic hope for another society. The foundation of the state in the historical process becomes aporetic because the principles of justice are founded on the violence of totalization. In the double historical movement of singularization and universalization we can see how the deconstructivist notion of justice is determined as rupture, or a break in the totalization produced in the original reference to justice in the violent metaphysical totalization. This is possible because the totalization is never totally closed because it cannot avoid its own deconstruction and opening towards the Other outside the totalization. In this way, the ethical break becomes the defense of the radical universalization of the gift, in contrast to state violence. Ethics becomes a general strike in a world of violence. The political positivity is based on the possibility of the gift and of divine violence. In this way, the end of history is only possible in the hope for a radical donation. However, the totalization of this "gift" implies its impossibility and the dead end in the search for the end of life. Accordingly, in the name of individual difference, the deconstruction emphasizes the conflict and dissemination of each institutional state formation in the heart of history. Deconstruction searches to form institutions of difference and openness in opposition to the pretentious legitimacy of mythical violence of the end of history in universal rationality. Accordingly, the critique of historical violence also manifests a critique of the possible project of the universal state that is implied in certain visions of cosmopolitanism.

Accordingly, that justice cannot be deconstructed means it always represents a possible ethical opening in every legal closure of a particular state and legal

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[141] Ibid., p. 67.

system.[142] This opening transcends factual systems and rules. There is always the possibility of a better and more just democracy and political system. In a developing democracy one must continue to recognize that the state cannot avoid exercising illegitimate violence through the power monopoly, and therefore justice cannot be deconstructed because the vision of justice as hope for the future always transcends particular legal and political systems.

The idea that justice cannot be deconstructed means that concepts of responsibility and integrity have significance that go beyond any predetermined vision of business ethics. Those concepts transcend a particular ethical system or theoretical approach. They are related to the infinite messianic hope that goes beyond the instrumentalism of the market economy.

In this context, we can integrate the ideas of integrity and responsibility in the perspective of an economy of the gift. The economy of the gift in *Donner le Temps* (1993) is characterized by an effort to overcome the logic of immanence. Derrida will not conceptualize the social as a dialectic of recognition, but as an openness to the Other in a generous relation of the gift. The gift should not be conceptualized as "economic recognition" in potlatch exchange logic. Derrida wants to overcome the morality of master and slave, which is the logic of the political fight between friend and enemy. The idea of the gift represents an effort to overcome the logic of exchange. But this conception of the gift as openness for Otherness at the limits of immanence does not represent a steady theoretical system. The relation to radical Otherness at the border of the horizon of meaning in society must be open and free from economic determination. To reduce the possibility of such exchange would be to reduce the possibility of the gift. This idea is built on a political ethics with an asymmetric concept of difference and mutuality, where each individual has an unconditional responsibility for the other human being that transcends every technical logic of exchange. Accordingly, society is based on such a gift of justice and ethics that emerges out of the asymmetrical relation of the gift.[143]

It is impossible to reduce corporate philanthropy to a purely strategic concept of an economic exchange relation. From the point of view of deconstruction, the very idea of responsibility moves the economy beyond pure exchange relations towards the economy of the gift. This economy of the gift is not only based on exchange, but rather on generosity and expectations of giving without expecting return. In corporate life, we can see many examples of the need to be generous in order to show power and attain respect as a giver. The economy of the gift is, however, never something that is purely present in capitalist economies, but rather an expression of the Other that is manifested within the logic of identity. We see how a notion of responsibility for the Other and the concept of justice is an aporetic notion that nevertheless always reappears as an open possibility in social and economic systems. With this notion of ethics and justice we can present another view on

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[142] Ibid.

[143] Jacques Derrida: *Donner le temps*, Gallimard, Paris 1991.

CSR and corporate philanthropy that mediates and transcends the oxymoronic tension between ethics and profits.

Derrida's philosophy prepares a whole new way of thinking about philosophy of management.[144] In particular, it focuses on aporias and complexities, and supplementary logics between oppositions, in organizational forms and discourses. Also, movements of undecidability, impossible possibilities, production of difference, and movements of iteration are important for deconstructive thinking in organization theory.

7.12 Deconstruction and Complexity: Thinking in Business Ethics

In this context the work, *On the (Im) Possibility of Business Ethics. Critical Complexity: Deconstruction and Implications for Understanding the Ethics of Business* (2013) represents an attempt to improve ethics and decision making in organizations and institutions by combining deconstruction with Edgar Morin's (b. 1921) sociology of complexity.[145] From this perspective we can argue that complexity thinking may contribute to dealing with the current technological and financial crisis. Complexity thinking is about seeing all aspects of a situation and opening a window for ethics in organizational decision making. This approach may help us to understand action in complicated organizational systems by dealing with the complexity that modern technical rationality cannot accept. It is an approach that emphasizes the importance of reflexivity, judgment, and the limits of rationality.

This analysis applies Morin's complexity theory in relation to business ethics and organizations,[146] and is inspired by cybernetics and information theory. Complexity thinking is an ethical engagement in order to understand complexity in general and the laws of complexity in particular. According to Morin, complexity is a problem not a solution.[147] Complexity thinking is a method and epistemology for dealing with natural, social, human, and technological systems in modernity. Instead of believing in the necessity of rationality, complexity thinking takes contingency seriously.

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[144] Andreas Rasche: "Organizing Derrida. Organizing Deconstruction and Organization Theory", *Philosophy and Organization Theory. Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, Volume 32, pp. 251–280. Emerald Group Publishing.

[145] Minka Voermann: *On the (Im) Possibility of Business Ethics. Critical Complexity, Deconstruction and Implications for Understanding the Ethics of Business*; Issues in Business Ethics, Springer Verlag 2013.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Edgar Morin: *Introduction à la pensée complexe*, Point Essais, Le Seuil, Paris 2005, p. 10.

Complex systems are characterized by richly interconnected components where the whole is more than the parts and the parts are more than the whole.[148] Like Theodor W. Adorno (1903–1969), Morin suggests that the totality is nontruth. Systems are characterized by uncertainty, contingency, complication, confusion and nonaccomplishment. Holism is not enough because it simplifies the complex interdependence in diversity and unity. Complex systems are characterized by mutual interactions in self-organizing processes that can be both open and bounded. The world consists of such complex systems that interact with each other, the environment, and their boundaries.

In his short introduction to complexity theory, *Introduction à la pensée complexe* (1990), Morin emphasizes the finitude of human knowledge and action. This implies that: (1) The cause of error is not false perception or logical incoherence, but organization of our knowledge in systems of ideas; (2) there is a new ignorance linked to the development of science in itself; (3) the most dangerous threats to humanity is the blind and uncontrollable progress of knowledge, nuclear weapons, manipulation, and ecological disaster; and (4) it is necessary to organize knowledge in order to understand complexity.[149]

In particular, it is a problem that we organize our knowledge in very specialized paradigms, (i.e., biology, physics, human sciences). This implies a hyperspecialization that includes a blind intelligence, making it impossible to see the complexity in a larger framework. We need to find a paradigm of complexity thinking that can see systems in relation to their environments, in particular the ecosystem. With the concepts of information, system, and self-organization, there has been room for understanding the complexity, contingency, hazard, and uncertainty of natural, social, and technological systems.[150]

Morin describes insights into complexity as insights into the "black box" of a system, in other words, in what happens in the system beyond causal laws. As self-organizing subjects within the system of the world in interaction with its ecological system, human beings are hypercomplex systems. In complexity thinking, it is important to be aware of the mutual dependency between subject and object. This was expressed in the concept of *complementarity,* as developed by Niels Bohr (1885–1962). In this context, complexity thinking emphasizes the role of the hazard (*hasard*) as contingency relating to tension between order and disorder in the self-organization of systems. Here, action as planned strategy may also profit from, and be determined by, hazard. This was the case, for example, when Mikhael Gorbachev (b. 1931) initiated the reforms in Russia that ended the cold war. He acted as the contingent element in the system.[151] Accordingly, complexity thinking is preparation for the unexpected.[152] With regard to economic and technological

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[148] Ibid.

[149] Ibid., p. 15.

[150] Ibid., p. 49.

[151] Ibid., p. 109.

[152] Ibid., p. 111.

organizations that are self-organizing in interaction with their environments and the ecosystem, this means that we need to understand action not only as linear rationality, but as including circular and recursive rationality in inseparable and interdependent processes in complementary and opposite relations.

Voerman argues that we need to be aware of the ethical implications of this situation of complexity. An ethics of complexity implies a double consciousness of technical models and ethical awareness of the limits of the models.[153] She mentions the former group executive of BP, Tony Hayward, and his decision to continue sailing during the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico (which resulted in his dismissal) as an example of the incapacity to deal with unforeseen complexity. To deal with complexity means to continue to put in question one's knowledge mechanisms and to face contingency.

Inspired by deconstructive ethics, Voerman mentions aporia, irony, bricolage, and imagination as elements of the ethical awareness of complexity. Indeed, Derrida deconstructed the concept of bricolage, which Lévi-Strauss used to distinguish between the rational scientific mind of the engineer in a closed space and the open mind of the savage. He argued that it is not reserved to the savage mind, but instead is the real condition undergirding all science and technology. There is no perfect technological solution and no strictly pregiven rationality for organizational decision-making.[154]

Moral imagination is in this context also important for ethical decision making in complex organizational processes.[155] Decision makers and leaders need to be able to see the limits and dangers of specific rules and regulations, and moral imagination ensures an ethical openness to Otherness and difference in decision making. In this context, the awareness of universal ethical responsibility, from the point of view of critical moral imagination, expresses the articulation of ethical complexity in the organizational context.

Indeed, deconstructive ethics implies the awareness of the unforeseen and awareness that contingency is at work in the organizational and technological system. This is expressed in Derrida's analysis of the double movements of deconstruction in metaphysics, where complicated plays of hierarchies, oppositions, difference, traces, and supplements are at work in the theoretical system. Derrida used the concept of *pharmakon* to analyze the tension between medicine and poison that is present in Plato's metaphysical philosophy.[156] The logic of *pharmakon* means that there is no stable meaning or essence behind the play of differences in the ideology of the organizational or technological system.

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[153] Minka Voermann: *On the (Im) Possibility of Business Ethics. Critical Complexity, Deconstruction and Implications for Understanding the Ethics of Business*; Issues in Business Ethics, Springer Verlag 2013.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Ibid.

[156] Jacques Derrida: "La pharmacie de Platon" in *Marges – de la philosophie*, Minuit, Paris 1972.

Deconstruction can be conceived as a philosophy of the ethical testimony of complexity and contingency in a given ontological, institutional, organizational, or technological system. It is also a testimony of the infinite responsibility for the Other in that system, based on Derrida's idea that "justice can never be deconstructed" and that "deconstruction is mad about the desire for justice."[157] This means that justice is always transcendent to a given positive law or formulation of ethics within a specific organizational system. True responsibility always goes beyond what is expected in the direction of the Other. In this sense, postmodern complexity thinking invites an awareness of the ethical complexity of decision-making in complex economic systems. As such, it is important for understanding complex actions in organizations.[158]

This deconstructive approach to organizational decision making implies a concept of the CSR of private and public organizations (including the nuclear industry). Deconstruction involves a concept of responsibility that include all stakeholders. This complex concept of responsibility combines the environmental, social, economic, and stakeholder-oriented aspects of CSR. In addition to devolving a broad responsibility to all stakeholders, deconstruction implies continuous reflection over the limits and scope of organizational responsibility.

7.13   Jean-Luc Nancy and the Continuation of Derrida's Project

Nancy can be said to take up many of the aspects of the philosophy of Derrida, who was an important friend and teacher.[159] In relation to business ethics, his work addressed several key questions: whether such thing as a stakeholder community exists; how to argue for the foundations of business ethics in a pluralistic and postmodern world; and whether corporations are responsible (e.g., CSR) and what its relationships is to personal responsibility. Nancy belongs to the deconstructivist lineage of Derrida and he was also inspired by the psychoanalytical theory of Lacan, where he worked together with Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe (1940–2007). Nancy was also inspired by philosophers like Nietzsche and Bataille. With his work on the criticism of subjectivist philosophy, the community without community, and the singular, Nancy provided a framework for philosophy that is rather external to

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[157] Minka Voermann: *On the (Im) Possibility of Business Ethics. Critical Complexity, Deconstruction and Implications for Understanding the Ethics of Business*; Issues in Business Ethics, Springer Verlag 2013.

[158] In that sense, I think that deconstruction is important for critical business ethics, although I would still insist on a more comprehensive view on ethics, organizations, and institutions that I proposed in my book, Jacob Dahl Rendtorff: *Responsibility, Ethics and Legitimacy of Corporations*, Copenhagen Business School Press 2009.

[159] Jean Luc Nancy: *A plus d'un titre: Jacques Derrida*, Galilée, Paris 2007.

stakeholder theory and business ethics, though it may still be possible to find a framework for a critical theory of business ethics within his thought.

Nancy had a rather traditional career. He studied for his doctorate with Ricœur in Strasbourg. He was later inspired by Derrida who, together with Lyotard and Gérard Granel (1930–2000), were members of the jury of his habilitation, which resulted in the publication of *L'expérience de la liberté* (1988).[160] Because of this close intellectual connection, it is appropriate to reference Derrida in the application of Nancy's thought to our discussion of stakeholder theory, business ethics, and corporate social responsibility. This approach allows for a close relation to the potentialities for business ethics, CSR, and stakeholder theory, as proposed in Nancy's philosophy.

Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe worked closely together with Derrida in discussing Derrida's theory presented in *Les fins de l'homme*.[161] How can we rethink business ethics on the basis of the philosophy of the end of subjectivity? One result is that business ethics could be thought of as a relational discipline, a discipline of stakeholders. In this sense, there is a similarity between the postpragmatic conditions of stakeholder theory and the philosophy of the end of man. Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy's work produced in relation to the philosophy of Derrida may contribute to the foundations of stakeholder theory.

In particular, Nancy's important work, *La Communauté désœuvrée* (1982), contributes to understanding the problems of identity and community that need to be addressed by stakeholder theory.[162] We may indeed ask what kind of community we find in stakeholder theory. This cannot be a community of identity, but must be something else. Here, we can find help in Nancy's redefinition of community. He does not want to understand community on the basis of methodological individualism, or as a Hegelian collectivity that is in danger of involving a totalitarian society. We need to avoid the violence of inclusion when we talk about stakeholder community. Moreover, we need to fight an eventual exclusion of particular stakeholders on the basis of a totality. It is therefore interesting when Nancy proposes the political community, not as an economic, social, or nationalist community, but rather as an aesthetic one. Consequently, a stakeholder community may also be conceived as an aesthetic community where the members engage commonly without being included in a single body that is in danger of being totalitarian. A firm cannot create a totalitarian stakeholder community, but needs another foundation that is based on the mutual recognition and stakeholders tastefully accepting one another. There are furthermore important resources in Nancy's book that help to propose a pragmatic foundation for the unification of stakeholders in community.[163] True stakeholder identity implies that stakeholders respect one another without being dissolved into

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[160] Jean Luc Nancy: *L'expérience de la liberté*, Galilée, Paris 1988.

[161] Jean Luc Nancy: *Les Fins de l'homme à partir du travail de Jacques Derrida: colloque de Cerisy, 23 juillet-2 août 1980*, Galilée, Paris 1981 (ed., with Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe).

[162] Jean Luc Nancy: *La communauté désoeuvrée*, Christian Bourgois, Paris 1983.

[163] Jean Luc Nancy: *Verite de la democratie*. Galilée, Paris 2008.

a totalitarian unity. This means that traditional concepts of community, for example in teamwork, are impossible.[164]

L'expérience de la liberté (1988) is a work that discusses freedom as an important foundation for every action. Freedom is fundamentally existential and relates to the origin of human existence. We can say that the experience of freedom is the foundation of existence. In this sense, Nancy's philosophy provides a deconstructive continuation of Sartre's existential philosophy.

In *L'équivalence des catastrophes (Après Fukushima)* (2012) Nancy addresses ethics and philosophy after Fukushima. The idea is that the tsunami that ravaged the nuclear plant in Japan is an example of the condition of technology and human action in corporations in modernity. Fukushima is an example of the complexity of interdependent systems and how capitalist society is submitted to constraints of its own production of richness and economic growth. This was the connection between technology and economic accumulation of capital that Marx nominated as the "general equivalent," meaning that everything is absorbed by the economic and financial values of society.[165]

Nancy asks whether the name Fukushima may indicate something particular about the fragility of technology and modern globalized society. Reflecting upon Adorno's problem of whether philosophy is possible after Auschwitz, Nancy combines the events of Auschwitz and Hiroshima. There is still a striking similarity between the madness of Hitler and the efforts to end the Second World War in the name of democracy by the Americans. America's political masters used advanced technology not only to destroy specific human beings, but a whole life-form of a particular human people in history. The similarity between Auschwitz and Hiroshima is therefore the transcendence of limits, not only of human dignity, morality, and politics, but of the destruction of a whole world for human beings.[166]

What then links Fukushima and Hiroshima? While there are many differences between intentional military destruction and involuntary civil disaster, the link is not similarity, but the issue of nuclear technology and nuclear power. Fukushima is, like Hiroshima, an expression of the danger of humanity to itself, as Freud described in *Das unbehagen der kultur* where he argued that human beings are in danger of destroying ourselves due to the natural aggression present in our civilization. In the Second World War the use of nuclear atomic bombs expressed. In modern complex society, it is the risky use of technology that is the threat of human beings to themselves, where apocalypse becomes a result of the complicated interdependence between human society, nature, and the use of technology. In its civil use, it is the possibility of an accident with advanced technology, due to total equivalency, the incalculable, the incommensurable, and complex interdependence

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[164] Alexander Bertland: "The Limits of Workplace Community: Jean-Luc Nancy and the Possibility of Teambuilding", *Journal of Business Ethics (2011)* 99:1–8.

[165] Jean-Luc Nancy: *L'Équivalence des catastrophes (Après Fukushima)*, Galilée, Paris 2012, p. 16.

[166] Jean-Luc Nancy: Ibid., pp. 26–27.

in society, which is the basis for potential self-destruction. Capitalist society has become so dependent on technology that it has lost the ability to govern its own technology.[167]

The incalculable in technology is manifested by the fact that we cannot control technology and that technological solutions lead to new problems that make us need even better technological solutions, for example, this is the case with security problems in cars and the need for airbags.[168] It is also the case with regard to complex medical technology, for example, the need for treatment after heart transplants, or indeed with problems of climate change, pollution, or the case of handling the waste problem of nuclear technology. Increased incommensurability cannot be understood in terms of incalculability, but means that at the same as we experience more equivalence of market logic, communication, and independence, we can also see that there is growing incommensurability between worlds, technological rationalities, and modes of existence on earth. In order to deal with this incommensurability we make recourse to economic calculation in order to dominate what is incommensurable and incalculable.[169]

The case of Fukushima is a symbol of this failure to master our technological existence and destiny. This catastrophe is not a natural disaster, but a technological, economic, social, and political one that witnesses our unconscious dependence on technology. There is a fatal link between technological progress and the liberation of forces that are more destructive for humanity. At the same time, Fukushima raises the question of a possible end to our present relation to technology, and the need to envision another future that deals with the problems in a more meaningful manner.[170] Nancy speaks about respect for ecology, human dignity, and rights in a way that does not reduce the incommensurable to the equivalent. To affirm equality today means to fight against the reduction of catastrophe to the equivalent, and to work for a democracy of free incommensurable human beings.[171]

In *Le sens du monde* (1993), Nancy provides us with the ethical foundations of this philosophy of freedom and ethical responsibility. He argues that in the modern one-world we cannot exit from our existential and ontological responsibility that comes before other kinds of responsibility.[172] This means that behind CSR we have to look for the fundamental responsibility of the individual that is the foundation of our action in a global and cosmopolitan world. Accordingly, behind CSR we have to look for the responsibility of the individual stakeholders. We live together with others, with the other stakeholders, and there is no subjectivity behind the collectivity. On the other hand, individual freedom cannot be ignored in relation between the collectivity and its stakeholders. There are individuals behind

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[167] Jean-Luc Nancy: Ibid., p. 43.

[168] Ibid., p. 44.

[169] Ibid., p. 53.

[170] Ibid., p. 63.

[171] Ibid., p. 69.

[172] Jean Luc Nancy: *Le sens du monde*. Galilée, Paris 1993.

collective corporate responsibility even though this responsibility still emerges on the collective level of the stakeholder community.

In this sense, Nancy's deconstructive approach relates individuals and community. He deals with issues of justice, freedom, responsibility, and sovereignty in the process of globalization and in the cosmopolitan world. In *Le sens du monde* demonstrates how radical responsibility as ontological responsibility becomes essential in globalization. This is the important ontological approach that proposes fundamental individual responsibility for our interpretations of the world. We may say that the individual sovereignty without a creator is transferred to corporations that also get fundamental responsibility for how they reveal the world. This is clear when Nancy talks about globalization in his book, *La création du monde ou la mondialisation* (2002).[173] We need radical responsibility as a search for justice through deconstruction in times of globalization.

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[173] Jean Luc Nancy: *La création du monde ou la mondialisation*. Galilée, Paris 2002.

Chapter 8
Beyond Poststructuralism: The Critical Hermeneutical Philosophy of Paul Ricœur

Ricœur's hermeneutical philosophy was marked by a continuous confrontation with Marxism, psychoanalysis, structuralism, and poststructuralism. Ricœur developed his hermeneutic philosophy in close interaction with what Foucault called *les penseurs du soupçon*: Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud. Moreover, Ricœur also agreed with Deleuze in his characterization of structuralism as transcendentalism without the subject. There are many similarities between the project of Ricœur and Deleuze's critical philosophy of difference, in the sense that they both refuse a Hegelian dialectics of perfect mediations. Indeed, Derrida was one of Ricœur's pupils and they had important discussions about the foundations of interpretation and metaphor as central to language and meaning. Ricoeur was a persistent critic of poststructuralism, who built a hermeneutical ethics and political philosophy that takes the poststructuralist challenge seriously, while at the same reformulating a new hermeneutic philosophy beyond the poststructuralist project. This is, indeed, an important project that also has an impact on the foundations of business ethics, responsibility, and organization theory.

Ricœur's parents died during the First World War and he was raised by his great grandparents. He was a Protestant and he wrote on Protestant Christianity and theology. Moreover, he was inspired by the existentialist philosophy of Marcel and Jaspers. Ricœur was a prisoner of war in Germany during the Second World War and he translated the first volume of Husserl's *Ideen* (1913) into French and he worked on his doctorate on phenomenology during the time of his capture. Ricœur was married to Simone Lejas with whom he had five children. After the war, Ricœur was professor in Strasbourg. He left for the Sorbonne in 1956. In 1964, Ricœur became professor at Nanterre University, and later the dean until he was appointed at the University of Chicago in 1970, after which he traveled regularly between the United States and France. From the 1970s Ricœur became a representative of the philosophy of critical hermeneutics and a major figure in French and international philosophical life until his death in 2005.

How should we define Ricœur's contribution to business ethics and philosophy of management? His thought has been applied in other fields of practical ethics.[1] We can say that Ricœur's ethics is based on classical philosophy and provides us with a new foundation for business ethics that mediates between the ethics of Aristotle and Kant, and considers utilitarianism as based on these approaches. In this sense, we are confronted with a hermeneutic approach to the foundations of business ethics, globalization, and the common good.[2]

Ricœur develops this political and ethical philosophy of leadership and governance, which mediates and draws the line between ethics, law, and politics, in *Du texte à l'action* (1987), *Soi-même comme un autre* (1990), the collection of articles *Lectures politiques 1* (1994), and a few articles and lectures on judgement and the philosophy of law, which were inspired by Hannah Arendt's (1906–1975) *The Human Condition* (1958) and her interpretations of the Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. Against a Machiavellian and Hobbesian realistic definition of politics as a strategic game, and law as an instrument of power, Ricœur defines the ideal of politics and action in organizations as the realization of "the good life for and with the other in just institutions."[3] This concept of politics and institutional action sees a close connection between a philosophical anthropology of existential commitment and a vision of the good life. Further, this implies an argument for the right formation of institutions and an outline of practical wisdom and judgment in the process and practice of law-making in democratic communities.

The methodological foundation of Ricœur's concept of politics is his theory of interpretation as critical hermeneutics in *Du texte à l'action* (1987), where *the hermeneutical movement of distanciation* between belonging and critique functions as a means to overcome an abstract distinction between tradition and emancipation, ideology and utopia. This approach combines critique of ideology and hermeneutics and can be used as a critical approach in management.[4] In his three-volume work, *Temps et récit* (1985–1987), this leads to a hermeneutics of historical consciousness, recognizing the finitude of human understanding and the place of political action within a horizon of a concrete political and organizational community always open to reform of institutional frameworks and critique of common ideals.

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[1] Marie-Josée Potvin: "Ricoeur's 'Petitee éthique': An Ethical Epistemological Perspective for Clinician–Bioethicists", *HEC Forum* (2010) 22:311–326.

[2] An earlier version of this chapter can be found in Jacob Dahl Rendtorff: "Critical Hermeneutics in Law and Politics", in Lars Henrik Schmidt (red): *Paul Ricœur in the Conflicts of Interpretations*, Aarhus 1996. Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 1996, pp. 102–127. See also Jacob Dahl Rendtorff: "Business, society and the common good: The contribution of Paul Ricoeur" in H-C Bettignies & F Lépineux (eds), *Business, globalization and the common good*, Peter Lang, Oxford, pp. 345–369.

[3] Ricœur, Paul: *Soi-même comme un Autre*, Le Seuil, Paris 1990, p. 276.

[4] Yvon Pesqueux: "Corporate governance and accounting systems: a critical perspective", *Critical Perspectives on Accounting 16* (2005), pp. 797–823.

Ricœur's political theory of governance and leadership mediates between the existential personalism of individual conviction and responsibility in the philosophy of Jaspers and Gabriel, John Rawls's (1921–2002) moral universalism as justification of fair institutions, and Alasdair MacIntyre (b. 1929) and Michael Walzer's (b. 1935) Aristotelian theories of standards of excellence and substantial and concrete forms of life as the origins of political life. The starting point is the communitarian idea that local culture and historical tradition, expressed in basic values and narrative representations, are necessary conditions for a political community. This vision of co-existence must, however, be compatible with Kantian universalistic and cosmopolitan ideals of equal social and political rights for all citizens, according to practical reason and the categorical imperative.

Consequently, Ricœur's critical hermeneutics in law, politics, and philosophy of management can be characterized as a communitarian Kantianism. Even if it appeals profoundly to the ideas of human dignity, responsibility, and freedom in a *Rechtsstaat* built on the rule of law, it still insists that a vision of the common good—a concrete morality, very close, but also critical to the Hegelian concept of ethical substance (*Sittlichkeit*)—is a necessary foundation of political and organizational community. In this way, it is possible to describe the basic strategy of Ricœur's political and organizational philosophy as a mediation of differences and oppositions, not sublation (*aufhebung*) nor overcoming, but rather the search for understanding and effort to find common points, by showing the mutual implications of ideas and concepts that normally are considered to be contradictory and in conflict. But this also leads to the question of the price and coherence of this effort.

The concept of critical hermeneutics is already present in the idea of the wounded self (*Cogito blesse*) in Ricœur's early essay on Freud, *De l'interpretation* (1965). No Cogito is self-transparent, and self-reflection always takes place in a dialectics of archeology and teleology, taking the long route around interpreting human symbolic—metaphorical self-objectifications as a condition of understanding.[5] In social theory, the opposition of archeology and teleology of consciousness corresponds to the interaction of facticity and self-distanciation. The hermeneutic concept of belonging to a tradition, advocated by Hans Georg Gadamer (1900–2002), requires critical examination as an ideology. In the famous debate between hermeneutics and critical theory, Habermas suspected belonging as false consciousness and ideological self-dissolution. Ricœur argues that the distinction between belonging to a tradition and critical distance cannot be an absolute opposition. Even hermeneutics, and Gadamer himself, recognized distanciation as implicit in the autonomy of writing and the separation between textual meaning and the subjective life of the author (the concept of *wirkungsgeschichtliche Bewusstsein*). Further, it is impossible to conceive an absolute critique of ideologies, because the concept of critique presupposes a relation to concrete political life. Also, critique of ideology implies a hermeneutical project, being itself part of a

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[5] Paul Ricœur: *De L'interprétation*, Le Seuil, Paris 1965, pp. 13–61.

tradition: the Enlightenment. At the same time, the hermeneutics of traditions must account for normative problems in the influence of traditions.[6]

A similar interaction between opposites is present in Ricœur's argument against a sharp distinction between ideology and utopia. Ideology relates to the past, while utopia concerns the future. Both are modes of communal symbolic self-representation. Ideology is an imaginary narrative about the roots and foundation of a society as collective memory, motivation, and legitimation of present political or organizational action. It is often related to a political act of legitimation, indicating the origin of the political community (e.g., the French Revolution, or the history of the Founding Fathers in the American Revolution). In this way, it is reminiscent of the self-formation of the political community, referring back to the origins of present political structures. In opposition to ideology, utopia proposes an ideal society, arguing for political change of current reality. The integrative function of ideology can disseminate in corruption and distortion, becoming a schematic code, where it is so different from reality that it is false consciousness and a form of social lying. Similarly, utopia can become crazy, distancing itself so much from present society that utopianists forget belonging to the community. But societies without ideology or utopia would be dead, with no vision of the common good. The dialectics of utopia and ideology are that societies need social imagination to guide collective actions of construction and innovation.[7]

In the third volume of *Temps et récit* (1985–1987), the dialectics of distanciation and belonging is the basis for a hermeneutics of historical understanding, replacing the Hegelian temptation to construct a philosophy of world history, where the realization of absolute spirit mediates every single human life in the end of history and eternal presence. Historical understanding in the institutional context is an open, unfinished, and imperfect mediation, conditioned by human finitude and the context of the situation. With Reinhart Koselleck (1923–2006), Ricœur defines the hermeneutical situation as being affected by history in a tension between the horizon of experience of the past and the space of expectation for the future. Being affected by the past as a necessary social habit determining individual action (habitus) means that the past is not closed, but a vivid tradition, open for reinterpretation and mediation with present and future expectations and projects, determined by a dialectics of horizon and situation. Therefore, metahistorical categories, such as utopia and ideology, can only have meaning in relation to the concrete horizons of experiences and space of modest and responsible expectations in the political or organizational community. This field of experience and expectation determines individual action and initiative, and engagement in personal commitment and promise. Individual historical agents are determined by their bodily incarnation and inscription in the narratives of the community. From this perspective, universal history can only be possible as a modest Kantian vision of progress in history. The Enlightenment project of modernity is conceived as a regulative idea of

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[6] Paul Ricœur: *Du texte à l' action*, Le Seuil, Paris 1987, p. 333ff.

[7] Paul Ricœur: *Soi-même comme un Autre*, Le Seuil, Paris 1990, p. 362ff.

the possible cultivation and endless perfectibility of the "sociable unsociability" of mankind in a democratic republic guaranteeing basic political and social rights according to the ideal of the Kingdom of Ends.[8] This is an ideal that should also be applied to organizations and organizational action.

Ricœur's development of the hermeneutics of belonging and distanciation into a philosophy of history must be praised for reinserting historical understanding into the concrete history and situation without ending in relativism and historicism, or arguing for the universality of hermeneutics, making distanciation and critique impossible. In relation to organizations, this makes an application of hermeneutical methodology to organizational studies possible. This can, for example, be the case with the use of narratives in determining corporate identity and strategy.[9] Indeed, the hermeneutic approach to narratives and symbols provides a basis for analyzing the discursive dimensions of business.[10] Also, overcoming the rigid distinction between rationality and the symbolic mediation of human experience in alive and open narrative traditions helps to understand the origins of political communities. The limitations of historical understanding to the interaction between situation and horizon presuppose, however, an open hermeneutical circle, leaving space for self-critical and vivid traditions. In situations of contradiction and conflict such an opening is often difficult to obtain. This is also a problem for the interpretation of hermeneutical processes and forming meaning in organizations. Further, there is a risk that the eagerness to surpass the contradictions in arguments and oppositions between historical discontinuity and continuity, freedom and situation, the mediation between the symbolic experience in utopia and ideology, may go too far in mediating what is irreconcilable, finally ending in unsurpassable contradictions that ought to be characterized, rather than mediated in heterogeneous synthesizing.

8.1 The Ethical Foundations of Organizational Deliberation

This problem becomes more urgent applying the dialectics of belonging and distanciation in mediation between Aristotle and Kant in the formulation of the ethical foundations of politics in *Soi-même comme un Autre* (1990). This work develops ideas of the initiative, the promise, and personal responsibility in *Temps et récit* from the perspective of the hermeneutics of the self. At the same time, it is a

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[8] Paul Ricœur: *Temps et récit I-III*, Le Seuil, Paris 1985–1987, p. 300ff.

[9] Steven Sonsino (2005): "Towards a Hermeneutics of Narrative Identity: A Ricoeurian Framework for Exploring Narratives (and Narrators) of Strategy", *Organization Management Journal*, 2:3, pp. 166–182.

[10] Michel Dion: "The moral discourse of banks about money laundering: an analysis of the narrative from Paul Ricoeur's philosophical perspective", *Business Ethics: A European Review*, Volume 21 Number 3 June 2012.

new interpretation of the idea of the fragility and vulnerability of human existence already present in his early works on a philosophical anthropology of the human will: *Le volontaire et l'involontaire* (1947–1948) and *L'homme fragile* (1961) in the first part of *La symbolique du mal* (1960).[11] In the promise and ontological commitment in existential consciousness (*attestation et témoignage*) as a situated subject between participation and distanciation, the self is engaged in life in action and passion that is never morally neutral. Projects of existence determined by initiative, as well as conceptions of human action and narrative identity, always imply a vision of the good life with the other person. This vision does not undermine the universality of moral norms; however, universal moral norms have no meaning without the vision of the good life as the foundation of political and organizational community.

As Aristotle says in the *Nichomachian Ethics*, ethics is realized in the lifelong friendship with the Other, based on difference, generosity, and reciprocity in a mutually generous giving and receiving between free human beings. The ideal friendship is neither determined by common interest nor utility, but by the common vision of the good life, founded on real need and concern for the Other as a happy, independent, and responsible human being. According to Ricœur, ethics is basically grounded in mutual estimation and reciprocity with the Other, and the idea of self-estimation and ontological commitment precedes the idea of the imperative of the Other, which is proposed by Lévinas to be the absolute source of morality. The foundation of ethics is not unconditional duty, but mutual affection, where the concern for the fragility of the irreplaceable Other is a condition for personal and mutual happiness.[12]

This modern interpretation of the Aristotelian concept of friendship is considered as a true "vouloir vivre ensemble" in a political or organizational community. The foundation of politics is not technological rationality, strategic calculation, or a modern rational natural law theory, where societies are justified as the result of a contract between egoistic and fearful individuals in an unbearable state of nature, but the genuine desire to live together in stable and just institutions. A basic condition for the political community is not a rational consensus, but rather sympathy and understanding based on the ideal of common realization of freedom in enduring political life, organizations, and institutions. Politics concerns internal relations between citizens in a specific historical community, though it must primarily be seen in relation to the economy, determined by human interaction with nature to satisfy basic needs and an external human relation governed by technology. Modern society is, however, characterized by a dangerous tendency to dissolve the political and ethical deliberation in economical rationality and to forget the importance of public space in community, seeing human beings as "animal laborans," making happiness private, and reducing the meaning of life to work and

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[11] See in particular, Paul Ricœur: *La symbolique du mal II*, Aubier, Paris 1961, p. 21ff. See also Paul Ricœur: *Le volontaire et l'involontaire I*, Aubier, Paris 1947–48.

[12] Paul Ricœur: *Soi-même comme un Autre*, Le Seuil, Paris 1990, p. 236.

endless consumption.[13] In particular, in business and economics we can perceive this problem of not leaving room for ethical deliberation in decision making.

Ideal political praxis and organizational decision making is in opposition to the inequalities of economical relations of work and private intimacy, founded on the open discussion between free and equal citizens in a public space, and characterized by respect for differences and concern for the common good. Ricœur adopts the concept of ideal political praxis from Arendt, who characterizes it as discussion in a public space of appearance, plurality, and conflict, but also as the coordination of action to assure right and just institutions. In opposition to mute violence, praxis is the foundation of political or organizational power, which is the result of a cooperative venture, undertaking a common project in the coordination of opinion, communication, and common deliberation.[14] Violence is the dissolution of common action, where domination replaces the common unity in political praxis.

The art of politics is to let the power and capacity for common action founded on the "vouloir vivre ensemble" emerge. This should not only be applied to political action, but it is also important for organizational decision-making. The capacity for common action and deliberation is always presupposed and a very basic, though ontologically hidden, condition of political and organizational life.[15] The political and organizational community should be aware of the finitude and mortality of human existence and ensure that just social institutions are created and formed. This also implies awareness of the fragility and vulnerability of the political community, because no external standards can secure the persistence of a common power, which can be dissolved in instrumental violence.[16] The state is an historical community where social rules are not only legal procedures, but the incarnation of accepted norms and symbolisms expressed in the narrative identity of that community. Justice is an ideal in the narrative mythical—utopian self-representation of community and in organizational self-understanding.

In the words of Weil, who also had a great influence on Ricœur's political and social philosophy, the state articulates a historical diversity of institutions, organizations, functions, and social roles, determined and guided by practical reason in opposition to technical rationality. The important idea is that the community or organizational unity is considered as the realization of a living morality, a concrete moral life as a function of prudential rationality and reasonable action. The state implies, at the same time, the strife for rationality and as a universal concrete with a particular history, a reflection of the passions and interests of individuals. In this way, the state should be the synthesis of rationality and history in the tradition of the specific community.[17]

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[13] Paul Ricœur: *Du texte à l'action*, Le Seuil, Paris 1987, p 393ff.

[14] Paul Ricœur: *Lectures 1*, Le Seuil, Paris 1994, p. 17ff.

[15] Ibid., p. 29.

[16] Ibid., p. 18.

[17] Ibid., p. 108.

In this Aristotelian vision of the political community, justice that is founded in the common vision of the good life can be seen as the search for the right proportion between extremes, determined by the particularity of experiences, situations, and involved persons. This idea includes a teleological concept of justice as equity, as the right middle between extremes in the distribution of the goods in society and organizational action. The equality of distributive justice concerns primary and secondary goods, basic political liberties, as well as the social and economical situation of the citizens. Although it includes a dimension of abstract equality, the concept of equity admits the heterogeneous character of the goods and must be considered in relation to the social context.

The communitarian theory of spheres of justices by Walzer, founded in the shared values of the community, expresses this ideal of the realization of justice in the social distribution of goods and possibilities. Here, a complex equality in different sectors of society (e.g., medicine, education, commerce) is realized according to shared understandings of the good. Ricœur's adoption of this concept of politics gives rise to the problem of idealization, this notion that this is an essentially ancient idea that is difficult to apply to modern society and organizational life. Ricœur emphasized, however, that Arendt—rather than being nostalgic—wants to describe the essential structure of the political phenomenon as opposed to a philosophical rationalization of praxis.[18] Also, looking closer at Arendt's interpretation of the Aristotelian concept of praxis, it must be emphasized how much is borrowed from a modern concept of politics, such as defining public space and the vision of plurality and difference as resultant of a projection of a modern concept of politics into the Greek understanding of praxis. The communitarian vision of politics cannot guarantee universal moral norms; therefore, it is not surprising that Ricœur tried to combine this vision of politics with the Kantian concept of moral universality.

Where the communitarian vision of politics stresses the belonging of the self to community, the application of the Kantian concept of moral reason to the ethical vision can be conceived as a reflexive distanciation from the self in the light of the Other. Kant's concept of justice focuses on formal equality before the law. In postmetaphysical philosophy, this resulted in purely formal theories founded on human autonomy and freedom, not advocating any vision of the good. To avoid this danger of legal positivism as the result of Kantian formalism, seeing the legal system as nothing but a function of instrumental power relations, Ricœur argued that that a vision of the good has to be seen as the driving force of Kantian moral philosophy, as expressed in *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1784), after all. Consequently, Ricœur re-interpreted Kantian categorical imperatives from the perspective of a hermeneutics of the self, focusing on the teleological aspects of Kantian ethics, in the following way: (1) It has to be investigated whether a vision of the good life is possible as a universal law that can be applied to all human beings without contradictions and bad moral consequences. (2) The other human person

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[18] Ibid., p. 19.

must never be treated only as a means, but also always as an end. (3) The goal of the moral law is the reign of human beings as goals in themselves in the Kingdoms of Ends, a community of free human beings.[19]

The first formulation of the categorical imperative concerns the possibility of changing individual actions into a universal law. The self cannot follow an ethical vision, which is incompatible with the happiness of other people, without self-contradiction and in opposition to moral law. The morally evil person will, in the end, loose his of her self-respect, the moral correlation to the ethical concept of self-estimation. A person who consequently chooses a bad moral maxim, determined by *amour propre*, as opposed to *amour de soi*, and by destruction and negation, ignores the other person's essential significance for existential authenticity and self-respect.

The second formulation of the categorical imperative, considering the person as an ultimate end, can only be significant from the perspective of the good life. The golden rule to treat others as you want them to treat you is an important principle in the transition from ethical ideal to moral obligation. Treating the other as yourself implies concern and respect for the dignity of the other person. This maxim is the essential protection of the Other to avoid abuse in asymmetrical situations (e.g., violence or torture) where power is used for the humiliation, reification, and destruction of the other person's self-respect.

The third formulation of the categorical imperative is the most important from the political perspective for institutionalizing the teleological concept of justice, because respect and concern lead to a shared system of law, where individuals are conferred universal social and political rights as citizens of the realm of ends (*Reich der Zwecke*). This republican ideal of popular sovereignty and universal justice in procedural institutions is, from the perspective of a hermeneutics of the self, not only justified by individual freedom but realization of state institutions as incarnations of shared values.

Such interaction between the visions of the right and the good in the foundations of modern institutions is developed in Ricœur's communitarian interpretation of John Rawls's contractualist argument for justice as fairness in *A Theory of Justice* (1972). The principles of justice for a future state that are chosen by individuals behind the "veil of ignorance" are deduced from the interaction between philosophical ideals, intuitions, and concrete conceptions of morality. According to Ricœur, this imaginary deliberative process cannot only be justified on the ground of individual interests and autonomy. The task is also to develop principles of justice valid for all members of society. Rawls's demarcates the first level principles as respect for citizenship, basic rights, and second level principles of distribution show a basic ethical concern for equality. The principles of equality before the law and proportionate distribution are determined according to the need of the citizens. The "difference principle" and the principle of "mini-maximization" imply a common vision of the good, which must be mediated in public political discussion and concrete legal practice, as well in organizational life and in particular institutional contexts.

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[19] Paul Ricœur: *Soi-même comme un Autre*, Le Seuil, Paris 1990, p. 237ff.

In this way, Rawls's procedural theory of justice presupposes the idea of society as a cooperative venture, where justice is not exclusively a theoretical concept, but a social praxis based on the idea of the common good, rather than on atomistic individualism alone. Therefore, even if a procedural and constructive theory of justice is necessary to ensure basic liberties, the just cannot be totally separated from the good. Rawls's concern to avoid inequality that disfavors the poor as well as the weakest seems to promote this concern for the totality of community. To further avoid empty formalism, Rawls's principles of justice must be seen in relation to the particularity of a given historical situation, which Rawls himself seems to be aware of in his later statement from *Political Liberalism* (1992) that "the good shows the point. Justice draws the limit."[20]

Rawls's critique of teleological theories of justice can be seen rather as directed towards the particularities of the inequalities implicit in pure utilitarian theories of maximization of the good as the search for the greatest happiness for the greatest number. Social inequality cannot be justified. Accordingly, utilitarian and technological values, and pragmatic calculations of consequences are subordinated to a vision of the common good and the dignity of the individual. Utilitarianism implies the sacrifice of the individual for the common good of community. From the perspective of Ricœur's philosophy, the only possible utilitarianism would be a negative utilitarianism, minimizing the unhappiness and poverty among the most fragile and vulnerable, instead of searching for a general maximizing of happiness without taking into account the difference between the weakest and the strongest in society.

The function of the state is to mediate communitarian and historical values and universal norms to control economical rationality. It is not only as educator, but also as a state of force, following the rule of law, that the state incarnates the power monopoly (*Gewaltmonopol des Rechtstaates*), acting as a state that protects the basic rights of individuals and minorities from the abuse of the social majority. This is Weil's *political Paradox,* where the modern state has conquered "the empty place of power," which earlier belonged to the sovereignty of nondemocratic rulers using only force and violence. At the same time, the paradox implies that the state could fail to produce happiness, and instead become a totalitarian regime that causes mostly unhappiness for its citizens.[21] The task is therefore to secure that the constitutional state does not turn to arbitrary violence. Government needs a balance the force of law between power and violence, where the law—submitted to bad political agency——can turn into pure violence no longer guided by justice and the teleological vision of the common good.

A major problem with this impressive political theory that tries to mediate the tensions between the good and the right, universalists and communitarians, the ancients and moderns, is the radical difference between the Kantian and the Aristotelian concepts of rationality. In opposition to Ricœur, a thinker like Leo Strauss (1899–1973) would emphasize the insurmountable oppositions between the

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[20] John Rawls: *Political Liberalism*, Basel Blackwell, New York 1992.

[21] Ricœur, Paul: *Lectures 1*, Le Seuil, Paris 1994, p. 106.

two thinkers. For Strauss, the Kantian concept of intersubjectivity implies that there are no standards outside the human will to determine rationality, and consequently there cannot be such a thing as the common good (see, for example, *Natural Right and History* (1953) and *The City and Man* (1964)). Friendship is seen rather as an ideal for the private sphere of the theoretical virtues, which, although an ideal, is problematic to apply to mass society. Also, the ancient concept of the good life cannot be transposed onto the Kantian framework because it acquires a concern for the particular situation in a way that cannot include formal universalism.

Furthermore, it is unclear whether it is possible to keep the Kantian understanding of a political community without giving up the Aristotelian idea of the common vision of the good life.[22] Western democracies are characterized by a fundamental pluralism, a tribal social structure, where particular groups, forms of life—with incompatible religious habits, traditions, and visions of morality—live together under quite weak procedural structures, where even justice as fairness and basic social and political rights do not guarantee a common idea of the good life. Furthermore, it is not unassailable that we need a common vision of the good to live in a community. Modern society seems to accept a radical pluralism as the basis of coexistence, and it is difficult to localize narrative traditions forming a uniform concept of the good life. Wouldn't the concept of an all-embracing objective vision of the good life for the community be in danger of totalitarianism? How can we, as moderns who are so different in our lifestyles and personal projects, agree on a common vision of the good life, in a society where there is no more happy Greek ethical life ("schöne griechische Sittlichkeit")?

8.2   Ethical Life and Judgment in Organizations

It can be argued that Ricœur tries to solve these problems by interpreting the Hegelian *Sittlichkeit* from the perspective of communitarian Kantianism.[23] The concept of *Sittlichkeit* emerged out of Hegel's critique of abstract Kantian morality. When practical reason cannot be in harmony with concrete reality it has no value. An abstract concept of liberty is totally formal and cannot govern the reality of political life. The Hegelian temptation is to reconcile freedom and community in the realization of objective morality through the concept of *Sittlichkeit* in concrete mediations of community, the family, economics, and the community. In *Du texte à l'action,* Ricœur rejects the Hegelian temptation in *Philosophie des Rechts* (1821) and *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807) to seek

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[22] See Jacob Dahl Rendtorff: "Critical Hermeneutics in Law and Politics", in Lars Henrik Schmidt (red): *Paul Ricœur in the Conflicts of Interpretations*, Aarhus 1996. Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 1996, pp. 102–127. See also Jacob Dahl Rendtorff: "Business, society and the common good: The contribution of Paul Ricœur" in H-C Bettignies & F Lépineux (eds), *Business, globalization and the common good*, Peter Lang, Oxford, pp. 345–369.

[23] Paul Ricœur: *Lectures 1*, Le Seuil, Paris 1994, p. 279ff.

an objective morality, but seems however to emphasize two other aspects of the Aristotelian vision of the good life and the Kantian moral norm.[24]

1. The first idea is the relation between liberty and norm. Institutions in a democratic society are here conceived as the realization of the moral norm at the institutional or organizational level of society. An institution or organization is defined as a structure of living together (*vivre ensemble*), of a historical community that cannot be reduced to pure interpersonal relations, and that implies a certain vision of distributive justice. The value of this *Sittlichkeit* is the acceptance of differences, social responsibility, tolerance, and recognition of the pluralistic character of society. The values of the *Rechtsstaat* are the point where the individual recognizes him- or herself in the will of the majority. The institutions express the objective spirit of practical reason, guaranteeing basic liberties' however, as a consequence of the totalitarian dangers of the objective *Sittlichkeit*, practical reason should never be totally dissolved in the institutions. It should remain critical towards the corruption of the institutions.

2. The second idea is the recognition of the existential tension between the individual and the state, between private and public, between the commitment to the Other and the family, and the commitment to the values of the state, where the personal obligations and devotions of the citizen have a destiny to enter into insoluble conflict with the law and the morals of the state. The private sphere of commitments, responsibilities, and beliefs can never totally be integrated into the morals of the political community, the organization, or business corporation. The finitude and tragedy of action signify that human beings on the political, as well as the personal, levels are continuously confronted with destiny and never have certain awareness and transparent knowledge of all the consequences of their actions. Moral choices, determined by ignorance, passion, or emotional blindness lead to wrong actions and consequently the moral destruction of the self.

Ricœur draws attention to Hegel's interpretation of the Greek tragedy of Sophocles' (496/495–406/405 BC) *Antigone*, as an example of how even morally superior human beings can be caught in the game of destiny, the contingency and unexpectedness of human life.[25] Kreon, a tyrant, the leader of the Polis, forbids Antigone to bury her brother at the burial place, because the brother has acted contrary to the wishes of the state. Antigone must make a choice between loyalty towards her brother and loyalty to the laws of the state. She chooses to bury her brother and therefore does not obey the law and institutions of the state. She is committed to a divine law, her own ontological commitment, and promise to her brother, which overrides her duty to respect the positive legal code of the state. The tragedy illustrates the priority of the personal commitment in relation to the

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[24] Paul Ricœur: *Du texte à l'action*, Le Seuil, Paris 1987, p. 237ff.

[25] Paul Ricœur: *Soi-même comme un Autre*, Le Seuil, Paris 1990, p. 281.

objective legal code, and the possible oppositions between profound individual beliefs and state institutions.

Political communities, even democratic societies obeying the rule of law are never totally without such moral conflicts. Personal ethical convictions, actions, and responsibilities happen to be in insoluble conflict with the norms and *Sittlichkeit* of the community. Such a conflict implies contradiction between universal principles of morality, the vision of the good life of the community, and the ethical commitment of the individual in promise and responsibility to a divine law. Even the most well-founded consensus would turn into totalitarianism if it did not allow the emergence of dissent as a real possibility. Realizing a final, universal, objective *Sittlichkeit* is, therefore, impossible, and there will always remain a potential gap between positive and divine law.

Furthermore, some situations are characterized by tragic dilemmas where there is no proper solution to the outcome of the conflict. Here, respect for the legal rules of the state, personal conviction, and the respect due to the other person are in insoluble conflict. The problem of truth-telling to dying patients or the questions of active and passive euthanasia, abortion, and respect for unborn human life are among examples of such a situation where there can be insoluble tragic dilemmas between individual person, the legal rules of the state, and perhaps also the sphere of appeal to eternal visions of justice.[26]

Consequently, society, but also decision making in institutions and organizations, must always recognize the eternal tension between the human being and the state without a total mediation of individual liberty in the rationality and unity of the state. In this context, Ricœur emphasizes the respect for the individual and the importance of conflict in the Hegelian definition of the *Sittlichkeit* in *Philosophie des Rechts,* where individual freedom and subjectivity are essential parts of modern society.[27] Justice and law cannot be totally founded on culture and tradition, but a universal dimension is acquired in the philosophy of law. By the continuous recognition and acceptance of the possibility of conflict as an essential dimension of democracy, the republican notion of people's sovereignty, such as respect for autonomy and fair legal procedures as founded in the constitution and institutional political praxis, can mediate between individuality, universality, and community norms, in opposition to the terror and technological rationality of a totalitarian society, reducing the individual to an abstract function of the state.

The character of this institutional and organizational praxis can be illustrated by the concept of authority.[28] In opposition to a totalitarian political institution, authority presupposes the recognition of the political community in a democratic process of legitimation. Authority is neither based on the natural will of God, nor on the laws of a totalitarian regime, but is founded on the decisions of the political community. Authentic political authority must be distinguished from domination

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[26] Paul Ricœur: *Lectures 1*, Le Seuil, Paris 1994, p. 266.

[27] G.W.F. Hegel: *Philosophie des Rechts* (1818–1832), Reklam Ausgabe.

[28] Paul Ricœur: *Lectures 1*, Le Seuil, Paris 1994, p. 19.

and force, because it relies on the common power of the participants of the political community. Authority in open institutions relies on the shared understandings of the *vivre ensemble* in the political community.[29]

The great advantage of this use of the concept of *Sittlichkeit* is the possibility of emphasizing the respect for otherness, tolerance, and solicitude as being constitutive of the common values of community; however, the emphasis on conflict and *Sittlichkeit* seems to beg the question of the possibility of shared values. Or is it possible to see the dialectics of conflict and communication as the basis for democracy?

Ricœur argues that this is possible by characterizing the particular democratic *Sittlichkeit* with Rawls and Arendt as a *conflictual-consensual* society, where, on the one hand, there is always disagreement about distributive justice in concrete cases, but, on the other hand, agreement about certain basic legal and constitutional procedures.[30] In practical political life, government is based on the formation of public opinion, the irreducible plurality that cannot be overcome in philosophical idealizations of political life. This conflictual consensus determined by a sense of community and the willingness to test personal conviction in the confrontation between opinions in a public space of discussion is the boundary of political community.

This play between conflict and consensus, as another example of the dialectics between belonging and distanciation, can be found in the structure of political language as an interplay between violence and discourse, conviction and responsibility. Even if they presuppose the anthropology of belonging to common institutions, concrete political discourses are particularly vulnerable and fragile because they concern human action and the coordination of the common good among different social practices in the community. They concern the endurance of just institutions in social conflict. And they presuppose the structures of recognition in the context of a democratic *Sittlichkeit*.

The reason is that the possibility of violence in discourse is the other side of political language.[31] Language can be seen as an overcoming or reduction of violence, because the appeal to understanding and reason is implied in language, as opposed to the mute character of violent force. The democratic process of deliberation leads to the transformation of potential political violence into peaceful disagreement in discussion, whereas the totalitarian use of language implies the transformation of language into an instrument of manipulation.

However, no democratic communication is without difference and power. From Ricœur's perspective, conflict is an essential and basic aspect of communication. Communication takes places as an "amorous battle" (*combat amoureux*) between particular peoples with different convictions, and implies a certain openness because they expose their convictions to the argumentative force of language and

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[29] Paul Ricœur: *Soi-même comme un Autre*, Le Seuil, Paris 1990, p. 227ff.

[30] Paul Ricœur: *Lectures 1*, Le Seuil, Paris 1994, p. 219.

[31] Ibid., p. 132ff.

the rationality of discourse.[32] Indeed, we should not forget the role of love and justice in our lives in institutions.[33] The argumentative force of language cannot be reduced to the violence of instrumental calculation, and the reduction of language to calculation leaves no room for the critical reflections on the ends of actions. At the same time, political language should not become pure rhetoric, seeking only to impose a hidden goal without appealing to reason and a vision of the common good. Even if one cannot overcome personal convictions, commitments, and beliefs, the responsibility towards the Other, due to respect for moral norms, implies the willingness to engage in an open debate about the argumentative validity of personal convictions. Confronted with the plurality of discourses and convictions, this respect for the presence of reason in the diversity of languages implies a nonviolent attitude.[34]

The particular democratic Sittlichkeit is determined by the realization of certain common procedures of discussion that make negotiation about conflict possible. The power of negotiation in plurality and difference is in opposition to pure violence determined by the shared values in democratic societies. Ricœur emphasizes that disagreement, divergent points of view, polemics, and the freedom of expression are also manifested at the level of differences in opinion about legislative proposals, disagreement about constitutional decisions, long-term goals of the state, and finally considerations concerning the basic democratic legitimacy of the government.[35] Democratic principles can be subject to conflict in particular situations because they concern the future of the fundamental ideals of the particular state and the interpretation of basic concepts of liberty and equality. Ricœur rejects the idea of a *Letztbegründung*, a final interpretation of these principles, because they are always open for discussion in practical political life. Therefore, the possible emergence of a crisis of legitimation as the dissolution of democracy and shared understandings is a permanent possibility. This institutionalization of conflict is the origin of the vulnerability of democratic societies.

One can say that in *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (1981) and in his conceptualization of political discourse and deliberative democracy in *Faktizität und Geltung* (1992), Habermas presupposes Arendt's ideas of the plurality of opinions and of conflict. Ricœur opposes a dialectical and reflective equilibrium between argumentation and shared convictions to Habermas's concept of the domination-free dialogue. He avoids Kantian formalism by ensuring communication as a concrete discussion that implies the idea of the non-violent discursive formation of the common power of free political praxis.[36] Here, Claude Lefort (1924–2010) talks about the empty space of power and of democracy as the

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[32] Ibid., p. 137.

[33] John Francis McKernan and Katarzyna Kosmala MacLullich: Accounting, love and justice Accounting, *Auditing & Accountability Journal*, Vol. 17 No. 3, 2004, pp. 327–360.

[34] Paul Ricœur: *Lectures 1*, Le Seuil, Paris 1994, p. 140.

[35] Paul Ricœur: *Soi-même comme un Autre*, Le Seuil, Paris 1990, p. 291ff.

[36] Ibid., p. 335ff.

permanent institutionalisation of conflict. It seems, however, that alongside Arendt, Ricœur stresses the vulnerability and fragility of community without going as far as to adopt Lefort's position.

The task of jurisprudence is to mediate these conflicts by applying practical reason, wisdom, and judgment to assure common action and good and right decisions concerning the good life in opposition to fragility, human error, and the possibility of tragedy. Judgment is essential for ensuring just and ethical decision making in politics, organizations, and institutions.[37] Again, in considering practical reason, Ricœur tries to combine Aristotle and Kant.[38] Practical reason assures respect for moral norms and the basic procedural rules in a society, but because of the possible exceptions to the rules and the particularity of situations, practical wisdom and judgment is required as a necessary supplement to practical reason. Furthermore, practical wisdom is required in exceptional situations of difficult and tragic dilemmas where legal rules are hard to apply. Also, in many cases legal judgment is required to intervene (e.g., euthanasia, abortion, genetic engineering). So, all three faculties of human deliberation contribute to the work of the unfinished mediation between the ideal of the good life, universal principles in relation to concrete situations, and social traditions. This is also the role of judgment when it is applied to decision making in organizations and institutions.

In this philosophy of law, Ricœur develops a new kind of mediation between distanciation and belonging, between practical wisdom and practical reason, between universal principles and concrete narrative traditions. He uses the concept of judgement in Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790), inspired by Arendt in *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (1982). The Kantian understanding of judgment is an effort to apply the formalistic concept of practical reason to the situation and tradition of political community. Ricœur defines judgment as a peaceful way to solve social conflict, where individual execution of justice, revenge, and physical aggression are replaced by codified neutral procedures.[39] Here, general understandings and principles of justice are applied to concrete situations. The legal system—autonomous, different from and yet mediated through public debate and political legislation—implies a rational discourse about justice, where minimum mutual respect and recognition of basic rights are granted those to be punished, and where punishment replace pure violence.

Judgment is not only a determinate application of a predetermined rule, but rather reflective thinking that applies to decision making in organizations, institutions, and politics. Although the reflective judgment in Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* primarily concerns aesthetics and natural teleology, one should not forget its significance for the concepts of political rationality and jurisprudence. There is a logical and structural analogy between aesthetic, political, and judicial

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[37] Søren Juul: Recognition and judgement in social work, *European Journal of Social Work*, 2009, 12:4, pp. 403–417.

[38] Paul Ricœur: *Du texte à l'action*, Le Seuil, Paris 1987, p. 237ff.

[39] See the article *L'acte de juger*, Esprit, Juillet 1992.

judgments. Judgment is characterized by mediation between particularity and universality in a space of intersubjective, public deliberation. Communication concerning judgments of opinion and taste relates to particular cases, and is founded on the common understanding of validity and shared values. Judgment as formation of political opinion, legislative act, and concrete legal processes can be conceived as an interaction between understanding, imagination, reason, and common sense (*sensus communis*).

There are two finalities of law. On the one hand, short-term reasonable solution of conflict, on the other hand, long-term formation of a just society. As a result of intersubjective public debate, the formation of law in judgment has a teleological function. It mediates conflicts and contributes to social peace in the light of the regulative idea of progress in history and the perfectibility of the unsociable sociability of humanity. Legal rules and principles of justice cannot be directly applied to all situations, but must be interpreted as reflective judgments relative to new situations. The pluralistic character of social conflicts make applying universal moral principles and revitalizing narrative traditions a question of a dynamic interpretation, where new situations, without preceding cases, challenge given legal standards and demand imaginative and original solutions at the limits of traditional understanding of law.

Judgment must be understood as the ending of the process of deliberation, going from discussion to final opinion and decision about a social conflict. It is the final point and the fulfillment of the force of law that mediates conflict and violence through reason and discourse. The legal process can be seen as a codified mediation of social conflicts. The rationality of deliberation is well-founded opinion and social codification in written laws in an institutional framework with professional judges.[40] Against the background of conflictual critical discussion and opinion, judgment is the final step, the closing of a process, leading to public action in execution of decisions, expressing the force and power of law in community. The procedural structure of judicial practice ensures the rule of law and formal equality between citizens.

Judicial argumentation can be described as a communicative activity taking into account shared understanding in the context of the judicial framework, where the concept of justice is the guiding regulative idea of judicial practice. Argumentation and decision making are the movements between concrete situations and abstract justifications, between shared convictions and critical rationality. Even if justice remains a transcending quasi-mythological idea, which is best revealed negatively by the understanding of injustice, it remains the legitimizing idea of concrete judicial argumentation and practice.[41] Justice in the legal system implies the confrontation between arguments that are tested according to facts, rules, and convictions. However, the rhetorical character of judicial discourse also manifests the fragility of language between violence and discourse. Legal decision making

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[40] Paul Ricœur: *Lectures 1*, Le Seuil, Paris 1994, p. 176.

[41] Ibid., p. 192ff.

and argumentation cannot, therefore, be reduced to positivistic legalism, but are guided by a teleological vision of social peace and the good for the individual and community. Ricœur characterizes the concept of judgment as the "just distance," or the just place between the parts of the conflict, the right distance from the factual situation through the procedural deliberation about particular conflicts in society. The ultimate goal of judging is the common recognition of the judgment by the involved parts, and in this way it builds an understanding about the case despite tragic and hurtful experiences. This concept of judgment can also be applied to decision making in organizations and institutions.

Ricœur emphasizes the distributive character of judgment as being a peaceful way to solve conflicts of ownership in a discursive rather than in a violent way. It distributes things and goods among individuals. It decides conflicts of ownership among individuals taking part in society as a system of exchange of goods. Judgment contributes to the delimitation between spheres in society, and to social peace. It presupposes a vision of society as fundamentally cooperative, so that the communitarian vision of community as a fragile and vulnerable context of "vouloir vivre ensemble" undergirds the very exercise of judgment to maintain social peace. Still, conflicts about repartition of the good in different spheres of justice also often transcend shared understandings. Common visions of the good are often realized to be inadequate, and must be confronted with universal standards and individual autonomy. Disagreement with state policy can lead to civil disobedience in the name of the divine law, and the corresponding hard cases. According to Ronald Dworkin's (b. 1931) analysis in *Taking Rights Seriously* (1977), appeals to rights and principles must be seen as the foundation for innovation and reform ensuring legal coherence.

This conception of judgment focuses on the concrete conflicts in society, assuring the right proportion between shared understandings and judicial universality in opposition to ideology and contingent interests of power. Ricœur also adopts Dworkin's hermeneutical-narrative understanding of law as integrity (in *Laws Empire* (1986)) concerned with the respect for principles of political morality and progressive innovation according to the principle of equality, fairness, and impartiality, and based on a permanent reinterpretation of the constitutional basis and emergent legal practice. In describing this movement of universalization, Ricœur comes close to Habermas's idea in *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* and *Faktizität und Geltung* of the foundation of legal norms in domination-free communication and the interplay between facticity and validity. But although Habermas, in his philosophy of law, wants to integrate concrete moral convictions and experiences as basic for the formulation of new moral principles, it is difficult to give moral principles any substantial and contextual strength on a purely formalistic and proceduralistic basis. Therefore, an abstract foundation of legal rules is impossible, and the universal ideals must be related to the context of community, where *sensus communis* and shared values always determine the concrete processes of legislation between form of life and reflective ethical justification.

An example of these requirements for the imaginative invention of law are the new biotechnological possibilities of manipulation with a fetus and embryo, which demand reflection about the extent of the dignity of human beings, including potential persons and future generations. The problem is the legal status of the human body, unborn human life, and potential human generations, and how to cope with the peculiar situation of these particular subjects of law between persons and things. The question is how these subjects of law should be seen in relation to the concept of *bios*, the bodily incarnation of the human being with a particular life story, and the required respect and responsibility towards the irreplaceable singularity of such a human being.[42] The fetus is, on the one hand, a potential human, and requires a certain treatment as an end in itself, but, on the other hand, it is not really a person and cannot be granted rights and duties at the same level as the adult person. The same search for the right legal status concerns the human body confronted with biomedicine. Actual discussions about a new world order or a changed conception of nature also challenge the self-understanding of legal systems. An important task for legal philosophy is to investigate how the new problems in risk society, new possibilities of legal dilemmas and situations of responsibility, challenge the concept of law as mediation in social conflict between shared understandings and universal principles in the particular political community.

Ricœur's political theory is consequently the realization of the dialectics of distanciation and belonging in the field of legal philosophy. This also applies for decision making in political institutions, organizations, and business corporations as a powerful hermeneutic basis for business ethics and philosophy of management.[43] The turn towards the Kantian understanding of judgment seems to be a promising way of overcoming a too rigid separation of the universalist and communitarian approach to political philosophy. This vision of the "hermeneutical circle of practical judgment" is used to understand the interaction between ethics, law, and politics in democratic societies and institutions, where human rights and legal respect for autonomy cannot be seen as abstract constructions, but a concrete realization of a modern humanistic tension between shared understandings, universal principles, collective experiences, and democratic traditions.

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[42] Paul Ricœur: *Soi-même comme un Autre*, Le Seuil, Paris 1990, p. 208ff.

[43] Jacob Dahl Rendtorff: "Critical Hermeneutics in Law and Politics", in Lars Henrik Schmidt (red): *Paul Ricœur in the Conflicts of Interpretations*, Aarhus 1996. Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 1996, pp. 102–127. See also Jacob Dahl Rendtorff: "Business, society and the common good: The contribution of Paul Ricoeur" in H-C Bettignies & F Lépineux (eds), *Business, globalization and the common good*, Peter Lang, Oxford, pp. 345–369.

Chapter 9
The Tradition of Political Philosophy: From Raymond Aron and Democratic Institutionalism to Republican Liberalism

Phenomenology and existentialism include elements of the international discussions of the foundations of liberal democracy. In fact, since the discussion of Marxism in the 1940s and 1950s there had already been a strong liberal tradition in French philosophy and political theory. This was a liberal and rationalistic political philosophy that defended the republican institutions and liberal market economics in Western societies against the Marxist belief in revolution. This was also a tradition that was critical toward the 1968 revolution and, later, poststructuralist philosophy. It was Aron who, since the 1940s, particularly defended this liberal political thought and dialogued with critical Marxist intellectuals. Aron argued for the integration of France in the Western and European liberal political community and in the international society. He defended human democratic freedom and political and economic rights.

Aron's political philosophy was based on a continuous appropriation of classical political philosophy from a phenomenological perspective. There is, indeed, a connection between Aron and the Trotskyist's Castoriadis and Lefort, who each developed their political philosophy through criticism of the totalitarian concept of the state, which included a strong defense of freedom in democratic institutions. Another related connection was the phenomenological philosopher of law, Anne Goyard Fabre (b. 1924), who wrote a number of classical philosophical monographs about legal philosophy.[1] Together with Aron, Goyard Fabre had a great influence of the legal philosophers Luc Ferry (b. 1951) and Alain Renaut (b. 1948), who during the 1980s worked on a humanistic philosophy of the subject that was based on a modern natural law critical of poststructuralism.

During the 1990s and 2000s, this interest in political philosophy led to research in liberalism, including Anglo-Saxon political philosophy. This approach also included an integration of the liberal defense of the market economy in political philosophy and to the proposal for a liberal concept of rights as the basis of the

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[1] Bernard Waldenfels: *Phänomenologie in Frankrich*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main (1983), 1987, pp. 455–456.

theory of democracy. A philosopher who has attempted to draw the consequences of this tradition of liberal political philosophy for modern societies is Marcel Gauchet (b. 1946), who also followed Castoriadis and Lefort as professor at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales in Paris.

Indeed, this liberal tradition can be said to have importance for reflection on business ethics and the ethics of organizations because it defends liberal economy and argues for the importance of the private market economy for society. The liberal tradition also analyzes the importance of liberal virtues of integrity and trust in business behavior; therefore, this tradition contributes to the foundations of business ethics by showing how the organization is placed within the framework of a liberal democracy and market economy.[2]

9.1   Raymond Aron: Defense of Liberal Democracy

Aron is often seen, in contrast to Sartre, as the representative of bourgeois France. He was considered as the ideologist behind the policy of the Gaullist French Fourth and Fifth Republics from the Second World War to the late 1960s. He had huge importance for the formulation of the political ideas of French politics in relation to the US and NATO, but also concerning the establishment of the European Union in 1950.

Aron studied philosophy at École normale supérieure and the Sorbonne and was from the same generation as Sartre and de Beauvoir. Like them, he was educated in classical philosophy.[3] During his studies, he and Sartre characterized each other as "petits camarades," but the friendship was broken for many years because of their disagreement about politics and democracy. Aron studied phenomenology in Berlin from 1930 to 1933 as a teacher of French language and culture. His own position was inspired by phenomenology and the great German tradition of sociology from Weber, Georg Simmel (1858–1918), Karl Mannheim (1893–1947), and the historical hermeneutics of Dilthey. With his interest in contemporary liberal history and sociology, and epistemology, Aron wrote his doctoral work on the epistemology of history and the social sciences, which was published as *Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire: essai sur les limites de l'objectivité historique* (1938).[4] His work was a critical and existential evaluation of historical knowledge. He saw that "human beings are in history. Human beings are historical. Human being is a history."[5] It is a book about the limits and possibilities of objective historical

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[2] There has been done very little work on the application of this tradition to business ethics and philosophy of management so this work on the potentialities of the tradition of political philosophy in France is really very innovative with regard to the proposal of the foundations of business ethics.

[3] Nicolas Baverez: Raymond Aron: *Un moraliste au temps des idéologies*, Flammarion, Paris 1993, p. 63.

[4] Ibid., p. 105.

[5] Ibid., p. 127.

knowledge. Marx argued that human beings create history, and Aron added that they don't know in advance what kind of history they create.[6]

Shortly after having been employed at the University of Bordeaux and after a stint in the French army, Aron had to flee to London due to his Jewish background. There he became involved in France's movement for liberation, defending a social liberal position while at the same time criticizing the communists and the Gaullist nationalist movement. In London, Aron worked on a theory of democracy and criticism of totalitarianism. He was introduced to Friedrich Hayek's (1899–1992) liberal defense of economic markets, which he thought was too far from the belief in the political and economic possibilities of the market.

After the war, Aron was employed as a commentator at *Le Figaro* and he became a member of the Gaullist RPF political party, which made him unpopular among left-wing intellectuals. He continued his work combining sociology and classical political philosophy with an effort to integrate the classical tradition of political philosophy characterized by Weber, Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–1859), and Montesquieu in social theory.[7] In 1948 and 1951 Aron published a number of books that analyzed the cold war and supported the military collaboration of France with the US in NATO.[8] He was influenced by Gaullist policy and defended the creation of a European army in connection with European economic collaboration. Aron was also critical of Sartre's Marxism. He wrote *L'opium des intellectuels* (1955), where he transformed Marx's idea the "religion as opium for the people" by describing Marxism as opium for the intellectuals. Instead of a communist revolution, he defended liberal democratic ideals of freedom, equality, and democracy, and he thought that the idea of a classless society was an illusion.

Despite continuous opposition by the Durkheimian sociology professor Georges Gurvitch (1894–1955) in 1955 Aron was finally elected as professor at the Sorbonne. Fifteen years later he became professor at Collège de France. At the Sorbonne, Aron worked to develop the university's offerings in sociology as well as philosophy. Many of his important works were presented as lectures for his students, such as *Dix-huit leçons sur la société industrielle* (1962), *La lutte des classes* (1964), and *Démocratie et totalitarisme* (1965). Those books stand as very important contributions to understanding democracy in industrial society. Aron developed his conception of industrial society through engagement with the thought of Auguste Comte (1798–1857), Marx, and Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923). According to Aron, industrial society is first of all a technical and economic organization of work. In his defense of class struggle he asks whether it is possible to talk about class struggle in complex societies with democratic and pluralist political systems. In describing the relation between democracy and totalitarianism, Aron emphasizes the advantages of democracy in combination with totalitarianism. With inspiration

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[6] Ibid., p. 148.

[7] Ibid., p. 236.

[8] Raymond Aron: *Le grand Schisme*, Gallimard, Paris 1948 and Raymond Aron: *Les Guerres en châine*, Gallimard, Paris 1951.

by Karl Popper (1902–1994), he points to the necessity of defending human freedom in democratic institutions. Aron emphasizes that the market cannot be absolute, but must be regulated through democracy. The advantage of Western societies is the protection of human freedom and the democratic legitimation of their institutions.[9]

Aron was also a philosopher of international relations. As guest professor at Harvard in the 1960 and 1961 he wrote his masterpiece of international politics, *Paix et guerre entre les nations* (1962), which synthesizes his reflections about international relations. This work proposes a realist theory of the history and sociology of international relations and discusses the philosophical theories of strategy and political action (*praxéologi*). Aron also enters into the issue of the significance of geopolitics for strategic deliberations. He has a classical conception of international politics where it is state sovereignty and monopoly of action that, in the end, determine the foundation of actions.

Aron begins with Clausewitz's definition of war as a means to force an opponent to execute one's will.[10] War is not in itself political, but an instrument to act in political relation, to realize political aims.[11] Clausewitz's emphasis that war has a political rationality that makes it a part of the strategy that is politically motivated. It should not be conceived as a logic of violence that is independent of politics, but as a continuation of politics by other means. Aron maintains that war expresses a relation between hostile states. It is not possible within this theoretical paradigm to give meaning to an "absolute war" that has nothing to do with the political and rational aims of the states.

Aron can be said to describe war as a struggle of recognition between states. In international relations, states are striving to get political, social, and economic power, thus war should be seen as an extension of the monopoly of power of sovereign states as an application of power to improve their economic, cultural, and geographic situation.[12] Aron is aware of the changed world order after 1945, which led to a global bipolar system with two superpowers during the cold war and that included a certain form of unification through the establishment of legal institutions, such as those of the United Nations.[13]

The aim of *Paix et guerre entre les nations* was to propose a theory of international relations that conceives of the tension during the cold war as the conflict between Kant's search for eternal peace and absolute violence that destroys everything. This theory was developed as a criticism of Hans Morgenthau (1904–1980), who had a Machevellian and Hobbesian conception of international politics. Aron argues that power politics are not sufficient explanation for state action, because states also act from ideological motives. Aron did not, however, agree fully with

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[9] Raymond Aron: *L'essai sur les libertés*, Calmann-Lévy, Paris 1965.

[10] Raymond Aron: *Paix et geurre entre les nations*, Calmann-Lévy, Paris 1962, p. 35.

[11] Ibid., p. 35.

[12] Ibid., p. 65.

[13] Ibid., p. 113.

Kant, who in his theory about eternal peace has an idealistic expectation of the possibility of overcoming the egoistic power interests of states. Aron argues instead that the idealist and realist theories about international politics are not opposite, but complementary.[14]

As professor at the Sorbonne in the 1960s Aron had huge significance for French social philosophy. He contributed to developing a center for European sociology and 1964 became directeur d'études at École des hautes études en sciences sociales. Aron influenced a new generation of sociologists and philosophers, in particular Michel Crozier (b. 1922), who developed an important sociology of bureaucracy and organizations, and the sociologist Luc Boltanski (b. 1940). He had also had Claude Lefort, and later Bourdieu, as his assistants.[15]

Aron wrote an introduction to sociological thought, *Les etapes de la pensée sociologique* (1967), which actualizes a number of sociological classics from Marx, de Tocqueville, Durkheim, Weber, and Pareto. In *Histoire et dialectique de la violence* (1973) he proposes a very profound criticism of Sartre's *Critique de la raison dialectique* (1960). Aron argues that Sartre did not succeed in integrating the dialectical concept of freedom in Marxism. Sartre's individualist ontology cannot be combined with a collective understanding of history as totalized totality.[16] Aron was also skeptical in relation to Sartre's concept of the revolution, which he considered as a mystical metaphysics of violence.

In addition, Aron entered into the debate about the student revolt in 1968. In *La revolution introuvable: reflexions sur les évènements de mai* (1968), there is an analysis of the events that explains them as a combination of a reaction towards the materialism of consumer society, lack of action in government, and lack of government legitimacy. This book was a success in the public space, but was criticized by many left-wing intellectuals.

In from 1970 to 1971 Aron lectured as professor at Collège de France about Clausewitz's thought, which led to his publication of *Penser la guerre: essai sur Clausewitz. I. L'âge européen. II. L'âge planétaire* (1976). In the first part, Aron analyzes Clausewitz's concept of strategy and of war as politics by other means.[17] In the second part, he considers modern concepts of war by taking into consideration different philosophers of war, like Erich Ludendorf (1865–1937), Vladimir Ilitch Lenin (1870–1924), and Mao Zedong (1893–1976), as well as concepts of war that were developed after 1945 (i.e., wars of liberation, guerilla combat, and civil war).

War is an art of strategy that accomplishes the practical aims of politics by securing and developing the power of the state.[18] Clausewitz was neither

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[14] Ibid., p. 16.

[15] Nicolas Baverez: *Raymond Aron: Un moraliste au temps des idéologies*, Flammarion, Paris 1993, p. 328.

[16] Raymond Aron: *L'histoire et la dialectique de la violence*, Paris, PUF, 1973, p. 269ff.

[17] Raymond Aron: *Penser la guerre, Clausewitz: I: L'âge européen, II: L'âge planétaire*, Paris Gallimard 1976, tôme 1, p. 109.

[18] Ibid., p. 105.

a Machiavellian not an idealist, because he considered war as a part of pragmatic deliberation in order to ensure balance and equilibrium among states. The strategy of war is an art because it operates with great indeterminacy and ambiguity in concrete strategic situations. He conceived of war from the perspective of the dialectics of recognition as an instrument to dominate the Other and acquire recognition.[19] Violence becomes a rational instrument to realize predefined political aims, such as in the case of the wars in classical Greece, to the Napoleonic Wars.

Aron states that war is a chameleon that changes according to the historical and cultural circumstances, and this means that both classical and modern wars can be understood within Clausewitz's paradigm of the political rationality of war.[20] At the same time, modern strategists of war have disagreed with Clausewitz and have unfortunately moved beyond the dialectics of recognition. Hitler made the whole nation the subject of one battle and developed the concept of total war.[21] Lenin conceived war as the instrument of class struggle. Mao mobilized the masses and put the destiny of a whole society at stake. They all go beyond Clausewitz's classical conception of war defined as an instrument to keep the balance of power.

Aron was not certain that nuclear war should be included in Clausewitz's definition of the rationality of war. In fact, with its threat of total human destruction, nuclear war is a break with the rational logic of war. While atomic weapon has the political function to scar the opponent, the question is whether it goes too far by no longer defining war as politics by other means and by recasting peace as violence by other means.[22] Aron would argue that meaningless violence, or a postmodern media war without visible political aim, is at the limits of Clausewitz's typology of war.

Aron's book about war can be considered as his reply to Sartre's critical philosophy of history. The relation between Aron and Sartre was reestablished in 1978 when they came together in an action to support Vietnamese boat refugees. Even though they had hardly seen each other since 1947 they now gave each other a handshake and the "petits camarades" became united again as old men. Aron supported Sartre in his walk up the steps of the Elysee Palace to visit the President of France, and was happy for the reconciliation. Sartre had been so popular among so many people that a common expression developed: "It was better to be wrong with Sartre than right with Aron." Still, Aron, with his pragmatic realism and defense of the values of liberal democracy, provided a strong social philosophy and defense of freedom and difference in political community.

How should the business ethicist read Aron? We can emphasize that he made an important contribution to the methodology of the social sciences that is manifested in his theory of the limits of historical knowledge. Moreover, his defense of liberal social democracy proposes a framework for organizational action within republican

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[19] Ibid., tôme 1, p. 111.

[20] Ibid., tôme II, p. 184.

[21] Ibid., tôme II, p. 59.

[22] Ibid., tôme II, p. 176.

political structures, where the corporation acts as a good citizen in the economic market. His theory is the political foundation for understanding industrial society and the economic and social organization of work in this society. Moreover, with his analysis of war and peace between nations, Aron delivered the tools for understanding the geopolitical situation in which corporations act with more or less reference to the states to which they belong. While the business corporations may be interrogated on strategy, recognition, and rationality, we should not forget that strategy is also about recognizing and legitimizing organizations in society.

9.2   Castoriadis and the Concept of Institutions and Institutionalization

Castoriadis also proposed a body of social thought that has important relevance for business ethics, particularly the relation between institution and democracy.[23] We can situate the philosophy of Castoriadis as a part of the liberal discussion of the foundations of democracy. We can propose an outline of the development of Castoriadis's political philosophy with focus on institutionalization, imagination, and self-limitation of democratic institutions as central elements in his thought.[24] This includes the presentation of the concept of the institution and institutionalization. Indeed, Castoriadis's critique of bureaucracy can be seen as a way to distinguish between totalitarian society and democracy. This is the basis for understanding the relation between the imagination, freedom, and autonomy as basic elements of democracy. Finally, Castoriadis's new notion of democracy as a kind of self-limitation and creation of collective meaning can be seen as the basis for social legitimacy.

How can we conceive of changing values and the institutionalization of new organizational values and cultures? What is the basis of change in society? These problems of change, values, and institutions are addressed in many different ways in institutional theory, also in relation to business organizations. However, we often feel the need for further conceptual clarification. Castoriadis can be said to provide this. His social theory of institutions has significance for present concepts of politics and novel institution building.

Castoriadis argued that humanity attempts to come to autonomous self-expression through imagination as a primary force of history. The social imaginary is a dream of human autonomous emancipation and self-expression. Social

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[23] Cornelius Castoriadis: *La société bureaucratique,* Paris, 1973. Cornelius Castoriadis: *L'institution imaginaire de la société*, Paris, 1975. Cornelius Castoriadis: *Les carrefours du labyrinthe I–V*, Paris, 1978. Cornelius Castoriadis, *La cité et les lois. Ce qui fait la Grèce, 2. Séminaires 1983–1984. La création humaine III*, Paris, 2008.

[24] An earlier version of this section on Cornelius Castoriadis has been published as Jacob Dahl Rendtorff: "Castoriadis' Concept of Institution and Democracy", *Nordicuum-Mediterraneum*, December 2008, Volume 3, Number 2.

institutionalization is a product of this social imaginary. We can apply Castoriadis's concept of institutionalization to the process of searching for the legitimacy of society and of corporations, and we may say that we experience a process of searching for autonomy and self-limitation by creating new meanings for democratic institutions.

For Castoriadis, this theory of imaginary institutionalization is the basis for a theory of democracy, because democratic policy is based on an ongoing search for autonomy and critical questioning of existing social institutions. Direct democracy is created in an open process of creation, but also in the capacity for self-limitation and wise and prudent decision making. The ethos of democracy is an understanding of the limits of human existence and action. It is only by this understanding of self-limitation that we can understand the conditions of human autonomy and democracy. This may be the reason why ethics and values are so important for creating new understandings and meanings of modern society.

9.3   Castoriadis's Critique of Bureaucracy

The point of departure of Castoriadis's social thought is a critical investigation of eastern European institutions. Like Althusser, Castoriadis wanted to scientifically explain the contribution of Marxism to social organization. Like Sartre and Althusser, Castoriadis can be said to be oriented towards reinventing Marx as a social theorist and to determine the Marxist contribution to social philosophy. At the same time, Castoriadis developed his own political and social philosophy in his late work, which was inspired by socialism, but also contained many new and interesting perspectives on social theory that in many ways are deeply critical towards the Marxist paradigm.

Castoriadis presents an anti-authoritarian and autonomy-based democratic theory of society. His basic idea is that human beings can come to free autonomous self-realization without being governed by work leaders, priests, therapists, politicians, or generals who come from the outside and want to determine our actions. Human fantasy and dreams of autonomy are the primary force in history, which is neither determined by predestination, nor by reason. Castoriadis's philosophy of social fantasy and imaginary institutions of society derived considerable signification from the riots of the French youth in 1968 Paris.

Castoriadis, who originally was educated in economics and law, emigrated to France in 1945 thanks to a scholarship, after having fought as a Greek Trotskyist against the Stalinist Greek communist party. Castoriadis grew up in a Greek society marked by civil war and totalitarian regimes. In Paris, he contributed to creating the French section of the Fourth International in 1945, and was later a member of the committee directing the popular French review, *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, which became a pivotal socialist review in the 1960s and played a significant role vis-à-vis the 1968 riots. Simultaneously, he was employed as an economist by OECD, which gave him great opportunities to investigate the capitalist structures of society.

In 1974, he opened a clinic for psychoanalysis and in 1979 he became Directeur d'Études of the famous research institution in Paris, École des hautes études en sciences sociales.

In his articles in *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, Castoriadis criticized both capitalist and communist bureaucratic and totalitarian societies. Western states displayed a very undemocratic co-operation between the State and private companies, and in reality it was the owners of capital who had the power to decide over the economy. But Castoriadis was also critical towards the turn that the dictatorship of the proletariat had taken in the Soviet Union. In 1948, he disagreed with the Trotsky-ites, because they defended the USSR, and he believed in autonomous self-organization outside the dominant bureaucratic state. He was therefore also critical towards Sartre's defence of communism. It is claimed he said that Sartre was wrong at the right time, to which Sartre replied that Castoriadis was right at the wrong time.

In his two-volume work, *La société bureaucratique* (1973), Castoriadis develops his central notions of bureaucratic capitalism. Capitalist society is fundamentally separated into classes and is characterized by strong hierarchical structures, and strong separations between those who give orders and those who execute them. Bureaucratic capitalism consists of great industrial complexes based on advanced technologies. The dominant rationality is goal-oriented, utility-oriented, and instrumental. In many cases, chiefs, work leaders, and superiors can use their positions of power and give irrational, inhuman, and half-sadistic orders to workers that break with the logic of production. To change this situation, workers have no other choice than organizing themselves in autonomous groups of resistance.

Castoriadis argues that the state-capitalistic society of the communist bloc became a regime that was as inhuman as the capitalist society of the west. Communist institutions had forgotten human beings. Stalin's totalitarian state is considered by Castoriadis to be a reified bureaucracy, where the party and a specific group of leaders took over power in society and in which historical development had stopped. Accordingly, Castoriadis thought that there was no big difference between capitalist structures of repression and the kind of exploitation of workers and peasants that was the consequence of the victory of the proletariat in the Soviet Union. That sort of communist society can be characterized as bureaucratic monopolistic capitalism, where Marxism is used as ideology to oppress the proletariat, who have not been liberated, but exposed to a new kind of oppression.

Eventually, Castoriadis had to recognize the limitations of Marxism. He was sceptical towards Marx's metaphysical theory of surplus value in the last book of *Das Kapital* and he wanted to give up dogmatic Marxist philosophy of history. At the same time, he had to admit that developments in eastern Europe had reduced Marxism to a bureaucratic ideology. Russian society had been established upon the false ideology of the worker's state, whereby the dominant group in society succeeded in preserving its power. The relations of production of the USSR did not lead to inequality, but separated the population into proletariat and bureaucrats of the party. Soviet relations of production implied exploitation of workers and

therefore were not essentially different from capitalism.[25] Factories were not democratically governed, but dependent on a huge bureaucratic machine that governed workers with terrorist reason.

Therefore, it was possible to describe the government of the Soviet Union as bureaucratic capitalism based on the hierarchical structures of government as factories. As such, we cannot say that communist regimes in China or Eastern Europe were more developed. In all these societies it was possible to describe a new type of bureaucratic capitalism that was based on bureaucratic organisations of power like the army, public companies, or the party. Castoriadis's criticism of the communist party would lead eventually to a generalized theory about bureaucratic forms of organization in modern late capitalism and technology-dependent society.

After criticism of the Soviet Union began to grow, Castoriadis realized that he had to choose between orthodox Marxism and revolution. During the 1960s, he understood that new autonomous groups—groups of young people, the women's liberation movement, and others—were seeking alternative life forms, and that they expressed a new form of criticism of bureaucratic capitalism. At the same time, he was very critical towards Althusser's structural Marxism, which did not contain any conception of human self-creation. In his philosophy of the imaginary Castoriadis choose the revolutionary project that he stated was an integrated part of the human dream of being different.[26]

In order to overcome finitude, alienation, and reification, human beings wish to create new imaginary social institutions. The oppressed will overcome goal-rationality in the technical and bureaucratic structures, and fantasy becomes the driving force of history. This was the reason why the ideas of *Socialisme ou barbarie*, even though the publication of the review was cancelled in 1967, had great significance for the riots of 1968. The leader of the Nanterre riot, Daniel Cohen-Bendit, was connected to the review, and even though Castoriadis held a low profile during the riot of 1968, his ideas of self-governance and autonomy in universities and work environments were conceived as important demands by the revolutionary student movement. Later, in 1981, Castoriadis also published a book, together with Cohen-Bendit, concerning autonomy and ecology.

After he left OECD, Castoriadis concentrated the rest of his life on developing his social and historical theory about a democracy based on autonomy, and on human imaginary creations and socially instituting forces. What is imaginary is not a picture of anything; it is not socially or physically predetermined. It is only on the basis of the human imaginary process of creation that something is realized. The creative force of fantasy expresses an ability, on the basis of hope and desire, to achieve a better social reality and create new social institutions. This ability is not predetermined by the gods, nature, or rationality. His major work, *L'institution imaginaire de la société* (1975), describes an alternative autonomy-based theory

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[25] Cornelius Castoriadis: *L'institution imaginaire de la société*, Èditions du Seuil, (1975), Paris 1999, p. 16.

[26] Ibid., p. 105ff.

of democracy.[27] Societal ontology—its being *poiesis*—is determined by the imaginary creative force of humanity. This is the basis for analyzing the history of the idea of fantasy and it shows how the philosophical tradition has a tendency to ignore the psychological and social significance of fantasy.

In the development of this alternative social theory, Castoriadis refers to the psychoanalysis of Freud that is used to overcome an individualistic reading of social theory. Castoriadis argues that the human psyche is a nomad who, in the end, can never be fully socialized, but has an antisocial core, which at the same time represents the foundation for the capacity of humanity to institute an imaginary and real social change. In his use of psychoanalysis, Castoriadis is very critical towards the announcements of Lacan and Foucault of the death of the subject and of the idea that unconscious structures have taken over in relation to the conscious ego or 'I.' Instead, we have to understand how psychoanalysis of human fantasy can help to achieve a better understanding of the unconscious and imaginary. Psychoanalysis helps us to understand ourselves, without implying that we are determined by our unconscious life.

In contrast to the structuralist and therapeutic reading of the psychoanalytic project, Castoriadis emphasizes that psychoanalysis must be conceived as a modern narrative of the classical demand to "know thy self," which originated from ancient Greek philosophy and culture and is mediated through tragedy and the Greek epic stories by Homer and others. Psychoanalysis is a kind of catharsis that helps us to understand our identity through the analysis of unconscious fantasies.

Through this conception of human beings, Castoriadis argues that the real contradiction is not between individual and society, but instead that society and psyche are different poles that cannot be reduced to one another. The original psychical pole cannot in itself produce social significance and meaning. Rather, social fantasies are created in the surrounding society. The socially imaginary significances are different from both the rational and the real forces that are realized in this society. In this way, one can define a special social imaginary, a characteristic ability to institutionalize new social structures and relations. The characteristic socially instituting ability of the imaginary breaks with both functionalism and structuralism by contributing to the creation of a more original kind of being: one that can be characterized as a self-instituting and self-creating unit that cannot be reduced to the physical, the biological, or the psychological. Social institutions carry deep socially imaginary significance with this creative force. It is this significance that contributes to the creation of the social signification of institutions and keeps a given society alive. Because of the self-creation of society, this significance becomes a part of the collective meaning of society. This meaning is based on either open or closed autonomy. In this context, the primitive or totalitarian society is building a predetermined social order, whilst the democratic society builds on an open and autonomic process of creation.

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[27] Cornelius Castoriadis: *L'institution imaginaire de la société*, Èditions du Seuil, (1975), Paris 1999. II. L'imaginaire social et l'institution, p. 251.

This conception of the instituting function of imagination is developed by Castoriadis in *L'institution imaginaire de la société* and in his five-volume collection of articles, *Les carrefours du labyrinthe* (1978–1990).[28] In his investigation of the history of ideas of fantasy and imagination, Castoriadis states that this creative force has been partly forgotten by the philosophical tradition. Already the classical definition of Aristotle in *De Anima* expresses the lack of understanding of the imaginary and creative force of fantasy. Aristotelian philosophy is defined as an unreal mimesis and a passive negativity, and it is not really clear how fantasy can be defined as the mediation between emotion and rationality. If we look at the philosophy of Kant, we can also see that he was not sufficiently conscious of the importance of fantasy, because he did not let the transcendental imagination have great significance in the second edition of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781). Though Freud spoke continually about fantasy, he never analyzed the imaginary as that which creates unconscious fantasies and gives being to the nonexistent.

9.4   A New Theory of Democracy

The starting point for Castoriadis's notion of democracy is the relation between politics and philosophy in classical Greece. Philosophy expresses the imaginary institutionalization of society, because it continually questions the existing social institutions. It is developed in close relation to democratic politics, and thereby contributes actively to changing society and its institutions.

Accordingly, both philosophy and politics are closely connected to the development of the autonomy of citizens. Political philosophy questions the validity of the fundamental norms of society. In the development of history there are many examples of this fight for the imaginary institutionalization of the autonomy of citizens. Castoriadis mentions the struggle of the bourgeoisie against the church and the king, the American and French revolutions, and the fight for freedom of workers, women, and youth movements in Western societies as expressions of this fight for political and philosophical autonomy in the imaginary institutionalizations of society.

However, according to Castoriadis, the emergence of democracy in classical Greece is the most perfect expression of this process. Castoriadis says that the political institutions of classical Greece were based on a direct democracy where every citizen with autonomy took part in the democratic process of decision making. The Greek city-states were characterized by autonomy and openness. The laws of democracy, the public rules, and the shared values were institutionalized in an open process of creation, where the citizens could always question the meaning and validity of the institutions of society. In this sense, democratic society

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[28] Cornelius Castoriadis: *Les Carrefours de labyrinthe I–II*, 1978/1986/1990, Bind I–II, Le Seuil, Paris 1999.

emerges as an auto-institutionalization of the norms of society. In a democratic society, citizens contribute collectively to making their own laws. They engage in the process for the sake of justice and the common good, and to bring order to the existing chaos. In the Greek city-state the people (*demos*) were considered as the absolute sovereign and this creates an autonomous political space, the public space, that is the basis for the institutionalization of laws in society.

With classical Greece playing as counterpart, the representative democracy of our days cannot really be determined as anything other than a liberal oligarchy, where the few take part directly in the process of decision making, while the many submit to bureaucratic structures. Castoriadis did not have much respect for the development of the globalized economy of the 1990s, which he regarded as based on undemocratic structures.

Castoriadis places his theory about the imaginary institutionalization in *L'insti-tution imaginaire de la société*, adding to it the perspective of an ethics of self-limitation. Humility and self-limitation are central notions for democratic self-understanding.[29] If the community is supposed to maintain its norms, it cannot show hubris (*hybris*) in relation to those norms. Castoriadis, like Ricœur, refers to *Antigone* in his work. According to Castoriadis, the art of self-control (which Antigone embodies) is closely connected to an understanding of the mortality and finitude of humanity, which are the real background to the possibility of any autonomy and democracy. In this context, what matters most is to make art and philosophy a form of social life. The ethos of democracy is based on an under-standing of the limits of human actions and of the impossibility of the total comprehension of their consequences. Democracy allows for the tragic aspects of human existence. It is based on the understanding of the fact that a totalitarian regime always implies hubris in relation to the finitude of human nature. The limitations of democracy are neither based on what is necessary, nor on what is contingent, but on human creativity aware of the possibilities and limitations of human action. This is related to the respect for freedom. Only by understanding human mortality can we respect ourselves and others as autonomous and free human beings, and at the same time aim to realize ourselves in an autonomous and self-organizing society.

This approach to Greek democracy is further developed in Castoriadis's lectures on democracy in ancient Greece, published as: *Ce Qui Fait La Grèce, 1. D'Homère a Héraclite. Seminaires 1982–1983. La Création Humaine II* (2004). In those seminars, Castoriadis developed his investigations of institutionalization in Greek democracy. In particular, he was interested in the issue of how a society questions its own institutions, and how this society contributes to its own institutiona-lizations.[30] In ancient Greece, it was important to ensure positive freedom in the

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[29] Cornelis Castoriadis: *L'institution imaginaire de la société*, Èditions du Seuil, (1975) Paris 1999. II. L'imaginaire social et l'institution, p. 520.

[30] Cornelius Castoriadis: *La cité et les lois. Ce qui fait la Grèce, 2, Séminaires 1983–1994. La creation humaine 3*. Texte établi, présenté et annoté par Enrique Escobar, Myrto Gondicas et Pascal Vernay. Précédé de "Castoriadis et la Grèce anicenne" par Pierre Vidal-Naquet. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2004.

city-state. The radical spirit of imagination became the basis for auto-creation and human self-creation in this society. In Greek democracy, human beings create themselves and their essence. Deliberation and prudence are virtues of democracy. The direct democracy in ancient Greece can be promoted as a model for the modern world and individual freedom in democracy. The polis of self-realization is conceived as a society of free citizens who realize the social imaginary in the political process of self-realization. The social imaginary is realized in the classical political space, the *agora*, where citizens meet in the political community to discuss the future of society. Here, we have the democratic creation where all citizens are free and their freedom is realized in the *polis*. In this sense, we can talk about auto-institutionalization of society, where sovereign citizens create the political community and the political collectivity together in the political process.

This conception of the democratic process of society is a process of self-instituting, or self-institutionalization, where community is a result of historical creation. Great resemblance can be observed between Castoriadis and Arendt, who Castoriadis recognizes as an important source of inspiration for his political philosophy. The social imaginary of democracy is the source of representative government and based on the sources of civil society. In this context, Castoriadis emphasizes the institutional elements of modern democracy. He also says that *polis* in human creation is the result of such auto-institutionalization. In the *polis*, the citizens are in contrast to the sphere of *oikos*, characterized by mutual friendship (*philia*). The political relation is conceived as a relation between friends, and this is the foundation of the vision of common happiness in politics. Castoriadis conceives the act of instituting in democracy as a kind of "Grundnorm" in the Kelsian sense, in the way that it is the foundation of the institutionalization of society. In addition, inspired by Arendt, Castoriadis uses the Greek imaginations of *mimesis*, *mythos*, and *catharsis* as the foundation of tragedy. The tension between hubris and nemesis is very important, because Casotriades bases the act of creating a democracy on Greek tragedy.

In contrast to bureaucratic organization of reified institutions with strict separation of groups and classes and with strong hierarchical structures based on instrumental and utility-oriented rationality, the imaginary search for autonomy is characterized by striving for autonomy and emancipation like the one represented by new social groups and their reaction against established social structures. According to Castoriadis, we have to conceive human revolutionary projects as an effort to be emancipated from bureaucratic structures in an imaginary creation of autonomous democratic institutions. The social imaginary is not a picture of anything. It is not predetermined, but expresses a capacity to creatively build upon hopes and desires for a better social reality and new social institutions.

Castoriadis defines this concept of institutionalization in *L'institution imaginaire de la société* and makes it foundation for his theory of democracy. History is therefore understood as creation (*poiesis*), that is, it is determined by the human imaginary capacity of creation. Society is created through an imaginary symbolism based on conceptions of meaning and values that are the basis for social existence. We can talk about a social capacity of imagination that contributes to the creation of

new social structures and contexts. The human imaginary capacity of creation can be characterized as a primordial kind of being that contributes to the creation of common imaginary contexts of significance as the basis for community and collective meaning. Castoriadis can be said to contribute with a very important concept of institutions and institutionalization as the basis of business ethics. This horizon of meaning can be based on a more or less open autonomy, dependant on democratic or totalitarian forms of organization. This concept of institutionalization and institution implies a profound idea of organizations that can be very important for institutional and organizational analysis as the basis for business ethics and philosophy of management.

9.5   Claude Lefort and Marcel Gauchet

Lefort developed his theory of democracy and political philosophy on a postphenomenological basis. This position was further developed later by Marcel Gauchet (b. 1946) at École des hautes études en sciences sociales. Lefort had worked closely with Castoriadis in relation to *Socialisme ou Barbarie*. He had criticized Sartre's abstract Marxism and thought that there wasn't such a big difference between communist and capitalist bureaucracies of power. He also argued against the idea that the proletariat could be defined as a particular class with an historical mission. Sartre answered in "Réponse à Lefort" (1953) that Lefort did not believe in class struggle.[31] Sartre argued that Lefort, as an intellectual, could not identify with the proletariat.[32] The USSR could not do otherwise because of the circumstances, but Lefort could not understand this because of his relation to the bourgeois class. Lefort acted like Merleau-Ponty, who described the violence of USSR as a fact.[33]

This debate between Sartre and Lefort shows Lefort's close relation to Merleau-Ponty, who criticized the totalitarian regime. Lefort wanted to base his political philosophy on Merleau-Ponty's thought. In addition to being responsible for publishing some of Merleau-Ponty's books, Lefort also published a number of essays about Merleau-Ponty's philosophy.[34] Lefort took his point of departure in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body and understanding of the close relation between freedom and situation. The body represents an immediate experience of the world. The subject is bodily engaged in the world that is manifested in the

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[31] Jean-Paul Sartre: "Réponse à Claude Lefort", (1953) *Situations VII*, *Problèmes du marxisme, 2*, Gallimard, Paris 1965, p. 81.

[32] Jean-Paul Sartre: "Réponse à Claude Lefort", (1953) *Situations VII*, *Problèmes du marxisme, 2*, Gallimard, Paris 1965, p. 20.

[33] Ibid., p. 92.

[34] Claude Lefort: *Sur une Colonne absente. Écrits autour de Merleau-Ponty,* Gallimard, Paris 1978.

bodily presence. Lefort emphasized Merleau-Ponty's search for human original being of the body as expression of our forgotten being.[35]

Lefort can be said to develop a political philosophy that continues and extends beyond Merleau-Ponty. In particular, he emphasized the importance of human praxis in human symbolic institutions.[36] To philosophize human history and situation is not only to talk about several subjects, but we also face a common world between human beings (*intermonde*). Lefort developed a political phenomenology out of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy. He emphasized the common world in human bodily situation. Lefort emphasized the symbolic creation of individual and society in a common original primordial world of bodily experience.

In the creation of the political, the real and the imaginary shift places. The idea of the political can only be understood as realization, a mise en scène of power in a specific historical structure and connection, where the contingencies of the situation are combined in a way that forms a new structure of power. A revolution, or new formation of power, can be understood as a fantastic projection where a symbolic destruction of law happens. Lefort mentioned, for example, the Algerian war of liberation as such a political mise en scène.[37] The revolutionary phenomenon should be understood as a symbolic event.

Lefort analyzes society as symbolic mise en scène in his dissertation, published as *Le travail de l' oeuvre Machiavel* (1972), which considers Machiavellian political philosophy. Machiavelli is read in connection with the classical tradition of political thought as philosophy of the mise en scène, or creation of political power. Different political regimes, such as tyranny or democracy, are examples of such formations of political power. What is essential in politics is to keep and maintain power. Lefort conceives Machiavelli's philosophy as a defense of the republic, understood as the best political regime.[38] Machiavelli's separation of politics and religion, and his emphasis on the central significance of power, make the question of power an open question. Power is the place that is needed to govern society, but in a society without pregiven symbolic orders the possession of the place of power requires symbolic legitimation. Power is an open public place where there is a theater for the involved actors. At the same time, the position of power is insecure and unstable, and political wisdom is needed to maintain it.

According to Lefort, ensuring that the force of unity that constitutes society as political power is something good for community is an important political question. Lefort puts democracy and totalitarianism in opposition. Totalitarian society creates a homogenous and total unity between state and civil society. Because of the religious origin of the state, there is a natural search for a unit that reflects the

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[35] Ibid., p. 18.

[36] Ibid., p. 41.

[37] Ibid., pp. 46–47.

[38] Jan Ifversen: "En tænkning af det politiske – Claude Leforts politiske filosofi i Carsten Bagge Laustsen og Anders Berg-Sørensen". *Det ene, den anden, det tredje*, København 1999, p. 83ff.

totalitarian society. The state is put in the place of God, and it searches to mediate between conflicts of interest and individual struggles.

In his philosophy, Lefort analyzes the many struggles for liberation from totalitarian regimes after the Second World War, in particular illustrated by Alexandre Soljenitsyn's (1918–2008) description of the Soviet Union as an effort to break with the unity of totalitarianism and search for a legitimate political symbolization of power.[39]

In opposition to totalitarianism, the issue for democracy is to unite society without dissolving its parts or including civil society in the state. According to Lefort, democracy is characterized by being a political organization where power does not belong to anybody in advance, but is a result of permanent undecidability, where public debates and a plurality of points of view define political decision making. In democratic society, power (*le pouvoir*), knowledge (*le savoir*) and law (*la loi*) separate in autonomous spaces that are continually in tension with each other.

In democracy, the political foundation is an empty place, like an open institution that is in continuous movement. At the same time, democracy is qualitatively different from totalitarian regimes, because it concerns the welfare of citizens and basic human rights.[40] In a democratic society there is much greater understanding of the complexity and consequences of political decisions. While the totalitarian society puts an end to economic, political, and social rights, democratic societies thematicize the basic rights of citizens in public political debates.

Of particular importance for the formation of democracy is the intervention of the masses in the political and public sphere. Politically decisions must be legitimized in public space. Instead of the secular religion of totalitarianism, which wants to capture and dominate everything, it is the duty of the democratic modern state to continuously ensure that the place of power is empty, because it is constituted by many different conflictual channels of decision making, which keep their instability and are in constant movement. Human rights should, for example, not be conceived as eternal and unchangeable, but like all other legal and political conditions of society they are continuously debated.

Lefort develops his understanding of the symbolic dimension of social formation by reference to Pierre Clastre (1934–1977), who questioned why human beings want to give power to the state. The answer is that the holistic state expresses a symbolic moment of identification that creates unity in the manifold.[41] This realizes the need for identification with a larger unit of coherence beyond the individual. The human search to belong to a unity with the state is a modern expression of a need that was earlier expressed in relation to the religious community. There is a

[39] Claude Lefort: *Un homme en trop: Réflexions sur L'archipel du Goulag*, Le Seuil, Paris 1976.

[40] Claude Lefort: *L'invention démocratique. Les limites de la domination totalitaire*, Fayard, Paris 1981.

[41] Etienne de la Boétie: *Discours de la servitude volontaire*, (1548), Paris 1976: Postface de Pierre Clastre et Claude Lefort.

potential danger of totalitarianism in the state, because it takes over the collective role of identification between the individual and a larger whole, as Clastres argues in *La société contre l'Etat* (1974).

The reflection is also developed by Gauchet in *Le désenchantement du monde* (1985) where he studies the relation between religion and politics.[42] Gauchet was a pupil of Lefort and he also became a professor at the Centre d'études politiques Raymond Aron at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales. Gauchet investigates the genealogy of democracy linked to secularization of the world in his work on secularization and democracy. In his theory of democracy, Gauchet was also inspired by Merleau-Ponty and Arendt. It is the escape from religion that is one of the conditions of democratic possibility. He argues that the state became possible through religion and the totalitarian state can be seen as a reaction towards the state taking over the religion. Historically, religion is a condition of the state, and this implies that the state—through the secularization process—takes over the function from religion of creating unity in society. At the same time, this means that we can talk about a kind of secular presence of religion in democracy.[43] What is important in democracy are the secular values of liberty and equality. They give society and government their legitimate foundations.

In relation to business ethics and philosophy of management religion, in its secular version, can arguably play an important role as the basis for creating and seculering values in business ethics and values-driven management.[44]

9.6   From Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut: To Liberalism

Luc Ferry (b. 1951) and Alain Renaut (b. 1948) have also proposed a defense of liberal democracy as essential to political thought. In this way they are predecessors of the liberal-republican thought in French philosophy that has led to a strong tradition of historical analysis of liberalism, as well as contemporary proposals for a liberal political philosophy. They have presented their philosophy in a number of books as criticism of Marxism and of structuralist and poststructuralist thought as threats to democratic and humanistic thinking. Together they published *La Pensée 68: essai sur l'antihumanisme contemporain* (1982) and *Heidegger et les modernes* (1988). This liberal philosophical project can be said to re-establish Enlightenment-based philosophical humanism as the foundation for democracy.

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[42] Marcel Gauchet: *Le désenchantement du monde*, Editions Gallimard, Paris 1985.

[43] Marcel Gauchet: *La Religion dans la démocratie. Parcours de la laïcité*, Editions Gallimard, Paris 1998.

[44] See Kirsten Marie Bovbjerg: "The Ethics of Sensitivity: Towards a New Work Ethic. New Age in Business Life" in Jacob Dahl Rendtorff (ed.): *Power and Principle in the Market Place. On Ethics and Economics*, Ashgate, London 2010, pp. 169–178.

In the three-volume *Philosophie politique* (1984–1991), *Homo eestheticus: l'invention du gout à l'âge démocratique* (1990), and *Le nouvel ordre écologique* (1992), Ferry proposes an attempt to develop a modern humanism of human rights based on Enlightenment ideas of the self-reflective and autonomous subject as a criticism of positivism, historicism, and postmodernism. This is a defense of the contractual liberal and republican political philosophy as presented by Rousseau, Kant, and Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814). Law and justice must be founded on an intersubjective rationality and aesthetic sense of community that is also the basis for the relation between human beings and nature.

In addition to helping Ferry in writing his work about political philosophy, Renaut has also worked on a number of books that argue for re-establishing the concept of the subject in recent philosophy. Renaut discusses human rights in one volume of *Philosophie politique*, with the title *Des droits de l'homme à l'idée republicaine* (1985). He develops his defense of modern natural law in a book about Fichte's philosophy: *Le Système de droit: philosophie et droit dans la pensée de Fichte* (1986), which establishes Fichte's concept of natural law as the foundation for the establishment of modern democracy. In *L'Ère de l'individu: contribution à une histoire de la subjectivité* (1989), Renaut argues for a humanistic respect for the subject in times of individualization. He wants to re-establish the perspective of the philosophy of the subject that has been criticized by structuralist and poststructuralist traditions.

In *La Pensée 68: essai sur l'antihumanisme contemporain*, Ferry and Renaut launch a strong attack against the socalled antihumanistic movements in French philosophy following 1968. This polemical book tries to give a picture of the philosophical thought behind 1968. It takes its starting point in a criticism of consumer society and totalitarianism and can be said to attack the dialectics of the Enlightenment, where reason becomes technical rationality.[45]

The focus point of the philosophy of 1968 is the death of the philosophy of the subject. This is based on readings of the philosophy of Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger, and their roles in the thought of poststructuralists like Lacan, Bourdieu, Deleuze, Lyotard, and Althusser, who are mentioned as the ideologists of the philosophy of 1968. They approach the metaphysical concept of the human being is dead and disposing of metaphysical humanism in philosophy. Instead of the subject, Ferry and Renaut speak about individualism. Instead of humanism, they refer to antihumanism as liberating; however, they tend to forget, as Rousseau says, that natural freedom is not the same a moral freedom.[46]

Ferry and Renaut are primarily worried about the consequences for the political community of 1968 style thinking, which they conceive as basically antidemocratic. In making their case they refer to Lefort, who argued that totalitarian society dissolves the subject. It is even worse that the philosophy of 68 argues that

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[45] Luc Ferry & Alain Renaut: *La pensée 68. Essai sur l'antihumanisme contemporain*, (1982) Paris, Folio Essai, Gallimard 1988, p. 17ff.

[46] Ibid., p. 29.

philosophy has ended rational thought. This is a radical relativism that conceives all interpretations as perspectives, and understands truth, in the Heideggerian sense, as revelation of what is visible and invisible (*atletheia*).

In addition, the world is historicized in a genealogical perspective of power, where moral and rational universals no longer exist. Althusser's description of the philosopher as a petit bourgeois intellectual is an example of how philosophers of 1968 cannot overcome historical determination. When psychoanalysts refer to an economy of desire, and the voice of the Other as determinant for meaning, it destroys the rationality of the subject. The philosophy of 1968 was determined by a paranoid search for the marginality in a revolt against a misunderstood political, technical, and rationalistic betrayal.[47] This is one of the reasons why thinkers like Althusser, Derrida, and Foucault (according to Ferry and Renaut) want to do anything to avoid philosophical clarity and rationality.

In a discussion of the different interpretations of the events from 1968, Ferry and Renaut mention Aron's *La révolution introuvable*.[48] In opposition to the philosophers of 1968, Aron understands the impact of the crisis of 1968 on parliamentary democracy. Aron considered the crisis as a political one that had unforeseeable consequences for French society and even implied a totalitarian development. The philosophers of 1968 behaved irresponsibly because they would not accept the technical and economic realities of society, and their nihilism contributed to undermining the state.[49]

In order to save republican democracy, Ferry and Renaut want to totally depart from the doubtful radicalization of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Marx, and Freud by the philosophers of 1968. They want to formulate a philosophy of the subject that does not fall with the criticism of metaphysics. They refuse to understand the subject as an unconscious machine of desire, but at the same time, they are aware of the problem of the metaphysical conception of the subject as autonomous that has sovereign decision making over itself and the world.[50]

Instead of substituting humanistic metaphysics with a Marxist and Heideggerian antihumanism, Ferry and Renaut ask the question about what is left of deconstruction understood as a revolt against the Cartesian cogito, and against the representation of the world through an absolute (theoretical) subject that has mastery over the world. This also implies a revolt against the subject defined as will to power over being, as described by Nietzsche and Heidegger.

Ferry and Renaut argue for such a nonmetaphysical human by interpreting the relation between Kant and Heidegger. They argue that Heidegger, in *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* (1929), develops his existential analytics out of Kant's transcendental philosophy.[51] In reality, "being there" (*dasein*) expresses

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[47] Ibid., p. 53.

[48] Ibid., p. 117.

[49] Ibid., pp. 118–119.

[50] Ibid., p. 316.

[51] Ibid., p. 327.

a temporalization of Kant's categorization in a theory of human historicity and temporality. But this means that Heidegger goes too far, because in his will to revolt against metaphysics he changes transcendental philosophy into historicism.

Instead of going through with this temporalization, Ferry and Renaut argue that the Kantian subject should neither be understood as metaphysics, nor as an empirical subject. Moreover, it does not give meaning to talk about the subject as isolated and separated from a concrete connection of action and meaning. Kant is aware of this in *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1794), where the philosophy of the subject is related to a concrete subject that has to apply judgment in an ethical political context of meaning.[52] In opposition to the philosophy of 1968, Ferry and Renaut want to maintain humanism through a defense of a minimalistic concept of the subject that is not master of being, but at the same time is something more than only a machine of desire.[53]

Ferry and Renaut's defense of human rights is based on a modern conception that moves beyond classical political philosophy. They want to defend a modern liberalist position of the political order as based on a social contract.[54] In opposition to Leo Strauss, who considered modernity as the crisis of natural law, and Heidegger, who conceived of it as the domination of nature and society by technology, they argue for a modern rationalist concept of natural law based on the free and self-conscious human being in opposition to classical cosmology and natural law. The main themes of their political philosophy are the relation between democracy and metaphysics, the conception of human beings, and the definition of practical reason.

In Ferry's *Philosophie politique 1* (1984), he discusses the problems of the classical concept of natural law.[55] Classical natural law is determined by lack of equality and the problematic concept of nature, as related to a cosmic order, as the basis for moral principles.[56] In opposition to classical natural law, Ferry and Renaut refer to the concepts of justice and judgment by Kant and Fichte, where the political community is based on a legitimate social contract, based on the public space of intersubjectivity, critical reason, personal responsibility, and subjective freedom. Like Fichte, Ferry and Renaut want to base modern natural law on a phenomenology of intersubjectivity by developing Kant's project in *Kritik der Urteilskraft* in order to conceptualize intersubjective rationality in judgments of opinion and taste, and to use this analysis to understand political judgment. Fichte's *Grundlage des Naturrechts* (1796–1797) is, accordingly, a continuation of Kant's intersubjective program for the foundation of philosophy.[57] Law is based on an intersubjective

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[52] Ibid., p. 333.

[53] Ibid., p. 338.

[54] Ferry, Luc og Renaut, Alain: *Philosophie Politique 1–3*, P.U.F., Paris 1984–1991.

[55] Ibid., Tôme 1.

[56] Ibid., Tôme 2.

[57] Ferry, Luc og Renaut, Alain: *Philosophie Politique 1–3*, P.U.F., Paris 1984–1991 (Tôme 2).

social contract that is different from ethics and politics. It creates a republican constitution that is based on intersubjective rationality of the members of community.

According to Ferry and Renaut, Fichte's concept of rationality, critique of metaphysics, and reflective judgment can be understood as a legal interpretation of the Kantian notion of *sensus communis*. Ferry and Renaut think that this does not lead to subjectivism and historicism, because it is based on a common understanding of what is legally right and wrong, and a fundamental feeling of sympathy for other human beings (*sentiment de l'humanité*). According to Ferry and Renaut, Fichte understands history as a movement towards perfectibility and civilization. With the help of judgment, laws and legal rules are continuously reformed in a horizon of expectation and process of interpretation, with the regulative ideas of reason and critical philosophy as foundational for this movement.

In his later work, *Le nouvel ordre ecologique* (1992), Ferry confronts this humanism of the Enlightenment with the new ecological movements. He wants to describe the connection between a modern foundation of natural law and the ecological conception of nature, in order to maintain a humanistic anthropocentrism within liberalism, without letting human beings be totally dissolved into nature. While classical political philosophy considers the legal organization of human beings from the point of view of a higher natural order, Ferry tries to distinguish human legal community from the nature as such.

Ferry argues that human relations to nature can only be justified on the basis of an intersubjective rationality and aesthetic sensibility, and not from a cosmic necessity. He wants to maintain a humanistic anthropocentrism without giving animals and nature special inviolable rights. But at the same time, he is critical in relation to the conception of free-floating subjectivity that dominates over nature. Ferry's project is to develop a hybrid model between human beings and nature where sensibility and aesthetic education make human beings part of nature. Ferry wants to use the humanism of freedom and aesthetic education to argue for a natural sensibility as the solution of the relation of human beings to nature. This is in contrast to the opposition between domination of nature (in the light of a pragmatic ethics of sustainability) and the modern deep ecology movement, which criticizes humanism and Enlightenment philosophy.

This implies a criticism of a holistic cosmological vitalism as the basis for a philosophy of nature where human beings, animals, and plants are considered as beings on an equal scale. Ferry is, however, also critical of the metaphysical humanism that, following Cartesian subject-object relations, leads to tyrannical domination of nature. He is rather inspired by Rousseau, who spoke about a sensible cogito, that is open and receptive to the environment.[58] Human beings are not masters of nature, but nature is a part of the human liberal process of civilization where free and autonomous citizens deliberate about ecological problems, protection of the environment, and the beauty and esthetics of nature.

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[58] Luc Ferry: *Le nouvel ordre écologique*, Grasset, Paris 1992.

Ferry and Renaut's modern naturalism is an important criticism of the philosophy of 1968, which led to the re-establishment of the historical liberal tradition of political philosophy and its ideals of freedom and equality. In particular, for business ethics and conceiving of liberal economic markets, this humanism of justice and rationality is important to justify the capitalist organization of the economy. In fact, the liberal and republican defense of democracy and its free economic market structures has also been promoted in France through discussions of the history and theory of liberalism.

9.7   Consequences of the Liberal Tradition for Business Ethics and Philosophy of Management

The liberal and republican tradition of political philosophy provides a basis for developing a democratic and republican business ethics and philosophy of management. We can say that the defense of liberal, republican democracy provides the foundations of business ethics in a market economy, where the corporation follows its social responsibility towards the state and society. The framework suggested by Aron would include a corporation that follows basic democratic principles and considers its social responsibility as relevant to society. Aron's concepts of strategy, recognition, and prudence in political action and in international relations are also ideas that have important impact on business ethics and philosophy of management.

In connection with, Casotriadis's criticism of bureaucracy and imaginary institutionalism provides an important approach to philosophy of management. It can serve as the basis for a different kind of institutionalism, of philosophy of management, and the concept of the imaginary introduces a new conception of organization and imagination that provides a basis for a creative development of business ethics.

Indeed, Ferry and Renaut contribute with a foundation of business ethics in Kantianism and German idealism. As contemporary defenders of the liberal and republican tradition, who have defended a concept of political theory as a criticism of the thought of 1968, their philosophy would also suggest corporate citizenship and the concept of republican responsibility of the corporation as essential to business ethics.

A democratic political basis for regulating the business corporation can be found within the liberal and republican traditions of political philosophy. A business corporation should consider itself as a good citizen of society and contribute to the common good. The liberal and republican traditions thus provide us with foundations for democratizing the corporation. As an institution, a corporation must have social responsibility as a good citizen in society.

In addition to these approaches there has been a growing interest of French philosophy in the resources in Anglo-American philosophy, for example Hayek and Rawls. In this context, we can mention authors who follow Aron in introducing classical liberal theory, like Rousseau and Tocqueville, to contemporary

philosophy. In this context, we can indeed also mention Catherine Audard as a Rawls specialist who applies this tradition to the context of French philosophy. Finally, elements of rights thinking have emerged in recent French philosophy, for example, as Emmanuel Picavet (b. 1966) has proposed his book *De la revendication des droits*.[59] This tradition provides a liberal democratic framework for understanding organizational action and business ethics.

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[59] Emmanuel Picavet: *La Revendication des droits. Une étude de l'équilibre des raisons dans le libéralisme*, Classiques Garnier, Paris 2011.

Chapter 10
Poststructuralist Sociology and the New Spirit of Capitalism: Bourdieu and Boltanski

The tradition of sociology in French social theory goes back to Durkheim and Tarde. Durkheim was particularly influential, and his approach was followed by Gurvitz, who took over the chair of sociology at the Sorbonne. He was also followed by Aron as professor of sociology at the Sorbonne, along with Bourdieu, who later became professor at Collège de France and is one of his important followers. Boltanski worked together with Bourdieu before he, too, became a full professor. In this sense, there is a close connection between the major figures of sociology and French social theory that followed Durkheim.

The followers of Tarde also deserve mention. In fact, it was only recently that Tarde's works were discovered, due mainly to Latour, who has made most of his career in an Anglo-Saxon context, but who claims to belong to the classical French tradition of sociology. Latour combined sociology, and science and technology studies, and was also inspired by the tradition of French epistemological thought and science.[1] Latour combined sociology and the epistemological theory of sciences from the epistemologist Gaston Bachelard, and the medical biologist, Georges Canguilhem, in order to develop a social constructivist social theory. Latour argues that we have never been modern in the sense that it is impossible to imagine a science that can be external to the object that it describes.[2] Latour was also inspired by the complexity sociology of Morin and the cybernetics of governance in the work of Serres. Latour has recently done a lot of work in developing a theory of organization out of combining the insights of the natural and social sciences.[3] Therefore we should not call the natural sciences pure sciences, but

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[1] Bruno Latour: *Pasteur. Bataille contre les microbes*, Paris, Nathan, "Poche-Nathan. Monde en poche", 1985; Bruno Latour: *La Science en action*, traduit de l'anglais par Michel Biezunski; texte révisé par l'auteur, Paris, La Découverte, "Textes à l'appui. Série Anthropologie des sciences et des techniques", 1989.

[2] Mathieu Hauchecorne: Les humanités scientifiques selon Bruno Latour, in *Bruno Latour ou la pluralité des mondes*, *Critique*, Novembre 2012, p. 942.

[3] Bruno Latour: *Reassembling the social. An introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, Oxford, OUP, 2005; trad. *Changer de société. Refaire de la sociologie*, Paris, La Découverte, "Armillaire", 2005.

rather consider them as "scientific humanities" where the foundation of science is a social ontology. Latour provides us with a new perspective on the sociology of organizations that gives us a new constructivist perspective on organizations that can help to reformulate our concept of business ethics.

The following will, however, focus on the contributions of Bourdieu, Boltanski, and their colleagues in relation to the possibility of finding concepts and theories in sociology and social theory that can be applied to the understanding of the basis of philosophy of management and business ethics in sociology and social theory.

10.1   Pierre Bourdieu: Sociology of Praxis and Intentional Structure

Bourdieu proposed a very important poststructuralist sociology that combines elements from Sartre's existential Marxism and the structuralist anthropology of Lévi-Strauss. Bourdieu was particularly interested in social reproduction in society and the constitutions of class distinctions. Bourdieu was himself the son of a poor farmer and did not come from an academic tradition; however, due to his intelligence, he passed the relevant exams to go to École normale supérieure and later on to a distinguished career as professor at École des hautes études en sciences sociales and Collège de France.

Bourdieu's contribution to business ethics and philosophy of management is the development of fundamental concepts for understanding the structural and institutional foundations of economic interaction. With this approach, Bourdieu helped to define basic concepts like social capital, organization, institution, action, and intentionality that are integrated into a theory social practice and structure. Bourdieu refers to a social embeddedness, or a basic constitution, in social fields of the economy, where economic interaction is socially constructed on the basis of the symbolic constitution of society.[4]

In this sense, it is true to say that Bourdieu was a pure product of the republican education system, which is, in theory, meritocratic.[5] Bourdieu started in the anthropological tradition and as a professor at the faculty of social sciences in Alger he studied the system of honor and the social structures of the local Arab people, the Kabyles. In particular, he looked at the system of Arab marriage and related logic of honor.[6] This study was the basis for *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique* (1972), where Bourdieu develops general elements of a social theory on the basis of his anthropological studies. Later, he developed this into a general theory of social

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[4] Jens Beckert: "Die sittliche Einbettung der Wirtschaft. Von der Effizienz- und Differenzierungstheorie zu einer Theorie wirtschaftlicher Felder", *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* (2012) 22:247–266, pp. 161–162.

[5] Pierre Mounier: *Pierre Bourdieu, une introduction*, Pocket, La decouverte, Paris 2001.

[6] Ibid., p. 29.

practice in his major work, *Le sens pratique* (1980). In these two works, Bourdieu uses the phenomenological and existential approach in Sartre's dialectical Marxism to criticize structural anthropology that neglects the importance of individual action and temporality. Social action emerges in social fields where individuals incorporate structures as the basis for individual action and personal habitus.

With his theory of habitus and social fields that create action, Bourdieu also develops a theory of power and domination. It is, in fact, in the social field of exchange and social struggles, based on the logic of the gift, that concepts of class, distinction, and social difference emerge as a logic of distinction in society. This theory of social exchange, praxis, power, and domination becomes the foundation of Bourdieu's many concrete social analyses of different social fields, for example, reproduction of the educational system, creation of cultural and social distinctions, and the specific social fields of art or economics.

Accordingly, in *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique* and *Le sens pratique*, Bourdieu conceptually develops his theoretical product. In his social theory, Bourdieu tries to unite hermeneutics and structural explanations through the idea of the formation of the body and cultural practice with the concept of practical sense. In addition, Bourdieu integrates a philosophy of the gift in order to conceive the foundations of the practical logic of intersubjectivity. The theory that emerges tries to unite practical sense, individual capacity for action, and general social sense, as the basis for his theory of society.

With this work, Bourdieu proposes a critique of the French tradition of ethnology and anthropology. In particular, he criticizes anthropological structuralism from Saussure and Lévi-Strauss as being captured in an objectivist illusion based on structural universal laws. It is the presupposition of structural anthropology that society can be explained by structuralism, and that it is not necessary to refer to individual and collective action outside the reference to structure. Bourdieu does not agree with the structuralist attempt to explain society and social action exclusively from the perspective of objective structures. Indeed, it is a problem to refer to objective knowledge because the social observer is always implied in the phenomena that he or she observes, and the observer also reflects a practice or social logic. Accordingly, there is no epistemological innocence in structuralism and objectivist thought needs to be aware of its own presuppositions.[7] In fact, the position of the observer in relation to the observed implies in itself a practical logic that should be analyzed in order to understand the interaction between the social scientist and the object.

Bourdieu does not agree with the structuralist distinction between *langue* and *parole*, according to which *langue* conceives the fundamental structures, while *parole* signifies the event and the sensible surface of language. This distinction makes a break between the sensible and the real. In fact, the problem with the distinction between structure and surface is that it makes it impossible for thought to conceive contingency, infinity, and the temporality that is at work in practical

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[7] Pierre Bourdieu: *Le sens pratique*, Editions de Minuit, Paris 1980, p. 57.

logic.[8] The problem is that structuralism cannot conceive intentional action, and it cannot conceive of innovation and change as something that goes beyond universal structures. Moreover, structuralism seems to make structures exist, as such, without being able to see that structures, like family relations, only exist as far as they are enacted by human agents.[9] In other words, human intentionality produces structural significance. Accordingly, structuralism describes unconscious mechanical structures as determinant of the social world that appear as logical relations instead of human practical relations.

Following Merleau-Ponty, Bourdieu argues that thought and expression are constituted simultaneously.[10] This means that Bourdieu opposes philosophical hermeneutics against structural explanation. In order to give meaning to human action, we presuppose intentional action, and understand that social structure emerges as a part of human intentional practices. Structure should be considered as based on intentional practice and determined by variable social norms that are more or less institutionalized. Every structure depends on social practice, that is, economic structures of division of work, gift relations, or ritual structures of social symbols. Structural regularity is not dependent on mechanical or natural regularity, but on a social practice, in the sense that structures never have existence on their own, independent of their social agents.

In this way, a scientific sociology should be aware of the cultural dependence of practical reason, and how scientific research is, in itself, a kind of ethnological practice.[11] Through awareness of its own presuppositions, it is the aim of ethnology to conduct scientific analysis of the practical sense that works as the foundation of a specific culture. Practical sense emerges as the internalized dispositions that are necessary for an individual to take part in a social praxis.[12] Structures are not independent of people who carry them, but are integrated in the cultural totality. Meaningful action is simultaneously structure and event, and Bordieu refers to a dialectics of social structures to describe this intersection.[13] Structures are based on the social praxis and dependent on the social logic, and the structures of the social praxis do not exist independently of the social intentionality of the individuals taking part in it. Structures emerge as a part of the collective of social action in a social intentional praxis. Bourdieu proposes an ethnological methodology that overcomes the opposition between phenomenology and structuralism, which can be characterized as self-reflexive sociological hermeneutics that analyzes the intentional structures of social praxis as aware of its own sociological presuppositions.

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[8] Ibid., p. 55.

[9] Ibid., p. 60.

[10] Ibid., p. 62.

[11] Pierre Bourdieu: *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique*, Précédé de Trois études d'ethnologie kabyle, Droz, Paris 1972, p. 106.

[12] Ibid., p. 47.

[13] Ibid., p. 70.

Bourdieu does not want to give up the notion of the individual in his conceptualization of a social and practical logic. Inspired by Sartre's philosophy, Bourdieu defends the importance of individual subjective action as a criticism of the structuralist approach. The intentionality of the subject is always possible as a way to get out of the structure and to act otherwise than established social structures. This is inspired by Sartre's reflections about the relations between subjectivity and social logic in *Critique de la raison dialectique*. Here, Sartre tries to reflect on the relation between subjectivity and the social world, and on the relation between the pratico-inert and the seriality in the social world. What is practico-inert represents the objective world, the being of class, or group, where the subject is taking part as an element in a collectivity.

However, according to Sartre and Bourdieu, it is important to remember that every social life may be founded on free human intentional practice, where social change implies a negation of specific practice fields and social structures. Accordingly, even if the subject is strongly determined by social structure, and acts most of the time in accordance with it, there is always a potential possibility of transcending social structure through individual intentionality. While Sartre seems to emphasize this possible revolution through the negation of social structure, Bourdieu emphasizes the determination of the individual through the practical inertia of the social structure, and he thinks that structure is a very strong determining element of individual action.

Even if structure cannot be interpreted as objective and transcendental without subjectivity, it can be presented as an essential element of human life. This role in human life as a kind of facticity of the situation is what Bourdieu defines as *habitus*, that is, a social habit determining individual action. In this way, habitus is a part of practical logic and constitutes an essential aspect of this logic, because it forms and conditions the worldview of individuals. We can say that, according to Bourdieu, the concept of habitus defines the rule, the norm, the expectation, and the ethos of the practical logic. It conditions the stability of structure, even though in principle it should be possible for the individual to reflexively transcend habitus and relate critically to his or her own participation in a social structure and field of practice.

We should not interpret habitus in a objectifying way, as though it was constituted outside the individual and the group. Habitus is presented in the group, and it is incarnated in the individual, without existing outside the appropriation of the habitus by the individual. Accordingly, habitus is part of the historical praxis and of the rules that condition the community.[14]

Bourdieu defines habitus as a system of durable and transmissible dispositions, that is, structured principles that determine praxis and practical action, as well as the objective representations of this action. Habitus is the basis for the structures and more or less informal rules that organize individual and collective action. Habitus regulates action without being a conscious agent of this action: "collectivement orchestrées sans être le produit de l'action organisatrice d'un chef d'orchestre."[15]

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[14] Ibid., p. 188.

[15] Pierre Bourdieu: *Le sens pratique*, Editions de Minuit, Paris 1980, p. 84.

Habitus is, in this way, defined as the dispositions that structure and organize the individual and collective action of the human sociality. Habitus precedes the structure of the collective at the same time as it is a part of the structure. There is also an unconscious element of habitus that is determined by a not fully conscious and intuitive intentionality of the group, which Bourdieu expresses with the idea that there is no chief of the orchestra that organizes the action of the group. We can say that a group produces intentionally, but not fully in transparent social structures, norms, or laws that constitute its social life. As such, the objective dispositions of habitus are incorporated in the worldview of the individual that is produced as a part of class or historical community.

Bourdieu argues that habitus incorporates and internalizes common sense.[16] Behavior in relation to common sense is based on specific social norms that are not determined by the conscious subjectivity of the individual; rather, common sense is presented as an unconscious spontaneity that seems to act without consciousness or will.[17] Here, we see an attempt to conceive the practical logic while still keeping a conception of individualized subjectivity as the foundation of the role of the individual in social life. Habitus emerges as the totality of subjective dispositions of actions of the individual that are part of a specific cultural logic and that have no existence independent of its incorporation of the individuals living the structures.

With this idea of habitus and the logic of practice, Bourdieu proposes a theory of institutions because he argues that an institution is defined by this incarnation of the practical logic in the incorporation in the bodies of the individuals in the social practice. The institution has been incorporated in things and agents in a particular social field, but also in the body. Accordingly, it must be incarnated in the transcendental logic regulating individual action in a particular field and in the dispositions of individual action.[18]

10.2   Habitus and the Social Structures of the Economy

Habitus is an immanent law that is inscribed in particular individuals and determines their actions in social life. It regulates the individual, and in this way is a disposition for meaningful action that is incorporated in each individual. This disposition conditions the participation of an individual in common culture, in the sense that the cultural exteriority is internalized in the individual, so that habitus becomes a system of stable and structured dispositions.[19] It is supposed to function

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[16] Ibid., p. 93.

[17] Ibid., p. 95.

[18] Pierre Bourdieu: *Le sens pratique*, Editions de Minuit, Paris 1980, p. 97.

[19] Pierre Bourdieu: *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique*, Précédé de Trois études d'ethnologie kabyle, Droz, Paris 1972, p. 175.

by structuring structures, which appear as principles of an unconscious ethos that determines social action in community. Habitus is what constitutes the structure of social regularity, while at the same being the basis for a collective change and installation of new practices in collective structures. It is incarnated as the coordination between collective and individual action in an historical context.[20] The idea is that the social structures present themselves in the habitus, which is the basis for forming dialectical relations between the incorporated social structure and the constitutive conditions of habitus.[21]

On this basis, Bourdieu argues that the practical sense conditioning the significative action of the individual is determined by the dispositions of the habitus, in the sense that the practical sense is a quasicorporeal relation to the world.[22] Practical sense can be considered as an intuitive ability to nearly unconsciously deliberate about the actions of the individual. We see how Bourdieu defines habitus and practical sense with reference to concepts of deliberation and practical reason by reinterpreting these conceptions from the framework of a philosophy of corporeal intentionality, inspired by Merleau-Ponty. The deliberation of practical sense happens in accordance with the practical logic of sociality that conditions human intentionality.[23] These bodily dispositions for action and affection are determined by the practical logic of community, and they are institutionalized as a specific logic of this community according to which the culture incorporates itself in the individual.

Communities of people, as individual bodily incarnations, organize their ethics as the practical sense determined by the being of their bodies, according to which the norms of community are learned. Bourdieu talks about a corporeal mimesis that forms the art of living of the community.[24] The logic of praxis constitutes a mimetic representation of the rules of society of community that are incorporated in the formation of the individuality of the subject.[25] This practical logic is formed on a totality of structurally determined habitus, disposition, body, incorporation, and practical sense, which constitute the culture of a specific society.

Bourdieu is inspired by the sociology of the gift when he conceives intersubjectivity in the social logic of the practical sense of society. In every society, the gift is conceived as an essential figure of intersubjectivity. Bourdieu argues that the logic of giving and receiving, and giving back, is essential in the practical logic of the field of society. This kind of exchange is presented on different levels of society: in the family, civil society, the economy, in the reproduction of society, et cetera. In particular, the gift is at work in the development of social distinctions, as described

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[20] Ibid., p. 185.

[21] Ibid., p. 187.

[22] Pierre Bourdieu: *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique*, Précédé de Trois études d'ethnologie kabyle, Droz, Paris 1972, p. 111.

[23] Ibid., p. 115.

[24] Ibid., p. 129.

[25] Ibid., p. 154.

by Bourdieu in the later work *La distinction*, but the concepts are already an important part of the definition of the logic of practice. He argues that work and the gift of work constitute accumulation of capital and also of symbolic capital in society. Indeed, the concept of symbolic capital signifies the accumulation of the gift and intimate connection between gift and capital in the social context.

In modern society the gift has become the gift of exchange, and the concept of economic capital has replaced the original concept of the gift, where it is only symbolic capital that is important in the gift. Bourdieu argues that when we consider the gift in contemporary social relations there is still both economic capital and symbolic capital, and even today the gift cannot be reduced to economic exchange. The gift of work for money is one form of capital, but there is also social capital and cultural capital. Bourdieu develops a theory of the gift for different forms of capital and their possible accumulation in society, which constitute different elements of the logic of praxis. These different forms of gift and exchange relations are constitutive of social relations, and they contribute to the formation of the logic of praxis beyond the logic of exchange.

On the basis of his general sociological concepts, Bourdieu has proposed an analysis of the social structures of the economy in *Les structures sociales de l'économie* (2000).[26] Analyzing of development of the French housing market, Bourdieu wants to show how the concepts of Karl Polanyi (1886–1964) and Marc Granovetter's (b. 1943) institutional economic sociology can be combined with his own sociology of habitus and practical field (*champ pratique*). Bourdieu is critical towards the neoclassical and neoliberal concepts of rational economic action as separated from social action. He is also critical towards Gary Becker's (b. 1930) conceptualization of human capital and of rational theory of capital calculation as suggested in the theory of rational social action by James Coleman (1926–1995). Bourdieu argues that the conception of economics as rational abstract calculation must be seen as the basis of social structures and fields of habitus. The capitalist society is built on the dream of rational calculation of economic action, but in reality, the purely economic rationality of homo oeconomicus depends on social structure in a practical field of social reality.[27]

According to this approach to economics, we should see economic rationality as formalization in relation to social action. The economy constitutes itself with objectivity in a separate universe, with its own laws of calculated interest and of limitless competition for profit. In this sense, economic action emerges as an economic practice field and economic cosmos through social action as an independent concept of economic rationality. This is the basis for what Bourdieu calls an ethos and a moral vision of economics and a common sense of economics (*sens commun économique*) that constitute the particular social and cognitive structures of economics.[28] In contrast to the neoliberal idea of the economy as constituted

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[26] Pierre Bourdieu: *Les structures sociales de l'économie*, Le Seuil, Paris 2000.

[27] Ibid., p. 18.

[28] Ibid., p. 23.

through free exchange according to economic rationality on separate economic markets, Bourdieu emphasizes the role of the state in the constitution of the economic market. The economic field is inhabited by the state through its monopoly of violence, so that the it has strong decisive power over the formation of the economic structures emerging out of the social.[29]

This theory of the importance of the state for the institutional and social structure of the economic market joins the republican political philosophy of Aron and his followers, and it manifests an important difference between the foundations of business ethics and philosophy of management in France in comparison with the Anglo-Saxon liberal theory that defends a liberal conception of the economic market. With Bourdieu, we find an argument for a much broader foundation of business ethics and philosophy of management, because this cannot be understood without an interpretation of business in relation to the political economy of the state.

In particular, when we look at the French housing market we see how the economic market is produced by the state. The market of individual houses is the product of a double social construction of demand and of the system of preferences, which is constituted through the governance and legislation of state interventions.[30] In this sense, an economic decision is not the result of the decision of an isolated economic agent, but emerges in a collective field constituted through the family, involved corporations, the state bureaucracy, and other involved individuals or organizations. For example, buying and selling a house is linked to the life cycle of families (being married, having children, becoming old) and the symbolism and mythologies that are linked to houses for the family. So the housing market, where corporations that build, buy, or sell houses are acting, is closely linked to the social structures of family life. Accordingly, the housing market is based on the orchestration of different practices and habitus structures of the involved actors in this field of action.[31]

Bourdieu describes the role of the state in the construction of the housing market. In the 1960s, a neoliberal tendency loosened the housing market. This was constructed through the use of laws of ownership, commercial law, work law, and the law of contracts. In this sense, the state contributed with a discourse about the market for houses. Moreover, a bureaucracy that could take care of this market was invented. However, at the same time there was a public policy with state institutions of housing so the market did not became fully liberated from state intervention.[32]

With this analysis, Bourdieu wants to show that economic action is not the result of a quasimechanical act, but is rather a social form where individual actors are engaged in acts of social exchange. The economic field is a social field where economic action is embedded in the historical and social institutions of this field.[33]

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[29] Ibid., p. 25.

[30] Ibid., p. 30.

[31] Ibid., p. 98.

[32] Ibid., p. 150.

[33] Ibid., p. 242.

Accordingly, markets are self-reproducing social structures that are based on the development of a particular habitus in a particular social field. Habitus breaks with a conception of independent rational action and shows how the individual is situated in the structures of the social field. In this way economic action is based on bounded rationality where rational action is dependent on a social field. Accordingly, economists of rational action, like Coleman and Jon Elster (b. 1940), must recognize that economic action is, in reality, an institutional and historical science.[34]

Accordingly, the economic field is constructed within the framework of the nation-state that shapes the economic field and other fields that it embraces.[35] Although states have opened for neoliberal liberalization and deregulation on the world financial market, they cannot avoid constructing and influencing the economic field of practice within their national institutional structures.[36] Bourdieu argues that liberalization of the world economy is not something unavoidable, but indeed dependent on the decisions of the nation-states and the development of their national policies.[37]

10.3   The Economic Sociology of Late Capitalism: Luc Boltanski

Together with his colleagues, Laurent Thévenot (b. 1949) and Eve Chiapello (b. 1965), Boltanski has written two books on the economic sociology of late capitalist society: *De la justification: les economies de la grandeur* (1991) with the economist Thévenot from the Paris convention school, and *Le Nouvel esprit du capitalism* (1996) with Chiapello. Together these books propose an economic sociology and analysis of the ethics of capitalism, and as such they are essential as a theoretical framework for business ethics and philosophy of management.[38]

This approach presents an analysis of the foundations for social and ethical business. The theory of economic sociology of late capitalism contributes to business ethics by clarifying orders of worth, spirits or ideologies of capitalism, and the values of business ethics. In this sense, Chiapello and Boltanski contribute to the clarification of the normative foundations of a new age of responsibilization.[39]

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[34] Ibid., p. 266.

[35] Roger Friedland: "The Endless Fields of Pierre Bourdieu", *Organization* 2009 16:887.

[36] Pierre Bourdieu: *Les structures sociales de l' économie*, Le Seuil, Paris 2000, p. 275.

[37] Ibid., p. 276.

[38] An earlier version of this chapter has been published as Jacob Dahl Rendtorff: "The economic sociology of late capitalism: The Contributions from Boltanski, Thévenot and Chiapello" *Nordicuum-Mediterraneum*, Volume 7, no. 3 (2012).

[39] Ronen Shamir (2008): "The age of responsibilization: on marketembedded morality", *Economy and Society*, 37:1, pp. 1–19.

De la justification should be considered in the context of the French and American discussion of the concept of justice in relation to political philosophy from the middle of the 1980s. This book focuses on describing the different spheres of justification of society in order to understand the private market economy. The central problem is how people justify their actions within different social contexts. The authors argue that modern societies consist of multiple orders of worth and justification that follow different values and norms. The multiple orders (i.e., civic, market, inspired, fame, industrial, and domestic) coexist together in society and are often confronted with each other in social conflicts. In that case, the values are tested in accordance with a superior principle of worth that refers to the common good in society. However, the compromises established between specific values in social spheres and the superior principle of the good are often fragile.

In this way, the book proposes a program for economic justice inspired by the discussion between liberalism and communitarianism, in particular between Rawls, the liberal political philosopher and Michael Walzer, the communitarian political theorist who wrote the book *Spheres of Justice* (1984).[40] Inspired by communitarianism, Boltanski and Thévenot propose a defense of a pluralist conception of the economy, social value, and justice in society. Justice emerges through the integration of different values and justice spheres that consist of different worlds, with different requirements for justification. Accordingly, there is always a kind of moral agreement behind economic action, as Adam Smith had already suggested when he defended the position that we have to face the importance of the moral feelings of the actors for economic exchange. In this sense, the position of the convention school, as suggested by Boltanski and Thévenot, can be said to combine the economic sociology of Durkheim with a communitarian conception of the moral economy.[41]

Their book presents the need for a situation-based social science as an accomplishment of statistical economy. This social science should take into account the role of anthropology, individual action, and socioprofessional categories for the formation of codes and conventions in the social field. The argument is that research on justice refers to a generalized form of justification that is mediated through individual action in the economy.[42] We need to refer to a form of generality that goes beyond the individualism of neoliberal economics.

This kind of generality is found in political philosophy. Boltanski and Thévenot examine the tradition of political philosophy and its implied conceptions of agreement in relation to the model of the city (*la cité*) and of the common good.[43] Accordingly, they analyze different conceptions of the common good (*bien commun*) in political philosophy. This can be determined as different spheres,

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[40] Michael Walzer: *Spheres of Justice*, Basic Books, New York 1984.

[41] Luc Boltanski et Laurant Thévenot: *De la justification. Les economies de la grandeur*, Gallimard, Paris 1991, p. 33.

[42] Ibid., p. 26.

[43] Ibid., p. 34.

systems, orders, fields, or worlds of justification with final reference to a common good. The reference to such generalized forms of justification is particularly important in situations of disagreement and dispute.[44] Indeed, it is also important in situations of compromise where an agreement between different orders of justification is needed.

This kind of justification can be explained in terms of political philosophy. Here, Boltanski and Thévenot are inspired by political philosophy in order to understand constructions of generalized norms and concepts of humanity, with reference to the common good on the market sphere.[45] Michael Walzer's project in *Spheres of Justice* serves particularly as a model in order to understand the different forms of justification with reference to a common good that is a stake in the different spheres of society.

In this sense, the book is about the conception of agreement and disagreement within different spheres and worlds of justification. The authors want to show that moral capacity is in the center of the economic exchange.[46] Smith's concepts of sympathy and the impartial spectator help to understand this moral dimension of the economy where there is reference to a superior good as a guiding legitimating force in economic exchange. In the words of Durkheim, there is a reference to a collective moral being of society. The common good of the economic market is determined by collective moral rules that represent participating individuals. The agreement of the market (accord) refers to a collective generality that is the basis for the justified economic action.

The justification in relation to a general normative order can, borrowing a term from Weber, be defined as legitimation.[47] According to Boltanski and Thévenot, the different forms of justification refer to a common principle of humanity.[48] The economy becomes a system of constraints that is limited by a common order of the city (*polis*, *cité*). In complex societies this common order is, however, differentiated into a plurality of justifications and different value spheres. In these different spheres internal concepts of justice are constitutions as applications of general principle of humanity.

Boltanski and Thévenot discuss the foundation of agreement in terms of political philosophy, citing the market city (*cité marchande*) as an example and with special reference to the conception of agreement in the theory of moral sentiments by Smith.[49] Smith proposes a conception of the city that is based on a market connection. In fact, according to Boltanski and Thévenot the original project of Smith was to propose a political philosophy and a concept of justice along the same lines that the *Theory of our Moral Sentiments* (1759) represents a proposal for a

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[44] Ibid., p. 26.

[45] Ibid., p. 27.

[46] Ibid., p. 42.

[47] Ibid., p. 54.

[48] Ibid., p. 55.

[49] Ibid., p. 60.

theory of jurisprudence. Accordingly, the identification of the market relation is based on a common identification of goods.[50] This concept goes back to the idea of the "just price" of Aquinas and Aristotle, where the common agreement (*communis aestimatio*) to the price was considered as the basis of exchange of goods and services at the economic market. Desire for profit at the market had the function of creating a balance between buyer and seller.[51] In the work of other philosophers, like Montesquieu and Hume, you can find the same idea that the market relation is based on a principle of a common social good of exchange. This principle is maintained by the concept of the impartial spectator who, according to Hume, is based on a common disposition of sympathy among human beings. This idea of sympathy is further developed by Smith as a common moral sense that serves as the basis for the idea of the impartial spectator. This idea is also found in the work of social theorists like Durkheim and George Herbert Mead (1863–1931), who worked with the idea of the generalized Other.[52]

On this basis, Boltanski and Thévenot analyze the idea of a justification of legitimate agreement according to a superior principle of the common good within different political philosophies. They propose a kind of structural analysis of texts of political philosophy, arguing that the text constructs a form of superiority that refers to the common good and universal validity by making a form of sacrifice to that superior good.[53] Accordingly, such a system of reference to a superior common good is essential to the texts of political philosophy. This is the case with the idea of a common humanity shared by all members of the city. A plurality of different concepts of the good can be held together by reference to the general superior principle of the good and of humanity. This is also a principle of political economy, where the market city is constituted by a common human dignity and humanity. In the political economy, individuals who disagree in market transactions are supposed to refer to this principle.

This idea of the greatness of common humanity is treated differently within the political community. Boltanski and Thévenot refer to the different orders as cities that are founded on different political philosophies. Firstly, we can mention the democratic illegitimacy of the principle as a eugenic principle of constructing better human beings. However, in different models of political philosophy we can see principle in different forms. Augustine spoke about the city of God where members unite because they respect the divine principle of infinite grace. The idea of the family that Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704) described as a *domestic city* that requires a certain worth as a superior unit is another expression of this. We can also mention the idea of the state as an incarnation of the person as kind of secular repetition of this idea within the modern nation state. Moreover, we can mention the concept of citizenship in republican political philosophy in the civic city that is

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[50] Ibid., p. 67.

[51] Ibid., p. 67.

[52] Ibid., p. 82.

[53] Ibid., p. 94.

marked by the same kind of logic of reference to a higher principle as the basis for political or social order (i.e., civic greatness as proposed by Rousseau). In the city of opinion, by contrast, the reference to a higher principle is constituted by formal or conventional elements, for example, the law or people who receive honor and fame in terms of civil recognition in society. Even in the industrial system, as described by Saint-Simon, worthy actions are justified by reference to a principle of common humanity. Even here, people justify the worth of their actions with reference to a superior principle of the common good.

On this basis, Boltanski and Thévenot describe the function of justification in particular situations.[54] This is also a plea for a more individualistic action-oriented social science that not only focuses on universal abstract law, but on individual *engagement*. The social sciences are faced with individual actors in concrete situations of justification, who face different logics of worth in different cities. Accordingly, for Clausewitz, the situation is a possibility for victory or defeat depending on prudence in the battlefield, while for Sartre the situation is entirely dependent on the interpretation of the actors in terms of their existential projects that determine their gaze and thus view of the situation.[55]

In the concrete situation, individuals are involved to prove their worth and obtain recognition. Here, the different cities emerge in a common world. It is in this particular existential situation that individuals make reference to different logics of justification according to the values of the different cities. Individuals are searching for justification of their actions ("engagés par des actes justifiables").[56] In this sense, the situation is a test of common humanity with reference to specific logics of justification.[57] It is the dignity of humanity in relation to common principles that are at stake in each world, or sphere of justification. We can mention common superior principles, states of greatness (worthiness), dignity of persons (real nature), a cast of subjects, objects, and dispositions, formulas of investments for an economy of worth, natural relations between beings, figures of an harmonious natural order, test models, forms of expression of judgment, forms of evidence, and states of satisfaction or destruction of the city world.[58]

10.4   Different Orders or Regimes of Worth

Each of the different worlds refers to a particular prudence that is especially expressed in the economics of the business organization. In the inspired world, it is creativity. In the domestic world, it is the logic of good human relations. In the

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[54] Ibid., p. 162.

[55] Ibid., p. 164.

[56] Ibid., p. 168.

[57] Ibid., p. 175.

[58] Ibid., pp. 179–181.

world of opinion, it is fame, marketing, and good public relations. In the civic world, it is the logic of social contracts and citizenship rights. In the market world, it is the logic of money, management, and business strategy that is important. In the industrial world, it is the logic of productivity in the modern enterprise that is the paradigmatic rationality.[59]

In each of these worlds, or regimes, of justification we find a deeper elaboration of these different elements of each order of justification[60]:

The world of inspiration and creativity is marked by a focus on individual creativity and originality, where worth is related to the creative accomplishments of the individual person, like a famous artist or writer. This world is one of creativity and originality, of the individual in contrast to mass society.

The domestic regime is not only present in family circles; it is a general logic of the family that can be applied to all spheres of society. Here, generation, tradition, and hierarchy are important. Indeed, the images of the superior and of the father, as well as tradition, are basic logics of this position. But the regime also contains all the logics and values of the family order.

The regime of opinion is the world of the logic of the present and of public opinion. It is the fame and dignity of human beings in public space. This world is also the world of communication and the regime of information in the society. Success is dependent on fame and recognition in public space.

The regime of the civic world refers to persons that are not human beings in the same sense as individuals in the family. We are faced with universal rights of persons, in a general sense. They are determined by abstract general principles of rights and laws in society. The sphere of justification refers to the logic of solidarity and respect in the welfare state.

The regime of the market world cannot be reduced to the economic world. It is also different from the industrial regime. It is the order of business and of buying and selling. It is the order of profit, as opposed to human dignity. This logic is not restricted to the market, but it is also unconsciously a part of personal identity.[61] It is also based on logic of competition and of commercial relations between individuals.

The regime of the industrial world is determined by industrial technical and scientific approaches. This regime is marked by the function of the enterprise according to an industrial logic. Here, it is logic of technical performance and of functionality that dominates. This paradigm is the regime of technical productivity and of standardization in relation to the factory.

Against this background, Boltanski and Thévenot discuss the criticisms of their proposed concept of different worlds of justification.

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[59] Ibid., pp. 186–199.

[60] Ibid., pp. 200–262.

[61] Ibid., p. 246.

First of all, there is the criticism of the immanent logic of each regime of justification from the outside. However, people can be in all worlds and regimes at the same time, so people within a regime can immanently apply the logics of another world to criticize this regime. This criticism is that a person is too occupied with the logic of one regime, in contrast to the rationality of another. A kind of critique of the paradigms would be to show how a certain behavior is nothing but market logic or technological.[62] It would be a revelation of the real logic behind a certain activity. This could lead to another perspective on a particular activity (*inversion du regard posant les valeurs*).[63]

Access to the logics of different worlds depends on the construction of the action in the situation (*agencement* in the sense of Deleuze). It is impossible to combine the different logics of justification, and the confrontation between the worlds can also result in a certain cynicism when one of the logics is preferred to the other. However, the fact that the construction of a world is submitted to the constraint of justification means that the rationality of the world is tested to the rationality of the other worlds, and finally also to the concept of justice that refers to principles of the common good, going beyond the specific worlds of justification.

Accordingly, Boltanski and Thévenot present some of the criticisms of each of the rationalities of each regime of justification from the point of view of the rationalities of the other spheres.

From the point of view of the domestic world, *the world of inspiration* can be criticized for going beyond habit and convention; leaving everything, creating a world of appearance, and making an inauthentic world theater. From the point of view of the civic world, it brakes with the state through its revolutionary attitude. From the point of view of the market logic, creativity is not economic and may be bad business. From the point of view of the industrial world, it breaks with the necessary routine and functionality of industrial production.

From the point of view of the world of inspiration, *the domestic world* can be criticized for its unreflective passivity. From the world of opinion, it is problematically pure appearance while not wanting to be a part of the public space; it cannot stay in the privacy of the family in a mediatized world. From the civic world, we see a criticism of the irresponsibility of the anonymous family man who does not want to take on his political and civic duty. From the market world, the family world is naïve because it ignores the commercialization of all human life. From the point of view of the industrial world, family product are old and bad, and family business is unprofessional.

The inspired world might criticize *the world of fame and opinion* for its lack of profundity and for the irresponsibility and inauthenticity of its stars and the newspapers. The family world would also be critical of this and challenge the lack of privacy in the world of opinion. The world of the market would argue that

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[62] Ibid., p. 276.
[63] Ibid., p. 277.

opinion has to be commercialized, and the industrial attitude would be critical toward the lack of objectivity in opinion.

From the inspired world, *the civic world* would be criticized for its lack of individualism and avant-gardism. From the point of view of the family world, the civic world make contracts out of relations of love and affection, and it does not respect the values of the family. Moreover, there is the danger of corruption of unions, in contrast to the values of the family. There is a potential tension between the paternalism of the family and the democratic values of the civic attitude. The world of opinion would emphasize the importance of debate in democracy, while the market world would see the civic world as economically inefficient, not respecting market individualism. The industrial world would be critical towards the dangers of bureaucratization of the civic world.

The market regime world argues that the inspired world could not be good for business because of lack of cold-blooded rationality in business transactions. To the domestic world, it would argue that the market should be liberated from personal relations and local custom. The family business ruins development of the market. Moreover, the opinion world is dangerous for good business transactions and investments. Celebrity and fame are not important for good business. Indeed, the civic world is not very productive, and democracy and justice can be expensive for business. The industrial worldview may imply rigid technocratic attitudes.

The industrial world argues that the improvisation of the inspired world is dangerous. Indeed, we are beyond the domestic world in modern industrial society. The bureaucracy of the civic world is supposed to be inefficient and social politics too costly. With reference to the market world, it would argue that luxury products only based on business profits are also too costly. Moreover, the market may be technologically inefficient if it is left to its own logic.

Boltanski and Thévenot argue that the confrontation between the world leads to different forms of compromise,[64] searching for a common good that goes beyond the logic of a specific order of worth. In the compromise, the actors refer to a specific vision of the common good. The compromises are very fragile. The moral philosophy of Durkheim and Saint-Simon contains conceptions of the common good that help us to understand the role of compromise between different orders of worth; for example, with Durkheim's industrial concept of organic solidarity and collective worth in relation to the civic philosophy of Rousseau.[65] Here, elements of civic and domestic orders of worth are introduced into the industrial order of the corporation.

Accordingly, Boltanski and Thévenot propose examining different figures of compromise.[66] Compromise of the world of inspiration with the domestic world may take the form of the master-pupil relation as a model of professional work relations. With the world of opinion, it is the cult of celebrity that is the

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[64] Ibid., p. 337.
[65] Ibid., p. 350.
[66] Ibid., pp. 357–407.

compromise. With the civic world, it is the rebel (*l'homme revolté*) who represents the compromise. With the business world, it is the creative market. With the technology world, it is creative technology.

Possible compromises with the domestic world involve good relations in the case of the world of opinion; with the civic world it involves good manners and common sense in administration; with business, promotion of trust in business; and with the industrial world, it refers to the importance of home knowledge, human resources, and the paternalistic responsibility of the corporate director.

Compromise between the world of opinion and the civic world involves respect for public opinion; with the business world, it involves promotion of the image of the brand; and with the industrial world, it involves strategic branding methods.

Compromise with the civic world and the business world seems impossible, although business ethics and corporate citizenship may be a possibility. With the industrial world, it is the respect for the rights of workers and the unions that express the compromise, as well as different methods to humanize work.

Possible compromise between the industrial world and the business world is based on the production of an industrial product that can easily be sold and combining a business and industrial attitude.

Boltanski and Thévenot emphasize that the mutual presupposition of the common good and a common humanity is necessary to create a foundation for compromise.[67] However, an attempt to escape from justification is the reference to relativism. We should also avoid the violence of justification, which should be based on mutual acceptance of the reference to the common good. Indeed, good compromise is a matter of sound reflective judgments.

Accordingly, we see how the project of Boltanski and Thévenot marks both a continuation of, a move far beyond, and a criticism of the sociology of Bourdieu, which was very dominant in the 1980s. With Bourdieu, the authors introduce a stronger concept of the individual actor than the one that was present in the structuralist approach to sociology.[68] Moreover, we see that the project is critical to the antinormative project of Bourdieu by focusing so much on the common good as essential to solving the problem of compromise.

Moreover, Boltanski and Thévenot are very normative when they say that different worldviews always refer to the common good. In fact, we can say that they are inspired by Ricœur's hermeneutics and implicit definition of ethics as the conflict of interpretations, and of his concept of world in his theory of ideology.[69] This is also the basis for the move from structure to actors that is present in the project of Boltanski and Thévenot, but is there a danger of a potential idealism and

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[67] Paul Ricœur: *Le conflit des interpretations*, Le Seuil, Paris 1969. This book is important to understand the selection of a particular form of compromise in the conflict of interpretations.

[68] Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot (translated by Catherine Porter) *On Justification: Economies of Worth* Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2006, Reviewed by Olivier Godechot, Paris School of Economics, Cultural Sociology, Cultural Sociology Volume 3, Number 1, March 2009.

[69] Paul Ricœur: *Le conflit des interpretations*, Le Seuil, Paris 1969.

even moralism, with so much focus on the common good? Also, what is the status of these different regimes, or worlds of justification? What are their borderlines, and what are their justifications?

10.5   The New Spirit of Capitalism

While the study of justification and the economy of worth can be characterized as the study of political philosophy, *Le nouvel esprit du capitalism* (1996) is based on the reading of management literature and the development of capitalism from bureaucratic organizational forms towards flexible network and project capitalism. Boltanski and Chiapello analyze the sphere of justification that is present in network capitalism, which constitutes a new sphere of justification that is different from the spheres they established previously. The question of *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme* is the problem of how the development of capitalism from the 1960s to the 1990s has been able to overcome critique and reinforce itself by taking on a new form. The book studies the ideological changes that follow the recent changes in capitalism.[70]

The authors use the term "capitalist spirit" in order to understand the ideological transformations of capitalist society that have made it possible to absorb the critique of capitalism into its ideology. Capitalism is defined as accumulation of capital with pacific means.[71] The spirit or ethos of capitalism is defined as the ideology that justifies "l'engagement dans le capitalisme."[72] The spirit of capitalism is the dominant ideology that justifies capitalism as an independent world of justification. The ethos of capitalism is linked to a city, or world of justification of capitalism, that aims for justification in light of the relation to the cities of justification. In this context, the business world and the industrial world already represent two forms of capitalism that aim at being justified in the city.[73]

However, according to Boltanski and Chiapello, a third spirit of capitalism is being formed, namely, the world and city of project and network capitalism. This new justificatory discourse is based on autojustification in order to resist the anticapitalist critique. In fact, critique has an internally transformative influence on capitalism. Capitalism incorporates the values that were the basis for its critique.[74] In fact, the book is not only about the ideology of capitalism, but also about the forms of critique of capitalism, and the capacity of capitalism to incorporate its critique in order to justify its existence in the city. Accordingly, capitalism has been

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[70] Luc Boltanski et Eve Chapello: *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme*, Gallimard, Paris 1995, p. 35.

[71] Ibid., p. 38.

[72] Ibid., p. 42.

[73] Ibid., p. 64.

[74] Ibid., p. 71.

claimed to be inauthentic, oppressive, opportunistic, egoistic, and been the subject of social criticism, and more recently, artistic criticism.

Boltanski and Chiapello document the transformations of capitalism by analyzing the literature of management as a source of capitalist normativity. Management has its origins in the doctrines of Fayol, who conceived management as a science of administration.[75] From the 1960s to the 1990s management changed from being hierarchical and bureaucratic to being based on autonomy, confidence, and employee self-management. Since Taylorism, with its planning and control, management has become dependent on networks and project management. Boltanski and Chiapello call this new regime of justification *La cité par projet* with reference to a flexible world with multiple projects that are taken up by autonomous persons following the new ideology of justification of management.[76]

The key to the new ethos of project management and network capitalism is the employability and flexibility of the individual, and his or her capacity to transform themselves and undergo change in the movement from project to project.[77] According to Boltanski and Chiapello, the new management of the project and network capitalism responds to the artistic critique of lack of authenticity and creativity, while being still open to the social critique of leaving the vulnerable and poor outside the capitalist system.[78] This new management allows individual creativity and self-realization in the business system, while still being based on instrumentalization and exploitation. The new management is a personalization of the worker according to the desire of the individual.

The city of projects is a seventh world of justification that is based on the network paradigm, which focuses on communication and relations based on common judgment, according to communicative action (in the case of Habermas).[79] Here, mediation and network formation capacity are particular values. Extending networks and projects represents the superior principle of this project city. Life is conceived as an extension of projects and self-development, with the values of flexibility, adaptability, and employability as important. On this basis, in the city of projects the concepts of justice and of justification are based on the readiness of the nomadic individual to sacrifice everything for the next project. But the network is also supposed to be open for new participants. Some forms of justification of the domestic and the business world are very close to the project world justifications[80]: however, the morality of the project city is first of all about personal development and self-control.[81]

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[75] Ibid., p. 96.

[76] Ibid., p. 143.

[77] Ibid., p. 145.

[78] Ibid., p. 151.

[79] Ibid., p. 161.

[80] Ibid., p. 192.

[81] Ibid., p. 235.

Can developments in values-driven management and business ethics be interpreted in terms of Boltanski and Chiapello's work? According to them, business ethics is a good example of how the vocabulary of the 1960s has moved into business. They say that the argument "ethics pays," from the ethics movement in the 1990s is an indirect way to introduce moral issues in business.[82] Due to the requirement of justification, the ethos of capitalism is continuously incorporating critique. In fact, from being an external social critique of the lack of justice in business and capitalism, business ethics has been incorporated into the capitalist firm as an instrument of legitimation, discipline, and profit maximization.

Managers want to expose themselves as figures of trust and confidence in the emerging network economy, and therefore they are motivated by business ethics. Business ethics is an element of the introduction of the logic of the domestic world into the business world and thereby an element introducing network capitalism of the 1990s, with its refusal of hierarchy, emphasis on change and flexibility, virtue, and friendship. Boltanski and Chiapello emphasize that the new managers of the 1990s were trying to show themselves as people of high ethical standards and integrity.[83] Business ethics is also a response to the difficulties of managing people in flexible network organizations, where employees work far from central management. Business ethics is introduced as an important element of HRM, including its use by psychologists and coaches to take care of employees. Therefore, business ethics is a way to ensure compliance, but personal integrity and ethics is also important to ensure employability of individuals in network capitalism.[84] This is the same with the concept of confidence, or trust, which is becoming a new form of control.

On this foundation, they treat the issue of business ethics in relation to the debate about trust (*confiance*) more closely. The instrumentalization of trust as an instrument of management follows Oliver Williamson's (b. 1932) transaction cost economics; however, trust also allows the possibility to give up very rigid organizational structures. In the vulgar management literature, trust is considered a calculative instrument at the disposal to managers to increase their confidence in the network. This management literature describes the man with the mask (*le mailleur*), the great idol of project work, who shares with the active worker *(faisseur)* all necessary qualities to create a good network.[85] But the *mailleur* also has the quality of being attributed confidence, which is very important to increase and open up the network. This is due to the fact that trust relations are becoming increasingly important in project work in order to develop the project group, and to avoid opportunistic behavior.[86]

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[82] Ibid., p. 111.

[83] Ibid., p. 146.

[84] Ibid., p. 148.

[85] Ibid., p. 486.

[86] Ibid., p. 486.

On this basis, Boltanski and Chiapello regard the movement of business ethics as an effort to develop personal loyalty of workers to the corporation for the benefit of the corporation and their collaborators. Analysis of the ethics codes of the biggest multinational firms in the beginning of the 1990s shows two aspects: (1) The first one is the effort to discourage opportunistic action among employees. Those should be put outside the firm, if they want to use the firm against the interests of the firm. It is about avoiding gaining personal profits against the firm. (2) The second is that codes of ethics should be constant, which according to Boltanski and Chiapello is an effort to avoid corruption—one of the actions of the *faisseur*, who profits from his institutional position by using and accepting corruption.

Now, Boltanski and Chiapello argue that business ethics codes are directed towards individual persons instead of institutional structures. Business ethics is about adaptation of individuals to organizations, to install just exchange between them and their organization. The codes of ethics are directed to the moral sense and cognitive capacity of individuals in organizations, so that they are responsible for their behavior in the organization.[87] This means, however, that business ethics focuses on the individual and is not able to explain collective and institutional changes, or network developments.

Accordingly, *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme* presents an interesting analysis of the transformations of capitalism and its ideological incorporation of its Other. This description of the emergence of a new order or city of the project and network world is very illuminative. Yet, the question of the connection between the different worlds and cities seems difficult to explain within capitalism. Moreover, it seems that the real issue is not so much the problem of the emergence of new historical justifications of capitalism; rather, the topic is a moral and normative question about the possibility of a new social critique after the incorporation of the existing critical forms in the transformation of capitalism.

With these transformations of capitalism and the disarmament of traditional forms of justification and critique, we are faced with the question of how to deal with justification and critique after the transformations of capitalism.

According to Boltanski and Chiapello, the transformations of capitalism have disarmed social critique; in particular, the social and artistic critique following the riots of 1968. The social critique of capitalism was especially represented by the new social movements; however, what happened in France was that the traditional industrial society, and its concept of work and unionization, was changed into a new capitalist society that took away the foundations of the traditional concept of social critique.[88] With the decline of traditional critique we saw the emergence of new forms in the 1980s and 1990s.

The new kinds of social critique look at the forms of exploitation in the project and network world. What is important is to re-inscribe the project world into the forms of law and justice of the common good in order to ensure its legitimacy.[89]

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[87] Ibid., p. 487.

[88] Ibid., pp. 414–416.

[89] Ibid., p. 498.

The force of law is proposed to ensure the common good in the pluralistic context of the transformation of capitalism.[90] Also, we have to look at the possibility of finding new forms of artistic critique after the transformations of capitalism, since such critique is important for capitalism.[91] After the emergence of project capitalism, the artistic critique was forced to change its conceptions of liberation, autonomy, and authenticity.[92] This is because capitalism began to incorporate many of the elements of autonomy, creativity, and self-realization that were previously present in the artistic critique.

In this context, it is indeed a question of what kind of liberation and authenticity we want, confronted with the recent developments of network and project society. Here, Boltanski and Chiapello focus on sustainability, ecological products, and criticism of product standardization as new forms of critique in network society.[93] Indeed, we can also mention CSR and corporate citizenship as a way to ensure a new form of ethical capitalism. Moreover, a critique of the concept of authenticity following poststructuralist philosophers is proposed, in particular with regard to the use of authenticity as an instrument of manipulation in the capitalist context. However, new forms of artistic critique are difficult because the artistic critique was paralyzed by the deconstructive movements after 1968.

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[90] Ibid., p. 500.

[91] Alan Irwin, Torben Elgaard Jensen and Kevin E Jones: "The good, the bad and the perfect: Criticizing engagement practice", *Social Studies of Science* 43(1) 118–135.

[92] Luc Boltanski et Eve Chapello: *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme*, Gallimard, Paris 1995, p. 501.

[93] Ibid., pp. 545–546.

Chapter 11
Postmodernism, Hypermodernism, and Critique of the Spirit of Capitalism

With the emergence of the concept of postmodernism and the discussions of the relations between modernity and postmodernity since the 1980s, there has been a shift in poststructuralist philosophy and social theory. Among postmodern philosophers, Virilio's analysis of speed, power, technology, and society has been mentioned as important. Virilio developed his analysis of the postmodern condition in relation to architecture. He was inspired by Deleuze and Guatteri in his inclusion of analysis of territory in his approach to postmodernism. Virilio focused on postmodern society and the way technology develops in society. In this context, Virilio was also inspired by philosophers like Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard (1929–2007), who are considered as the most important contributors to the analysis of postmodernism.[1] By inventing the term postmodernism, philosophy and sociology formulated new conditions for analyzing business ethics and philosophy of management. We have to be aware of the changed conditions of analysis that come from the postmodern condition. With postmodern philosophy, we need to reformulate concepts of organizational ideology, values, and narratives. Moreover, philosophy of management needs to be aware of the social condition of postmodernity, in which there are specific aspects of consumer society and of consumer culture that determine individual actions and formations of economic markets. However, when we analyze the movement from postmodernity to hypermodernity, as proposed by Lipovetsky, there is also a movement towards and acceleration of postmodernity that seems to go beyond some of its initial determinations. Finally, with the work of Bernard Stiegler (b. 1952) we see an application of the insights of poststructuralism and deconstruction to the new developments of capitalism in hypermodernity.

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[1] Paul Virilio: *Vitesse et Politique*: *essai de dromologie*, éd. Galilée, Paris 1977.

11.1 Jean-François Lyotard: The Postmodern Condition

Lyotard is recognized as the philosopher who developed the term postmodernism. He invented the term in a book that he published in 1979, *La condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir*.[2] This book became extremely important for the debate about ethics and social philosophy in Europe and North America in the following years.[3] The debate about the relation between modernity and postmodernity later became one of the most important debates in the 1980s and 1990s. Philosophers like Habermas and Richard Rorty (1931–2007) reacted to the debate and the terms postmodernism and postmodernity became a central issue of concern, not only for philosophy, but also more generally in the social and human sciences.

However, Lyotard's postmodern philosophy did not begin with *La condition postmoderne*. Lyotard's work took its departure from readings of phenomenology, Marxism, structuralism, and the integration of psychoanalysis in a critical reading of traditional philosophy. Lyotard started from the phenomenological tradition with *La phénoménologie* (1954).[4] This is a work that presents the basic context of phenomenology. In the 1960s, Lyotard worked together with Castoriadis and Lefort connected to *Socialisme et Barbarie*. Lyotard's doctoral dissertation was published as *Discours, figure* (1971), where he breaks with his political activism and proposes an analysis of arts and aesthetics.[5] In this book, Lyotard proposes a critical reading of structuralism and also of Lacan, utilizing Freud's psychoanalysis, with its emphasis on the concepts of libidinal aesthetics and libidinal economy. This concept of psychoanalysis is developed in Loytards' work on Marx and Freud, *Dérive de Marx et Freud* (1973), and later in his work, *Economie libidinale* (1974), where he develops his concept of libidinal economy based on desire, affirmation, and intensity.[6] This book was very critical of Marxism and it made Lyotard unpopular among leftist Marxists. With his work on *La condition postmoderne* (1979), Lyotard proposes a postmodern philosophy that takes its point of departure from libido and criticism of the great metaphysical ideologies of modernity.

Lyotard's contribution to business ethics can be said to provide us with the basis for a new theory of network and social interaction in postmodern society. In particular, postmodern philosophy proposes a theory of the changed conditions of social and institutional legitimacy in society.

La condition postmoderne is not a vast presentation of the conception of postmodernism, but it is a small book that summarizes the results of a report to

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[2] Jean-François Lyotard: *La Condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir*, Minuit, Paris 1979.

[3] Adam Diderichsen: "Lyotard: Det postmoderne" in Poul Lübcke (ed.) *Fransk filosofi. Engagement og struktur*. Politikens forlag, København 2003, p. 286.

[4] Jean-François Lyotard: *La Phénoménologie*, Presses universitaires de France, (coll. Que sais-je?), 1954.

[5] Jean-François Lyotard: *Discours, Figure*, Klincksieck, 1971. (Thèse de Doctorat d'État, sous la direction de Mikel Dufrenne.)

[6] Jean-François Lyotard: *Économie Libidinale*, Minuit, Paris 1974.

the Canadian regional government of Quebec about the condition of knowledge in modern society. The term postmodernism is used by Lyotard to present the socio-logical and philosophical conditions of knowledge in contemporary society. Lyotard defines the topic of his research as an investigation of the role of knowledge in developed societies. He argues that the conditions of knowledge have changed and that society has entered into the postmodern age, replacing modernity since the beginning of the 1950s.[7] Lyotard argues that we have moved into knowledge society, where knowledge plays a more important role for society. Knowledge, science, and technology become economic forces that are increasingly important for production. In this sense, knowledge is a condition of power in postmodernity.

At the same time, knowledge changes its character in postmodern society. Scientific knowledge is only important to the extent it can be legitimized and instrumentalized in knowledge society, not as an aim in itself.[8] In particular, knowledge is instrumentalized as essential for business and the economics of technocapitalism. Knowledge is also changed into an object that can be sold and exchanged on the economic, capitalist market. Knowledge is only valuable to the extent it can be translated into information that makes a difference in economic and social exchange of society. In this sense, there is a close connection between postmodernism and the emergence of a knowledge and communication society, because in postmodernism knowledge changes into information.

In the postmodern information society, knowledge as the traditional state of affairs or of a particular object is now longer important. Instead, knowledge is conceived as useful information that makes a difference in society. In the informa-tion society, it is information that can be used and that makes a difference, not specific knowledge. Lyotard emphasizes that the emergence of information and the information society should not be considered as a simple and unproblematic extension of modernity. The emergence of information society, and the new role of information in society, reflects fundamental changes in the political, economic, and social structures of society.[9]

These changes raise a problem of legitimation because society is no longer built on solid objective knowledge, and the circulation of information in society ques-tions the structures of traditional society. In this sense, the information society questions the objectivity and validity of knowledge and scientific institutions. With the emergence of information society we face new conditions of social legitimacy of knowledge and knowledge formation structures in society.[10]

It is only when Lyotard needs to show that the changes towards the information society cannot be explained in terms of traditional theory of modernity that he

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[7] Jean-François Lyotard: *La Condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir*, Minuit, Paris 1979.

[8] Adam Diderichsen: "Lyotard: Det postmoderne" in Poul Lübcke (ed.) *Fransk filosofi. Engage-ment og struktur*. Politikens forlag, København 2003, p. 287.

[9] Jean-François Lyotard: *La Condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir*, Minuit, Paris 1979.

[10] Adam Diderichsen: "Lyotard: Det postmoderne" in Poul Lübcke (ed.) *Fransk filosofi. Engage-ment og struktur*. Politikens forlag, København 2003, pp. 288–289.

invented the concept of postmodernity.[11] Lyotard uses the concept to explain the changed conditions of knowledge in society. The conditions of knowledge and information in society show that we generally have moved from modernity to postmodernity in the way we treat and deal with knowledge.[12] Lyotard does not use postmodernism as a general cultural and sociological condition, but argues more specifically that there has been a move away from the "grand narratives" that legitimized knowledge in modernity towards a transformation of knowledge. This is a movement towards disbelieving the grand "metanarrative" of modernity.[13]

Lyotard does not argue that the metanarratives, or grand narratives, no longer exist. We are still faced with Marxist, liberal, and Christian ideologies, or other holistic concepts of the world; however, the postmodern condition implies that we no longer relate to the grand narratives as particularly evident or true. The postmodern individual has increasing difficulties in identifying with the metanarratives of postmodernity. Nobody can see the meaning of identifying with the ideologies of modernity and people search for other elements to give meaning to their lives. According to Lyotard, this situation of the crisis of legitimacy for grand narratives means that there is a parallel crisis for science and ideology, which are built on the grand narratives as ideological and metaphysical systems, and conceived as the foundations of knowledge production in modernity.[14]

Lyotard emphasizes how science has been a part of the legitimation of society since its beginning in classical Greece. Science was integrated in ideology as the narrative foundation of the social structures of society. From the earliest work of Plato and Aristotle, science found its legitimacy in the metaphysics of the grand narratives. Among the dominant narratives of legitimation was the emancipatory legitimation story of the sciences, which was proposed by, among others, Marxist ideology and also by different concepts of liberalism. In this context, science emerges as a means of legitimizing human activities in order to achieve better action in society. The other dominant story of legitimation according to Lyotard is the story about science contributing to the increase of speculative and metaphysical knowledge about the world, where science contributes to new knowledge.[15] According to Lyotard, this concept of legitimation is also challenged by the postmodern condition because nobody believes that science contains the ultimate truth about society anymore. The two stories of legitimation have been the most dominant stories: the sciences as contributing to emancipation and science's contribution to description, interpretation, and metaphysical understanding of the world. With postmodernity these stories are faced with a legitimacy crisis.

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[11] Ibid., p. 289.

[12] Jean-François Lyotard: *La Condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir*, Minuit, Paris 1979.

[13] Adam Diderichsen: "Lyotard: Det postmoderne" in Poul Lübcke (ed.) *Fransk filosofi. Engagement og struktur*. Politikens forlag, København 2003, pp. 288–289.

[14] Ibid., p. 290.

[15] Ibid., p. 290.

Lyotard argues that the narratives contain elements that contribute to their own dissolution, delegitimation, and self-destruction. There are elements of nihilism that are deeply internal to these ideological stories of legitimation.[16] In this sense, the speculative story of legitimation contains contradictions, because it is only justified metaphysical knowledge that is considered to be appropriate. However, the result of this concept of knowledge is that rational positivism seems to be the most appropriate paradigm for scientific knowledge. This is in contradiction with the concept of speculative, scientific knowledge.[17]

Lyotard also points to contradictions implicit in the emancipatory justification of science and knowledge. This approach argues that scientific knowledge needs value and significance (to the extent it contributes to ethical, political, and social emancipation) in order to acquire more freedom and autonomy. Science is, however, not normative, but descriptive, and a contrast between scientific description and normative argument is emerging. This means that science and knowledge cannot really be totally integrated in an ethical and political project because they seem to follow their own patterns of discovery.

Accordingly, the grand narratives of legitimation seem to lose their possibility as fundamental narratives. Science emerges as an independent discourse that contributes to the self-dissolution of the grand narratives. This implies that the different grand narratives are reduced to particular language games that are mutually irreducible, and that cannot really be translated to one another.[18] With this plurality of language games it is no longer possible to conceive a metanarrative as justifying the unity of the world and, therefore, we can talk about the postmodern condition of knowledge and knowledge creation.

In addition to the difficulties of modernist proposals for legitimizing science, Lyotard mentions a number of contemporary proposals for legitimation that are present in postmodernity. One strong candidate is the emphasis on performativity that establishes a focus on efficiency and economic performance, or performance in general, to legitimize scientific activity. Here, the focus is on the capacity of science to increase the production and productivity of contemporary society. With these criteria of legitimation science is conceived as technology, and this is a criterion of social technology that is central to the legitimation of the role and function of science in society. Within this criterion of legitimation, science is legitimized because of its role as contributor to economic gain and social prosperity.

Lyotard is skeptical of the idea of controlling a system through managing its performativity, and he emphasizes that the idea that it is not possible for a system to have total control over itself is implicit in many scientific investigations.[19] Instead of reducing science to performance, Lyotard proposes that legitimation of science is not performativity and efficiency, but rather the production of new ideas. In contrast

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[16] Jean-François Lyotard: *La Condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir*, Minuit, Paris 1979.

[17] Adam Diderichsen: "Lyotard: Det postmoderne" in Poul Lübcke (ed.) *Fransk filosofi. Engagement og struktur*. Politikens forlag, København 2003, pp. 290–291.

[18] Ibid., p. 291.

[19] Ibid., p. 292.

to the consensus of the grand narratives, new ideas break with pre-established concepts and imply radical innovation. In this sense, it is important that science goes beyond the pre-established concepts and contributes with new and ground-breaking concepts.[20]

In *Le différend* (1983), which was published not long after *La condition postmoderne*, Lyotard asks the question whether it is possible to defend justice and difference against the background of the postmodern condition.[21] The book is about dissent between language games and struggle, and the problem of how to reach agreement between such different positions in a universal judgment. In this context, Lyotard refers to the concept of judgment as proposed by Kant in his theory and critique of judgment, and Wittgenstein's concept of language games. These are considered as works that deal with the transition from modernity to postmodernity.[22]

Accordingly, in *Le différend*, Lyotard continues the discussion of the problem of language, truth, and norms that was already present in his discussion of language games in *La condition postmoderne*. Lyotard defends the heterogeneity and multiplicity of language in a criticism of the objectivist-structuralist conception of language. Language is an event that is based on the emergence of difference and struggle. In this sense, the break, rupture, and innovation are essential features of language in relation to meaning and being. Here, it is important how difference and dissent is a central element of postmodern criticism of modernism and modernity.

Lyotard emphasizes that postmodernism is not only a sociological description of what came after modernity. He suggests that the concept of postmodernism describes a philosophical concept of delegitimation of grand narratives, and the emergence of new concepts of philosophy that takes into account the irreducible plurality of language games and the condition of difference as essential elements.[23]

With this analysis of the changed conditions of legitimacy, we can say that Lyotard provides us with a new conception of postmodern business ethics that is founded in the plurality of languages games and forms of justification within different businesses and corporate practices.

11.2 Jean Baudrillard: Postmodernism, Seduction, and Simulation

Together with Lyotard, Baudrillard is among the French philosophers and sociologists who have argued most strongly for a revolt against the idea of modernity that is expressed in the general cultural and economic conditions of the west.

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[20] Ibid., p. 293.

[21] Jean-François Lyotard: *Le Différend*, Minuit, Paris 1983.

[22] Adam Diderichsen: "Lyotard: Det postmoderne" in Poul Lübcke (ed.) *Fransk filosofi. Engagement og struktur*. Politikens forlag, København 2003, p. 294.

[23] Jean-François Lyotard: *Moralités postmodernes*, Editions Gallilée, Paris 1993.

Baudrillard is strongly inspired by Nietzsche's criticism of metaphysics and emphasis on illusion and seduction as conditions of philosophy. Beginning with a criticism of Marxism and structuralism, Baudrillard developed a postmodern simulation, seduction, and philosophy of illusions that is a temporal diagnosis of the conditions of existence in the Western society of our times. In his many analyses of the influence of mass media on the postmodern human being, Baudrillard was inspired by the Canadian theorist of media, Marshall McLuhan (1911–1980).

Baudrillard was educated in Germany and taught German for a number of years in a French high school before 1966, when he became professor of sociology a the Nanterre University. At Nanterre he worked together with Lefebvre and was inspired by Barthes' criticism of myths and his semiological philosophy. Baudrillard taught at the university until 1986, when he retreated in order to work on his writing. In his later years, Baudrillard became a very active participant in French public debate.

Baudrillard's philosophy can be separated into three major phases. In the first part of his work, we see his theory of semiotics and critique of ideology, analyzing the welfare and consumer society. Works like *La société de consommation* (1970) and *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* (1972) are important manifestations of this sociological critique of the society of abundance. Accordingly, Baudrillard proposes a framework for a postmodern semiotic analysis of business ethics in consumer society.[24]

The second part of his work started with *De la séduction* (1979), which marks a decisive movement towards the description of the postmodern society. In this early work, the conditions of seduction are described as characteristic of the culture of postmodernism. While seduction earlier happened in relation to rules and laws in society, it is today totally without limits. Seduction expresses a world without essences and without structures behind the appearance. Reality is reduced to an infinite chain of self-referential simulacres, that is a reality of signs and illusions with no ideas or substantial or material being behind it.

The third part of Baudrillard's writings can be considered as a radicalization of this general condition of seduction: *Les stratégies fatales* (1983), *La transparence du mal* (1990), as well as *L'illusion de la fin* (1992). Baudrillard argues that the culture of consumption has been replaced by a fractal culture, an information and computer society, and the postmodern condition has become fully totalized everywhere.

It is a characteristic feature of Baudrillard's postmodern Nietzscheanism that he has gone beyond a critical and rather nostalgic attitude to the postmodern condition, where there is no longer deep symbolic meaning. In his later work, Baudrillard takes a cool and distanced attitude to the postmodern condition.

Baudrillard's early writings are characterized by the effort to work with a critical structuralism that describes how object and sign systems structure human reality.

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[24] Mollie Painter-Morland and René Ten Bos: *Business ethics and continental Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2011.

This semiology is based on a Marxist criticism of production and class relations that determines the system of signs in the Western culture of consumption. Baudrillard works with a critical attitude towards consumer society and discusses the possibility of having a critical attitude towards its development. This Marxist inspired semiology is present in Baudrillard's first book *Le système des objets* (1968), and is developed in *La société de consommation* and *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe*, and also in *Le mirror de la production* (1973).

Even though he takes his starting point in Marxist semiology, Baudrillard is critical towards Sartre's existentialist Marxism and Althusser's structural Marxism. Marxism cannot be used to describe the struggle of the masses for freedom and the historical drive for revolution, but neither can it be conceived as a purely structural science. Marxism is, rather, an instrument to help us understand how consumer culture has become the central feature for ensuring social integration and differentiation in capitalist society.

This means that not only the conditions of production, but also fashion, free time, consumption, and lifestyle that structure the culture of society.[25] These conditions can be analyzed semiologically by combining Barthes' semiological analysis of social sign systems with a generalization of Marx's conception of the conditions for creating meaning; to not only to be concerned with production and work life, but all cultural formations.

In particular, Marx'w conception of the fetishistic character of goods and objects is the focus of *La société de consommation*. The fetishistic character of a traded good is its irrational value of desire that is linked to the object, independent of its use and exchange value. Here, the object becomes fetish and its use value is improved by appealing to desire and ideology. The culture of consumer society makes consumption a party. Human need is considered to be socially integrated through pleasure. The consumption value of an object is different from its use and utility value, and appeals to human desire. Today we live and define ourselves through things. To go to the supermarket is a party and through mass media, violence and war are consumed.[26] In growth society, consumption is a lifestyle surplus and growth is pursued for its own sake. In particular, mass media, fashion, and publicity contribute to making consumption, and not production, central characteristics of welfare society.[27]

In contrast to the strict scientific structural analysis by Barthes and Althusser, Baudrillard maintains a perspective of ideological critique in his analysis of consumer society. He shows how the mentality of consumption takes over in all dimensions of society and how empty relations of signs determined by consumption replace earlier substantial content-based symbolic relations in society. Today, the world has become transparent. The body and sexuality are exposed in pornography and publicity. Everything is a social theater without anything behind it.[28] Surface

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[25] Jean Baudrillard: *La société de consommation*, Gallimard, Paris 1970, p. 20.

[26] Ibid., p. 33.

[27] Ibid., p. 112.

[28] Jean Baudrillard: *L'Autre par lui-même. Habilitation*, Éditions Galilée, Paris 1987, p. 20.

relations between signs, which only refer to themselves, replace the depth that existed in earlier symbolic relations. Baudrillard generalizes a central insight in Marxism that value can be reduced to use value, and thus become the central logic of exchange in consumer society. In today's society, every exchange is based on consumption and the gift has lost its symbolic dimension.

In his analysis of the exchange logic in consumer society, Baudrillard was strongly inspired by the descriptions of the logic of the gift by Mauss and Bataille.[29] In their work, we find a generalization of the concept of the gift to concern every form of economic exchange. It is, however, a characteristic feature of consumer society that it has reduced the symbolic content of the gift and made it into trade exchange of objects of consumption. In the ecstatic materialism of consumer mentality, it is only surface, while earlier cultures were based on symbolic exchange.[30] The modern logic of potlatch is therefore expressed in a growing capitalism, where endless accumulation of goods and consumption witnesses the extended social status of the subject. The gift giving and consumer society is marked by a growing accumulation of consumption, as reinforcement by the social status of individuals in relation to their class and place in society.

In *L'échange symbolique de la mort* (1976), Baudrillard places the empty culture of production in present Western societies in sharp contrast to the closed traditional societies of earlier times, which were marked by strong symbolic structures based on the eternal return, destiny, and integration of life, death, and evil in a cosmological symbolic unity. This analysis looks like a metaphysics of death, stating that the nothingness of death is the only thing that is behind the sign systems of culture. Western culture is marked by nihilism, where the materialism of consumer culture has taken over from symbolic relations in society. There is also an externalization of negative aspects, where codes and simulations resemble stable structures.

At the same time, Baudrillard shows how death continually manifests itself behind the symbolic structure that one tries to oppress.[31] Symbolic features break with the immanence of the logic of exchange. The symbolic represents the radical Other in relation to exchange in the economy of consumption. The principle of pleasure of sexuality involves opposition to the death drive, and the genetic description of human beings presupposes our own dissolution. Behind the ideal reified structures of the objects, we find the indeterminacy of death.[32]

Death is the indeterminacy of the code behind the logic of exchange, and it cannot be avoided, even in the most perfect virtual systems. This is shown by concrete analysis of work, fashion, body, and poetics.

In *De la séduction* (1979), Baudrillard radicalizes his position in relation to the analysis of the structure of sign systems. He argues that it is no longer possible in the postmodern society to give meaning to the idea of seduction as an expression of

[29] Jean Baudrillard: *La société de consommation*, Gallimard, Paris 1970, p. 55.

[30] Jean Baudrillard: *L'Autre par lui-même. Habilitation*, Éditions Galilée, Paris 1987, p. 11.

[31] Ibid., p. 68.

[32] Jean Baudrillard: *L'échange symbolique de la mort*, Gallimard, Paris 1976, p. 12.

real symbolic exchange in society. We can no longer give meaning to a reality independent of the chains of signs; rather, we father pure signs, which exchange places with each other. Western society is built on the belief in symbolic exchange structures and also on the idea that there is something behind these sign structures, which is an illusion.

In *De la séduction*, Baudrillard describes seduction as the quintessence of a virtually simulated universe. In original societies, seduction was a ritual and a game that contributed a stable structure to social integration. Even though one may have risked one's life in an effort to win the other, seduction was a well-defined social category with value and rule systems. With a certain nostaligia for such a pact between ritual and coincidence, Baudrillard emphasizes that this is not the case anymore.[33] In relation to the ritualized world of earlier times, the seduction of our time appears to be extremely poor and banal.

Baudrillard emphasizes that the time of law has ended and we live in a condition of pure simulation. He mentions our relation the Holocaust as an example of such a seduction that is particularly mediated through the information bombing of the mass media. Here, we see how a historical event is vitalized through television and film.[34] For many people, the Holocaust is not more than this: a self-referential system of myths that they encounter in the media.

Accordingly, the world is nothing more than a gigantic system of simulation that has no content in a material reality. Baudrillard makes this point in his strong criticism of Foucault in *Oublier Foucault* (1976).[35] He feels that Foucault makes a big mistake when, in *Surveiller et punir* (1976), Foucault states that it is a number of discursive conditions of power that determine society. Baudrillard thinks that Foucault goes too far because he speaks of conditions of power that are beyond the simulation universe of the signs.[36] Foucault treats the discourse of power as if it was real, but without questioning the principle of reality. He positions power and sexuality, instead of the human principle of desire, without defining the status of these principles. This is, however, nothing more than a theater, where Foucault simulates power as the real principle of reality.[37] Power is not absolute, and death is present in power as the limit of politics. Foucault did not really manage to go beyond the repressive violence that he criticized because violence seems to be present everywhere and can not be transcended.

Baudrillard describes the development towards seduction in society as a genealogy of simulation, where the real world finally has become a myth. Renaissance art had already started to move away from flat realism to operate with illusions, where the tromphe d'œil provide a new perspective on nature. This was radicalized in industrial society, where reproduction was systematized and society, with its

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[33] Jean Baudrillard: *De la Séduction*, Éditions Galilée, Paris 1979, p. 209.

[34] Ibid., p. 215.

[35] Jean Baudrillard: *Oublier Foucault*, Éditions Galilée, Paris 1977, p. 13.

[36] Ibid., p. 20.

[37] Ibid., p. 55.

belief in progress, enlightenment, and revolution, moved more and more away from nature. In the information and communication society, abstract art and infinite mass production have totally liberated art from the idea of a primordially true or natural original. The world has become so artificial that the artificial has become real, and it no longer gives meaning to talk about an original reality. Instead of operating within a real world, art has started to create a "more real world," a hyperreality.

This radicalization of the postmodern condition in total simulation is the theme of Baudrillards's later works. In the works like *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) and *La transparence du mal* (1990), Baudrillard shows how the political project of modernity, involving emancipation, enlightenment, and progress, has been dissolved in a manifold number of values and aesthetic forms that live together. Since seduction is generalized, it is no longer meaningful to talk about alienation, because there cannot be a real world expressing itself in particular. At this level, traditional dialectical forms and dualistic oppositions in politics, art, and economics have been replaced by a number of transpolitical, transaesthetic, transsexual, and transeconomic forms that mark society.

In *La transparence du mal*, Baudrillard proposes that our postmodern times are characterized as the world after an orgy. Aesthetic postmodernity no longer operates with the heavy oppositions of modernity between true and false, good and evil, beautiful and ugly, or man and woman.[38] We live in an empty culture that is characterized by an infinite chain of relations of superficial signs that do not refer to anything other than themselves. The relations between the signs are immanently closed in a way that implies that culture refuses all negative components that are excluded from the system.

When Baudrillard speaks about the transparent reality, he claims that we live in a society where there is no enigma that we have to find. We have reached the core of reality. This can be illustrated in relation to sexual nakedness. Everything is revealed, and sexual genitals are only interesting as pornographic pictures that are so virtual that one can say that obscenity has replaced reality.[39]

According to Baudrillard, it is no longer meaningful to talk about human nature because our bodies are mixed with machines and artificial body parts, and are defined as aesthetic sign relations that are related immanently to each other without being based on any essence. The subject no longer tries to find itself by transcending itself, but has become a "fractal self" that is manifested in a manifold of fragmented selves, such as in aesthetic and technical perfection of the body.[40]

All the dualistic categories and genres of modernity are slowly dissolving. It is no longer meaningful to talk about sexual difference, when every woman can dress like a man and men can get sex change operations. We live in a kind of Xerox-copy culture, where originals no longer exist and everybody can create themselves

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[38] Jean Baudrillard: *La transparence du mal. Essai sur les phénomènes extremes*, Galilée, Paris 1990, p. 11.

[39] Jean Baudrillard: *L'Autre par lui-même. Habilitation*, Éditions Galilée 1987, p. 31.

[40] Ibid., p. 36.

according to their own aesthetic needs.[41] Similarly, communication and speech are without deep content, and the manifold of transpolitical, transsexual, and transaesthetical forms have taken over culture.

Postmodernity is also characterized by a kind of fictive economy, where information technology has taken over the human real world so that the world no longer consists of material relations, but of virtual relations between signs in information and communications systems. We cannot avoid a semiotic reality where the human body no longer, qua Merleau-Ponty, expresses personal access to the world. Instead, the body is conceived as a machine that neither acts from a soul, nor from a consciousness, but is constituted through its place in virtual sign systems. The Italian porn star, Cicciolina, or the pop stars Madonna and Michael Jackson are prototypes of such a plastic, coded, and semiologically structured system that continuously recreates itself as a computer program.

Baudrillard's diagnosis of postmodern society looks like a nightmare, when he argues that our culture is far beyond the Enlightenment conception of radical evil as based on human subjective intentionality. That we have gone beyond an ordinary opposition between good and evil implies that we have much more difficulty in distinguishing between them. We doubt the existence of the concentration camps, and in the continuous, superficial self-referentiality of the media we become indifferent in relation to the reports about war, terror, and genocine that we hear about through television and other electronic media. The problem is, however, that in a time where absolute truth no longer exists and where dialectical oppositions between the same and the Other have been dissolved, humanity no longer can deal with evil. Evil is the "part maudit."[42] Evil is something absolute that is a pathology in the system of signs, which can result in anomaly and metastasis. Evil returns in postmodernity as unexplainable events, a kind of destiny or other nature that breaks with the supposed infallibility of the social systems, such as in the Tsunami catastrophes, the terror attacks, and so forth.

Baudrillard's offer many different cultural analyses of object systems and relations in postmodern society based on his philosophy. In *America* (1988), Baudrillard proposes a description of American culture as virtual and superficial, where good and evil are mixed in the banality of positivity. Here, simulation has taken over and hyperreality is realized. In this postmodern culture, there is no understanding for the Other outside the system of signs of the ideology of American culture.

Already, in *La transparence du mal*, Baudrillard enter into this discussion of the same and the Other. He states that the universe of simulation in postmodernity excludes the Other. This is, for example, the case with cloning as a postmodern phenomenon.[43] In the end, the development of genetic and reproductive technologies implies that the individual in the postmodern universe does not have to be in

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[41] Jean Baudrillard: *La transparence du mal. Essai sur les phénomènes extremes*, Galilée, Paris 1990, p. 58.

[42] Ibid., p. 111.

[43] Ibid., p. 124.

a relation to something else. As a clone it no longer has any parents or relation to death. Cloning is a genetic incest that is so radical that everything is identical, and the Other no longer is present: We only meet ourselves again and again. Such a postmodern universe reminds us of death, the pure narcissistic repetition of the same without possibility, through the creation of life, to meet the foreign and the Other.

Together with Virilio, Baudrillard has become famous for his postmodern analysis of war.[44] In *La guerre du Golfe n'a pas eu lieu* (1991), Baudrillard argues that real experience of war is no longer possible because we live in a virtually simulated universe, where the world is experienced through television and other electronic communication systems. The strange unreality of the Gulf war in media expresses our postmodern condition, where simulation is reality.[45] Similar analysis can be proposed for the wars in Kosovo and in Iran.[46] This kind of approach was also the basis for Baudrillard's interpretation of the terror attack on World Trade Center on September eleventh, 2001. In *L'esprit du terrorisme* (2002), Baudrillard argues that the terror attack expressed the pure form of terrorism or the "mother of all events."[47] By this, Baudrillard means that terrorism is the shadow of globalization and of the hegemony of the west, and that the destruction of the twin towers was a symbolic shock to the belief of Western civilization in its own almighty power. In this sense, terrorism is like a computer virus in a perfect economic and political system.[48] The symbolic power of the event makes the September eleventh a mythical nonevent, a fictive Otherness that challenges the foundation of Western rationality and civilization.

With this, we see that Baudrillard provides instruments to analyze the business corporation as an element of postmodern consumer society. In his philosophy and sociology, there are many elements for seeing corporations as systems of sign that act within postmodernity. Consumption and desire are important elements for understanding the foundations of business ethics, and ethics have to take into account the conditions of postmodernity when formulating principles and values for the corporation.

11.3   Gilles Lipovetsky: From Postmodernity to Hypermodernity

Lipovetsky, who was a professor of philosophy in Grenoble, has a somewhat different conviction of the postmodern society than we find in Lyotard and Baudrillard. Lipovetsky has presented his views on subjectivity, existence, and

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[44] Mike Gane: *Jean Baudrillard In Radical Uncertainty*. Modern European Thinkers, Pluto Press, London 2000, p. 83.

[45] Ibid., p. 86.

[46] Ibid., p. 87.

[47] Jean Baudrillard: *L'esprit du terrorisme*, Galilée, Paris 2002, p. 10.

[48] Ibid., p. 16.

ethics in *L'ere du vide: essai sur l'individualisme contemporain* (1983) and *Le crépuscule du devoir: l' éthique indolores des noveaux temps démocratiques* (1992). Moreover, he has presented his views on the transformation from postmodernity to hypermodernity in *Le bonheur paradoxal* (2006). We can say that Lipovetsky presents an analysis of the movement from modernity to postmodernity, and further from post-postmodernity to hypermodernity. This analysis can be directly applied to business ethics and philosophy of management as a determination of the idea of postmodern or hypermodern business ethics.

In *L' ere du vide*, Lipovetsky is inspired by Baudrillard's theory of seduction in arguing that Western societies underwent a big change at the end of the twentieth century. The emergence of consumer society in postindustrial times implies an individualistic revolution of postmodern society. This means that a new ideology of self-realization has become dominant in democratic society. Individualization of human beings as free and autonomous persons marks a revolutionary development, and at the same time is a part of the general disposition of society towards discipline and governance of its citizens. We face a movement from a conventional rigorous social order towards a capitalist society, where everything at the surface has a human face. At the same time, Lipovetsky states, inspired by Foucault, that society increasingly uses individualization as a new instrument of discipline.[49]

The person and the personal are liberated in order to achieve the infinite right to self-realization.[50] Individualization is increased seduction, for example, through body culture, sex, and fitness. Postmodernity implies a humanization of society that normalizes individualization and personal freedom in the choice of lifestyle and religion. This focus on subjective rights and self-expression implies increasing skepticism towards the traditional political system.

In *Les crepuscules du devoir: l'ethique indolores des nouveaux temps démocratiques* (1992), Lipovetsky analyzes the movement of ethics in postmodern society. Postmodern ethics is very different from the Kantian morality of duty in earlier times.[51] Ethics is no longer based exclusively on religious convictions, or pure duty. The re-emergence of ethics in postmodern society therefore expresses a farewell to religion. Lipovetsky thinks that the effect of ethics is not moralization, in an old fashion sense, but expresses and individualistic and postmoralistic culture. This is based on a soft pragmatism in the regulation of controversial moral questions concerning narcotics, capital punishment, euthanasia, abortion, censorship, health care treatment, environmental policy, et cetera.

This postmodern morality is in sharp contrast to fundamentalism and dogmatism. Postmodern ethics is primarily based on self-control and the active

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[49] Gilles Lipovetsky: *L'Ere du Vide. Essai sur l'individualisme contemporain, Gallimard, Paris 1983*, (Folio-Poche), p. 10.

[50] Ibid., p. 13.

[51] Gilles Lipovetsky: *Les Crepuscules du devoir: L'Ethique indolore des nouveaux temps démocratiques*, Gallimard, Paris 1992, p. 15.

contribution of the individual to monitor and control oneself. Postmodern society argues for a responsible individualism, which is critical of the idea that one has freedom to do whatever one wants. Ethics in postmodernity is supposed to be based at a responsible individualism, where freedom is limited by the responsibility of the individual. This ethics of self-limitation can be a new chance for democracy, but it also implies the danger of creating a new narcissistic ideology. This postmodern ethics balances between virtues and self-interests. According to Lipovetsky, we face new ethics of realistic prudence that is concerned with the wishes, interests, and rights of the individual, and is aware of the fact that we cannot solve all problems, but maybe can win time in the battle against evil.[52]

In this new ethics, the hedonism of the self is the main focus of the times: Happiness or nothing ("Le bonheur. Sinon rien"), as a publicity slogan for Richard Pastis sounded. This is included in terms of self-control (*consommez avec modération*). This ethics of self-limitation is the essence of the new narcissistic period that has replaced the time of endless desire. The new ethics is a morality "without obligation or sanction."[53] In this society, family values and love are no longer based on duty, but on pleasure and enjoyment. Moreover, sexual liberation means that sex is no longer connected to sin, and pornography has become normalized. Infidelity is not considered as a great sin, but even sometimes necessary for the relationship. Sex is not a problem, only if it is not safe sex. Prostitution is not prohibited, but is considered wrong if the prostitutes do not pay taxes. There is a kind of dislike of depersonalization of the body implied in prostitution, where people sell sexual services for money. This is because the new ethics is based on the unconditional rights of the individual to decide over his or her body, for example in medical treatment and euthanasia, or in relation to sports, where it is not a training for moral duty, but to make the body more perfect.[54]

The same changes of our relation to duty we can see in relation to the conception of work in society. Work has become an instrument of self-perfection, self-organization, and self-realization. In postmodernity, work is about self-management in the corporation as an emotional and organic unity that unites employees in a common project of quality development.[55] This is closely connected with individualism, where individual freedom and autonomy are used to promote the productivity and competitive advantage of the firm, because work becomes a part of individual self-development. Modern management philosophy uses the capacity of the individual for self-definition, self-construction, and self-direction in order to improve creativity in a movement away from duty towards personal development.[56] The Fatigue in traditional politics is replaced by a superpolitical postmoralistic politics beyond the

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[52] Ibid., p. 22.

[53] Ibid., p. 60.

[54] Ibid., p. 115.

[55] Ibid., p. 128.

[56] Ibid., p. 131.

concern for the republic that emphasizes the personal rights in a return of law, rather than return of morality ("retour du droit" rather than a "retour de la morale").[57]

Accordingly, this transformation from duty to virtue means that the ethics of pragmatic self-determination has become so radical that the categorical imperative has been replaced by a humanistic minimalist ethics.[58] This ethics is, for example, based on mediated charity that shows the poor and suffering people in the world. Pop stars engage in megashows and sing "We are the world" to help the starving populations in Africa. The humanitarian charity shops are a kind of festival, a media event that focuses on individual donation and morality, and appeals to the generosity of the individual. In this sense, charity is an existential supplement, where the individual feels good when he or she gives money.

In opposition to what many intellectuals have argued, Lipovetsky does not feel that nihilism will lead to an apocalyptic victory of evil over good. Even though God is dead, individualism in postmodernity is not without criteria for good and evil. Paradoxically, the new democratic consciousness in postmodernity implies duty without sacrifice. Responsibility is voluntary, and it is without dogmatic force. The ethics of narcissism is about making individualist social praxis more just.[59] The new ethics is an Aristotelian-oriented ethics of wisdom. This is the case, for example, with the ethics of the environmental movement, where ecological consciousness is justified as a part of body culture and personal development. The future belongs to eco-industry, because it knows to combine individual well-being with concern for the environment. This is also the case with developments in bioethics, which is also based on concern for individual patient autonomy and dignity, or the ethics of journalism based on the belief in journalism as an important promoter of an ethics of knowledge in modern society.[60]

According to Lipovetsky, business ethics is the most striking example of this new ethical consciousness in postmoralistic times. With irony, but also cynicism and a strange postmodern joy, Lipovetsky describes the present business ethics movement as "the corporation in search of a soul."[61] Corporations are realizing that economic growth is based on values-driven management. Lipovetsky emphasizes that the new conception of ethics is not primarily idealistic, but rather based on the pragmatic conception that ethics pays.

In addition to being a political issue of macroeconomic politics, ethics is increasingly considered as a matter of proper corporate conduct. Ethics is not only an individual phenomenon, but rather considered as an integrated part of the project of the firm.[62] While traditional companies are developing a kind of moral

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[57] Ibid., p. 212.

[58] Ibid., p. 145.

[59] Ibid., p. 220.

[60] Ibid., p. 151.

[61] Gilles Lipovetsky: "Les noces de l'éthique et du business" in *Le Débat*, novembre–decembre, 1991, numéro 67, pp. 145–167.

[62] Ibid., p. 147.

contract with their employees through written ethics and compliance programs, new network companies are working with a more open and less formal agreement with employees about company ethics.

Lipovetsky considers business ethics as an expression of a post-technocratic and posthierarchical historical period, in which business ethics is a very good example of the secularization of morality in postmodernity.[63] In our society, the legitimacy of the corporation is neither traditional, nor charismatic or rational-technological. What is happening is that the consensual demands of legitimacy have replaced the great conflicts of modernity between employers and employees. Democratic legitimacy of the corporation implies that an organization should find a harmony between individual and collective interests. The combination of ethics and business is a good example of this search for harmony. Accordingly, the idea that good ethics is good business expresses a postmodern instrumental view on virtue.[64]

In this context, CSR illustrates the emergence of a new discourse of management, based on respect for integrity, loyalty, and a humanistic concern for the vulnerability of the employee. This is partly a response to new conditions of action in a multidimensional and unstable economic environment. But, at the same time, holistic intelligence and multiple managerial skills, based on ethical behavior on a long-term basis, will supply the highest growth. Even if the idea of CSR emerged out of radical environmental and social criticism of economic activities, it has now been integrated as a major management concern for the community of the firm. Social responsibility is considered as a moral obligation, which is qualitatively different from compliance with legal rules. The company is required to have values and ideals that go beyond positive legal norms.[65] This is the proper place of the idea of corporate citizenship, where the firm is considered as a mature, responsible, and reflexive organization.

Lipovetsky uses the expression "auto-institution" from Castoriadis to express the constructive aspects of the idea of the moral personality of the corporation. Business values can be seen as the result of a rational deliberative process within the firm. In this context, the ideal of CSR is based on a belief in the capacity of corporate self-regulation without direct state intervention in their process of value formulation. Based on the ideal of sustainable development, business ethics has changed the economic conception of the future. The concept of sustainable development implies that the corporation finds the right balance between profit maximization and prudent use of resources. Lipovetsky sees this as an indication of an ethics of compromise and an Aristotelian just mean between extremes.[66] The essence of this reasoning is the negotiated economy and the effort to find a balance between individual concerns of different stakeholders.

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[63] Ibid., p. 148.

[64] Ibid., p. 149.

[65] Ibid., p. 149.

[66] Ibid., p. 152.

An important aspect of business ethics is the conception of ethics as an integrated part of public relations. Ethics programs, audits, and social responsibility reports are viewed as communicative strategies to improve the corporate image and institutional legitimacy. Lipovetsky is aware of the fact that changed conditions for economic activity implies that an open system of communicative legitimacy has replaced Smith's invisible hand.[67] Companies use ethics as conscious strategies in order to improve public relations. Concerns for social responsibility emerge as strategic tools in situations of organizational crisis, where corporations have to protect their image. We may say that it is in these situations corporations take advantage of presenting themselves as good citizens because honesty and responsibility about bad products may change public judgment and criticism.[68] Using good public relations methods, a crisis situation may be changed into a presentation of the corporation as a responsible citizen. In a modern competitive climate, ethics and values are used as marketing branding and devices to improve a firm's reputation among consumers.

Lipovetsky argues that we cannot exclude these strategic dimensions from business ethics. Moreover, such a combination between strategy and values seems to be a constitutive dimension of the morality of CSR. From the postmodern perspective, we live in a postmoralistic time in which morality functions as a tool for differentiation and personalization of the firm.[69] The ideas of integrity and excellence should, from this perspective, not exclusively be viewed as moral ideals, but also as a way to integrate the firm in community. Based on CSR, marketing and public relations no longer consider consumers as blind and stupid desiring machines, but rather as responsible individuals who want to make good moral choices. Moreover, the control and power of the firm on the market has become more sophisticated. The corporation has to respond to democratic human beings in an open structure of communication. According to this view, marketing of products based on values is very efficient in a society with a high culture of individualism, where citizens are highly conscious of their consumer choices and personal style.

Accordingly, Lipovetsky can argue that management and ethics do not exclude each other. The replacement of Taylorist scientific management with a more soft values-driven management is nothing but the logical development of management strategies, in order to make them fit with a posttotalitarian society. Values-driven management emphasizes commitment, personal responsibility, dialogue and communication, sharing of profits, and continuous training and education of employees. But according to Lipovetsky, such a cultivation of employee creativity and human resources, in a loosely connected network or flat project organization without hierarchical and bureaucratic structure of organizations, is necessary to increase managerial efficiency.[70] Emphasis on personal responsibility and creativity is the

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[67] Ibid., p. 155.

[68] Ibid., p. 154.

[69] Ibid., p. 156.

[70] Ibid., p. 159.

most functional method to make modern, radically individualized human beings take part in the community of the firm. Soft and communicative values integrate individuals into the organization in the context of a highly competitive environment. In this context, values are efficient ways to manipulate the individual to feel that he or she belongs to the firm.

Therefore, with Lipovetsky, we can conceive that the idea of ethics as good business is based on a paradox, because the firm has to hide that the concern for ethics is based on strategic calculation in order to receive acceptance. This is the case for public relations, but it is also the case for values-driven management and firms promoting themselves as socially responsible. Moreover, it is also a sad paradox, the true "ruse de la raison entrepreneuriale," that values-driven management, rather than promoting the ideal of individual autonomy, in many cases seems to be primarily an advantage for the corporation, because the value of personal responsibility seems to be extremely efficient in order to promote the work performance of individuals.[71]

The paradox is that business ethics and values in management is the most efficient strategy in order to cope with modern individualism, but at the same time it may be counterproductive to positive aspects of the culture of individualism, because it seeks to adapt the individual to the performance pressure of corporations. From this perspective, moralization of work may imply that individuals are continuously asked to be creative and self-realizing at work. Replacing discipline and duty with responsibility and virtue can lead to increased pressure on individuals, because values are determined by internal conscience rather than external sanctions.

The danger of an ethics of responsibility, trying to overcome the opposition between private life and work, may be a "hyperabsorption" of the individual in the firm, rather than personal liberation. New imperatives of creativity, virtue, and innovation are replacing old totalitarian views on the work force. Accordingly, personal development, team building, trust, solidarity, and responsibility take over the function of Taylorist management tools in order to motivate postmodern individuals. The result is not freedom and social responsibility, but increased stress and psychological breakdown among workers pressed to ultimate potential. Accordingly, emphasis on values-driven management in corporations many lead to greater existential instability.[72]

On this basis, we may suggest a critical evaluation of the function of CSR and business ethics. These possible paradoxes of the link between managerial technology and ethics do not, however, manifest sufficient arguments for abandoning business ethics and CSR as important aspects of Western business culture. Lipovetsky seems to be aware of that. After denouncing the Taylorist use of ideal individual responsibility, he emphasizes the need for an ethics of respect for human rights. Moreover, it is important to be aware of the human demand for recognition

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[71] Ibid., p. 161.
[72] Ibid., p. 164.

in social relationships. Instead, of exclusively using business ethics as a new management tool we should work for an authentic integration of individuals in community.[73]

In his analysis of hypermodernity in *Le bonheur paradoxal*, Lipovetsky integrates this analysis in a view of the development from postmodernity to hypermodernity.

Hypermodernity, or hypermodern society, is conceived as an escalation of modernity, that is, a kind of creative construction of experience, where the creativity of human beings as makers of metaphors and symbols moves to the forefront of capitalist production. We are searching for more than maximization of pleasure preferences in the cultural industry. We want to become new human beings when we eat at restaurants, travel, go to the theatre, read magazines or books, or even when we buy ordinary products in the grocery store or in the supermarket. We want to experience happiness and authenticity in all aspects of our lives as consumers. Consumption shall help us to construct our identities: I shop therefore I am. It is the creativity of the producers and designers of experiences that is needed to fulfill this search for meaning in the experience economy.

The conditions of possibility of the experience economy are based on the historic changes of the meaning of creativity in human societies. Today, with a hypermodern society, creativity means something else than it had previously in history. What is essential is that creativity is no longer based on a higher divine reality, but instead, it refers to the entrepreneurial genius of the human creative spirit. With no divine meaning left, it is the job of the creative class to fill the empty space of the loss of meaning in postmodernity or hypermodernity, and because there is no pregiven meaning dependent on a metaphysical reality, the consumer must be also creative and create meaning through experiences. Human beings are now primarily defined as hyperconsumers and their appearance as citizens is derived from this condition of consumption.

Hypermodernity expresses a metamorphosis of liberal culture. We live in a consumer society that has become global and international. In the hypermodern society, we can talk about a new system of consumption that has become universalized. What characterizes hypermodern society is the development of a world culture of consumption. We can talk about universalization of the brand market economy globally. The global market culture is a culture of worldwide media and commercial culture. Hypermodern society is made possible with the neoliberal ideology of the free market and private happiness through consumption, and it was accelerated with the global revolution of information technologies.

Lipovetsky describes the three phases of the development of hypermodern consumer society: (1). The period from 1880 to the Second World War. (2). The period from the 1950s to the 1970s. (3). The time starting with the 1970s–1980s (where we really see that consumer society fully developed).

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[73] Ibid., p. 164.

We have been facing hypermodern society since at least the 1980s. Whereas the first phase of industrial society was signaled by the emergence of industrial society for an elite, the second phase was marked by the increased generalization of consumer society, as well as by increased individualization of consumption, for example through the generalization of luxury products, like perfumes, media appliances, et cetera. However, it is only with the emergence of hypermodern society that we really face the individualization of products.

In this individualist society, we see how individuals are able to organize their space and time on the basis of their individuality. Accordingly, we can argue that the individualization of consumption, combined with the focus on individual experience, makes immaterial experience and pleasure the focus of product promotion and product content. This new society of hyperconsumption is marked by a break with the conformities of class society. Although class differences still exist, there is no specific class culture. In this sense, the consuming individual is utterly liberated from the traditional institutions and from the cultural bonds of society. We can say that the consumer of the experience economy is a "turbo-consumer," a capitalist consumer who is no longer regulated by strong ethics and who is free to consume as much as he or she wants.

A very good example of this turbo-consumer in hypermodernity is the consumer of great international brands, which express the global logic of hyperconsumption. Through global marketing, brands appeal to our dreams of having authentic experiences. Consumers of hypersociety are not particularly loyal to one brand, but they are loyal to the promise of happiness in the brand economy that activates their dreams and emotions. The global brand economy expresses the logic of experience as emotional, rather than bound to the materiality of the products. Hyperconsumption is a continuing renewal of the sensations. It is travel in experience. The turbo-consumer wants the most intense experience, and in order to get this experience the turbo-consumer overcomes traditional limits of time and space that are taken over by the commercial logic. There is a close link between the brand economy and the search for happiness as the ultimate imperative of hyperconsumption society.

In *La culture-monde: réponse à une société désorienté* (2008), Lipovetsky discusses globalization of culture from the perspective of hypermodernity. We can mention fashion, advertisements, tourism, art, and the Hollywood star system as aspects of a world culture that has become dominant in hyper-modernity, and that aims to satisfy the consumer search for experiential satisfaction. At the same time, this globalization of culture—in the framework of an experience economy—is marked by the paradoxes of increased complexity and increased collective and individual disorientation.

The capitalist experience economy is supposed to respond to the dark sides of increased individualization and narcissism. Individualist mass society has less common references to give a sense of meaning and community, so the world culture of brand consumption is supposed to be the compensatory device that can give individuals meaning and fullness in their individual lives, which are increasingly devoid of meaning. World culture promoted through experience economy is the

only tool left to give meaning and sense to individual lives, yet it is far from certain that it is succeeding in its task.

Accordingly, we can see how the philosophy and sociology of Lipovetsky proposes some important concepts for business ethics and philosophy of management. The changed conditions of postmodernity have provided changed conditions of ethics. The analysis of the narcissistic and individualistic ethics of postmodernity has had strong impact on the development of the business ethics movement and the structure of ethics as pragmatic virtues of self-realization. Moreover, the emergence of hypermodernity and globalized culture has contributed to the universalization of this condition of business ethics as being a global basis for philosophy of management and CSR.

11.4   Bernard Stiegler: Hypermodernism, Pharmacology, and Ars Industrialis

Bernard Stiegler (b. 1952) takes up many themes from postmodernism and poststructuralist philosophy, through engagement with the thought of Lyotard, Deleuze, Marx, and integrates them in a powerful synthesis. In particular he is inspired by Simondon's concept of individuation and the Derrida's idea of the "pharmakon." This is integrated into a critical and pharmacological social theory that relates to many issues of contemporary society. In this way, Stiegler has proposed an analysis of hyperindustrial society and capitalism that can explain the conditions of the cultural capitalism of hyperindustrial society. Stiegler defines a catastrophe as something that ends one history and makes room for another history.[74]

Stiegler can be said to continue the deconstructive business ethics of Derrida, combining elements of the critical postmodernism of Lipovetsky. Stiegler's approach can be defined as a critical pharmacology of business ethics and economics in hypermodern society.

Stiegler defines modern society as a hyperindustrial society characterized by cultural capitalism, where voters in democracy are reduced to demos and consumers who are generally disoriented. The mass consumer is the new figure of the proletarian existence. The hyperindustrial age, with its cultural capitalism where consumerism is substituted for the society of social control, is a society where the important task is to dominate the technology of information.[75] The battle of power has become a battle about Internet technology and communication, and the cultural question has entered into the heart of industrial politics.

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[74] Bernard Stiegler: *Mécréance et discrédit. 1. La décadence des démocraties industrielles.* Galilée, Paris 2004.

[75] Ibid., p. 24.

An important element of capitalism is "grammatization" in writing, whereby individuals are inscribed in a system of communication and normative significance.[76] Grammatization leads to individualization of singularities without authenticity in society. It is the process of individualization in the history of Western metaphysics where the world of ideas is made into a supplement for real life.[77]

Stieglers early work was captured in a three-volume book series on the philosophy of technology. In *La technique et le temps I–III* (1994–2001), Stiegler defines a technological system as the basis of understanding technology. A human society is constituted by a technological system that evolves historically and changes and adjusts itself through new social ethical programs that become the basis for individual and collective individuation, which is the basis for the future of society.

According to Stiegler, there is a close relation between memory and technology, and we have to think of human conscious and memory as kinds of technology.[78] Further, the technology of remembering and recalling the ideas of the mind is a technological activity.

Stiegler proposes to conceive human becoming as a process of coordination between the psychic, collective, and technological individual. Individuals are systems that are constructed of organs that form the living body, which is a part of what Simondon calls a process of vital individuation. Individuals are constituted through a global process of individuation that is formed in a global temporal process, according to an application of Husserl's concept of retention. This temporal process is primarily experienced as psychic, but it is also a part of a collective and social process that leaves traces of experienced time. In this movement, there is also space for individual reactivation of movements, so that the collective order is destabilized through establishment of individual dispositions.[79] This is the basis for individuation, where we emerge as particular living beings.

Stiegler searches for a new European cultural politics that makes it possible to control the totality of cultural technologies. Indeed, communication technologies can also contribute to a society of control.[80] Europe has to enter into the industrial and cultural war that is about cultivation, brand, and marketing. Stiegler talks about a European revolution of the mind in order to deal with globalization. From this point of view, Europe should invent its own cultural and industrial political project. We must avoid the de-individuation of European societies. We need to go beyond the society of control and reduction of human beings to consumers in order to overcome decadence and invent a particular European society with focus on European values.

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[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid., p. 188.

[78] Bernard Stiegler: *Philosopher par accident*. Entretiens avec Élie During, Galilée 2004, p. 35.

[79] Bernard Stiegler: *Mécréance et discrédit.2.Les sociétés incontrolables d'individus désaffectés*, Galilée, Paris 2006, p. 35.

[80] Bernard Stiegler: *Mécréance et discrédit. 1. La décadence des démocraties industrielles*. Galilée, Paris 2004, p. 40.

The idea is that we are living in a democracy of decadence because human beings are reduced to consumers. This consumer society is a part of capitalism that today has become computer capitalism, determined by industrial and cultural politics. We can talk about a libidinal economy that is also symbolic and spiritual, and that requires individuation as an expression of cultural capitalism.[81]

Capitalism is a stage of psychosocial individuation of Western society. According to Simondon, proletarization of individuals in capitalism can also be analyzed as a loss of personal individuation of the self in the industrial world, with alienation as the result. This is also the case for the consumer who loses his or her ability to live.[82]

Consumer capitalism is also characterized by different technologies of domination, of power, and of the self.[83] Examples include the technologies of biopolitical disciplinary power, as analyzed by Foucault. Stiegler emphasizes that the technologies of control continue and develop the biopolitical technologies. However, control societies are not about make human beings into production machines; rather, they create a market for consumption, and here we can see a de-subjectivation, a destruction of singular understandings of *savoir-vivre*.[84] The control society re-inscribes the libido in the individual as a consumer through practices of individuation. Today, desire and libido have become systematically an object of capitalist exploitation.[85]

This is realized through the practice of the self, "l'otium du people," where the people in late capitalism use different techniques of self-domination in order to live in the postmodern leisure society. At the same time, this is a proletarization of the individual as consumer. Control society contributes to this domination of the individual. This is the result of individuals acting as elements in the collective mass of the group, which is individualized through collective programs of consumption.

In opposition to this, Stiegler mentions Arendt's concept of *vita active* as the ideal of active human beings in contrast to passive consumers. He also hopes that the technological individuation, with the emergence of a catastrophe leading to something new, can lead to a psychosocial individuation that moves beyond the proletarization of capitalism.[86]

In the second book of the triology, *Mécréance et discrédit. 2. Les sociétés incontrolables d'individus désaffectés* (2006), Stiegler addresses two topics that relate to the debate about contemporary society in French philosophy. (1) The uncontrollable societies of disaffected individuals and (2) the lost spirit of capitalism.[87]

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[81] Ibid., p. 75.

[82] Ibid., p. 94.

[83] Ibid., p. 109.

[84] Ibid., p. 116.

[85] Ibid., p. 123.

[86] Ibid., p. 206.

[87] Bernard Stiegler: *Mécréance et discrédit.2.Les sociétés incontrolables d'individus désaffectés*, Galilée, Paris 2006, p. 23.

In contrast to Boltanski and Chiapello, Stiegler does not think that there is a new spirit of capitalism; rather, capitalism is a threat to its own self-destruction.[88] Capitalism has lost its spirit and the disaffection of individuals is a result of this loss. This is an element of the general disidentification of individuals in society. The society of control is an attempt to control human desire and libido, but this is an impossible task, and the control society is not sustainable because it leads to its opposite, to the uncontrollability of the human animal.

In industrial society, the power of the rational is stressed everywhere, but it is not certain that it always works. In contrast to rationality, we are also faced with the spontaneity of trust.[89] In our lives we presuppose trust in technology, and the coherence of global society is based on this trust. At the same time, we experience that the vulnerability of the technological system is increasing as it becomes more and more sophisticated, and the hyperpower is accompanied by systemic hypervulnerability. This is the basis for what is incontrollable of the technological system of the hyperindustrial époque.[90]

The rationality of the system is based on mutual expectations and trust. This has increased with the system of Internet and other communication technologies; however, the hypervulnerability is also present in different technologies, such as nuclear power or medical biotechnology.

Technology is considered through the social desire for justice, which is an essential element in the libidinal economy. In contrast to this desire for justice, control society implies the liquidation of the super-ego and the reign of animalism (la bêtise). The collective proletarization of capitalism leads to collective disindividuation that destroys the social. The pure desire of the libidinal economy becomes cynicism without individuals.[91] We should not destroy individuality and the super-ego, but make a kind of Kantian critique of the super-ego. Whereas control society makes human beings into animals, it becomes an uncontrollable society that implies total desublimation and cynicism. This leads to a vicious circle of social autodestruction.

Control society is linked to terror. The irrationality of hyperpower leads to global violence. It destroys confidence and calculating and controlling motives become the spirit of capitalism. The problem is that this implies the death of God, as Weber suggests. Rationalizing and calculating trust is impossible.[92] This generalization of control technologies leads to an increase of the vulnerability of the global system, with terrorism as a possible result.[93] The problem is that we have systematically organized the economic system and political economy on bêtise, which is in danger of implying the self-destruction of the industrial society because of desublimation.

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[88] Ibid., p. 17.

[89] Ibid., p. 30.

[90] Ibid., p. 32.

[91] Ibid., p. 45.

[92] Ibid., p. 95.

[93] Ibid., p. 97.

We need a society of justice that respects individuation and sublimation as a part of identification of the self. Ethics and justice belong to the individual in society, and this is abandoned with the cynicism in the libidinal economy. Individuals desire justice and ethics, but the problem is that the industrial organization implies the disidentification of the individual. We need, therefore, another industrial process that favors the process of individuation, as suggested by Simondon. We need a new industrial politics that takes into account the necessity of the process of individuation, implying a concern for transindividual desire for justice.[94] Stiegler uses the concept of aristocracy to characterize this culture of singularities, determined by the desire for justice.

Moreover, we need to understand that the objects of trust and belief do not exist, but we need them. They assist in the social translation of desire when we have forgotten our singularity, in order to make society exist. Disbelief destroys capitalism because it changes the future into calculation, which means that there is no future. Calculation leads to the loss of trust that is necessary to make the system work. This destruction of trust leads to the loss of the spirit of capitalism and the self-destruction of the capitalist spirit, with spiritual misery as the result. Consequently, we need to defend capitalism against itself in order to re-establish its spiritual value of sublimation related to trust beyond calculation. We need to go beyond *bêtise* and re-establish institutions that value singularity.[95]

In fact, value is a desire for something that cannot be totally calculated. If everything is calculated, there is no desire. This is the problem of the industrial economy where everything is calculated, and therefore without value, which results in nihilism.[96] Stiegler gives an example of two parents who committed suicide and killed their five children because they were so wracked with credit card dept that they had lost all hope.[97]

Generalized calculation of everything renders everything without value. Stiegler argues that the market society destroys people's lives because everything becomes dependent on the market and on consumption. The world of hypermarket is a world where the calculating machines have taken over from the lives of individuals. The psychological and collective individuation has, in this way, changed into collective disindividuation, because everything has become marketing and publicity. Stiegler goes so far as to talk about collective disaffection where nobody has any feelings for others anymore, which is expressed, for example, in the lack of affection by young criminals towards their victims. In this sense, we can speak of the lost spirit of capitalism.[98] This affective saturation can be shown by many examples from the concrete life in society of the generalized sociopathology of the loss of affectivity—a generalized loss of the sense of existence in consumer society. With this, Stiegler

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[94] Ibid., p. 48.

[95] Ibid., pp. 110–111.

[96] Ibid., p. 117.

[97] Ibid., pp. 118–120.

[98] Ibid., p. 130.

searches for a libidinal economy with a spiritual aspect; in other words, a Catholicism that can contribute to individual and collective individuation, because the lack of this is the lack of the spirit of capitalism.[99]

In the third part of the triology, *Mécréance et discrédit. 3. L'esprit perdu du capitalisme*, Stiegler continues this analysis of the lost spirit of capitalism by criticizing Boltanski and Chiappello's work on the new spirit of capitalism. In this work he also provides a reading of the revolution of 1968 and of *Eros and civilization* (1955) by Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979). In fact, with the liberation of desire in the libidinal economy, the intellectual movements of 1968 contributed to the self-destruction of capitalism because they supported the general process of desublimization in capitalism. Stiegler shows how the libidinal economy, which characterizes capitalism, is in fact marked by a kind of pharmakon, as shown by Plato, where the desired object is the object on which the subject of desire depends. Accordingly, it acts at the same time as both poison and healing medicine for the subject. This points to a way to move capitalism from hyperindustrial society to a libidinal ecology.[100]

Stiegler proposes a new political economy and a new form of capitalism that is aware of the value and need for this new spirit. Further, this new form would accept that cognitive capitalism is a sublimation of libidinal capitalism, and that capitalism (by liberating the sublimated energy) destroys its own libidinal energy, which gives it its authority.[101] Desublimation is the fact, but the constitutive power of the spirit of transindividuation presupposes the sublimation of the libido. The paradox is that capitalism that arises from human desire destroys this desire (Derrida's *paradoxe auto-immunitaire*).

In his reading of *Eros and civilization*, Stiegler refers to his concept "hypomnésic practices" (sleeping or doping practices) of otium (a kind of doping of people) that he calls care (*soin*) as basic for thinking a new critical psychopathology and sociopathology that is necessary in order to develop a new political economy that overcome the doping of the population. The spirit of capitalism is lost in the uncontrollable society with disaffected and disindividualized individuals lacking superegos. The law of pharmakon, where poison is medicine and medicine is poison, is the paradoxical reality of present technological capitalism.

Stiegler continues this argument in *Ce qui fait que la vie vaut la peine d'être vécue: de la pharmacologie* (2012), where he develops his concept of pharmacology. According to Stiegler, the pharmakon is the transitional object that gives us the feeling that life is worth living.[102] The concept of pharmakon was developed by

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[99] Ibid., p. 160.

[100] Bernard Stiegler: *Mécréance et discrédit.3.L'esprit perdu du capitalisme*, Galilée, Paris 2006, p. 13.

[101] Bernard Stiegler: *Mécréance et discrédit.3.L'esprit perdu du capitalisme*, Galilée, Paris 2006, p. 27.

[102] Bernard Stiegler: *Ce qui fait que la vie vaut la peine d'être vécu. De la pharmacologie*, Flammarion, Paris 2010.

Derrida in his reading of Plato in "La pharmacie de Platon," where the pharmakon is writing; that is, artificial memory (*hypomnésis, hypomnématon*).[103] Stiegler says that the question of pharmakon is at the heart of our present planetary economic and academic crises.

We can say that we face the possibility of an apocalypse without God, where humanity can destroy itself. We are in a war of globalization, with industrial technologies that are destroying the ecosystems of Earth, and its social and psychological structures. This was revealed by the global financial crisis in 2008. With reference to Valery's description of the crisis after the First World War, Stiegler emphasizes the fundamental ambiguity that this destruction would not have been possible without human science, knowledge, and reason, as Plato described writing as something that forgets the original world of truth, which is the case technology of rational spirit of modern science.[104]

Stiegler emphasizes that Husserl's description of the crisis of the European sciences, and Adorno and Horkheimer's investigation of the dialectics of the Enlightenment, reveal the same tensions. Habermas described how instrumental and technological reason dominates other forms of reason, though, according to Stiegler, critical theory tries to escape from the pharmacology of logos, as such.[105] This is because the philosophers of critical theory, Horkheimer and Adorno only see technology as critical, and do not really accept the function of technology as pharmakon. The dialectics of reason, where people are proletarized as consumers, is, however, an expression of the function of pharmakon.

Western civilization can be read on the basis of pharmakon. Fire, with its creative and destructive powers, is a fundamental expression of the double logic of pharmakon. This is also expressed in the human libido, with the struggle between eros and thanatos. In particular, the logic of pharmakon is expressed in our relation to technology in the nuclear age, where generalized automatization means total proletarization. In fact, Derrida called the atomic era the absolute pharmakon, that is, structurally oriented towards its own apocalyptic destruction.[106] Today, this has become even more automatized, in the sense that the military establishment of atomic technology is totally automatic. The industrial pharmacological age is the automatic age, including proletarization and transindividuation.

Referring to Virillio, Stiegler argues that the Cuban missile crisis was about leaving a possibility for human decision in the middle of the automatic systems of military technology. Moreover, in today's financial markets, a similar movement characterizes the speed of automatization. In fact, capitalism solves the problem of the time by using technology, but this involves making time an abstraction in relation to the concrete work of the individual. In particular, fictive capital is a pharmakon, as in the highly publicized case of Bernie Madoff, with his gigantic

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[103] Ibid., p. 13.

[104] Ibid., p. 25.

[105] Ibid., p. 34.

[106] Ibid., p. 68.

Ponzi scheme fraud. If we look at human welfare, it is determined by the technology of biopower and accomplished with psychopower that is used for individual technological domination.

In this context, Derrida focused on speed when developing his "nuclear criticism."[107] According to Stiegler, nuclear criticism means that we have to go beyond. When Derrida talked about nuclear criticism, he argued that this is philosophy at the limits of experience and finitude. Nuclear criticism is the philosophy of the limits of criticism. This is a self-destruction that leads to the destruction of the concept of criticism, but this criticism is impossible. We therefore need to learn to live with the pharmakon. Accordingly, Stiegler proposes that another solution other than total deconstruction that is possible. This is the idea of a pharmacology that also takes care of the individual.

This idea is developed in relation to the economic system. The system of care is also a libidinal economy, and there may be potentialities for transindividuation in the technologies of psychopower that become sociotechnologies for new forms of social existence. This is also the case with transformative technologies that contribute to the creation of a posthuman situation. There is an on-going industrialization of pharmakon towards this posthumanity. The role of strategic marketing is important for this control of human beings in consumer society.

We need to develop new technologies of cure in order to overcome biopower and escape from control society. One way to deal with the globalized technological capitalism is to work for sustainable development. Instead of consumption that is destruction, we need to give the economy a new form of libidinal orientation that does not destroy, but takes care of the object.[108] We need to create new motivation and capacity for sustainable investment in society. This economy is a new libidinal economy that takes care of life, and the politics of care also relies on human capabilities, as defined by Amartya Sen (b. 1933).[109] This politics of care should not reduce care to an ethical question, but instead put it in the center of the political economy. This should imply a new way of life, where to economize means taking care.[110]

Stiegler proposes a reading of postmodernism as a new form of libidinal economy, as it has emerged in North America. This is based on the idea that the postmodern economy destroys the spirit of capitalism because it is a consumption-based organization that destroys the libido.[111] Stiegler has proposed the project of the organization *Ars industrialis* as an attempt to develop this new and different economy.[112] This organization takes up Stiegler's philosophical program of

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[107] Ibid., p. 70. Stiegler refers to Derrida's conference: "No apocalypse, not now".

[108] Ibid., p. 144.

[109] Ibid., p. 151.

[110] Ibid., p. 153.

[111] Ibid., p. 155.

[112] Bernard Stiegler, Alain Giffard et Christian Fauré: *Pour en finir avec la mécroissance. Quelques réflexions d'Ars Industrialis*, Flammarion, Paris 2009.

criticizing the proletarization of consumer society and develops a new political economy of care. Stiegler deals here with the immaterial experience economy, proposing a strategy for "brand France."[113] Creativity and innovation are based on this immaterial economy that is, however, nothing but a new form of the libidinal economy.[114] Instead, we need a new capitalism that is based on a future-oriented view of libidinal economy, and a new industrial organization based on care, rather than destructive consumption.

The theme is also the topic of *État de choc: bêtise et savoir au XXI siècle* (2012).[115] In this book, Stiegler shows how the financial crisis was accompanied by a loss of autonomy and sovereignty for the university and the government. Stiegler argues that the economic crisis implies the generalization of stupidity, where the minority has the power and privileges, and the majority is submitted to proletarization.[116] Postmodernity implies a destruction of the university, and the humanistic concept of knowledge. Education becomes solely about creating technologies of the mind, instead of general education.[117] This should be seen from the perspective of the general technological shock of Joseph Shumpeter's (1883–1950) creative destruction, which is the basis of capitalism. However, it is now technology that has taken over the power, and there is a danger of destroying the human element in society.

Stiegler questions the responsibility of the university after Fukushima.[118] This nuclear catastrophe, which is linked to the financial system, implies unforeseeable consequences for the Earth and its biosphere. In the financial system, deregulation has led to large profits for few financial firms and people, while at the same time shaking the social dimensions of the economy. Moreover, the economic model of consumer society contributes to the technological self-destruction of society. Indeed, it is a paradox that over one billion people on Earth suffer from famine, while the Western world is characterized by overconsumption.[119]

With reference to the dialectics of reason by Adorno and Horkheimer as an expression of the pharmacological situation of technological and industrial society, Stiegler talks about generalized vulgarity and stupidity (*bêtise, basesse*). Heidegger referred to great stupidity (*grosse dumheit*). At the same time, he defends, following Derrida, the special responsibility of the university to deal with the problems of technoscience and the planetary crisis of hyperindustrial society.[120]

Stiegler takes up Derrida's analysis of stupidity, animality, and sovereignty in *Séminaire: la bête et le souverain* (2010).[121] How can this be used to understand the

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[113] Ibid., p. 61.

[114] Ibid., p. 67.

[115] Bernard Stiegler: *État de choc. Bêtise et savoir au XXI siècle*, Mille et une nuit, Paris 2012.

[116] Ibid., p. 13.

[117] Ibid., p. 16.

[118] Ibid., p. 23.

[119] Ibid., p. 237.

[120] Ibid., p. 38.

[121] Ibid., p. 57.

crisis of sovereignty after the financial crisis? Derrida asks whether there it is possible to combat stupidity? If stupidity, like writing, is a pharmakon that is linked to traces of materiality, then it is something that is close to proletarization.[122] Stiegler thinks that it is possible to fight stupidity, but at the same time, stupidity is not just lack of knowledge. There is a link between knowledge and stupidity, as suggested by the law of pharmakon. We need to make a positive pharmacology (deconstruction) of stupidity in order to fight it, and this is the exceptional responsibility of the university and university professor in a time where the world is dominated by stupidity.[123]

With this Stiegler addresses what Naomi Klein (b. 1970) calls disaster capitalism in *The Shock Doctrine. The rise of disaster capitalism* (2007). Klein explains that the Bush government, following Milton Friedman, used a disaster like Katerina in New Orleans to privatize the schools in the process of reconstruction. This is an example of the shock strategy and doctrine that is used as creative destruction of capitalism. Technological shocks are used by capitalism to overcome itself with new technologies (pharmakon) as instruments.

Accordingly, to say so something stupid is also to do something stupid, and this increases the practical responsibility of university professors. The link between knowledge and stupidity is explained by the figure of Greek mythology, *Epiméthée*, who thought only on this basis of his own stupidity.[124] The idea is that when you get more knowledge you also realize that your knowledge is limited and you become more stupid. In this sense, there is a pharmacological condition of knowledge, and the university is supposed to struggle continuously against stupidity. Derrida does not link stupidity to the animal, but to individuation. Stupidity is a transcendental psychological feature, but at the same time, it is a condition of individuation. This is the reason we can speak about a systemic planetary stupidity.[125] This has emerged because it is the system of consumer capitalism that is the basis for individuation in market society. The problem is that stupidity is what is really human. Stupidity, like dissemination and difference, is in the center of the imagination of consciousness as ideology and technology; therefore, the university that exercises transmission of knowledge and technology is responsible for the global stupidity and must work critically with it.[126]

It is an important task to critically study the organizational complexities that lead to stupidity: that is, the psychopower of capitalism and the biopower of the state. This study should deal with systemic disindividuation and massive stupidity as at the center of the focus on responsibility, autonomy, and reason (in relation to technology), while remaining aware of the danger of the responsibility of knowing that technology is in danger of being itself toxic. This is illustrated by

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[122] Ibid., p. 59.

[123] Ibid., p. 61.

[124] Ibid., p. 82.

[125] Ibid., p. 108.

[126] Ibid., p. 143.

Lyotard's analysis of difference (*le différend*) as the postmodern condition where we experience a differentiation of responsibility in multiplicity.[127] Or, we could say complexity. But at the same time, the postmodern condition is a description of the dissolution of responsibility, and Lyotard is in danger of justifying capitalism, qua Friedman.[128] Instead, we need to think of responsibility as a new collective and social individuation, as a positive pharmacology based on the capacity of decision making beyond the subject of the cogito.[129] In fact, the description of knowledge as performative, as suggested by Lyotard, is an expression of automatization of scientific knowledge, where knowledge is no longer critical and theoretical, but purely procedural with a material, formal, and efficient causality that is not related to a final theoretical aim.[130]

The new responsibilities of the university in the world economic war implies an economy of attention where the university contributes to teaching people how to think and re-establish thought and spirit, in opposition to numeric technology.[131] We need a therapeutic reflection on the pharmacological condition of knowledge in order to overcome generalized proletarization and systemic stupidity. This implies interdisciplinarity and interaction between critical philosophies as curative pharmacology, with the technological sciences operating from the perspective of the political economy of care. This is a new challegence for business ethics and philosophy of management.

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[127] Ibid., p. 168.

[128] Ibid., p. 170.

[129] Ibid., pp. 173–174.

[130] Ibid., p. 222.

[131] Ibid., p. 247.

Chapter 12
Conclusion and Perspectives: Implications of French Philosophy for Business Ethics and Philosophy of Management

The aim of this book has been to provide the foundations for business ethics and philosophy of management from the perspective of French philosophy and social theory. The book has presented the concepts of different important philosophers and philosophical movements in contemporary French philosophy from the twentieth century to the present day, in order to show how these different philosophers and philosophical theories are relevant for business ethics and philosophy of management. This presentation has concentrated on the basic concepts and general philosophical theories in order to develop the foundations for business ethics and ethics of organizations. The basis for this approach has been to give the generally interested reader from business, general management, or business ethics the basis for applying these different theories to their understanding of business, philosophy of management, and business ethics.

Against this background, the book has aimed to provide a philosophical and conceptual clarification of particular concepts of business ethics and the ethics of organizations. Alongside the general presentation of the philosophical theories and movements, the book has also provided the foundations for a deeper philosophical approach to concepts of humanistic management, institutions and action, ideas of business ethics and responsibility, leadership, power in relationship to employees and stakeholders, legitimacy, business and society, and business ethics and judgment. The focus on presenting the different philosophical movements and philosophers has implicitly been the epistemology and ontology of organizations in relation to different aspects of French philosophy. Important concepts included institutions and action, but also ethics, society, and human beings within the different approaches of contemporary French philosophy. Hopefully, this analysis has provided the foundations for understanding concepts of leadership, power, employees, and stakeholders from a broader perspective. This aim of this analysis has been to investigate how modern French philosophy can provide resources for understanding organizational legitimacy, ethics, and judgment, and how we can find answers to questions of this kind in the body of knowledge that is called contemporary French philosophy.

The section on early contemporary French philosophy and business ethics provided the outline of important concepts that have been developed and that have had an influence on contemporary French thought. From Bergson, for example, we can develop concepts about consciousness and human subjectivity that have an impact of human responsibility, memory, creativity, and identity in organizations. But Bergson also provides early foundations for phenomenology and the search for intuitive meaning in organizations. With his works on creative evolution and the sources of morality and religion we can find a foundation for understanding the intuitive and creative evolution of organizations and institutions that provides a new perspective on business ethics, and that also influenced the further development of French thought.

Durkheim was also presented as a classical name informing the development of contemporary French philosophy. He provides a theory of modernization, and of the separation of work and professional ethics, that influenced further thought. Durkheim's sociology defines some essential concepts of organization that have an impact on business ethics. From Mauss we inherit the complex sociology and economy of the gift, which opens a whole area of sociological reflection about the foundations of human interactions in organizations and in society. The sociology and economy of the gift may give us new perspectives on corporate philanthropy and the foundations of ethics, for example as proposed by Bataille, one of the philosophical interpreters of Mauss. From Kojève we get the important Hegelian concepts of recognition and the importance of freedom in history, and in the institutions of modernity. These concepts have direct application for business ethics and they are important in further development of the dialectics between the same and the Other in French thought. Accordingly, with this chapter we proposed intuition and creativity, separation of work and differentiation, and the economy of gift recognition in institutions in advanced modernity as important concepts to retain for further reflection on business ethics and philosophy of organization.

In the chapters on phenomenology and existentialism, we gave the basic outline of a phenomenological and existentialist approach to business ethics and ethics of organizations. From this perspective, the epistemology and ontology of organization focuses on meaning and on the embodied lifeworld of the organization. But we also proposed reflections on human freedom, subjectivity, and intersubjectivity in organizations. With his philosophy of the body and recently published unedited lectures on the concept of the institution, Merleau-Ponty provides us with an historical-intuitive concept of institution that challenges mainstream institutionalism. In his existentialist philosophy of dialectical reason, existentialist praxis philosophy also contains a theory of interaction between organizational members and conditions for organizational decline and innovation. Moreover, the existentialist perspective may provide us with an outline of a conception of dilemmas of leadership and ethical choices in management. Lévinas provides us with a humanistic concern for the Other and the ethical respect for the Other in organizations. This perspective provides support for an ethical institutionalism that offers a critical perspective on organizational totalization of meaning.

   The Marxist tradition was, in some sense, prior to the existentialist tradition, and it also emerged during the 1930s and 1940s in connection with the strong communist party in French politics. The view of the dialectics of organizations and organizing would, in the light of this kind of philosophy, of course be that the workers should take over the means of production and that some kind of collective ownership should be constructed in relation to the means of production. This is a kind of analysis that provides a theory for understanding everyday life of organizations, combined with a critical social theory. Indeed, the dialectical theory of existential Marxism as proposed by Sartre may be a conceived as a theory of institutionalization and of historical development on the basis of the concepts of dialectics and collective human actions from anarchistic revolutionary and innovative groups over stable structures of organizations towards the reified condition of an institution like the state, or like society. From there, we went to the criticism of dialectics of historical action with the structuralist Marxist, Althusser, and his followers, like Balibar, who proposes a strict scientific reading of Marx's *Das Kapital*, as opposed to the anthropological and idealistic readings of Sartre.

   From Althusser we get a structuralist reformulation of Marxism, which may have an influence of our concept of organization. From the structuralist tradition, we can find an entirely different perspective that represents a break with both the phenomenological and historical Marxist approach to organizations. In this sense, the structuralist and poststructuralist perspective also provide possible concepts that can give us new views on organizations. With the concept of structure, Levi-Strauss creates a possible anthropological analysis of the organization as a space of dualisms between clean and unclean, pure and impure. There would also be potential in the structuralist approach to understand the tension between action and structure, which could give us a potential for a new concept of institutionalism in relation to corporations. Norms and values, as well as action, in organizations would be dependent on structure. With Barthes we get an application of structuralist concepts to the analysis of phenomena of daily consumer society, for example, publicity or ideology of market economy society. Lacan provides a psychological turn of structuralism that combines structural analysis with Freudian psychoanalysis in the approach to understanding ethics, organizations, and organizational action.

   When it comes to Foucault, we see a criticism of structuralism and we face an historical genealogical approach to organizations that would include analysis of neoliberalism and its logic of governance as a play of biopower, and a regulative game of discursive domination in corporations. In the philosophy of Deleuze, we can also find a strong criticism of dominant concepts of organizations, and we see discussions of capitalist globalizations that could provide a perspective for understanding the play of desire and difference in organizations. Furthermore, the concept of deconstruction, based on the movement of difference in structure and text in the philosophy of Derrida, may also be analyzed as providing a perspective on the ethics of organization. This approach may contribute with concepts that can help us understand the metaphysics of business ethics and the ethics of organization. With the so-called ethical turn of deconstruction, Derrida may help us with the

deconstruction of the idealistic presuppositions of CSR, and with the search for a new justice and legitimacy of the "coming democracy" in organizations. But there are also many interesting reflections on the gift, recognition, identity, structure, and so forth in Derrida's philosophy, which may provide a different perspective on the ethics of organizations. A follower of Derrida, Nancy helps to move beyond business ethics towards aesthetics of organization that questions concepts of metaphor and narratives in the context of work and organizational culture.

With the critical hermeneutics of Ricœur we move from the phenomenology of the ethical encounter towards a hermeneutic and narrative perspective on organizations and organizational identity. For Ricœur, the foundation of business ethics may be said to be "the good life for and with the other in just institutions." This approach implies a philosophical concept of institutions that is also critical of Sartre's praxis. In this sense, Ricœur provides a hermeneutical turn of the philosophy of organization that also can be presented as a foundation of a narrative conception of business ethics. Ricœur provides the basis for business ethics and philosophy of management with the vision of the good life controlled by the moral norm of universalism, and mediated in the ethical life of community. Ricœur proposes a theory of judgment as the basis for concrete decision making in ethics, leadership, and management.

In French philosophy and social theory, the work of Aron also represents a development of a republican philosophy of management and a liberalist criticism of Sartre's Marxism. Aron provides us with a liberal account of society and the role of organizations within society. He was followed by a liberal tradition in French philosophy that has also drawn on resources in Anglo-American philosophy, for example Hayek and Rawls. In the tradition of republican political philosophy, we also mentioned authors like Castoriadis, Lefort, and Gauchet, who transform concepts like imagination and creativity from the Marxist and phenomenological tradition, and give them a new meaning for a theory of society. Indeed, contemporary defenders of the liberal and republican tradition also include Ferry and Renaut, who have defended a concept of political theory as a criticism of the thought of 1968. This tradition provides a neoliberal framework for understanding organizations and organizational action.

In a very different way, the theory of habitus of the poststructuralist approach to sociology by Bourdieu provides us with a new understanding of the concept of structure, as bound to the habitus of individuals. With his different concepts of human, cultural, and social capital, Bourdieu helps us to understand how norms are generated and developed in organizations. Bourdieu's concepts of body, structure, and habitus also give us a perspective on organizational action that provides a foundation for doing organizational analysis in business ethics. The theory of the new spirit of capitalism by Boltanski and Chiapello can, in some senses, be considered as a continuation of the approach to structuralism by Bourdieu. They show how we have moved from a strict bureaucratic managerial logic of project management in the 1960s to a new logic of network society in the 1990s, where it the value-based project organization—with its concepts of flexibility and values-engagement—that has become the new spirit of capitalism. They define capitalism

as the accumulation of capital that requires some sort of justification in the different periods of history, in the bureaucratic welfare state and today in the advanced project and network capitalism. Capitalism is characterized by a search for justification, and in times of project capitalism, business ethics and CSR become even more important.

In postmodern sociology and philosophy we find a perspective that tries to understand the developments from modernity into another kind of advanced modernity or hypermodernity. In the Lyotard's philosophy of postmodernism, we also find conceptions of the corporation as a postmodern organization with no great narratives or center, but rather as a decentralized project with specific small narratives and values that provides a play of metaphors and a multitude of language games. Moreover, Baudrillard proposed an analysis of the society of consumption that provides an understanding of the desires of late capitalism. Ethics in organization is, in this context, situated and depends on the values of a particular network organization. The important work of Lipovetsky contributes to this new logic of capitalism by analyzing how we have moved towards "les crepuscules du devoir," where business ethics is based on virtue and the search for identity in the experience economy in hypermodernity, rather than on the traditional concepts of duty and a deep sense of responsibility. Lipovetsky shows how business ethics is very important in the hypermodern society, because both consumer and producer are searching for construction of identities and for happiness in the context of the economic exchange of the experience society. Finally, with his philosophy of the pharmakon, Stiegler develops deconstruction and poststructuralism into a critical analysis of the structures of power and domination of contemporary experience society in hypermodernity.

After having presented such a myriad of different points of view and perspectives that can be applied to the problems of business ethics and the ethics of organizations, we can ask the question: What we can learn from French philosophy when we work in business ethics and philosophy of management? The conclusion is that French philosophy contains many important resources for management reflection and reflexivity in business ethics. Those resources are, however, not available without speculative reflection. With hard reflective work, the resources from French philosophy may give us new and surprising perspectives that open new paths to help understand ethics in organization. Moreover, we argue that French philosophy implies a contribution with a framework for understanding potential critical problems in organizations. There is a deep criticism implied in some of the perspectives that may be an eye-opener for managers that can help improve organizations. Indeed, this is also due to the fact that French philosophy and social theory provides increased understanding of organizational culture, dynamics, and legitimacy. This could have real implications for the concrete work in organizations. Hopefully, the book has demonstrated that the resources from French philosophy contribute by improving the ethical formulation competencies and global views on leadership that help to make managers and business students better "reflective practitioners" in our hypermodern experience society.

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