

Manager Humanism: „Spiritualised“ Business and Corporate Life

My book aims to reveal the integrated relationship of management and humanities. It is about to prove that the intellectual, spiritual, literary, and artistic perspectives are inherent elements in the fields of business and management studies. This is the approach implicated in the – title’s – term of *spiritualised* economic and corporate life. I illustrate the characteristics of this integrated managerial thinking with examples picked out of the oeuvres of two prominent management authors, Peter Drucker and Charles Handy. During the analysis of their works and insights, I demonstrate that while they are investigating the different themes of management studies (business culture, entrepreneurial spirit, leadership, and corporate life), the textual practice of their writings flashes some interesting literary aspects.

However, in these cases the literary quality is not meant to transform the works of Drucker and Handy into parts of belles lettres. Instead, I consider the achievements of these authors as a kind of mental *endeavour* or intellectual *flow of energy*, and as it is, I interpret them as part of the *practice of social communication and attitude* defined in Kenneth Burke’s views on rhetoric. This rhetorical praxis is based on the in-betweenness of verbal-textual utterances’ autonomy and their direct application, furthermore on the dynamics between identification and separation which appear in social relationships. So, I refer to the literary aspects of Drucker’s and Handy’s works in this wider sense of Burkean rhetoric.

For analysing the integration of management and humanities skills (that is, a kind of *management of meaning*), we can find a really inspiring thinking model in the book (entitled *Economics of Good and Evil*) by Tomáš Sedláček, the Czech economist with groundbreaking views. Because it reveals that – under the surface of mathematical and

stastical models – in fact the psychological, philosophical, ethical, religious, mythical, and poetic themes are in the focus of economics.

Although, these insights are not so recent developments. In the 1980-90s, after the long period during which the cultural aspects had been regarded as low-status elements in economic thinking and business praxis, intellectual-spiritual values and the process of meaning construction became the central questions in business life and management studies. Since in late capitalism the primary challenge for corporations is to offer meaning and belief in work for their employees, because it is – among others – one of the main preconditions for being successfully competitive in flexible, globalised markets. So, at the end of the 20th century it has become a basic insight in the fields of organizational studies and cultural economics that the intellectual, spiritual, and symbolic perspectives are inherent elements of business or corporate life.

My approach is determined by the the views discussed above, thus in the first half of my book, to establish a social theoretical and cultural framework, on the one hand I demonstrate how the *spirit*/mentality of corporate life became a central theme in late capitalism after the middle of 20th century. On the other hand, I point out that in parallel with the aforementioned developments we can observe the professionalisation and marketization of cultural areas. It is not accident, because the creative-cultural industries may play important role in managing the problems and defects of the late capitalist society. I illustrate this assumption by revealing the use of writing and physical/printed book in corporate culture and business life, which use is based on the *discreteness* and *discreetness* – that is, physical closedness and intellectual-spiritual tactfulness – inherent in the medium of printed texts.

The second half the book concentrates directly on the literary traits of management. I reveal behind the self-management books a long cultural-religious tradition and their contemporary context rooted in self-help industry. Beside these, I also try to show that there may be room for literary reading in business and corporate life, on the basis of its inspiring intellectual-spiritual effects. Then, in the main chapters, I give close analysis

of the oeuvres of my central authors. In connection with Peter Drucker's works, my book highlights that management consultancy is considered by Drucker as a work on intellect and soul, which tries to *move* managers and business leaders spiritually and imaginatively by philosophical aspects, historical depth and different verbal inventions (metaphors, parables, etc.), which would offer new and creative insights for them. In the case of Charles Handy, by detailed textual-rhetorical analysis I prove that he really is – as he is often declared to be – the founding father of philosophical elegance and eloquence in managerial and business thinking. That is, I demonstrate how Handy has *spiritualised* the – previously *dry* and schematic – managerial and business areas by meditative/sermonlike writing style, individually-creatively invented images, and characteristic (both self-reflexing and *moving*) techniques of storytelling.

The literary aspects revealed in the examples and case studies are about to illustrate how the intellectual-spiritual values and humanities may be the inherent-integrated parts of management and business life.