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Life, Speech and Reason: A phenomenology of Open Deliberation in Organizations[*]

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abstract   Despite a growing interest the status of the manifestations of the subjective body is still controversial in organization studies. Defining flesh as pure subjective affective experience of life the French phenomenologist Michel Henry opens up outside the paths covered by contemporary thought. He offers an interesting perspective to understand body, subjectivity, reason, speech, power, action and work in connection with life. Following this phenomenological path opened by Henry, and also drawing upon Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Ricœur, I make a distinction in this paper between reason and rationality and I suggest one of their possible articulations through the concept of open deliberation. A field study which has been the basis of this research is presented.

> The site of reason is found by and through its identity with the real. (Henry, 1976: 40)

> The Real… only gives itself to be thought of as Life. (Vasse, 1999: 192)

Introduction

In order to make life-supporting choices in economic activity, a human subject cannot rely on scientific rationality alone. The drive for speed, efficiency and money does not lead *de facto* to the desire for "an enjoyable life with and for others in fair institutions" (Ricœur, 1992: 172). Having this in mind, what answer can we give to scientifically built rational managerial arguments? Enlarging on my reading of the phenomenology set forth by Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Michel Henry, I will argue that as researchers in human and social science we can explain that rationality is not the same as reason and that, consequently, rational arguments alone do not provide action with the authority of reason.

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Drawing on Husserl, in the first part of this paper I will show that scientific rationality is a disembodied abstract rationality. An example of this can be observed in the planetary inter(net)-connection of minds (Minsky, 1987), or in the Nobel Prize winner Herbert Simon's *Information Processing Systems* (1972, 1978). Following the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, I will also argue that by reintroducing the body we can open up to a deeper way of reasoning and speaking. This will lead us to the question how to avoid the social and economic alienations imprinted in the body and is precisely where Michel Henry will help us. Henry provides us with a phenomenology which introduces us to immanent incarnated subjective life where the subject finds force and reason and escapes from alienation. It will be then possible to introduce to reason as the true expression of life which both guides with innate authority and empowers subjects' rational ways of organizing. With Aristotle and Ricœur, I will suggest that open deliberation is a privileged framework where rationality can be referred to such reason.

In the second part of this paper I will present a field study to show how in open deliberation the pursuit of an efficient organization was referred to the pursuit of an "enjoyable life with and for others in fair institutions" (Ricœur, 1992: 172). I will be using the field of information processing systems and technology as a background for my arguments. The ideas I will be developing could equally be applied to most areas of management of organizations however, as they are part of the same underlying paradigm – that of the rational processing of information. Contrary to disembodied rational information processing, this paper will illuminate the possible openness to the subjective identity as pure incarnated experience of life.

Towards a Phenomenology of Incarnated Reason

Controversial Views about the Body in Organization Studies

The status of the subjective body is indeed a very controversial issue in organization studies. Long ignored, marginalised or suppressed, emotions as manifestations of the subjective body are now recognised as a key feature of working life. As early as 1946, Max Weber said that bureaucracy eliminated both love and hate, as they are emotional, irrational phenomena which defy calculation. The same could be said of the scientific organisation of work (Taylor, 1911); of modern methods of organisation such as Hammer and Champy's Business Process Reengineering (1993); as well as the view of organisations as an information processing system (March and Simon, 1958). The Information Processing System paradigm has been particularly embraced in the theory and practice of virtual organisations, where internet exchanges eliminate face-to-face encounters and the dimension of embodiment they imply. In addition to these mainstream trends, psychoanalytical studies of organisations have shown, on the contrary, that organisations are emotional arenas. However, much research carried out in the English-speaking world in this area has stressed the negative irrational aspect of emotions in organizations: i.e. the anxiety that generates defensive and dysfunctional behaviour (Jaques, 1955; Menzies Lyth, 1960; Diamond, 1985; Hirschhorn, 1988, to name but a few). Such studies advocate controlling, managing, containing these emotions.

Nevertheless Hochschild (1983), when speaking of emotional labour, advises that we acknowledge the different appropriate emotions which are an integral part of each occupation. Similarly, Fineman (1993), adopting a social constructionist standpoint, values those emotions which express, in his view, the social logic that is inherent to each professional context. Moreover, the French psychoanalytical and psycho-sociological perspective has developed a more critical standpoint with respect to rationality and has conceptualised the possible role of the unconscious in the manifestation, through speech, of truth. For Lacan (1977), the language and logic of industrial society and, for Legendre (1985), those of management, are at odds with the true and full speech that is rooted in the unconscious. Dejours (1995), French founder of the school of the psycho-dynamics of work, holds that there is a pathic rationality based on the lived experience of work, which he distinguishes from the rationality of instrumental prescriptions, and which he calls 'the Real of work'. In fact, several authors in organization studies referring to phenomenology (Zuboff, 1988; Moreno, 1999) have emphasized the subjective embodied life in work. Uchiyama (2003) calls this lived experience 'actuality' which differs from objective 'reality'. According to the psycho-sociologist Levy (1997), rationality, along with mastery and control, is the opposite of life. Linstead (2001: 338), in an attempt to transcend the different approaches of language in organisations, argues for the need for these kinds of language to open up to a reality that brings them to life: the reality of the body. This awareness of the embodied pathos of the world of work is also shared by the organisational aesthetic trend. Strati (1999) points at the positive role of pathos as an emotional, sensitive and aesthetic experience, which is the link between subjective life, knowledge and life in organisations.

However, the disposition of organisations to paranoid anxiety, neurotic and even psychotic emotions reveals the darker side of the affective body and casts an element of doubt on the compatibility of rationality with subjective experience perceived by the body (Kets de Vries and Miller, 1984; Sievers, 1999). As Gabriel put it: "an even greater task facing scholars, researchers and practitioners is the exploration of the relation between rationality and emotions in organizations" (1999: 230). This, of course, begs the question in what circumstances it is dangerous or counter-productive to open oneself up to the subjective experience of our body in organisations. In this article I intend, via a phenomenological approach similar to Dejours', to shed some light on the dreaded question that plagues Western thought which is, how to embrace the Other of abstract rationality – the subjective experience perceived by the body, a question that, according to Husserl (1970) we have repressed for over five centuries.

In order to do so, I will reintroduce the distinction between reason and rationality from a phenomenological standpoint: reason being the standard by which emotion and rationality will each be judged as good or bad for human being. To develop this viewpoint, I will start by clarifying the links between subjectivity, reason, rationality, life and the body in the light of a personal reading of four major theorists in phenomenology: Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Henry and Ricœur.

Current Phenomenological Critique of Western Rationality

In 1972 Dreyfus used phenomenology as the basis for his critique of Western rationality as represented in artificial intelligence. Since then, a number of social science authors

have taken a critical look at rationality in their work, returning to a wider re-thinking of reason (Ladrière, 1977). Latouche shows that a reasonable action "reflects a consideration of all the elements which constitute social and human matters" (1994: 156). Villette (1996) advocates a return to the Aristotelian concept of phronesis to sensitive intelligence, whereas Martinet (1993, 1996) favours a complex form of thinking which seeks judgement and cannot be reduced to calculation. Calori (1998, 2000) suggests identifying the rationalisations which mask contradictions in order to enter into a creative tension, a tension which states the contradiction and allows one to contemplate the harmonious dynamic between opposites, the unity in difference.

I will now continue to outline the distinction between rationality and reason which is central to this article, and upon which we shall elaborate later. Modern thought tends to confuse rationality with reason. The Oxford English dictionary defines rationality as: "The quality of possessing reason; the power of being able to exercise one's reason, a rational or reasonable view, practice" while it defines reason as "That intellectual power or faculty… which is ordinarily employed in adapting thought or action to some end; a reasonable or sensible view of a matter." Yet this confusion is a relatively recent phenomenon: in 1690 John Locke drew a distinction between reasonableness – complying with the laws of nature – and rationality – the ability to justify ones choices. In 'Raison', the article he wrote for the *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, the French philosopher Eric Weil (1989) shows that since the Ancient Greeks, the driving force of philosophy has lain in the distinction between the Logos as the argumentative faculty, *the understanding* (rationality in this paper), and the Logos in the sense of an immediate grasp of the truth of experience and the expression of being, the *intellect* (reason in this paper). Descartes (1637) uses this double dimension of Logos while reasoning, and as he sees it, these two ways of reasoning are not worlds apart. Indeed, the lengthy chains of reasons through which he builds his reasoning are founded on the one hand upon the inductive *ergo sum* logic (or rational understanding) and, on the other hand, upon the true conviction of being *cogito* (or reasonable intellect). However, after Descartes, Leibniz (tr. 1966) reduced reason to calculation and logical thought processes, denying the Logos as a capacity to grasp the immediate truth of the experience of being. This latter idea of Logos has become repressed in modern thought.

This is well illustrated in the rational reasoning developed in mainstream management approaches and, in particular, in the approaches which align with the information processing paradigm developed by Herbert Simon and his successors in the field of cognitive science.

Rationality and the Paradigm of Information Processing

Today the predominance of the paradigm of information processing in the field of management theories and practices is unquestionable. However, many authors criticize the fact that management is reduced to information processing (Mintzberg, 1989; Chanlat, 1990; Déry, 1990; Gabriel, 2000, to name but a few). And yet the following description by the manager of an industrial site of his role is not uncommon: "Information is everything: as manager, it's my job is to receive, take in, sort through and give out information" (Solé, 1991). This viewpoint concurs with the theoretic viewpoint developed in Wiener's cybernetics (1948) and above all with the research of

the Nobel Prize winner Herbert Simon, in which the human subject is likened to an information processing system:

> We do know how the information processing system called Man, faced with complexity beyond his ken, uses his information processing capacities to seek out alternatives, to calculate consequences, to resolve uncertainties, and thereby – sometimes, not always – to find ways of action that are sufficient unto the day, that satisfy. (1978: 368)

But information processing is not what it was in the 1980s. Computerizing used to be a matter of designing applications according to the users' needs. Today, however, the emphasis has shifted: instead of responding to users' needs, the aim is now to optimise processes – to make them as fast, as efficient as and as profitable as possible through computerisation. Information systems are increasingly devised as part of a network, with interconnection and integration of processes with data standardization – aiming at this ideal does not leave any room for local originality. Thus, ready formatted, standardized and optimised operative modes are transplanted and implanted into real processes. In this respect, the difficulty of the implementation of ERP systems (Enterprise Resource Planning, integrated software), is a notorious example; and there is no reason to suppose that installing the various standardized applications spawned by the internet wave (e-commerce, e-procurement, e-etc), will be any less problematic.

One would be mistaken in assuming, however, that this trend is merely a technological and economic one. It is my intention to show you that these developments have been embraced precisely because they are the culmination of the development of Western rationality as analysed and examined by Husserl as early as 1936 in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (tr. 1970).

Western Rationality

In this book Husserl traces, back to Galileo, the emergence of a "theoretical logical praxis" disconnected from the feeling body, disconnected from "our bodily (*leiblich*[1])
way of living" (1970: 50): experiencing subjectively the sensible qualities of the world
we live in. Let us clarify these terms and their implications.

According to Husserl, "Immediately with Galileo, then, begins the surreptitious substitution of idealized nature for prescientifically intuited nature" (1970: 49-50). Knowledge is no longer bound to the uniqueness of situations, but sees the world through a prism of idealized forms and geometric models. The real world, the everyday life-world which we perceive subjectively through the senses is substituted by a geometric and mathematical world which is perceived as the life-world. Now, the world of real life is 'dressed up' in a "garb of symbols of the symbolic mathematical theories" (1970: 51). Consequently, the act of knowledge is no longer aimed at the world of real life but at the pursuit of geometric shapes and mathematical formulae; thus the development of knowledge is effectively the pursuit of *perfection* embodied in pure geometric shapes (or Limit-shapes).

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1 Literally living body: *leib* is etymologically related to *leben,* life.

This theory of knowledge consequently gives rise to a theory of action. Instead of the real praxis – one concerned with empirical reality, we are now faced with an ideal praxis, "of 'pure thinking' which remains exclusively within the realm of pure Limit-shapes" (1970: 26). Knowing the mathematical equation of these limit-shapes and models allows us to calculate, and thus to predict: "if one has the formulae, one already possesses, in advance, the practically desired prediction" (1970: 43). Thanks to this anticipation, the action can be carried into real life. Here, the perfection of the action is justified by the exactness of the calculation. Thus, as Husserl points out, with this new praxis we attain "what is denied us in empirical praxis: 'exactness'" (1970: 27).

Consequently, the achievement which is decisive for life is "mathematization, with its realized formulae" (1970: 43) – the decisive end result being that the notion of truth is completely overturned. Exact knowledge and action as measured by rational calculation, expresses, through calculation, the exactness of means (as opposed to error) with respect to the objective. This exact knowledge replaces *true* knowledge and actions as created by reason, expressing the truth of the subject's intention (in his community) with respect to the sense to give to action (1970: 12-13). Husserl points out, moreover, that since Leibniz, calculation has been supplemented by symbolic logic, the very logic that has been adopted in computer models. After all, an integrated software program (or an e-something software program) is a pure Limit-shape designed to control action by enabling its user's confidence to act according to an abstract optimised efficiency.

From a Lifeless Rationality to Reason

However, as Husserl points out, the logical consequence of this perspective, accepted since Galileo, is that it leaves no room for life. This objective science forces reality into a mould of mathematical logic, and thus, if it takes over the whole domain of knowledge, is in danger of creating a world in which life and the subjective body are pointless and irrelevant.

> In his view of the world from the perspective of geometry, the perspective of what appears to the senses and is mathematizable, Galileo abstracts from the subjects as persons leading a personal life; he abstracts from all that is in any way spiritual, from all cultural properties which are attached to things in human praxis. (1970: 60)

In other words, human activity, when subjected to the idealized process, may become lifeless activity. On a more general note, Husserl speaks of the crisis of European sciences, saying that while contributing to greater prosperity, these sciences have failed to enable modern man to exercise his freedom with reason:

> In our vital need – so we are told – this science has nothing to say to us. It excludes in principle precisely the questions which man (…) finds the most burning. (…)What does science have to say about *reason* and *unreason* or about us men as subjects of this freedom? The mere science of bodies clearly has nothing to say; it abstracts from everything subjective. As for the humanistic sciences, on the other hand, all the special and general disciplines of which treat of man's spiritual existence (…) their rigorous scientific character requires, we are told, that the scholar carefully exclude all valuative positions, *all questions of the reason or unreason of their human subject matter*. (1970: 6, emphasis added)

However, Husserl does not limit himself to criticising European sciences, but offers an alternative reason, one which opens us up to a life as a constant personal and communal *becoming*:

> Reason is the specific characteristic of man, as a being living in personal activities and habitualities. This life, as personal life, is a constant becoming through a constant intentionality of development. What becomes, in this life, is the person himself. His being is forever becoming; and in the correlation of individual-personal and communal-personal being this is true of both, i.e., of the (individual) man and of unified human civilization. (1970: Appendix IV, p.338)

This reason, for Husserl, just like the Greek intellect, is indeed the ability to establish a link between truth and being and thus, the ability to give an individual and collective sense to existence (1970 § 3-5). Furthermore, as we have just seen, it is the ability to link knowledge and behaviour to life-world. It is also, as Husserl gives us a glimpse, the ability to link knowledge and behaviour to the individual and collective intentionality of life. This Husserlian reason is clearly distinct from the calculating rationality inclined towards the 'objective world'. As far Husserl as is concerned, phenomenology must accompany reason and enable it to go beyond the finiteness and relativity of the life-world of men in the limits of their own human community.

Rediscovering Reason and its Relation to Life

Based on this analysis and Husserl's critique we can state that the pursuit of an 'enjoyable life' requires reason understood as a different kind of knowledge and thought than rational thought. Husserl suggests that reason enables us to establish a close relationship with the life-world within a community. I will now elaborate on this idea by referring to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945, tr. 1962). According to Merleau-Ponty, in order to understand the role that our body plays in knowing, we must go beyond the notion of our body as an object, as a biological framework or a collection of processes, such as sight, motility, sexuality, etc.

Merleau-Ponty asserts that the way we experience our bodies goes beyond the reflective knowledge of these processes: "Thus experience of one's own body runs counter to the reflective procedure which (…) gives us only the thought about the body (…) and not the experience of the body" (1962: 198). What we experience with our *own bodies* gives us an idea of the many possibilities the body opens up for us: the pre-reflexive and pre-objective possibility of contact with the world, with things, with the other; and without this, reflective thought would not be possible. The living subject perceives himself as an embodied subject who goes towards the other and takes his place in the world. As Merleau-Ponty puts it: "It is through my body that I understand other people, just as it is through my body that I perceive 'things'" (1962: 186).

As a result, the fact that one's mind moves through categories of language must be linked to the way the embodied subject moves in the world. This is the foundation upon which reflective thinking can develop. Being an embodied subject means experiencing time and space first before being able to integrate them into the thought processes.

Furthermore, the embodied subject experiences that it is involved in a seemingly infinite life flow. It also experiences their own finiteness, the presence of disease and death: "I feel destined to move in a flow of endless life (…) along with which there comes to me

the feeling of my contingency" (1962: 364). Thus our own body places us in the world, opens us up to things and to the other, situates us in time and space, allows us to experience events and encounters in the background of the precariousness of our doomed existence. For Merleau-Ponty, reason as the immediate grasp of experience and being (intellect) is undoubtedly an embodied reason, a pre-reflexive embodied reason.

But how does this embodied reason manifest itself? According to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, our own body reveals an embodied meaning, a significant intention:

> Our own body (…) is not a collection of particles, each one remaining in itself, nor yet a network of processes defined once and for all (…) since we see it secreting in itself a 'significance' which comes to it from nowhere; projecting that significance upon its material surrounding, and communicating it to other embodied subjects. (1962: 197)

This brings us to a crucial point: our own body, sensing its own fragility, *reveals* the embodied significance, the possibility of and the necessity for forms of an enjoyable life world. Indeed, it is in the living body that "the disclosure of an immanent or incipient significance" (1962: 197) takes place; the living body is the place for a new existential project. But this raises once more the question of how the body can free this significance. To answer this, Merleau-Ponty understands 'language' as a linguistic system used for expression and 'speech' as an act of expression of a nascent thought. He distinguishes 'speaking speech' from speech which transfers a thought that pre-existed, which he calls 'spoken speech'. Merleau-Ponty shows that it is in the act of speaking speech that the body frees the significant intention and voices significance. Merleau-Ponty says, "it is the body which points out, and which speaks" (1962: 197). By opening new and unexpected prospects, speech is an advent and an event. It is speaking word: "one might draw a distinction between a speaking word and a spoken word. The former is the one in which the significant intention is at the stage of coming into being." (1962: 197).

Re-Thinking Thought

But how does significant intention manifest itself in speech? According to Merleau-Ponty, it does so through our ability to keep silent for a moment. Not in order to flee the world of activity and rational arguments but to capture the significant intention which derives from our body and which is deeply immersed in the world.

> Our view of man will remain superficial so long as we fail to go back to that origin, so long as we fail to find, beneath the chatter of words, the primordial silence, and so long as we do not describe the action which breaks the silence. The speaking word is a gesture, and its meaning a world. (1962: 184)

Thinking means first setting aside the existing ways of perceiving and classifying things, suspending the movement of rational thought – exercising the phenomenological *épochè* – in order to acknowledge a new meaning. Thus thinking implies consenting to the risk of freeing the significant intention by "plunging into speech" (1962: 403) without imagining beforehand the words we will say. Indeed, speech should not be thought of as the vehicle for an already developed thought, but as the thought in action: "Thus speech, in the speaker, does not translate ready-made thought, but accomplishes it" (1962: 178). For Merleau-Ponty, such speech is originating speech. Taking into

account the difficulty of living, the *lack-to-be*, it transcends all determinisms (including economic) and opens up new and unexpected perspectives:

> In this sense there is never any pure economic causality, because economics is not a closed system (…) The freedom [of the artist or philosopher] resides in the power of equivocation of which we spoke above (…); it consists in appropriating a *de facto* situation by endowing it with a figurative meaning beyond its real one. (1962: 172)

It is in the light of this speaking speech that new argumentative thought can emerge and flourish.

The Speaking Word and Otherness

The speaking word is creative in its expression; it unleashes a new meaning and a significant intention which discloses itself as it expresses itself. That is to say it emerges as an Otherness to the already formulated thought of the person speaking. In this sense, by silently consenting to the meaning of the significant intention, man transcends to a new mode of behaviour.

However, this expression should not be understood as the activity of an isolated ego. If the original speaking word reintroduces the presence of the subject, it consequently reintroduces the subject into the intersubjectivity which constitutes it. This is achieved mainly through dialogue and the sharing of life: not reflexive/argumentative knowledge but a pre-reflexive knowledge. The openness to Otherness therefore is the ontological condition of speaking subjectivity: "Subjectivity is not motionless identity with itself; as with time, it is of its essence, in order to be genuinely subjective, to open itself to an Other and to go forth from itself" (1962: 426).

Thus, in the creative surpassing in which it operates, speech clearly demonstrates a new concordance and coherence between the subject and him/herself, the subject and the other; the original speech establishes a concurrence between the 'for oneself' and the 'for others': "speech itself brings about that concordance between me and myself, and between myself and others" (1962: 392). Hence we can assert with Merleau-Ponty that "speech is precisely that act through which thought immortalizes itself as truth" (1962: 388). Therefore lying can be interpreted as a rejection of this concordance, a refusal to listen or consent to the meaning of the embodied word, of the speaking body. For Merleau-Ponty, to be reasonable is to consent to speaking speech, a revelation of the significant intention that establishes concordance (truth) between the subject and himself, the Other and things. To be reasonable therefore is to be acting coherently with such an embodied speaking speech. This view, in a way, makes explicit and reinforces the idea of the Greek *Logos* as an immediate grasp of the truth of experience and expression of being.

Merleau-Ponty Under Critique

I have argued that Merleau-Ponty's most significant contribution is to bring the body back into the act of knowledge: not merely reflexive/argumentative knowledge, but *pre-reflexive* knowledge. Moreover, through our body we are open to time, to space, to the Other, to the world and to things. Through significant intention, our own body is the source of speaking speech. This perspective highlights the immediate, pre-reflexive

perception, the truth of situations and, therefore, the capacity for reasonable words, thought and action.

However, this return of reason through the body immersed in the world has been questioned by a number of contemporary thinkers. Foucault (1977) and Deleuze (1995), for example, argue that not only our minds but also our bodies are alienated, captured and imprinted by social structures, and by instrumental, calculating rationality. Even Bourdieu, a disciple of Merleau-Ponty, reveals with the notions of *habitus* the Other of reflexive thought: "The habitus is […] a schemata of perception, appreciation, and action that result from the institution of the social in the body." (1992: 127). Habitus is the fruit of education and reflects the interests of the social group in which the individual is immersed. So how can we consider truthful or reasonable attitudes formed within the context of the habitus, or the expression of a body which is alienated? Is Merleau-Ponty's position ultimately not extremely ambiguous, as it would not help us to distinguish true speech from alienated speech, speech imprinted by the habitus? I would suggest that the opposite is true. Merleau-Ponty makes a point of distinguishing speaking word from the spoken word which exploits the available meaning like an inherited fortune (1962: 197), thereby refuting the objection of alienation by the creative, free transcendence that speaking speech generates. What, however, is this transcendence based on?

Merleau-Ponty searched for the answer to this very question right up until his untimely death. In the *Phenomenology of Perception* he explores and combines several viewpoints: the quest for the "plenitude of being" (1962: 197), time perceived as "the thickness of the pre-objective present" (1962: 433). The source and resource of this transcendence, this freedom, could be understood as opening up to "collective history", to the "pre-existence of the world" (1962: 433). But would this reference to the world not mean going from sociological and economic alienation to a far more disturbing form of alienation: ontological alienation, alienation due to human condition of being cast into the world, thrown into the world as Heidegger's Dasein was (tr. 1996)? Here, human being can only find the resource for his subjective transcendence in the world, should it be given in the thickness of the pre-objective present. This ontological alienation does not offer the subject a safe haven, a place to rest and to restore. This alienation dashes any hopes of a speech which could bring concordance between an insecure Self and others. What is more, it ruins any possibility of an accomplishment of thought in the truth of a speaking speech and ultimately ruins the possibility of reintroducing reason as an immediate grasp of the truth of being.

From the Alienated Body to Living Flesh
There is, however, a way out of this impasse for Merleau-Ponty: a tacit cogito which precedes the spoken cogito. This tacit cogito, "myself experienced by myself" (1962: 462), is "before any speech, can begin, in contact with my own life and thought" (1962: 402). But Merleau-Ponty, focusing on our own body, through perception and the significant intention, does not elaborate on this foundation. This limitation ultimately opens the door to the ontological alienation of which we spoke earlier. Michel Henry, another French disciple of Husserl, is well aware of the difficulty inherent in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. Henry argues that "In the philosophies of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, there is no foundation for the Self. Neither of these philosophies is able

to explain why I say 'I' or 'Me'" (Henry, 1996, reprinted 2004: 287). Henry distinguishes flesh from the Merleau-Pontyan own body and defines living flesh as pure auto-affection,[2] a concept he defines as: "an affection, not by the world but by itself… 'I' [to speak like Kierkegaard] is something which is affected without distance, thus without possibility to get rid of itself, without possibility to escape from the heaviness of its being" (1996, reprinted 2004: 287-288). Henry's phenomenology turns our attention away from the body which experiences the phenomena of the world towards flesh, as pure auto-affection. This foundation of the Self is the prerequisite of all perception. To further illustrate this argument he quotes Descartes' "sentimus nos videre", the seeing, whether it is an illusion or not, is that of the person who feels he is seeing. That, Descartes says, is beyond doubt: "Et certe, videre videor". Is the vision of his dream false, alienated? The terror it causes is, for the one experiencing it, indisputably real terror and, through it, there is pure awareness of the self experiencing this terror (2003: 118). Going one step further Henry argues that in the second Meditations Descartes' certain thinking I is a feeling, an experiencing I:

> It is at least quite certain that *it seems to me* (Et certe videre, videor) that I see light, that I hear noise and that I feel heat. That cannot be false; properly speaking it is what is *in me called feelin*g (sentire); and use in this precise sense that is no other than *thinking* (cogitare). (2nd Metaphysical Meditations, IX, 22, 1641, emphasis added)

Hence, according to Henry's reading of Descartes, this I is flesh of pure auto-affection and owes the world nothing, it is cleared of all suspicion of ontological alienation. Thus, flesh, as a pure auto-affection generates each singular living being as a Self (Ipseity). More, Henry argues that our deep knowledge of life does not comes from biology, we experience living our own life through our own flesh. To say that life manifests itself in pure auto-affection of the affective flesh of each living being is to say that life is not a phenomenon which is outside of the living subject which it perceives through intentionality, and which it could imagine as an object of perception and representation (*Genealogy of Psychoanalysis* 1985, tr. 1998, chapter 1). Life is immanent. Experiencing the difficulties of the world is simultaneously the way to experiencing our Self in life. While Schopenhauer had succeeded in arguing that being is life, only Henry's phenomenology places life not in a mythological background but "*in us such as we are*" (1985: 9). Henry's phenomenology is a phenomenology of immanence. Hence what we are dealing with here is not, stresses Henry, a blind force, a drive (Freud), nor a metaphor like 'life is reborn after the earthquake' or 'life is going on', but the life that belongs to each singular incarnated being. Nor is life to be confused with observable movements or activity. Life is manifested when a slaughtered, prostrate living being feels once again, in its flesh, the strength, the power to stand up. Thus the living being feels in its flesh the "essential, secret foundation that we are, that is life" (1985: 14). It feels it in the auto-affection of life in the flesh that it (life) generates "in the pathos of its suffering and its intoxication", experiencing itself as a singular self (1985: 15). In this respect life is not a concept produced by thought, but it is in life that we can reach a thought that is singularly our own.

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2   In French affection not only generally means love but any deep affective feeling from suffering to joy which affects, positively or negatively, the subject. There is no medical connotation in this context.

Life and Action

Furthermore, Henry stresses that the life that speaks of life in the flesh of the living 'informs' the Merleau-Pontyan intentional own body. Here lies the capital answer to the mystery of the source of the Merleau-Pontyan significant intention: the intentionality is put in possession of itself in life, Henry says (1992, reprinted 2003: 106, 120). Should a living being listen to the Logos of life? He who, in the alienated preconception of perverse men, was seen as a scapegoat, reduced to the category to which he belonged, will be given a first name, a surname, and shall be a living being for another living being? If so, the Logos of life, or silent speech, calls for a renewed knowledge and thus informs speaking speech or empowers the speaking act: a critical speech as opposed to the mortifying preconceptions, the act which saves. And thus the critical thought of the mortifying forms of living together is ontologically founded, forged in the fire of the intimate life in the flesh of the living, and with it, freed in the actuality of life, the strength of a transforming action. This is the basis of the critique of modes of behaviour of collective action, stemming from the only logic of calculation through 'pure Limit-shapes'; and thus the possibility of transforming action is open, where each living being can find in incarnated life strength and confidence. Freed from having to ask for this from a world influenced by idealist models, one can live free and commit without illusion.

Reason as an Expression of the Truth of Life

We can now think of reason as a pre-reflexive and immediate link -intelligence- of the living, not with the being (contrary to Greek philosophy) but with life – an Archi-intelligence, according to Michel Henry. Reason, I might venture to assert here, is the expression of life, Logos of life. It informs – if only we would pay attention to it – the pre-reflexive perceptions of the body turned towards the world. Reason thus becomes a fulcrum for the ability to judge: it enables one to distinguish, through the effects on the flesh, what is good according to life from what is bad, while the living share life experiences, debate on their preconceptions or defend the choices of their future actions. To be reasonable does not simply mean behaving sensibly in the eyes of the world of life (Husserl), or in the eyes of a concordance with the self, another and the world (Merleau-Ponty), but, for a living being, is about remaining open to life which manifests itself in the flesh. Henry says "Life… is true Reason… life is the only foundation of ethics" (1990: 219).

In order to be true, the living being must accept the silent speech of life manifested in its flesh. Truth is no longer the conformity between thought and the object (exactness), but the subordination of thought to life which is manifested in its affective flesh. We can now understand this statement formulated by Henry: "'True'… That's what we must encourage; by giving our own flesh for that." (1987:100). Two Lacanians, Dolto (1984) and Vasse (1999), converge with this approach. They have developed the concept of 'ressenti', literally re-felt, which precisely corresponds to the meeting or intersection of affects experienced in the flesh with words issued from the richness of one's language when addressing to another. Such a speech is generally uttered though a metaphor; it breaks the anonymity, abstraction and amorality of the sole rational discourse. And yet, the living being can only relate this truth to another through words uttered or acts posed through the pre-reflexive syntheses of the body imprinted by social niceties. Truth, as Lacan said, is 'half-spoken'. One cannot entirely rid oneself from mundane knowledge

and assumptions. Sometimes, however, when one man saves another, without any ulterior motive, and for no other rational argument than 'it was only natural', a shining example of the pre-reflexive affective truth of life among the living beings is revealed. A protective deed or thought are full of the sense of speaking, living speech and act.

Speech, Silence and Reason

Now that we have suggested a way out of ontological alienation, we can think of 'speaking speech' as the speech of a singular living being – immersed by its body in the world – but open to life through the flesh. As we have seen, this speech will be true if the significant intention that carries it is the result of the subject's acceptance of upheaval and disturbance that life – when it springs up – can bring to its significant intention of the moment. This acceptance of disturbance in action focused on efficiency implies understanding listening as not only paying attention to the Other's arguments and utterances, but also as the ability to answer the call of reason when the Other's words or voice touch the flesh.

Reason, the Body and Flesh

Through the phenomenological view expounded here, we are now in a position to answer the dreaded question I posed earlier when we were speaking of the diversity of opinions in organisation studies: in what circumstances is it dangerous or counter-productive to open oneself up to the subjective experience of our body in organisations? Far from rejecting the body in favour of rationality, Merleau-Ponty reclaims the body that offers pre-reflexive intelligence. The Merleau-Pontyan body is the body that experiences the subject-object relationship through the significant intention. However, we have already pointed out the ambiguities inherent in such an intention: we can therefore wonder whether the pre-reflexive intelligence defended by Merleau-Ponty opens the door to impulsiveness, instinct, to the urges in the subject-object relationship. If this is so, psychoanalysis since Freud and Jones (see rationalisation in Laplanche and Pontalis, 1973) has shown us that the rationality of arguments put forward is often an *a posteriori* rationalisation made with hindsight after impulsive movements. Similarly, the psychoanalysis of organisations (Gabriel, 1999) rightly states that the language of the body, through emotions, is uncertain and capable of love or hate, anxiety or boldness, and given to unexpected and contradictory statements.

However, Merleau-Ponty encourages us to overcome this difficulty by underlining the importance of silence, listening, of holding back and not giving in to instinct and urges but opening up to the deepest expression of speaking speech. Thus, Thomas (1977), developing a phenomenology applied to organisations, drew a distinction between intuition (revealing the intention, the meaning of the subject-object relationship), and the first, emotional sensation. However, as we have argued, this openness to the significant intention which, for Merleau-Ponty refers to the world, offers no protection from alienation in a closed habitus because the Merleau-Pontyan subject has no specific dwelling place, no site to call its own. It is for this reason that it would be, in my view, restrictive to reduce reasonable knowledge to tacit knowledge – as an incorporated accumulation of knowledge shared in the community – as Nonaka did (1995). It would be equally restrictive to base ethics on social constructs (a social constructionist perspective à la Bourdieu). For such social constructs forming common sense may

indeed, as Chikudate (2002) showed in the case of a Japanese bank, lead to a "collective short-sightedness" and to unethical racketing practices.

This is precisely what makes Henry's contribution so significant when he distinguishes flesh from the phenomenological own body. As we have just seen, phenomenological living flesh is a singular Self (Ipseity). Furthermore, through its close ties to life, its reason, the singular subject knows whether the affects and intentionalities of its own body turned towards the world, are good or not for life. For Henry, this occurs when reason demands, for a while, silence in arguments, restraint in action, and openness to using all the faculties of the living subject. This openness heightens sensitivity and makes one capable of compassion. The living subject now possesses two faculties which are intertwined: reason and desire. Reason informs, calls, and supports the search for what is good for life and the desire, rooted in life, supports the action which results from this research.

But how is such reason applied? Henry reminds us that it is not conscience that determines life but life that determines conscience: while its intentionality is put in possession of itself in life, the reasonable subject opens up to a way that is good for life and thus pays attention to situations and contexts which are important for life. For once he is rooted in life, he no longer needs to rely upon social representations to define his identity: he is now capable of having a critical distance from these socially accepted representations. Similarly, he is able to open up to others and other living subjects without reducing them to being the object of his urges or social ambitions. According to Henry, living flesh is even capable of evaluating action and inaction: it experiences a *malaise* or discontent when the subject obstructs the freedom of life: "There is unease in civilisation whenever the energy of life is not used" (1987: 150). Living life to its true potential is, on the other hand, a source of profound joy. The subject can thus learn to experience in his flesh the effects of liberated or restrained life, as P. Gire indicates:

> It remains a "moment of truth" for life insofar as it expresses both the possible and the impossible, the compatible and the incompatible within the vital dynamism of the subject. (1994: 434-435)

It can therefore be stressed that the ability to be a whistle blower stems from the living subject's perception of danger for life, from that capacity for the will for life that is peculiar to the living subject. So how is it that that the living subject, asks Henry, makes counter-appraisals, and gets caught up in choices and actions? According to Henry this is a result of the ontological essence of living, embodied subjectivity, a pathic subjectivity exposed to the variations within the full spectrum of enjoyment and suffering. To escape suffering, the subject can choose to flee the emotional ordeal of life. Then, he severs the tie with life: reason.

I will give two examples of the many types of what Henry calls the pathologies of life. The first one consists in casting aside affects in favour of abstraction and disembodied rationality and locking up life in, what I called a *rationalist gangue* (Faÿ, 1999, 2004). According to Henry, this is the path chosen by most of Western culture since Galileo. In this context, the subjects who sever all ties with life no longer have an ontological landmark and search for their identity in images or objects, and very often by the lure of money. In organisations they are prone to follow short-term pressure, often forcing them

to make disastrous decisions for the long term (cf. the asbestos disease, among many catastrophic examples).

Jealousy as pathology of life was described by the psychoanalyst Denis Vasse (1995) who is close to Henry. Jealousy, he says, in its most profound essence, is jealousy of life. When seeing another living person who is happy to be alive, the jealous person feels excluded from life and wants to possess the other and, by extension, possess life – a life which is given to him/her but which is rejected without being aware of this rejection. The jealous person has clearly lost reason – the close, happy tie with ones own life – and his/her rational arguments sound like *a posteriori* rationalisations of the urge to be the only one to possess. The jealous person is blinded and hovers on the brink of irrationality – and ultimately destroys both the other and him/herself.

In light of the pathologies of rejecting life, opening up to life has to be learned through education. One needs to learn to appreciate sharing life, in art, culture, in action with and for others. The subject also needs to learn discernment in order to discover the moments he opens up, or not, to life through the fundamental affects of suffering and joy. It is the responsibility of parents, teachers and friends to encourage this discernment. Now we have rediscovered the deep sense of reason (intellect) as an expression of life granted to will, let us now illustrate its link with rationality (understanding).

Rationality, Reasonableness and Open Deliberation

The development of these ideas around Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Henry should have shed some light on the distinction between rationality and reason. Rationalism survives when rationality is cut off from reason. Reasonableness is rationality guided by reason. Rationalist man only argues his choices (through calculation, logic or procedure) relying on existing ways of perceiving and classifying things. His thoughts and knowledge are "objective" because they are determined by a model and validated by certain measures. When rational human being acts he is confident of the exactness of his choices.

Conversely, reasonable human being consents to stay silent, to set aside one's ways of perceiving and classifying, one's drive for performance, in order to open to reason and to acknowledge a novel significant intention renewing the perceptions and attitudes which enable the person to situate oneself in relation to life, things and others. Then, through speaking words and/or courageous lively action, one can transcend the determinisms or conflicts and seek an enjoyable life with others while arguing rationally about the objective conditions of that. Through discernment, reasonable human being learns to open up to the *truth* of incarnated life when one acknowledges the Otherness of one's own subjectivity, auto-affection of life, and the other's Otherness, their own lively subjectivity.

With Merleau-Ponty I would like to emphasize that the rediscovery of reason does not lead to a rejection of rationality, no matter how complex and delicate their coexistence and connection is. Indeed, Husserl highlighted the difficulty of uniting the "world of real life" and the "scientifically true world": "The contrast and the inseparable union (…) draw us into a reflection which entangles us in more and more troublesome difficulties. The paradoxical interrelationships of the 'objectively true world' and the

'life-world' make enigmatic the manner of being of both" (1970: 131). I believe that with Merleau-Ponty we can overcome this difficulty by opening up to "a more fundamental Logos than that of objective thought, one which endows the latter with its relative validity, and at the same time assigns to it its place" (1962: 365). But, with Henry, I suggest that this more fundamental *Logos* is not only a significant intention relating to the world, but incarnated life relating to life and grounding significant intention. This opens up a new perspective for us: the exercise of rationality must be *referred to* the exercise of reason in order to remain human and lively, this is reasonableness. A contrario, 'de-reasonableness' occurs when rational arguments are not referred to reason.

To say that rationality must be referred to reason is to say that in order to attain reasonableness, rationality (which confirms the accuracy of objective arguments or conducts) must be subjected to the authority of reason and guided by reason (which opens up to phenomenological knowledge of life). This distinction between rationality and reason inevitably causes conflicts. But reason produces no objective knowledge. Through the subjective, intimate phenomenological experience of life, it draws attention to the good life. Thus reason obliges, but it is never an outside obligation. In the immanence of life in flesh, the living subject finds the resources and energy in life to consent, in an appropriate, and often inventive way (cf. Roberto Benigni's *Life is Beautiful*) to the voice of life in his flesh while he is subjected to the constraints of the organisation. This is why I join Henry in maintaining that ethics are not just an outside code, but require the openness to reason. Furthermore, given the Otherness of the affects of experienced life, I argue that reasonable conduct cannot be predicted or prescribed from the outside, particularly in modern organisations. I will, however, recount a rather unusual example of this based on my own experience.

It was a moment of debate on choices, a deliberation. In *Oneself as Another* (1992), Ricœur reminds us that Aristotle did actually call deliberation the moment when people determine, via the exchange of arguments, their preferences in view of the success of the action to be accomplished. These deliberations, for Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*, VI; 2000), should be rationally argued, organised and structured, in relation to the context and the singularity of the situation. And Greek heritage teaches us to watch over institutions which favour, by allowing speech, the quality of deliberations and which, I would like to add, may also favour opening up to the life which speaks in the flesh of the living. It is for this reason that I suggest that such deliberations should be called *open deliberations* when reason, alerted by a speaking, living speech, suspends rational calculation. Open deliberations, then, open to life and to living together, show the way to a good life and encourage reasonableness through renewed concepts, categories and attitudes, while the necessary rationality of debates goes on. This is when rationality is referred to reason.

By endowing the words 'open deliberation' with this sense of bringing reason and rationality together, I am thus giving it all the full meaning which the above reflections on reason and rationality have enabled me, through the work of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Henry, to bring to light. This perspective renews Aristotle's view that "the main characteristic of the wise man -phronimos- (…) is well conducted deliberation." Wise human beings, while deliberating, keep opened to the manifestation of life in their flesh,

consent to it, and doing this are oriented to the pursuit of an "enjoyable life with and for others in fair institutions" (Ricœur, 1992: 172). In keeping with this phenomenological approach, I now wish to share with you the way I experienced open deliberation before conceptualising it.

Presentation and Discussion of Research Fieldwork

Context and Methodology

The ideas I am developing here emerged from a field study carried out with a project leader in a multinational firm. For two years we undertook an action research project in which we held regular meetings with people (two hours every six week). These people were involved with the use and development of an already implemented information system designed to manage documents when launching new telecommunication hardware.

The researcher's methodological position, consistent with the phenomenological perspective, is undoubtedly different from the one he would have had in positivist epistemology. Indeed, he must focus his attention not on the issues of debates in order to subject them to an objective analysis, but, as Husserl says, on the 'life-world' in which the presence of subjects in relation to objects is revealed. In order to achieve this Husserl suggests we create a distance, "an épochè of all participation in the cognitions of the objective sciences (…) in regard to all objective theoretical interests, all aims and activities belonging to us" (1970: 135).

As a researcher, my methodology was to focus not on the actions of organizing themselves but on how taking the floor was possible or not for people in this open space for speech. With hindsight, I can define the methodological position as follows: the researcher in the field of organization studies (and consequently the manager) cannot control the emergence of words. But s/he can focus his/her interest on four possible tasks, namely: (1) devising and creating a formal context for dialogue, (2) make a note of all the factors which hinder true speech, (3) emphasize the emergence of this true speech when it occurs (and the conditions which are conducive to it), and (4) remain open to this speech himself.

Furthermore, I made a point of sharing my observations with the group I was working with at the beginning of each meeting, and thus opened up an unusual intersubjective dimension in a place where people focused on the objective organization of their working methods and procedures. The selections of dialogues which follow are derived from my experience of the situation through the phenomenological attitude I just presented. I will link these selections to the phenomenological concepts I presented in the first part of this paper but, needless to say, other perspective and ways of reading the situation are, of course, possible.

A Path to 'Open Deliberation'

Certain members of management have deemed opening up to the subjective dimension, the dimension of life-world, irrelevant in the context of the rationality of this western

firm. When I showed these people the results of the first series of meetings, I was surprised by their baffled reactions: 'we have to pursue goals: these bottom-up procedures aren't enough – we need top-down procedures too.' The open space for speech that we had set up was seen as a hindrance to these goals. 'Isn't this all cosmetic?'

However, despite these difficulties, we were able to find with this group a way towards the 'speaking word,' paving the way for an enjoyable life with the other through deliberation. Here, in chronological order, are some of the highlights of this journey;

The body and its Space-Time Points of Reference (1st and 2nd Meetings)
The 'speaking body' which 'points out and speaks', in the context of an environment dematerialised by working in data processing networks and by the digitisation of all media of information, appeared to be a body in search of new reference points:

Nicole (assistant): *I'm on the Avoriaz server, can I link up to Plotmi* (the application server)? (1st meeting).

Denise (Assistant): *Where* are *the files, by the way?*

Christian (Project Leader): *In the data base.*

Denise: *Yeah, there are some files floating around but we don't quite know where they are*. (2nd meeting).

When Existential Fears can be Expressed, from Force to Meaning (3rd Meeting)
The idea of a formal space open for speech allows the assistant to express, their 'lack to be', their experienced fears of losing their job. The dialogue between the technical assistants and the computer programmers enabled the assistants to say that they found the introduction of this network rather destabilizing. Indeed, they may well have feared that their role was under threat as the engineers would be able to input documents themselves. Thus, we went from a situation which was forced on us to a situation in which we were trying to create meaning.

Alain (Programmer): *Once the process engineers do it, the research department will do it.*

Nicole (Assistant): *And we'll go and sign on for the dole*.

Alain: *You say you've got nothing to do, but you could learn to check the documents: it's little details like that that make your job necessary and worthwhile.*

Denise (Assistant): *We'd need special training for the things we have to check. It should be made clear what our job is.*

Nicole: *We like to know and understand what we're doing.*

However, this discussion took place without any of the relevant engineers present.

From the 'Spoken Word' to the 'Speaking Word' (4th & 5th Meetings)
This time, and with one of the engineers present, the question of how the task of inputting data was divided up came up again. The project leader gave the feedback from management, who want things to stay the way they are; the computer programmer questioned this point of view and expressed a wish to bring up the subject freely in this open space for speech.

Alain (Programmer): *The important thing is what happens next and that we can talk about it freely.*

Christian (Project Leader): *It's management's view that it's the Technical Assistance Department's job to create the document.*

Alain: *The engineer's assistants do the dirty work. That's not a valid argument – that's just a way of keeping people stuck in their roles.*

Francis (Process Engineer): *we have a low input; I've only been here for 10 months. I was told that the Process Engineer did everything, now the Technical Assistance Department is supposed to take care of the documents...* (turns to the researcher for an answer).

Alain (Programmer): *The aim is client server architecture.*

Denise (Assistant): *I'm sure we'll still have a job to do.*

Francis (Process Engineer): *That still leaves the problem of creating the documents. Management says 'it's not your job to write the documents'.*

'I was told', 'Management says' these are examples of 'spoken word' which is meant to be heard and leaves no possibility for any exchange. In fact it is an absent other, 'he' – management – who is the subject of this dialogue. Instead of taking sides in this debate, I decided to bring up this perception which I call the 'arena effect' at the next meeting. This provoked a heated exchange.

(5th meeting) Francis (Process engineer, responds immediately, on the defensive): *Management set rules some time ago. Do we want to change these rules?*

Researcher: *What interests me is how we can talk about these questions. What you should do is, I don't know it will emerge from your discussions...*

Francis (Process Engineer): *If, and only if the person has the power of decision.*

Researcher: *Here you can exchange ideas and make suggestions to the managers.*

Christian (Project Leader): *Yes, making suggestions is useful. In that case I'll pass the ideas on to management.*

Here the researcher's intention is revealed in his words – words which aim to encourage openness where the rationality of the arguments could close the possibility of dialogue. After that, I illustrated how fruitful this kind of exchange can be by reading an extract

from the 3rd meeting, in which the question of checking documents was raised again. I underlined that this led to an interesting discussion on the possibility of a training course. The somewhat tense atmosphere relaxed, and, unexpectedly, an assistant who had worked in the department for a long time took the floor. Making a move toward incarnated intersubjective truth created then the openness which enables someone to become a subject who says 'I':

Véronique (Assistant): *I'd like to make some general comments about everything I've heard. The reason we're having problems is that our department is pretty big; there's a lack of communication because the systems are a bit too sophisticated, which has undermined the joint work effort between the assistant and the engineer. The engineers and us the technical assistants should pull together.*

Here we can see an expression of latent difficulties, followed by an interpretation of these difficulties, and the emergence of a desire for everyone to get along well together – '*pull together*': thus, concordance between self and others being aimed 'spoken words' gave way to 'speaking words.'

From 'Speaking Words' to 'Open Deliberation' (6th Meeting)

Within this dynamic of openness the group decided to have a meeting with the engineers from the Research Department. The next meeting was to take place in the Research Department, located 100 kilometres away, and the group planned to go in a convoy of cars. The scene I am about to present and analyse is the continuation of a process of opening up to the other which occurred in the last five meetings through several 'speaking words'. A key moment occurred in this sixth group meeting which had been held to review the progress of the project. Following a discussion with the project leader before the meeting, I began by saying: *"I have been told that some people were embarrassed by the fact that I named people when I spoke at the last meeting. I apologize for this, I didn't mean to make anyone uncomfortable."* I then went straight on to the last meeting: *"During the discussion about the relationship between the engineers and the assistants, I noticed a real dialogue, an open dialogue which respected the other person. There was a real desire for cooperation."* At that moment I perceived that the group was listening, that something was happening – like a crack in an ice field. A moment of silence, a pause seemed to be called for between each sentence. Thus, by opening up to the dimension of people's feelings – *"I have been told that some people were embarrassed … I apologize… I noticed a real dialogue"* the researcher was surprised to feel an unexpected dimension emerge from the density of silence. There was a need for silence, a need to momentarily suspend the organizing rationality for which the group had been assembled in order to acknowledge another dimension.

This initial feeling was confirmed in the car on the way back by one of the engineers: *You're talking about the life of the group. It's a bit strange; we didn't expect that. It gets us thinking; then, after a while, there's a moment of waiting around when we don't know what's going to happen next. It's good to have that at the beginning of a meeting.*

The next exchanges of opinions and feelings will shed some light on this strange dimension that emerges from silence and 'gets us thinking.' First and foremost, it

introduces a renewed presence to the self, a living incarnated self, in this dematerialised environment. This enabled people to articulate all the problems of organization which had been experienced as physical suffering and to be listened to: *"We're tearing our hair out over the suppliers because we don't know where to find out the information..."*

Furthermore, this dimension introduces a renewed presence to the other: I observed that the discussions progressed because people were able to shed their 'expert' image and admit ignorance: *"I'm sorry, I was wrong;" "I don't know;" "forget what I said, I got it all wrong."* Here, the pursuit of agreement with the other, of an intersubjective truth is more important than defending one's ego and image. Thus, in this meeting of experts, the *intersubjective truth* embodies their process to develop *exact* knowledge, through rational arguments, about how to structure the documentation. On the other hand, the dimension of the presence with the other creates a perception of time which allows people to distance themselves from the solutions they had previously come up with: "*That was another problem*." For just because an argument is rejected, it doesn't mean the person is. And thus we can see that the transformation of knowledge is linked to the phenomenological capacity of presence to oneself, the world, and the other: "The present mediates between the For Oneself and the For Others", as Merleau-Ponty says (1962: 452).

We are now going to finish off with the thorny question of how the tasks are to be divided up among the engineers, and how this dimension of a renewed presence to the other led to the pursuit of an "*enjoyable life with the other*." Following an in-depth discussion on how to structure documentation, which resulted in an agreement, the Project Leader raised the question of the allocation of roles:

Christian (Project Leader): *Now the question is: 'who modifies the files?' The question is, it's either you, the Research Department ... or the Technical Assistance Department.*

Here, Christian spoke sedately, he poised after '*you, the Research Department*' giving time to silence where incarnated life can inform his colleague's significant intention.

Bruno (Engineer from the Research Department): *Seeing as they're a few weeks ahead of schedule, it should be the Technical Assistance Department's job to summarize the documents.*

Christian: *And what do the Technical Assistants in question think about that?*

An Engineer: *They're delighted!*

Eric (Process Engineer): *There is a potential risk of errors.*

Christian: *Which brings us to the question of checking. If there are any changes, the technical assistants send them to the Material Engineer, and she'll check them.*

Isabelle (Material Engineer): *I agree. I've checked, and there were some mistakes. Of course it's my job to check. I'll be working with X, Y and Bruno.*

Christian: *We'll make two separate documents. Who'll check the presentation of the Read Me?*

Isabelle: *I'll pass round a suggestion.*

Thus what emerged from this exchange was the rational organization of work and the pursuit of an enjoyable life with the other in which the jobs of the technical assistants were saved. One could reject this view, arguing that the agreed solution is not viable in the long run because it is less reliable and more expensive than having the Research Department do all the work – which was hinted at when one of the engineers talked about the potential risk of error. With regard to the checking process, the Project Leader found the answer, which consisted of turning logic upside down – escaping in the sense of Merleau-Ponty. In fact, in the computer programmer's opinion, the Research Department was supposed to input the files into the system and the Technical Assistance Service was to make up for some of the work they had lost by checking them (3rd meeting). At this point, another point of view was raised: the Technical Assistance Service would input the files, and their work would be checked by the Material Engineer. The group was able to "appropriate a de facto situation by endowing it with a (new) meaning". As to the objection on the grounds of the increased costs generated by this course of action, one could argue that if the Material Engineer checks the documents correctly and has all the necessary information, she will understand better what happens and will be able to pass on reliable information to the suppliers (as the cost of mistakes in this area is incomparable to the cost of this partial redundancy).

Furthermore, it is very interesting to note that this open deliberation concluded with a resolute determination to act in a spirit of responsibility and cooperation: *"I agree…I've checked. There were mistakes. Of course it's my job to check. I'll be working with X, Y and Bruno."* Phenomenological opening to incarnated life generates the subjects' will for a good life. In the end, there was joy and peace in the social body: *"That went well. We came up with a solution, and yet we didn't follow any of the usual meeting procedures: everyone was allowed to express themselves freely."* This is interesting because it appears that we are given some intuition that life (as the source of perception) is enjoying life (shared in the social body) and recognises what is good for life. In this situation, through experience, the desire for an enjoyable life was incarnated in a specific existential situation, so that each person was able to synchronize their life with another's, without knowing beforehand what was going to happen. If the goal to be attained had been set in a precise way, and if an objective had been fixed beforehand, such freedom would never have been possible. This is precisely how Merleau-Ponty defines freedom: "the polarization of a life towards a goal which is both determinate and indeterminate which, to the person concerned, is entirely unrepresented, and which is recognized only on being attained" (1962: 446). This freedom follows, I argue after Henry, a deeper freedom which is an opening, a consent to incarnate life which frees from internalized servitudes (see meeting 5).

Discussion
This experience enabled me to conceptualise open deliberation as a specific moment of organised collective action in which decisions are made. Here, opening to the world no longer means merely opening to a relationship based on conflict with the world but that

the living being has a resource that empowers him to undertake the act of speaking, dialogue and deliberating which transforms a relationship based on conflict, force struggle, into once based on sense. This article shows the possibility of such a perspective but without reducing it to a mere technique. There are several reasons for this: first of all, because reason as a way of opening to life is not possible without the subject's consent which is, for him, a fundamental freedom. However, this freedom can also be hindered when organisations impose targets which one experiences as going against reason (as defined here): feeding, housing, nursing, and educating, etc, the needy. For example, there are goals which are contrary to reason when the strategic team seeks the accumulation of the exchange value as an end in itself and imposes this, through systems of control and their ratios, on the people within the organization. The crucial point is when these ratios stifle the development of life hurting reason. This could be developed in the course of future research. Another basis for research could be the negative reduction of the notion of development to the notion of technological progress, technological progress becoming an end in itself.

Such gulfs between the teleology of life and the teleologies of organisations is for the living subject a source of suffering that calls for taking action or speaking out. There is the choice between "Exit, Voice or Loyalty" (Hirschman, 1975) and resistance. In each singular situation, the subject can appreciate, if possible with others, in reason, the time and methods of action; the risk of uttering risky words. This is why it might be worthwhile illustrating complementary ways for the living subject to consent to reason, particularly by establishing a network of personal relationships based on trust. The stronger the constraints of teleological orientations outside life are, the fewer the possibilities for negotiations will be (with associate repression and sometimes persecution) and the more the subject will suffer. In his book *La Barbarie* (1987), Henry speaks of a subjectivity forced into an underground life. What remains is humour, the living looks and gestures that the living subjects exchange among each other. In any case, this article shows the alienated side of any identification to organisations, which allows me to suggest the posture of a critical cooperation as being favourable to the living, reasonable subject.

Furthermore, this article has pointed at the restricted side of ethics based on social values. If values and social constructs are to be valued (Rosannas and Velilla, 2005), the ontological foundations of this valuation is, according to Henry, life, as affective flesh, which enables the subject to assess values, standards and social constructs. This argument offers new perspective on reason and suggests a way out of the rationalist gangue, straight jacket, in which the most widespread modern thought too often becomes trapped. This thought, after becoming free from traditional institutions, freed itself from reasonable reason as proposed by Locke (1690): this very modern thought, following Mandeville's rationalist utilitarianism (1714), made a public virtue of a private vice. With this article, as researcher, I have attempted to show that another way of thinking, reasoning (episteme) and acting (praxis) are both possible and desirable. These ways of thinking and acting based on phenomenology and the experience I relate here aim at clarifying concepts to reinforce all those who organise, discuss, and deliberate by consenting to the voice of reason. They strive not to switch off the voice of reason whilst working in organisations. True, in order to follow this road they must suffer the rationalist methods which are imposed upon them.

Conclusion and Opening

I suggest that following the phenomenological framework presented in this paper, the unexpected dimension is the dimension of reason understood as subjects' deep connection with life. This emerges like a crack in the ice field of rationality and then confirms the presence of the body, agreement with others and ultimately the pursuit of an enjoyable life with others, by realistically overcoming organizational difficulties. During the field study reported in this article, this dimension of reason emerged through an initial and unexpected moment of silence at the beginning of the sixth meeting. A moment where, according to my reading, and confirmed by the quality discussion, participants' consented to open to incarnated life. This opening gave a specific grounding to their way of talking, one to another. The fact that during this meeting, the rational organization of the documentary structure was that way, referred to the opening to reason and led me to call this series of exchanges 'open deliberation'. Consequently, I would like to stress that an opening up to incarnated life had a liberating effect both on the organizational issues and on the lives of the subjects

Reason is what sides with life in the flesh of human beings; reason is the expression of life in human affairs. This is a metamorphosis of reason. In order to argue this, I have relied upon Husserl's critique of western rationality and upon Merleau Ponty's phenomenology which opens up to "a more fundamental Logos than that of objective thought". I then went one step further and relied upon Henry's phenomenology of life to assert that this more fundamental Logos is the Logos of life which manifests itself in the flesh of living beings. Life is there to be understood as pure Self-affection. This enlightenment of reason as an expression of life which manifests itself through living beings' flesh is a renewed foundation to the thinking of organised collective praxis. This new understanding opens up possibilities for future research in social and human sciences.

In the field of organization studies, the phenomenological perspective which I have followed in this article enables me to identify two types of innovation. The first kind, which I call rational innovation, is merely the result of rational methods and analyses. Thus, such an innovation resulting purely from rationality is a lifeless, mundane, destructive innovation which conflicts with the subject and causes him to suffer. The subject is perceived through the resistance he develops to such changes. It is therefore a case of developing a 'carrot and stick' communication strategy in order to convince the subject to stick to the changes and become involved in them. Through the situation described and analysed above, I suggest that another form of innovation is possible – deliberated innovation. By opening up to the 'speaking body,' allowing the people in question to speak, I have discovered that it is possible through 'open deliberation' to refer the rationality of action to reason, and thus aspire to an "enjoyable life with and for the others." We could at this stage call this a creative innovation which is open to the subjects' lives. Thus managerial guidance consists in adequately structuring spaces for open deliberation, in the context of real open spaces for speech, or, as Ricœur (1992) says, in the sense of 'fair institutions.' For this to be possible, management must of course take the risk of suspending, momentarily, the exactness of its rational analyses, in order to let the living, embodied and incarnated intersubjective truth come through.

Then, provided that they are not subjected from the outset to a closed rational logic, open deliberations should allow unexpected innovations to emerge.

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