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Työn nimi-Arbetets titel-Title The problem of the evil in the French social theory - the sacred and the accursed in the writings of Émile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss, Georges Bataille and Jean Baudrillard			
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Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract The aim of the thesis is to sketch a theoretical history of evil in sociology by concentrating on the profound interrelatedness of the sacred and the accursed, a problem, which has lately resurfaced in French sociology. The connection between the sacred and the evil is studied in the selected writings of four French social theorists: Émile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss, Georges Bataille and Jean Baudrillard. Furthermore the thesis comprises a case study in which the theories concerning the sacred and the accursed (notably those of Roger Caillois and Georges Bataille) have been used in the analysis of the drinking habits of the French existentialists in Paris during the 1940s. On the level of history of ideas the thesis attempts to determine, on one hand, the historical place of the "accursed" in the sociological discourse by studying the French theoretical tradition beginning from Durkheim. On the other hand, it analyses the classical problem of sociology concerning the nature of sociality in the light of this tradition, and more specifically, of its discussion about the accursed pole of the sacred. First of all, the thesis suggests that the good and the social are identified in a problematic way in the durkheimian theory of religion. Second, it shows how the sacred, interpreted solely as a positive force, is identified with the social in Marcel Mauss's essays of the magic, the religious sacrifice and the primitive gift-exchange. Third, in treating two subsequent French social theorists, Georges Bataille and Jean Baudrillard, the thesis shows how, in spite of the fact that their theories can be connected to the durkheimian tradition, they represent none the less a completely different manner of determining the relationship between the sacred and the social. For each of them the basis of sociality is an "accursed part" (for Bataille an existential lack constituting the foundation of the social in general, for Baudrillard an ironic defectiveness produced by the functioning of the modern society), an inefaceable "Other", which cannot be reduced to the social seen as a positive "force" or a "collective representation" as Durkheim and Mauss would have had it.			
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