B. Frère (FNRS-University of Liège)

« French pragmatic sociology, German phenomenology and British pragmatic philosophy » : convergences, differences, and cross-fertilization »,

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Working paper, do not quote without autorisation of the author.

For about fifteen years a new paradigm called pragmatic approach has been increasingly successful among francophone sociologists. The aim of the present paper is to locate it in the context of the philosophy presiding over the development of social sciences today. I first intend to consider the phenomenological origin of the pragmatic approach using some founding texts by its major theoreticians namely L. Boltanski and L. Thévenot (all available in English). Drawing on this school of thought, these authors aim to comprehend the "states of mind" and moral reasoning that accompany people's actions. To this end, various "regimes of action" have been defined. Among them, the regime of "justice," composed of "universes" (polities) of conventions upon which people argue for their action, is currently the most developed. (Frère, 2003) After a short discussion of these "universes," I will discuss the reason for which Francophone pragmatics is in reality at least as inspired by Anglophone pragmatics as it is by phenomenology. Finally, to conclude, I will investigate the strengths and weaknesses of this "new pragmatic paradigm" in relation to cited movements as well as to the "traditional" philosophies of the social sciences that it critiques: ethnomethodology, Bourdieu's structuralist school and the school of rational choice (also known as the positive political theory).

Francophone Pragmatic Sociology: a Phenomenological Sociology

The "pragmatic" branch of sociology, as it is known today in the francophone world of the social sciences, is rooted, above all, in the heart of a phenomenological representation of the social world, which is, in itself, inspired more than anything by American pragmatic thought. The hypothesis that I would like to support here is that it constitutes a sort of culmination of a slow

process of "sociologization" of the philosophical method founded by Husserl, a process that began with authors such as Schütz. Indeed, it is as if pragmatic sociology has succeeded in making intentionality, natural attitude and its corollary, life-world, into concepts directly usable in the analysis of sociological terrains, something Schütz was unable to do.

Husserl explains that the natural attitude is that of the man who lives naturally, forming representations, judging, feeling, wanting" and appears as such once it is "suspended," once the epoché is applied to it. (1913, p. 87 and 87n.) I am conscious of a world that extends unendingly in space and that develops unendingly over time (…). I discover it through an immediate intuition; I experience it. With sight, touch, hearing, etc., through the various modes of sensory perception, the physical things are simply there for me with some random spatial distribution; they are "present" in the literal or figurative sense. Likewise, animated beings, such as men, are there for me in an immediate fashion; I look at them, I see them, I hear them approach, I take their hands and I talk with them; I understand immediately what they imagine and think, what feelings they feel, what they wish or want. (…) They are present in my field of intuition. (*ibid*., p. 88)

In order to better describe this natural attitude, Husserl concludes that one must put aside the general theory of its existence suggested by the sciences: "this whole natural world that is constantly there for us, present" and "consequently, all the sciences that relate to this natural world – no matter how solid I believe them to be, no matter how much I admire them, no matter how disinclined I am to object to them in the slightest, I disregard them, I make absolutely no use of their validity; I do not adopt any propositions that come from them, even those which seem to make perfect sense. (*ibid.*, p. 102-103)

In his last work, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, Husserl develops at length the idea of the epoché as applied to the sciences in general, an attempt to shrug off the "cloak of ideas" that science adds to the life world and to the natural attitude. ([1954], 1976, p. 59) This modern science, inherited, he claims, from Galileo, tells us, for example, that the Earth rotates. But for those of us in the natural attitude, here and now, it does not rotate. Thus, we perform an epoché with regard to taking a scientific position, "with regard to all objective theoretical interests, to all of our intentions and activities that we adopt as objective scholars." (p. 154) This life world that we then join is "the spatio-temporal world of things, such as we percieve them in our pre- and extra-scientific lives." (p. 157) Once we have completed the

epoché, "we no longer use any knowledge that comes from these sciences as a premise." (p. 167)

Schütz draws on Husserl to show how sociologists could benefit from paying more attention to everyday life: "even what is perceived in our daily life is more than a simple presentation of the senses. It is an object of thinking, a construction of highly-sophisticated nature." (1987, pp. 7-8) All knowledge of the world, be it on the level of **common sense** or on the level of science, involves mental constructions, syntheses, generalizations, formalizations, idealizations bound to the cogitative organization specific to one's location." (Ibid., p.77) The thing – as it is perceived in the "natural attitude" which we adopt in the life-world – precedes scientific conceptualization. "For instance, the concept of nature, the subject of natural sciences, is, as Husserl showed, an abstraction which, in principle and of course legitimately, excludes people and their personal lives as well as all other cultural objects which "originate themselves" as such in man's everyday activities.

However, it is precisely on the level of the life-world (Lebenswelt) from which the natural sciences must abstract, that we find the social reality, the object of investigation of the social sciences. (*Ibid*., pp. 77-78) It becomes clear why Schütz concluded that "the exploration of the general principles according to which an individual organizes his/her everyday experiences and particularly his/her social world is the first task of social science methodology." He ends his article, however, by stating that it is not the place to develop the procedures inherent to a phenomenological analysis of the natural attitude through which this organization can come about." (*Ibid*., p.79) It seems that, in the end, Schütz's phenomenology never really leaves the project stage. He carefully explains that what is important in the natural attitude is to consider the individual living his/her daily life, while muting everything that science can tell us about the him/her. He clearly knows that this natural attitude can be divided in various "types" of attitudes. However, he contents himself with repeating Husserl's examples and fails to develop them: the individual he is talking about is one that "perceives, touches, sees, smells, etc.," but no natural "attitude" is systematized into a grid for sociological reading. P. Corcuff, a French sociologist who quickly integrated the logic of pragmatic sociology, points out that, in his interpretation of the social world, Schütz, like Husserl, focuses almost exclusively on the acting individual and his/her conscience and plans. (1995, p.58)

This problem becomes flagrant when the philosopher tackles intentionality, that is, the various modalities through which an individual conscience "perceives the world" in the natural

attitude: What we mean by intentionality, wrote Husserl, is that "consciousness (or *cogito*) is always consciousness of … something and under the influence of a modality (love, judgment, wish, hate, joy, etc.). An individual can aim his/her intention towards a single object as "memory," as "desire" or simply as an object of sensory perception (sight, touch, etc.) As Husserl shows through an example that he used up until his very last works,

> The perception of the house is directed towards a house and it is directed towards it according to the perceptive modality: the memory of the house is directed towards it according to the modality of memory, the way in which the house is imagined is directed towards it according to the modality of imagination, a predicative judgment about the house – for example the fact that it stands there according to perception – is directed towards it precisely according to the modality of judgment and it is still according to yet another modality that a value judgment (the feeling of finding that house beautiful, for example – author's note) is directed towards it. These processes of consciousness are described as "intentional," and the term "intentionality" here means nothing other than this fundamental and general propriety of consciousness, which consists in being consciousness of something. ([1949], 1994, pp. 77-78)

The problem is that, in order to practice sociology, one must, at one moment or another, refer to a typology that makes it possible to talk in a more comprehensive way about individuals that resemble each other because they have, for example, the "same natural attitude." Pragmatic sociologists understood this and firmly anchored their theories in the world of phenomenology.

P. Corcuff clearly points out how much the sociology of the regimes of action borrows from phenomenology in its definition of action. (2001, p.109) His goal, in the manner of Husserlian phenomenology (and its various modes of intention) and of Schelerian phenomenology (and its various mind sets) is indeed to "explore the cognitive structures that people in our society have at their disposal. (…) In the sociology of the regimes of action, action is approached through people's mental structures and body language, in the dynamics of their adaptation to things (such as a house). The way in which this sociology breaks down the action thus attempts to parallel what is observed in acting individuals in a situation. (…) What is aimed at is not what the world is "objectively" (or scientifically) but the world as it is perceived through the **ordinary sense**s (the intentions), the way the world is seen by the acting individuals in a situation during a course of action (for example, through ordinary senses of justice, love, but also power, violence, etc.) and how people in a situation conform to that world or question it." (ibid, pp. 109-110)

In the natural attitude, some modalities of intentions can be shared and correspond to as many regimes of action. For each regime of action there is a corresponding intentional mind-set.

What will need to be done here is to extend the realm of these relations to the world to which Schütz and Husserl refer. We are no longer only dealing with simple relationships of perception, imagination, value judgments, etc., but with general registers of mind-sets and ways to "be in the world."

Today, the regime of public justification is the most popular and most investigated one. (Boltanski, Thévenot, 1991) Others appeared later, such as the regime of compassion, (Corcuff, 2001) the regime of self-affection, (Laoureux, 2004, Boltanski, 2004) the regime of sympathy-philia, (Frère, 2006) the regime of familiarity, and the regime of engagement. (Thévenot, 1994, 1999) In all of these cases, the goal is to try to bring out a fundamental natural attitude that can describe several individuals at once, "a way to be with others (and objects in the world) whose justification constitutes one of the regimes," (Boltanski, Thévenot, p.35) "a register that regulates the way social activities are organized," in other words an "act-mode." (Boltanski, 1990, p.66, p.110)

When investigating the way people behave in the "life-world" (Lebenswelt), one can see that a common way to "aim intention at" the others or the objects of the world can be "justice" when a social situation is at the center of an argument (in the general meaning of an "opposition" between individuals). In the regime of justification, individuals use their rationality in order to argue in favor of their actions so as to make people who oppose and criticize those actions accept them.

A regime of justification as an illustration of phenomenological sociology

The regime of justification is the regime that attempts to encompass "the ordinary meaning of justice." Once a person's sense of what is just is offended, this person will place him or herself in a state of intentional consciousness aimed at the world according to the modality of justice that needs to be re-established, which will lead this person to argue. "One understands people once one has learned to model this ordinary meaning to which they must have access in order to produce arguments acceptable to others." (1990, p. 60) Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot dedicated their major work *On Justification: Economies of Worth* (originally published in French by Gallimard, 1991, in English by Princeton University Press, 2006) to the construction

of the different variants of this ordinary meaning. These authors modeled the general registers of justifications used today in everyday activities during which acting individuals attempt to convince others that their action is just and that it should not be the subject of criticism.

Each of these registers makes reference to a notion of the **common good**, of justice in a "polity." The word "cite" (which we translated by "polity") used by Boltanski and Thévenot recalls the Greek sense of the word, the space constructed around an "agora," a place of public debate destined for argumentation. A polity ("cité") is a sort of justification kit that acting individuals mobilize when their natural attitude is aimed at justification. It is a cognitive space in which one can draw arguments (in the tradition of topics which Aristotle called argument stores). (**Jacquemain, p. ??**) When acting individuals argue in a specific polity, they intentionally direct their arguments toward (and defend) the common good that is inherent to the polity they chose.

In tackling the formalization of polities, Boltanski and Thévenot call upon classical political philosophy authors who developed various visions of what could be considered a just polity. These authors did not invent the registers, but are considered **grammarians** of the political tie, in other words, they systematized the conceptions of justice which implicitly reappear in ordinary life and made them more explicit." (Corcuff, 1995, p. 108-109) "The detour by way of philosophical philosophy advances (their) understanding of the capacities that acting individuals put to work when they have to justify their actions or their criticisms. The way in which arguments are carried out "brings out strong constraints in the search for well-founded arguments backed by connected proof." The constructions of political philosophy constitute privileged instruments for clarifying these constraints and for making explicit the basis which most often remains implicit throughout arguments exchanged in the very heart of a disagreement. (p. 26) Each of these philosophies proposes a specific principle of order which allows one to specify what the authors call "the great ones" in the polities and, from there, to establish a justifiable order between people.

Individuals rely on such orders when they need to justify their actions or face criticism. Obviously, ordinary members of our society have not read the original texts that inspired Boltanski and Thévenot when they constructed their models of argumentation. These orders, formalized in political philosophies, are, however, ingrained in everyday life." (p.28) Each polity, crystallized in a paradigmatic text of political philosophy in which the logic of justification appears in a particularly pure form, would have then percolated little by little towards a common

sense in which these various logics would have become logics of justification, usable without reference to their original sources. Thus, these logics do not appear in people's minds as if by magic. On the contrary, they probably require, throughout history, a slow process of institutionalization, of incorporation into social organizations and therefore, too, of socialization. They do, however, require minds that are capable of supporting their general argumentative architecture and thus a form of general competence in judgment, which represents the strictly cognitive part of the model (Jacquemain, p. 160)

There are 6 of these orders of justification (or polities):

1) The "civic" polity. This is a polity in which people, in the manner of Rousseau's Social Contract, justify their actions by arguing that their position benefits the common good, representativeness. Greatness in a civic polity (in the civic logic of justification, that is) is measured by the fact that one speaks in the name of the collectivity. One thus justifies one's intentions by arguing that one has received a mandate, been elected, sworn by oath, that one is president of an association, a civil servant, an elected official, a trade union or class representative, in short, that one has received a mandate from the collectivity to speak in its name for the common good, not only for oneself.

2) The "domestic" polity. Here the relationship between individuals is comparable to what is found in a family. Individuals belong to a house delimited by a territory in which a relationship of domestic dependency is inscribed, just as, in a way, familial status follows us everywhere. In this model, greatness is a matter of the dependant relationship that gives one individual authority over another. Bossuet's work *La politique tirée des propres paroles de l'écriture sainte* (released in English as *Politics Drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scriptures*) sketches the model of this polity and seeks to prove the legitimacy of the King of France through forms of domestic relationships. The King exists only to serve the State, and both become a single entity. The King's greatness is measured in terms of his sacrifice. To celebrate his virtues is to show the world how ready he is to sacrifice himself in favor of the common good as he puts it before all of his own personal satisfactions. The great ones among us find a justification for their existence in the will to protect the small

ones. The Prince father protects the weak. He was not born for himself and he forgets himself in his sacrifice for the good of others. All people owe him love, which makes obedience agreeable. The common good is loyalty. One can easily imagine how this could apply to workplace relationships: an employee, under threat of being fired by his/her boss because the latter finds him/her too old, could complain that he/she is the victim of injustice even though he/she "devoted himself to the firm for more than thirty years."

3) The "industrial" polity. Formalized in the work of Saint Simon, this type of polity sets efficiency as its highest principle: comparing performances or using productivity as a criterion for passing judgment fall into this logic. In the example cited above of the old employee fired by his/her boss, the latter would inscribe his/her argument in the logic of the industrial polity by answering: "I'm sorry but you know that you're not competitive enough anymore." The sports journalist pointing out the exploits of a fast cyclist or of a football player scoring a lot follows, in a way, the same form of logic.

4) Hobbes' Leviathan exemplifies the "opinion" polity. The argumentative logic of this type of polity is that greatness should be measured according to popularity, which is, in turn, used to justify one's actions. In this polity, one will thus argue that one is right because one is "famous" or "well-known." It is thus in fact the opinion of others, the lesser known and therefore less great ones, which determines the greatness of the great ones in the polity. A movie star or a popular rapper will, for example, respond to an aggressive journalist with something like "who do you think you are to talk to me like that?" This answer shows explicitly how this famous individual adopts the position of a great person who sees him/herself as a higher representative for the common good.

5) The "inspired" polity, rooted in Saint Augustine's City of God, holds creativity as the common superior principle. In this polity, one becomes great when, in trying to be creative and innovative, one is able to easily cast aside the material world and let one's imagination and inspiration take over. The inspired polity is that of the artists and other creative people.

6) The "merchant" polity is inspired by the work of Adam Smith. Greatness in

this polity is measured according to interest and greed. Put simply, one is great when one owns a lot. We all know that classic economics is founded on Adam Smith's theory of the invisible hand, according to which there is a direct relationship between the general good and the fact that everybody seeks his/her own private interest on a market, which, as a result, regulates itself. The way in which the theories of one author can percolate into people's minds is particularly visible here: the maximization of individual profit is indeed a social and metaphysical construction which, after a couple of centuries, has become self-evident and in fact has ended up turning into a totally legitimate order of justification in the case of a dispute or an opposition.

To sum it up, we can see that each polity is characterized by one particular form of common good and thus offers a particular logic of justification that individuals can turn to in order to argue in favor of or against their own actions or those of others. A need for justification arises in two different kinds of disputes or oppositions:

1)   The opposition can take place within a single polity: various individuals refer to the same common good, but do not agree on who is "great" and who is "small," that is, they disagree on who best incarnates the common good. If, for example, one reconsiders the case of the employee about to be fired in the "industrial" polity, one could imagine a situation in which he/she responds to his/her boss: "I might not be 'competitive' in your meaning of the word, but I have acquired a lot of experience during these last thirty years. This experience plays a crucial role in the way this firm runs and you'll be missing it dearly when I leave this place." Here, experience, a principle of the industrial polity, is opposed to another principle of the same polity, competitiveness. Both boss and employee argue that they incarnate a form of industrial greatness, efficiency. The dispute can move into mounting generalizations as both parties stand their ground in the logic of the industrial polity: what matters is to decide who will sit at the summit of this efficiency hierarchy. A form of agreement between the two protagonists can take place without having to abandon the logic of the industrial polity. The boss can, for example, offer the employee a position as a self-employed consultant and thereby use his/her expertise for the benefit of the firm without being one of its salaried employees. The dispute is then

settled through the restoration of a hierarchy, a just distribution of greatness among individuals.

2) Sometimes, individuals have divergent opinions about which polity to turn to in order to settle the dispute and reach an agreement. One of the protagonists can refer to a form of common good that is not pertinent to the situation. Keeping our example in mind, one could for example imagine how the employee, trying to escape from the industrial polity, might point to the picture of his/her boss' family hanging in the latter's office and say: "I am also married and I also have children. What is to become of them if I am suddenly unemployed?" Clearly, the employee would then be shifting to another register, as he/she attempts to refer to the domestic polity and to pull his/her boss into this realm in order to measure their respective greatness according to another form of common good. This shows that individuals can switch to another normative support when they realize they are likely to lose the dispute in a given polity whose argumentative logic plays against them.

One can see how the regime of action of justification is a "mind-set," a specific attitude (rationality) in the life-world. The phenomenological inheritance is obvious. Here, too, the scientific attitude needs to be muted. One must, as Luc Boltanski explains, "stop trying to have the last word on the acting individuals, stop imposing a relationship on them that is stronger than any they would be able to produce" in order to see how "they themselves tell the story of their actions (Ricoeur uses the expression 'mise-en-intrigue')." (1900, p.56) The sociologist's role is to the take time to "clean" their justifications and to present the problem (or dispute) in question as clearly as possible. The reports made by the acting individuals are often hurried and brief. While the sociologist does try to avoid imposing a stronger interpretation than that of the acting individuals (suspending scientific judgment), he/she does not, however, stop trying to clarify their reports. The sociologist must climb the argumentative chain until he/she finds statements with a high degree of generalization that are acceptable to the acting individuals. This is a model of justice. Its goal is to clarify the principles of justice upon which people rest when they criticize or try to justify their actions. The implementation of these models is necessary since people, from lack of time, rarely reach back for the principle of justice of each "polity" that they use to back up their arguments.

Francophone Pragmatic Sociology and Anglophone Pragmatic Tradition

It is easy to see how the phenomenological tradition of Francophone pragmatic sociology is in fact quite close to what is found in the British pragmatic tradition. Indeed, in the pragmatic perspective, the sociologist does no more than suggest bringing to the foreground modalities of the attitude of justification that are already present in the "common sense." Schütz somehow bridges pragmatics and phenomenological sociology. Resting on James (but also Dewey and Whitehead), Schütz explains that "the objects of thinking constructed by scholars in the social sciences are grounded on objects of thinking constructed by the thought of individuals as they lead their everyday life among their peers and refer to it." This is why Schütz refers to their conceptual constructions as "second-degree constructions." (1987, p.79)

James, for instance, in a study entitled "Pragmatism," develops a strong conception of the hypotheses originating from common sense. According to him, these do not hold a lesser value of truth than their "scientific" equivalents. He writes: "our fundamental conceptions about the world around us originate from discoveries made by some of our ancestors, sometimes remote in time, which managed to survive throughout centuries of experience. They shape an important stage of balance in the history of human development, that of common sense. Other stages came about and attached themselves to it, but they never succeeded in replacing it." (1968, p. 125) Common sense refers here to the fact that an individual is likely to use certain intellectual forms, certain categories of thought and that these can be extremely useful to him/her in daily life. Commons sense is "a tool in the service of thought, a way to intellectually process facts." (*Ibid.*) In other words, common sense organizes the life world thanks to a series of concepts that originate from experience and that combine and order themselves according to each situation. Everywhere in practical life, adds James, "these intellectual tools serving common sense keep the upper-hand." (*ibid.*, p. 131) Of course, the laws of physics and chemistry define objects according to their molecular density or their organic functions, but these are "groups of physical qualities united by a law which nobody applies in their practical, daily life." When Schütz describes sociological concepts as second-degree concepts, he echoes what James said about extrapolation: science extrapolates "its primary qualities" beyond the world of common sense: its atoms, its ether, its

electric fields, etc." Things become mixtures "from which the good old visible objects of common sense are supposed to arise. In other words, the naïve concept of common sense disappears completely: the name of a thing is then only interpreted as a principle of association according to which some of our sensations follow one another and coexist." (p. 134)

The problem with critical philosophies, as is the case with science, is that they have lost the connection with common sense and can therefore prove inadequate when the latter becomes more useful in particular situations. When it comes to determining the truth, science and philosophy are on equal footing with common sense. Neither science, nor philosophy, nor common sense can pretend to be "closer to the truth" than the others. For some spheres of life, one prefers common sense, for some others, science, for others still, philosophy. Their hypotheses are "nothing more than ways of speaking and one must, when comparing them to one another, be aware of their intended use. Outside this reality, there is no truth," (p. 137) "no criterion makes it possible to decide without hesitation which one of these types of thought can claim the truth." Thus pragmatics considers that "those three ways to apprehend the world are just different procedures by which we adapt to reality." (p. 139)

Schütz explains that James, by saying that, agrees with Dewey: "our whole knowledge of the world, whether it is expressed in common sense or scientific terms, presents a number of constructions, for example, a set of abstractions, of generalizations, of formalizations and of idealizations that is specific to the particular level of organization where the thought is located." This thought can be located on the level of science or on that of daily life. There are thus no "pure" facts: in both cases, facts are being selected and interpreted according to some of the aspects that turn out to be relevant for us, as we find ourselves in a particular mind-set, one that reflects either a "common" or a scientific "intentionality." (1986, p.9)

Boltanski and Thévenot say essentially the same thing when they condemn the way in which, for a long time, the social sciences have considered common sense as a source of errors, equating, in a swift positivist motion, science with truth. According to the two authors, "people in every day life, like scientists, continuously adopt a suspecting, interrogating attitude towards the world and put it to the test." (1991, p.54) There exist some situations "in which acting individuals verbally expose and unfold their action. They attempt to build generalizations and to create facts through language. This use of language nears that of science." (*ibid*., p. 436)

The double space usually opposing the "deep reality of the sociologist" and the "illusion

of common sense" is thus no longer valid in pragmatic sociology in general and in the metaphysics of the polity in particular: "we take the arguments of acting individuals as they give themselves to us. Without a critical eye, we just confront them to models (the polities) that are themselves the product of a process of explanation and of systemization of the common competence. As a result, we are no longer submitted to the doubling that characterized the critical sociologist, who was forced to give up his "illusions" when he stepped into the laboratory, even though he would embrace them again once out of it, for example, as he left behind him the sociology of art in order to visit an exhibition – since, as an ordinary individual, he/she could not live without those principles of judgment even though they are described in his/her works as common illusions. (…) As we stop pretending to have analytical abilities that are radically different from those of the acting individual, abilities which would supposedly enable us to understand his actions better than he/she could, (…) we also stop trying to present our own version with the aim of having the last word." (1990, p.63)

The Sociology of Regimes of Action: a New Perspective beyond Critical Sociology, Ethnomethodology and the School of Rational Choice

Defined as such, there is no doubt that the first form of sociology opposed by francophone pragmatic sociology is Pierre Bourdieu's critical school. Bourdieu, from his early texts (such as *le Métier de Sociologue*) on, sees the sociologist's task as that of the intellectual who refuses to accept "the evidence of common sense," (1973, p. 78) who is ever-vigilant before "the contamination to which the purest of ideas are exposed as soon as they start to echo common schemas." (*ibid*., p. 38) Sociology must succeed where a certain (pragmatic?) philosophy failed: it must "protect itself from prenotions, 'schematic and summary representations' that come from ordinary language." (P. Bourdieu, 1973, p. 28 and 36)

Up through his later texts such as *Pascalian Meditations*, Bourdieu stayed in the wake of a positivist declension of Durkheim: common sense must be the object of sociological suspicion and incite a desire for a "critical break with its tangible evidence, at first sight indisputable, and which is constructed in such a way as to give us the illusion that it is based on elements of reality." (1997, p. 217) In *Pascalian Meditations*, he boldly goes on to say: "the sociologist very

quickly protects him/herself against 'rationalizations that agents inevitably produce once they're invited to adopt a point of view which is no longer that of action nor that of scientific interpretation.' (*ibid*., p. 306) Their 'spontaneous theories' are quickly distinguished by 'their open structure, their uncertainties, their imprecision, even their incoherence,' in short, by a set of characteristics resulting from the fact 'that they remain subordinate to practical functions.'" (*ibid*., p. 309)

Bourdieu develops a sociology that seems to be as far-removed from Anglo-Saxon pragmatics as it is from Francophone pragmatic sociology. However, though the two domains each put scientific knowledge on the same level as "common" knowledge, it is important to note that the second was not directly inspired by the first. Indeed, Francophone pragmatic sociologists rarely cite the founding fathers of the genre. Instead, they draw much more heavily on Bloor and Latour who are specialists in pragmatism. We thereby find the leveling of common sense knowledge and scientific knowledge so dear to James in Bloor's symmetry principle.

Bloor demands, according to the symmetry principle, that we treat the truth in the same way as errors in science. We are accustomed to applying social explanations to errors but never to truths, as if the truth was its own explanation. Epistemology raised this asymmetry between the real sciences and the fake (those that come from common sense) to the level of a founding principle. It is only these last ones that can be linked to a social context. The complete epistemological division will decontaminate the others. The only thing considered scientific is that which breaks with common sense. The symmetry principle re-establishes the historicity of scientific objects and as a result justice because, as Serres would say "there is nothing more mythical than the idea of a science free of all myths." (p. 124-127) As James suggested we must treat common sense and science in the same way while setting apart the truth that they each claim to represent.

However, there is an important distinction to be made between the sociology of the sciences and Francophone pragmatic sociology, which likewise separates pragmatics from ethnomethodology. Ethnomethodology was the first real trend in the social sciences to draw on phenomenology. But although it similarly aims to determine the states of intentional consciousness of the acting individuals in a situation, at present it does so without allowing itself (as a methodological choice) to use resources outside the situation. (1990, p. 73) However, in its discussions of regimes of action and the polity, pragmatic sociology calls upon common

resources beyond the realm of the situation which make it possible to identify the situation and to select pertinent arguments and organizations. Like Latour's sociology, ethnomethodology remains in a state of absolute indetermination of a "here and now" offered without resistance to acting individuals' free interpretations. In other words, pragmatics effectively reintroduces an asymmetry between "common sense" and science because science continues to propose categories and typologies. But unlike critical sociology, these categories are located beyond common sense and cannot thus claim to invalidate it by describing it as an illusion. However, Latour, though he concedes that pragmatic sociology is probably what is most interesting in France at the moment, would still consider this step too structuralist. In a recent article in which he confronts his approach with that of pragmatics, he writes that the polity and regimes of action bring transcendence to where one should, without adding concepts, limit oneself to a refined description of the progression of acting individuals. He advocates definitively renouncing the practice of categorizing sociological data and considers pragmatic categories as completely useless "new principles of coordination" of acting individuals' actions. (2004, p. 10 and 13)

In my opinion, Latour's sociology, by its continuous refusal to rewrite, by adding scientific elements, the way in which people describe their own actions (ibid., p.7), might be killing sociology, as it would content itself with a prefect redundancy with common sense. What makes pragmatic sociology interesting, on the other hand, is the fact that its conceptual inheritance, rooted in phenomenology and Anglophone pragmatics, opens new research methods to sociology, which can now start tackling subjects that it did not tackle in the past. Its most significant appeal is its offer of a variety of regimes of action for situations in which the strong tradition of the rational acting individual seems to focus solely on the regime related to rationality (that of justification). In France this paradigm is at the core of the school of methodological individualism. Its enemy is sociologism, that is, accounting for acting individuals' behavior through causes rather than reasons. What IM condemns in this intellectual position is that it considers the way individuals act as something shaped by social determinisms, be they of structural or ideological nature. The challenge of his rationalism is to make classic sociology's causal explanation useless or, at least, residual, to call into question a form of sociology that relies on purely sociological mechanisms of determination as is the case in Bourdieu's habitus or Durkheim's notion of collective consciousness. IM vests acting individuals with a supposed rationality that leads him to maintain, up until his very last texts, that these individuals have good

reasons to do what they do and to believe what they believe, even when their convictions are wrong. He refers to this as a "cognitive explanation of beliefs." (1995, 1999)

What makes the sociology of regimes of action interesting is its ability to integrate this point-of-view without having to restrict itself to rationality. It is true that the acting individual can aim at the world in an attitude of thought-out consciousness, which will lead him to justify his acts. It is not, however, the only possible relationships he/she can have with the life-world (Lebenswelt).

Boltanski refers to the possibility of existence of a regime of *philia* love, which would compose the state-of-mind of two individuals interacting with each other and recognizing in each other similar merits. (*ibid*. p.161) First inspired by Aristotle, this formalization of the regime of *philia* – which would lead individuals to develop a intentional mind-set anchored in reciprocity – owes a lot to Mauss' theory of the "contre-don" (which one could translate as "gift reciprocation"). *Philia* would substitute itself for the *hau* ("the spirit of the gift") and answer one of the questions that the anthropologist continuously asked himself when studying the Maoris:

> According to which rule of right and interest must a given gift, in backward or archaic societies, always be given back? What is the power that resides in the given object and that drives the receiver to give it back? (Mauss as cited in Boltanski, 1990: 214, translation mine)

Boltanski's approach thereby agrees with the French "Mouvement Anti-utilitariste dans les Sciences Sociales" ("Anti-utilitarian Movement in the Social Sciences," shortened to M.A.U.S.S in French) which, for a couple of years now, also uses M. Mauss' theories in order to put forward a critique of utilitarian economics. What its members would want to show is that "calculation and profit, be it material or not, play a role in social action, but there is more to it: commitment, spontaneity, friendship and solidarity, in other words, 'gift,' also play a big role." Indeed, on both sides, people take Mauss' discovery of "the universality of the concept of triple-obligation according to which individuals must give, receive and give back" very seriously, which itself implies that the gift is inconceivable when "a rule of reciprocity does not already exist." (Caillé, 2000: 16; 17) There is no doubt that *philia* (Boltanski) or the "don contre-don" (Mauss) are in fact a single non-rational mind set that does not aim at the world and the "others" that compose it through the intentional modality of interest, as is the case in IM's rationalist theory. We have, through this regime of action, analyzed voluntary investment in the third-sector

economy. A lot of further research, however, will be necessary in order to rehabilitate the study of friendship or even love in social sciences…