

SYMPOSIUM

La prière en partage

Une rencontre empirique de l'anthropologie et de la phénoménologie ?

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Phénomène de prière et phénoménologie de l'alliance

Esquisses

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« L'homme immédiat pense et s'imagine que le plus important, quand il prie, ce sur quoi il doit surtout insister, c'est que Dieu entende ce que lui demande. Et, cependant, au sens éternel de la vérité, c'est justement l'inverse : la vraie relation dans la prière n'est pas quand Dieu écoute ce qu'on lui demande, mais lorsque celui qui prie persiste à prier jusqu'au moment où il devient celui qui écoute, qui écoute ce que Dieu veut » !

Soeren Kierkegaard

Dès lors, dit Dieu, mon peuple va savoir quel est mon nom ;
dès lors de, ce jour, il va savoir que je suis celui-là même qui affirme : 'Me voici' (Hineni)».

Esaïe 52,6

1.- Héritages contrastés. La philosophie et les philosophes se sont longtemps détournés de la prière, de son concept, de son effectivité. De fait, elle ne figure pas, hormis quelques rares exceptions¹ au protocole thématique des Dictionnaires et encyclopédies de philosophie du 20^e siècle². Elle fut le plus souvent tenue pour un élément théâtral de la plus lointaine mythologie, ou bien reléguée dans la représentation (*Vorstellung*) ou encore pensée comme un résiduel superstitieux proportionné aux impuissances humaines. Démocrite pouvait ainsi écrire : « Les hommes dans leurs prières demandent aux dieux la santé ; ils ignorent qu'ils ont en eux-mêmes la possibilité de se la procurer » (*Fragment 234*). Cependant, celui qui fut vénéré comme le premier athée de l'histoire, complétait : « Mais, par intempérance, ils font le contraire de ce qu'elle exige et, par leurs passions, la trahissent en quelque sorte ». On trouvera un diagnostic similaire chez Kant :

La prière comme culte intérieur formel, et pour cette raison un moyen de grâce, est une illusion superstitieuse (un fétichisme) car elle consiste simplement à déclarer nos désirs à un être qui n'a nul besoin que celui qui désire une chose, lui déclare son intention intérieure ; aucun résultat n'est donc atteint par-là³.

Kant laisse, lui aussi, à la prière un espace de légitimité mais qui se définit par l'idéal moral et décline ainsi le souci « d'être agréable à Dieu⁴ ».

Cette défiance à l'égard de la relation entre philosophie et prière n'est pas moins remarquable du côté de la théologie. De quels titres, y demande-t-on volontiers, la raison philosophique peut-elle exciper pour traiter de ce dont le liturgiste et le théologien

¹ Cf. A. MARCHETTI, « *Pregiera* » in *Enciclopedia filosofica*, Florenz, 2e éd. 1968-69, vol. V, p. 241 ss.

² Par exemple, aucune des "entrées" du célèbre *Vocabulaire philosophique* de Lalande ne lui est consacrée.

³ Immanuel KANT, *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft* (1793) ; traduction française par J. Gibelin : *La religion dans les limites de la simple raison*, Paris, Vrin, 1983, p.208.

⁴ *Id.*

considèrent non sans raison comme un de leurs objets privilégiés ? Ainsi l'exégète allemand R. Schnackenburg estimait que « trop de réflexion » ne peut qu'ôter à la prière de supplication sa vertu propre⁵. Le théologien suisse Urs von Balthasar a pu lui-même le soutenir : lorsque la philosophie est entrée dans l'histoire, la prière s'est interrompue. De telles mises en alternative peuvent-elles toutefois conserver quelque pertinence tant que n'a pas été élucidé en amont le rapport avec ce dont parle la prière, à savoir la disposition religieuse ultime ?

On sait que la tradition philosophique depuis ses premiers matins, de Platon à Proclus, en passant par Plotin et Porphyre, tenait la prière pour une catégorie éminente de la pensée, les néoplatoniciens tel Proclus la considérant comme un « acte de penser⁶ ». Un mot de Gerhard Ebeling lui fait singulièrement écho : « L'acte de prier n'est pas étranger à l'acte de penser, ni l'acte de penser ennemi de l'acte de prier (...). Sur l'acte de prier, on n'a pas trop mais trop peu pensé⁷ ». Les conditions de légitimation et de fécondation de cette relation « philosophie-prière », dès les lors que sont identifiées les opérations de réductions psychologique, sociologique et linguistique, sont encore devant nous.

2.- Phénoménologie et paradoxes de la prière. Un nouveau champ de réponse s'est dessiné notamment avec le renouveau de la phénoménologie du début du 20^e siècle et son mot d'ordre de « aller aux choses mêmes ». La religion en effet, pas moins que la médecine, l'art ou la politique est *de ce monde*. La prière en est l'acte fondamental⁸ ; son inscription mondaine est plurielle : personnelle et intime, collective et communautaire, rituelle et institutionnelle. Cette pluralité ne concerne pas seulement la modalité expressive de son objet, la manifestation de son idéalité ; elle est cela même que la prière donne, déploie, autrement dit : *ce qu'elle est*. Le corpus hébraïque en décline quatre formes principales que le christianisme a fait siennes : supplication, demande, gratitude et louange.

Phénomène de plein droit, observable à travers tous les âges de l'Histoire et dans toutes les cultures, la prière est une disposition fondamentale qui concerne le monde, la place et l'orientation qu'y prend le sujet humain. Mais leur est-elle réductible ? Les pierres peuvent crier, les animaux souffrir, ils ne prient pas plus qu'ils ne forment un projet. Or l'orant décline un projet, dessine un horizon, ouvre une espérance, moins siens que ceux qui venant d'un ailleurs l'ouvrent à une herméneutique de la vie et à une promesse. La prière leur est-elle là aussi réductible ?

C'est pourquoi une phénoménologie de la prière, telle que nous cherchons à en esquisser un possible programme, ne saurait s'en tenir à une simple description factuelle comme s'y emploient pour leur part et avec bénéfice les sciences de la religion ; il lui revient en amont de dégager les directions de sens impliquées dans sa geste même, qui met en jeu une puissance relationnelle singulière : entre l'homme, le monde et le divin, réductible à aucune leurs instances, mais inscrit dans leur jeu triangulaire.

Ainsi entendue, la prière révèle son statut paradoxal. On sait que le jeune Heidegger, se voulant conséquent avec la méthode phénoménologique inspirée son maître Husserl, avait lancé un « bas les pattes » (*Hände Weg*), à celui qui ne se sent pas, avec le religieux, sur un sol

⁵ Rudolf SCHNACKENBURG, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, Düsseldorf, Patmos, 1971, p.144.

⁶ Voir à cet égard Werner BEIERWALTES, *Proklos. Grundzüge seiner Metaphysik*, Frankfurt am Main 1979, p. 327.

⁷ Gerhard EBELING, « Das Gebet », *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 70 (1973) p. 208.

⁸ Cf. Bernhard CASPER, *Das Ereignis des Betens. Grundlinien einer Hermeneutik des religiösen* Freiburg/Br. 1998.

*authentique*⁹. C'est qu'une compréhension phénoménologique originaire ne saurait être « neutre » : elle doit rapporter *positivement* aux différentes formes de vécu. « Neutre », elle l'est en un tout autre sens : elle ne préjuge en rien de ce qu'elle a à découvrir ; son seul préjugé, car elle en possède cependant un, tient à ce qu'elle reconnaît à la vie religieuse, un caractère *originaire* et non pas dérivé. La réponse apportée vaut subséquentement pour le phénomène de prière.

Ce phénomène doit cependant affronter trois problèmes phénoménologiques fondamentaux. Heidegger avait relevé deux d'entre eux. Le premier : comment les réalités vécues par le sujet telles que « le plus haut que toi et moi », « ce qui nous est supérieur », sont maintenues comme telles au moment où elles émanent de l'expérience. La réponse esquissée consiste à tenir que le processus de constitution de la présence de Dieu est un phénomène originaire¹⁰. Dit autrement, Dieu ne saurait être considéré comme un objet extérieurement constitué, il est présent à la disposition qui cherche à comprendre le monde, à l'analyser. Cette réponse est corroborée par la référence au « Château intérieur » de Thérèse d'Avila : « Quiconque ne le croit pas - que Dieu séjourne dans l'âme (...) - n'en aura pas jamais l'expérience¹¹ ». L'*absolutus* est coextensif à l'*interior intimo meo*. La double référence à saint Augustin et à Maître Eckhart s'impose ici.

Appliqué notre question, un tel propos place la prière du côté de sa détermination propre : une détermination dont participe lui-même le destinataire de la prière. Ne trouve-t-on pas en effet dans la philosophie du christianisme cette thèse fondamentale selon laquelle l'Esprit de Dieu prie dans l'âme humaine¹² ?

Le second problème concerne le « rapport au monde », souvent compris sans la prière comme séparation. Une compréhension phénoménologique doit s'efforcer de rejoindre la motivation originelle dans laquelle se produit le geste de « séparation » vis à vis de la quotidienneté - qui caractérise aussi bien le rite, notamment religieux -, oriente, réoriente *vers* le monde.

Un troisième problème concerne l'articulation entre l'horizon temporel et événementiel qu'implique la prière (demande ou gratitude) et l'idée gréco-antique du Dieu « immuable. Le schème kénotique hérité de saint Paul (*épître aux Philippiens* 2,5-11), qui a permis d'élaborer les conditions théoriques de la compatibilité entre nouveauté et immutabilité, nous instruit. La réponse fournie notamment par Origène et par Hilaire de Poitiers a consisté à lier la souveraine liberté de Dieu et son renoncement aux attributs divins, nouveauté de Dieu. La prière peut alors à bon droit trouver un espace propre d'effectuation qui exige, en vertu de sa dimension relationnelle, le jeu de la novation.

3.- Prière et phénoménologie de l'alliance. Ce qui précède fait signe vers une structure phénoménologique qui rompt avec les unilatéralismes classiques de la prière : *de bas en haut* et *de haut en bas* ; de l'*intérieurité* vers l'*extériorité* ; de la *conscience* vers l'*absolu*.

⁹ Cf. Martin HEIDEGGER, *Die philosophischen Grundlagen der mittelalterlichen Mystik, in Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens, Klostermann, GA 60, 1995, p.333-337* ; traduction française par J. Greisch, *Phénoménologie de la vie religieuse*, Gallimard, 2012, p.12-174.

¹⁰ GA 60, p.336.

¹¹ GA 60, p.337.

¹² Voir saint Paul dans l'*Épître aux Romains* : « Vous avez reçu un esprit de fils adoptifs qui vous fait nous écrier : Abba ! Père ! » (8, 15).

L'alliance, phénomène entre tous qui « fait temps » et qui « fait être », principale grammaire du monde¹³ place la philosophie de la prière devant une exigence théorique conséquente avec le double refus de toute « monadologie anthropologique » et de toute « monologie théologique ». Elle appelle ainsi une confrontation avec les philosophies de l'intersubjectivité, allant notamment de Martin Buber à Emmanuel Levinas et à Maurice Nédoncelle.

Les concepts qui entrent ici en jeu orientent vers l'idée d'une constitution mutuelle *des et par les* sujets ; ils signalent toutefois des divergences sur l'idée de la relation avec le divin parfois qualifié, après Kierkegaard, de « tout-autre ». La thèse de Nédoncelle sur la réciprocité des consciences concernait certes le champ de l'immanence interhumaine mais aussi celui de transcendance divino-humaine. Nédoncelle évoque d'abord « une synergie, une co-création des partenaires, une mutualité inventive qui s'exerce sur eux *ou au-delà d'eux*¹⁴ » ; ensuite : l'inscription de Dieu à même la réciprocité des consciences - « Dieu lui-même, écrit-il non sans accent eckartien, je ne le connais que dans mon âme¹⁵ » - venant subséquemment à affirmer que « penser, c'est (en définitive) penser Dieu¹⁶ ».

La prière cependant introduit une vocation nouvelle au penser lui-même : elle place devant l'exigence de penser une irréductible altérité temporelle d'une part à même la subjectivité ; d'autre part entre le sujet et son interlocuteur « objectivé, » inassignables l'un à l'autre Comment ne pas citer en écho à cette double altérité, le mot de D. Bonhoeffer : « Devant Dieu et avec Dieu, nous vivons sans Dieu¹⁷. » ? Cette double altérité, est coextensive à la temporalité de la prière, qu'elle soit suppliante ou élogieuse, qu'elle signe l'attente d'un salut ou entame le chant de la gratitude.

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¹³ Le concept d'alliance n'est pas ici entendu au sens biblique historiquement second, mais en son sens phénoménologique. Nous nous permettons de renvoyer à cet égard à notre *Le principe alliance*, t. 1 : *Phénoménologie de l'alliance*, Paris, Hermann (sous presse), février 2021

¹⁴ Maurice NÉDONCELLE, *Explorations personalistes*, Paris, Aubier-Montaigne, 1970, p. 81.

¹⁵ *Id.* *La réciprocité des consciences*. Essai sur la nature de la personne, Paris, Éditions Montaigne, 1942, p.105

¹⁶ *Id.* *Conscience et logos*, Paris, Éditions de l'Épi, 1961, p.149.

¹⁷ Dietrich BONHOEFFER, *Résistance et soumission*, Genève, Labor et fides, 1973, p.366.

Extrapolation!

Phenomenology, sociology of critique and states of mind in the solidarity economy¹

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate the value and the limit of the sociology *of critique* as a form of post-Bourdieuian critical sociology, especially where moral values play a crucial role in explaining actions – as they do in the solidarity economy, the field analyzed here. Contrary to interpretations of justifications as moral toolkits unconsciously mobilized by actors about practices whose real reasons lie elsewhere, I suggest that the sociology of critique’s notion of “grammar” is useful for articulating the normative moral elements that motivate specific actions and justifications. We will see how *taking the actors themselves seriously* – the sociology of critique’s motto – can yield important insights for sociology. But then we face a problem within the field that the sociology of critique can’t resolve alone: there sometimes appears to be a contradiction between actors’ actions and their justifications. Phenomenology can help us to understand these justifications at a deeper level as expressions of fundamental ways of relating to the world. In this sense phenomenology is useful to a moral sociology of critique because it helps us find a solution to the “contradiction” that the sociology *of critique* left unsolved.

Key words : Phenomenology, sociology of critique, reflexivity, Scheler, grammar, states of mind, solidarity economy, justification, critique, practice

¹ . I would like to thank Juliane Reinecke and Josh Booth for their contributions to this article.

Introduction

After Bourdieu, French sociology tended to see value-based arguments as “illusions” that hid cultural or economic determining factors of which actors were unaware (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 21). In the study of the solidarity economy this Bourdieusian conception has led to actors’ own justifications being quickly dismissed, as it is shown how they are in reality moved by market forces and the pressure of a welfare state increasingly inclined to devolve its public responsibilities to them. But what would happen if, rather than suspecting solidarity economy actors’ moral justifications to be the veil concealing the invasion of the market’s logic and the disappearance of the welfare state, we just took them seriously? To answer this question, I hope to demonstrate the usefulness of the sociology *of critique*, an original research program in contemporary French thought which allows us to treat values as sources of motivation, especially within fields which are keen to promote a moralized and politicized economy. By studying the moral judgements of people in action and describing their logics, the sociology of critique has helped restore to people the critical capacity that had been confiscated by the sociologist (Latour, 1993, p. 50-51). This paper offers both a contribution to this sociology of critique and a new way of understanding cooperativism and the solidarity economy – phenomena which are mainly studied by economic sociology and public action theory, both of which are more concerned with questions of institutions and embeddedness than with morality (Eynaud and Laville, et al., 2019).

In the first section I develop the notion of a moral “grammar”, the main conceptual tool used by Boltanski and Thévenot’s sociology of critique (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006), to understand actors’ critical competences. Then, in the second section, I will try to pick out the moral grammar of the solidarity economy by identifying how the moral values mobilized by its actors actually operate, showing that they are far from mere discursive elements of a naïve common sense which veils the real reasons for action (i.e. profit, state manipulation, etc.). But, while the sociology of critique’s notion of grammar allows us to understand the action of actors when it is coherent with the values they use to justify it, it does not allow us to explain a paradox that I will highlight in the third section: how can we understand the fact that sometimes the moral values mobilized by actors to justify their action seem to misrepresent the main characteristics of their action? Within the Bourdieusian framework of unconscious actors unaware of the factors that really determine their action, we can understand how their erroneous justifications might not fit with their action. But once we have left the Bourdieusian paradigm, this paradox cannot be solved from within the sociology of critique itself. Resolving this problem requires us to take a closer look at the sociology of critique’s phenomenological underpinnings.

The fourth section intends to show how phenomenology can be used as an extension of the sociology of critique. Indeed, the notion of grammar can be understood as the cognitive syntax of what Husserl and Scheler call “intentional states of mind” that mediate how an actor’s consciousness relates to the external world. This redefinition will lead us to conceptualize the notion of “extrapolation”, understood as the moment where an action is so focused on the realization of one moral value that this action can be seen by actors themselves as contradictory with some other values of the solidarity economy’s general grammar of justification. In this way, we reinforce the sociology *of critique* paradigm and we continue to take actors’ moral values seriously without reducing them to some kind of unconscious cultural toolkit that veils the real causes of action (Vaisey, 2009; Silber, 2003).

1. The sociology of critique

Taking people seriously: an original point of view on common sense

The sociology of critique is well known outside France today. This is why I will only summarize here its conceptions of common sense and grammar, which will serve my general analysis. Boltanski and Thévenot condemn the way in which, for a long time, the social sciences in general, and Bourdieu (Boltanski's former director of studies) especially, have considered common sense to be a source of errors, equating, in a swift positivist motion, critical sociology as science with truth. Contra Bourdieu, these two authors argue that, in everyday life, ordinary people never stop wondering about how to rationalize what they are currently experiencing (2006, p. 37). There exist some situations "in which actors exhibit their action and unfold it verbally. On such occasions, they seek to generalize and to constitute facts by means of language, and as they do so they use language in a way that approaches that of sciences." (2006, p. 356). This is why the language emerging from the common sense of ordinary people must be taken seriously by the sociologist. (Boltanski, 2012, p. 100). The scientific attitude needs to be muted. As Luc Boltanski explains:

To begin, we have to give up the idea that we can have the last word by producing – and imposing on actors – more powerful reports than the ones they themselves are able to produce; in other words, we have to abandon the way classical sociology has conceptualized the asymmetry between researchers and actors (...). Instead of defining agents by means of stable attributes (i.e. habitus, dispositions, etc.), endowing them with interests and tendencies that are inscribed in the body and capable of generating objective unconscious intentions, and then assigning itself the task of explaining the actions of these agents when they encounter external obstacles, (our) sociology shows how actors develop discourses about these actions, how they shape their action into a plot (2012, p. 28-30)

The most sophisticated language arising from actors' common sense appears when they develop *justifications*. Actors may use justifications both to defend and to object to particular rationalizations of reality. It is through justifications – which often contain actors' own nuanced (albeit non-scholarly) *critiques*, and arise in disputes, controversies, and situations of uncertainty – that actors perform the social world, attempting either to consolidate or to change reality through their discourse. But the justifications produced by actors are often hurried and brief. For the sociology of critique, the sociologist's role is to take the time to "clean up" actors' justifications and present the problem in question as clearly as possible. They must do this by identifying and theorizing the principles that underpin actors' justifications, climbing the argumentative chain until they find statements with a high degree of generalization that are acceptable to the actors. In doing so, they clarify the values (also referred to as "common goods") upon which people rest when they act, critique and justify their actions. The reconstruction of these models is necessary since, amid the immediate urgency of matters, people rarely reach back to access the values that they use to back up their arguments (Boltanski, 2012, p. 31).

The sociology of critique emphasizes the critical competences actors have to recognize and reflect upon the multiple values that co-exist and co-construct social reality. Critique arises from the interpretation of situations according to values, and becomes rationalized and intellectualized through justifications. Justifications are hence not approached with skepticism, accompanied by a search for unconscious influences that operate hidden behind discursive articulations, but serve as the starting point for studying the political and moral frameworks that motivate people's behavior.

Via a focus on justifications and the everyday critiques they contain, the sociology of critique thus brings values – seen as motivations for and constraints on action – back into the centre-stage of sociological inquiry: "In the realm of moral values, it was a question of taking the normative principles and ideals that people claim to adhere to seriously, without reducing them to mere ideological masks (or) to an interplay of forces over which actors have no control." (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2007, p. xi).

The notion of grammar

The sociology of critique school of thought is embedded in an intellectual tradition that privileges the study of situated behavior in indeterminate social situations. In this sense it can also be seen as another branch of the micro-sociological project that found its expression in the English language in Garfinkel's ethnomethodology (1967), and which seeks to identify the framework of common sense in order to comprehend how people make sense of their everyday world. But while ethnomethodology focuses on the role of "savoir faire" in people's routine day-to-day activities, the sociology of critique assumes that people act according to basic moral frameworks underpinned by normative values, and that these values are instantiated in social life through critique. Normative values give substance to justifications. But they also subject these justifications to "requirements resembling those of a grammar" (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006, p. 140).

Even though the notion of grammar stresses explanatory elements that *resemble* social structures, a grammar should not be understood as an external structure that becomes internalized as unconscious social norms. Grammatical rules are neither "externally guaranteed" (Weber 1980 [1922]) nor stabilized through naturalization (Bourdieu 1979). To emphasize the non-technical nature of a grammar – and contrast a grammatical with a structuralist approach – I propose to understand it, as Lemieux does (2009), in the spirit of a Wittgensteinian language game. In a language game, the grammar becomes a sense-making device that renders a situation intelligible and meaningful. For our purposes, a grammar consists of a set of values, which work like conscious rules of the game that vary according to the moral communities one belongs to.

In short, a grammar organizes how we speak – and therefore make sense of the world. It lies at the heart of how we make judgments about the world and/or what we are doing (Frère and Jaster, 2018). Acting, talking, seeing the world according to a grammar is a matter of competently mastering a language game, rather than complying with rules as if they belonged to a deterministic social field. A grammar is therefore both enabling and constraining. Grammatical rules are resources for people's playful uses of language, while at the same time setting boundaries to intelligible ways of speaking and acting. As with people's understanding of the generic rules of the language they are speaking, the sociology of critique posits that actors *are* conscious of these grammars – because they organize their common sense – even if they do not use the word "grammar" and if in their daily life they, unlike the sociologist, rarely have the time and opportunity to systematically clarify their normative assumptions (Boltanski 2012, p. 36-58).

When actors perform the social world through justifications, these justifications often include critiques of how others mobilize values within a given dispute over what counts in a concrete situation. Every justification carries its own representation of the world based on its own set of values – and thus its own grammar – which organizes the arguments it contains. These may be opposed to the arguments of others, who may have another representation of the same world, arguing from other values. Boltanski and Thévenot suggest that what matters to someone in an argument is to convince the other person that reality must be interpreted with respect to his/her values and that, since he/she embodies these goods in a perfect way, he/she is endowed with a particular worth (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006, p. 13).

2. The grammar of the solidarity economy

What is the solidarity economy?

Solidarity economy is a widely-used term whose most common French equivalent is *l'économie solidaire*. As explained in various publications, we prefer this term to "social economy", "charities", "Third Sector" and "social business / social entrepreneurship". First, while legal statuses are not sufficient for an organization to be referred to as part of the solidarity economy, they are necessary. Similarly to those belonging to the social economy, solidarity economy initiatives must have a strong legal collective status that differentiates them from social enterprises or social businesses, which may be so-called based merely on the "moral" declarations (about the

environment, poverty, etc.) of some individual leader or some company's marketing department² (Frère 2018). Second, many solidarity economy initiatives have a commercial dimension and operate on the economic market (like Community Supported Agriculture [CSA] and micro-finance). This contrasts with "charities", which are run by largely middle-class people for the benefit of unemployed or poor people without always making the idea of reciprocity central (Lemaître & Hemsling, 2012). Third, some solidarity economy initiatives, such as the Local Exchange Trading System (LETS), reject the official currency issued by central banks and introduce a new egalitarian currency based on the local exchange of good and services. This suggests an alternative or a parallel economy. So "social economy" must also be avoided, because it leads us to think either that all of these organizations are based on the usual market economy (like regular workers' cooperatives and mutual insurance schemes) or that they aim to construct a Third Sector alongside the public sector and market capitalism (Defourny et al. 2009). The term "solidarity economy", by contrast, suggests that all of its organizations belong to a specific alternative economy that aims to replace capitalism – one that seeks to eradicate a pure market sphere controlled by private shareholders rather than by citizens organized democratically (Frère and Reinecke 2011; Bauhardt 2014).

The solidarity economy is clearly delineated in France. It brings together new worker cooperatives (such as enterprises taken over by their workers in self-management); new consumer cooperatives such as Community Supported Agriculture (i.e the famous AMAP network³), *Local Exchange Trading Systems* (LETS); solidarity micro-credit and so-called *community services*⁴ (which include providers of everyday support such as help for older people; communitarian restaurants and public space improvement groups; cultural organizations; environmental initiatives such as local recycling, etc.) (see Laville, 2009, Frère, 2019). These initiatives were for a long time established by *consulting services* such as the *Pôles d'économie solidaire*⁵ or ADEL, which will be our focus here.

In a large research program on the solidarity economy which since 2002 has gathered several studies, my collaborators and I aim to identify the grammar of this "solidarity economy" in France⁶. The striking fact was that actors were able to switch between different values in justification simultaneously. Here we will consider the example of the Local Economic Development Agency ADEL⁷, an organization that helped establish community services to promote local economic development. This is one of the solidarity economy organizations endowed with high levels of worth. By taking the example that is cited by most of the other solidarity economy organizations as an "ideal", we are going to try to extract the moral grammar that characterizes the imaginary shared by people within the solidarity economy. As we noted, actors do not use the word "grammar", but they are conscious of a specific set of values – and tend to respect these values in their practices and justifications – when they identify with the movement. The study showed that when they give reasons for why they are involved in the solidarity economy they always and quite naturally respect the same grammar, mentioning the same values without necessarily having been in touch with each other.

ADEL as an "Example to Follow"

² . These statutes include 1) to serve members and the community, rather than profit, 2) self-management, 3) democratic decision-making: 1 person = 1 vote, 3) collective ownership of capital and the means of production, 3) primacy of people and work over capital in the distribution of income, 3) job rotation, 4) equal pay (wage ratio of 1 to 3, for instance) (Frère, 2018 : 85).

³ . *Associations pour le maintien de l'Agriculture Paysanne*

⁴ . *Services de proximité*

⁵ . *Solidarity economy centres*

⁶ . During the qualitative fieldwork of one of the first studies ("*L'économie solidaire à l'épreuve de la pratique*"), five associations were selected from each of the five key sectors. In each of the 25 selected organizations, activities were followed through participant observation of three days to a week. In each of these associations, three semi-structured interviews were conducted with the director, an employee and a volunteer in order to account for the voices of different positions within each association (bringing the total number of interviews to 75). These lasted an hour and a half on average. They were recorded and subsequently transcribed. We systematically coded interview transcripts and field notes.

⁷ . *Association pour le Développement de l'Economie Locale*

One of the oft-repeated principles of the solidarity economy is to “create contestation through facts”. Activists assume that practical activity has more subversive power than abstract critique, particularly if human creativity can manifest itself in economic creation emerging from what others might regard as the social “nothingness” of deserted, impoverished suburbs. This form of argumentation, which values the act of creation *ex nihilo* as an authentic artistic act, is illustrated in our first case: ADEL, a long-established solidarity economy consultancy service.

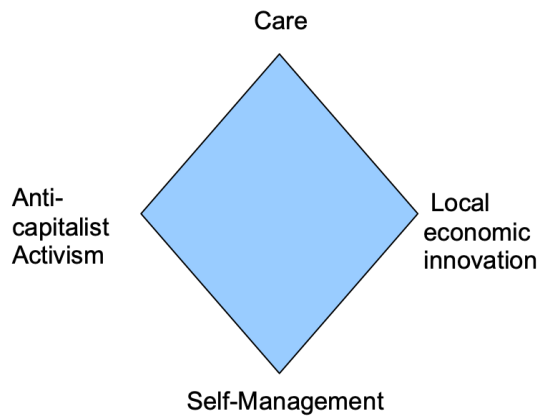
This Paris-based association was founded in 1983 by our interviewee Madeleine, who had participated in the French student riots in May 1968. ADEL primarily offers advice to its users, who are often jobless and willing to become social entrepreneurs “creating” community-service cooperatives. The model initiative of the multi-ethnic restaurant “Le Flamboyant” embodies the organization’s particular interest in local community business projects. Le Flamboyant was set up in 1989, with the help of ADEL, in a poor city neighborhood one hour north of Paris. It has given employment to five young female entrepreneurs :

Madeleine :- “The women are from really poor neighborhoods. Public transportation doesn’t work, the staircases are squatted by dealers, the plumbers don’t come, everything’s [in danger of] catching fire. They lived in conditions like that. The people said to themselves: we will have a meeting to ask why it’s like this and why it can’t change. And only afterwards were the initiatives born. By having a meeting and asking themselves why things weren’t changing, they finally said to themselves “Could we not change it ourselves?” Voila, the idea of a solidarity economy enterprise was born [...] . This comes from the lived experiences of people themselves. The business is rooted in what the people are, because they are close to each other, because there is a social tie [...]. There needs to be material elements for a solidarity economy initiative to germinate and it always does so based on what is shared [...] People have to be together, rethink the world starting from their staircase in order to be able to create... These girls, they survived distress. They went through hard times. What keeps them going...I think...that’s because they have an organization of multiplicity: they share the tasks, they share the responsibility, and so on. They find themselves in a world that they themselves have organized. And that’s because they keep going. But then, if you put a real boss there that exploited them, it wouldn’t work. These girls, they destroy capitalism from the inside, making their initiative impossible to privatize.[...] Ultimately, the question is: how do you create a strong movement, how do you link these initiatives so that they speak together, in a “similar” voice? We have to link the initiatives in our region with the initiatives in the third world that don’t know each other. To do that we go to the anti-globalization forums. I think that the solidarity economy is not the final fight. The solidarity economy is not primarily about thinkers. It’s primarily about citizens, the practices on the ground and people like those in Le Flamboyant that make use of the Social Forums in Florence and Paris to make political progress [...]”.

The creation of community services as a creative response to local necessity is the dominant justification that can be found in Madeleine’s account. Even if the main value consists in creation and “economic creativity” (people’s worth is determined by their innovative potential on the market), she moves between other values and types of justification when she talks about the kind of projects ADEL supports. Madeleine reveals that she wants to work with and for people who are trying to get out of precarious situations. She valorizes the fact that the project’s initiators “are close to each other, because there is a social tie”. She wants to care for those living in an area where neither plumbers nor public transport dare to come anymore. And she wants to galvanize the relationships that the restaurant creates in this neglected neighbourhood. Her worth is undoubtedly determined by care – by her desire to help people in distress and to galvanize their social ties. Furthermore, Le Flamboyant is the place where one learns to collectively manage a restaurant. By realizing associative practices, the project also champions the ideals of “self-management” in the attempt to overcome a situation of desolation. It is more efficient for Le Flamboyant to be self managed rather having a boss, and anyone who tried to obtain authority for themselves would lose his/her worth. Finally, the project also manages to advance political ambitions, which Madeleine emphasizes when she expresses her

concern to connect cooperatives and participate in political forums. Here the value is of course that aimed at by a kind of civic ethos: whoever wants to belong to the solidarity economy has to be a political activist. The motto of the alter-globalization movement of these Social Fora is “to make another world fairer for everyone possible”!

Figure 1. The grammar of the solidarity economy and its four values.



Justifications systematically mobilized four values, the pure forms of which we identified as creativity, care, self-management and political activism. We treat these four values as grammatical elements according to which actors assign worth to particular activities, human capacities and justifications. Furthermore, the search for “pure” articulations of grammatical elements draws attention to the fact that the combination of these four values did not occur by chance. Solidarity economy actors “see” the world, as phenomenology would describe it, through the lens of this moral grammar characterized by four values. They live within these values when they are acting, and they may even shift between them if they have to argue about what they do.

Table 1
The four values that compose the grammar of the solidarity economy

	Creativity	Care	Self-management	Political activism
Grammatical elements	Passion, ideas, imagination, initiative	Social ties, helping poor people	Responsibility, collective decision making, equality	Voice within local public spaces, citizenship
Human capacities	Capacity for self-realization, subjectivity expression	Benevolence, empathy, charity, social sensibility	Technical and administrative skills, knowledge, “polyvalence”	Being engaged and having a political opinion
Preferred practices	Innovate and create things, Business activity	Helping and working with poor neighborhoods, and people in precarious situations	Collective organization without hierarchy, no division of labour	Political demonstrations, activities with an ideological message

3. How can we account for contradictions between action and justification?

Self criticism as the reflexive capacity of actors

The notion of grammar allows us to take seriously actors' own criticisms. Madeleine is aware of capitalism and denounces it. Having observed how ADEL works, we cannot pretend that she is unconsciously led by the utopia of the neo-liberal illusio (as Bourdieu might have it: 1998, pp. 108-119) of self-entrepreneurship or by the veiled desire to make profit. But this perfect example of grammatical worth leaves an important question unanswered: how can potential contradictions between actual practices and their discursive articulations in justifications be explained without alleging that actors unconsciously provide erroneous justifications or adopt unconscious strategies? To illustrate the problem, we will now look at an association that is conscious about its deviation from the grammar and turns to self-criticism.

In the "Pole d'Economie solidaire" (Hereafter POLE), it is again the inspired value of human self-realization through "creativity" that we find at the heart of people's experience. POLE involves 4 employees and a network of about 15 volunteers in Chalon sur Saône, a medium-sized town in Burgundy. It seeks to introduce the unemployed into a new form of work through training and by supporting the setting up of entrepreneurial micro-projects.

Like ADEL, POLE explicitly shares the solidarity economy's grammar, and identifies itself as a member of the movement. The organization's statutes explicitly refer to the promotion of solidarity economy projects which encourage social links in poor neighborhoods (care as value), are cooperatively organized (self-management as value) and have a political dimension (political activism as value). POLE draws on its own success in setting up organic and fair trade restaurants, building a recycling centre and other kinds of community service. The interview with Manon, who joined POLE, illustrates POLE's ambitions to help people who are "in a mess" to start a new, more fulfilling working life where they can pursue their passions and realize their creative potentials:

*"The people who come to POLE are really in a mess. [...] There are many people who are self-employed, also people who are tired of having a boss. Who had a boss on their backs for years. A boss that fired them like dirt. These are people who don't want to go back to these logics of metro-boulot-dodo [commuting-working-sleeping], but who want to flourish. They have a hobby outside of their work. Well, they had. They are keen to develop this hobby. That's what they feel like doing [...]: There are many people who come out of a factory at 20, **who are self-employed and who have a passion. And they want to work for their passion, and why not earn money with their passion? [...]. We really motivate them to set up their projects that they feel deeply about, that allow them to flourish. That doesn't simply mean re-socialization. We are more getting into individual self-realization, in the sense of creating a network between project initiators, between creators, between businesses that exist in the Chalon region.**"*

The dominant theme in Manon's account reflects the urgency of immediate action to help people in difficulty "here and now". Their concrete situation is the dominant concern of Manon's mode of justification. Here, entrepreneurship is not only a way to avoid dependence on social welfare benefits but POLE also wants to enable people to escape the monotony and dullness of their ordinary working life. Manon speaks of "earning money through passion", "flourishing" and "self-realization" through "creation".

Offering free services to unemployed people, POLE appears in no way inferior to ADEL. At various instances during the participant observation, members of POLE emphasized their desire to also become politically active, for example in the anti-globalization movement. They also insisted on collective, democratic decision-making in the organization's management, and the importance of working with people who are really in a mess (care).

But in the course of the interview, Manon becomes reflective and expresses some self-critical thoughts.

Manon: "I think, for example, to really be creating the solidarity economy, to be creating an alternative economy, to be supporting solely fair-trade cooperatives or community services – things

like that – would be great[...]. But there are enormous political pressures that mean that in the end you can't concentrate on the solidarity economy, that you're forced to support the creation of "traditional" businesses, any type of business [...] We've also long since debated here about it and my brother [who works at an anarchist bookshop] he said: "But that's crazy, you're creating future bosses, but that has nothing to do with the logic of the solidarity economy! That's micro-capitalism! [...] That is to say, the logic of funding – that's also something that defines, that determines our activity. We are in fact extremely dependent when it comes to funding. An example: we want to set up a solidarity economy enterprise. We won't get funding if that project is about the solidarity economy. We won't get funding if it is called "support for a solidarity economy project". But if it was aimed at the creation of a business... You see what I'm trying to get at?"

Manon critically reflects on the incongruity between the reality of her professional life, where she recognizes a mismatch between what truly *living* solidarity economy values would mean to her and the actual practices of POLE. It shows that the language of "creativity" alone is not sufficient to realize the moral grammar of the solidarity economy in practice. Manon also criticizes the de-valorization of "self-management", when she agrees with her brother by quoting him saying "you are creating future bosses". This implies that POLE won't react if the leader of the project decides to recruit employees rather than collaborators paid at the same level and engaged in the collective management of the business. Nor will POLE react if the same project leader decides not to concern himself with care and precariousness (he could become a new exploiter as Manon's brother suggests). When Manon points out that they would not get financial support if a community service project were promoted under the label of the "solidarity economy" she regrets that POLE cannot draw on political arguments as this would risk them getting a reputation as activists in the eyes of funding bodies. But when she attends the Social Fora – and when she talks about them later in the interview – her value is that of an activist.

The dilemma Manon finds herself in results from the fact that funding bodies, such as the European Social Fund, base their decisions for resource allocation primarily on economic arguments. Public funding bodies, who are primarily concerned with bringing down the rate of unemployment, demand that projects get people off social benefits. But the risk of a project's failure often correlates with its degree of originality. The project initiators at POLE often have to reject the most original projects, frequently having to let their passion die away. As a consequence, the projects that POLE supports tend to be "ordinary businesses". As Manon points out: *"To a project creator who wants to do something different, it is in your interest to say he should set up a snack shop rather than a cooperative organic Fairtrade shop"*. To a certain extent, Manon leans on the logic of "here and now" to argue that circumstances as they are leave no other immediate choice but to activate all possible and thinkable ways to help set up business activities for the most powerless – even if these activities fail to allow Manon "to live" the solidarity economy.

After the interview, Manon led us to her favorite lunch place, a local, organic, fair-trade restaurant close to the far-left activist area of the town. Without saying anything, she showed us the kind of "true" alternative enterprise that she would like to support in her professional life, but which funding bodies would consider unsustainable on the market. In the moment when she chooses where to go for lunch, her action corresponds perfectly to the solidarity economy's grammar of justification. Here the value behind her action (driving us to this restaurant) and her justificatory discourse about solidarity economy experimentation, which ideally has to be activist, fit perfectly together. Her work, however, is characterized by the constant regret of not being truly able to pursue (through her actions) her political ideals and reconcile these with unemployed people's economic creativity. But she sometimes focused in practice on the need to create one "job more" by supporting some very ordinary business initiatives: to secure a loan without jumping through endless hoops, which "capitalist" bank should she contact that does not have the high moral, social and ecological demands of the micro-credit cooperative banks of the solidarity economy? To develop a creative project that is able to make profit becomes the nature of her relation to the world. But this value – that of creativity allowing profit – is not one that has sufficient weight within the grammatical community of the solidarity economy movement, except if the organization that makes profit is self-managed, politically committed and aims to create social links.

The impasse of the usual critical sociology

Post-Bourdieuian sociology has examined this kind of initiative in the solidarity economy. Bourdieu himself showed how actors (bosses, unemployed people, employees, etc.) unconsciously follow the immanent tendencies of the market (Bourdieu, 2017, pp. 181-192). And his followers consider the solidarity economy in general to be an illusion that fools people who, restricted by the mechanisms of the market, do not see the extent to which it is complicit in the state's disengagement (Hély, 2009). Far from offering an alternative, the solidarity economy further entrenches the precarization of work. According to this analysis, functions previously fulfilled by civil servants are today entrusted to associative actors who are far less protected. Volunteer workers and employees are thus unwittingly subjected to the neoliberal logic that they think they are combatting. They constitute the new reserve army of the labour market, and the solidarity economy in which they nonetheless "believe" is in reality helping to bring about the retreat of public services.

This perspective allows us – and this is important – to point to the state's ambiguous role. But the problem lies not in this conclusion. If these sociologists had spent more time looking at the actors' own justifications, they might have realized that actors in the solidarity economy are the first to regret the state's withdrawal. And they have an acute awareness of the impasse created by faith that the market will resolve the problems of poverty. Aside from the fact that it is incapable of imagining what might lie beyond capitalism other than an all-powerful centralized planning state, this perspective returns to a sociological stance that to an even greater extent confiscates the possibility of critical discourse. It interprets the rationalizations of common sense as errors, even if they are sometimes coated in "a veneer of scientificity and respectability" (Hély, Moulévrier, 2014, p. 6).

As the product of an overly detached way of seeing, this interpretation never dives into the diverse complexity of moral justifications and once again comes back to Bourdieu's hypothesis of the unconscious. If correct, we should see Manon as unconsciously influenced in practice by the neoliberal argument of creativity detached from any political and collective imaginary: poor people can help themselves by galvanizing their creativity to create their own business (as Mohamed Yunus believes). In other words her action, in contradiction with her justification, is influenced by the unconscious rules of the game, the illusion of the market. The trouble is, she knows this better than the researcher conducting the interview.

Contrary to what a pure Bourdieusian reading would suggest, Manon is able to step outside her actions to reflect on her practice and self-criticize. By analysing Manon's grammar of justification, the sociology *of* critique shows us how aware she is of the need to make the solidarity economy a social project of emancipation. But this value of political activism, which leads her to the cooperative restaurant, is in contradiction with her practice when she helps people create ordinary businesses. And she knows it.

Manon's justifications are not "illusio", but they are not always the perfect mirror of what she is doing in reality. How to explain the paradox? The sociology *of* critique in its present form does not provide any real solution to this question, as it implicitly assumes coherence between actions and justifications. That's why it needs phenomenology.

4. A phenomenological reading of the grammar

A question of states of mind

Apart from the notable exception of Schütz (1962) and traces visible in some research programs (Garfinkel 1967), the potential of phenomenology to inform social theory has rarely been

fully utilized (Boltanski, 2013). Here I will attempt to demonstrate its value for the sociology of critique. The notion of “intentional states of mind”, as developed by Edmund Husserl (1987[1931]) and Max Scheler (1982 [1919]), is particularly useful for understanding a grammar as a cognitive representation of the world, but one of which actors are *fully conscious*.

Phenomenology – the science of the essence of consciousness, as Husserl defined it – allows us to understand how people experience the world. It is through consciousness that the subject’s mind is linked to the world’s objects. This fundamental and general property of consciousness – which consists in being always conscious *of something* ([1949], 1994, pp. 77-78) – is called “intentionality”. Intentionality thus means that human consciousness is always directed towards an object of the world, and this occurs under the influence of a perceptive modality (memory, love, judgment, wish, hate, joy, etc.) whereby the resulting tension between mind and object becomes constitutive of consciousness itself. Intentionality is neither a structural property of the external world nor a subjective property of the individual mind. Instead, it characterizes the relation between the subject’s mind and the world of objects.

Husserl emphasizes how the conscious processes of relating to the world constitute subjective identity:

“During the flowing process of (subjective) experiencing, the object of consciousness – in its identity with itself – does not come into experience from outside, but its sense is already given within the process of experiencing, and this is the intentional effect produced by the synthesis of consciousness. (The same object) can be conscious in highly diverse, simultaneous or successive, separate modes of consciousness, for example in separate perceptions, recollections, expectations, valuations, and so forth. Again it is a synthesis that the consciousness of identity generates (as a unifying consciousness of identity, which spans all these separate experiences) and thereby makes possible any knowledge of identity”. (Husserl 1987 [1931], p. 44, own translation)

When Husserl speaks of diverse modes of consciousness, he means that a human’s relation to the world is mediated not by a single but by a plurality of “intentional consciousnesses”. Each of them makes the world represent itself to the conscious mind in a particular way. The actors’ relationship towards the world can be mediated by, for example, desire, rationality, love or profit. What constitutes the identity of a person is the *synthesis* of these processes of experiencing the world.

While Husserl was concerned with the subjective “intentional relation of consciousness to object, cogito to cogitatum” (1987 [1931] p. 31), Max Scheler’s main contribution is twofold: he focuses on both the sociological and the emotional dimensions of intentionality (Scheler, 1980 [1927]; 1982 [1919], Vandenberg, 2008, 18)⁸. Using the vocabulary of “Einstellung”, which the American scholar Frings translates as mind-set or states of mind, Scheler shifts from Husserl’s notion of subjective consciousness of an individual mind to a collective emotional disposition towards the world, so that “depending on the nature of a specific attitude of consciousness, things around us appear in a specific light” (Frings 1997, p. 169). Intentional states of mind “appear as characteristics, respective forces of the environment: for they are supra-individual: a collective spirit and collective living of the present” (Scheler 1982 [1919], p. 623, own translation). These are not fixed cognitive categories, but contingent on changing historical realities. Scheler’s thesis was that the dominant mind-set of 19th and 20th century society was a capitalist way of relating to the world, which superseded a religious way of seeing the world:

A mind-set (or a state of mind) “is an attitude of consciousness that determines ‘how’ things appear in the human milieu. Depending on the nature of a specific attitude of consciousness, things around us appear in a specific light. But most of the time we are not aware of this or that attitude of consciousness and we presuppose that the way things are appearing amounts to their objective reality (...). Let us first look at mind-sets of the past. A theophantic mind-set dominated the age of mythology according to which earthly things and events bespoke the divine. The celestial bodies, the seasons, animals, mountains and oceans appeared according to a mind-set that attributed their

⁸ . Max Scheler was the first author who sought to explicitly integrate phenomenology and sociology, even though Schütz is repeatedly, but mistakenly, credited for having done so.

existence to the divine. By contrast in our time it is difficult for a capitalist to imagine, for example, the fury of Zeus manifested in a thunderbolt (...). In the capitalist mind-set, things and entities of the world are experienced under aspects of profitability, capitalization and usefulness that pervade our technological civilization” (Frings, 1997, p. 169, 173, 171).

Rather than a material order, Scheler understands “this mysterious specter of so-called capital” as the way of seeing the world that lets all objects come to be understood in terms of the social values related to appropriation: “I claim that the ‘commodity’ is everything [...] that is recognized, seen, interpreted through this mode of valuing as if through a particular lens.” (Scheler 1982 [1919], p. 619, own translation).

Scheler tries to show that capitalism is not only a model of economic exchange but a modern way of apprehending all the world’s objects, which appear as either sources of profit and capitalization or not. For the capitalist state of mind, everything is potentially a source of capitalization. Not only commodities but also Eros, art, education, sport, and religious objects (for instance the indulgences). “Things themselves look at man as a function of their their ability to be capitalized. They ask him the same thing: see what profit you extract from me” (Frings, 1988, p. 356). Modern man became an *homo capitalisticus* whose principal characteristic is to inflect each kind of intentional perspective of his consciousness with the modality of profit and utility (M. Scheler, [1919], 1982, p.632). His state of mind presents the world to him as a market on which things either can be appropriated or cannot, even if they could be seen with some other intentional modalities such as love, Eros, real emotion when faced with an artwork, or passionless faith when faced with religious objects.

Now, integrating these phenomenological insights with the sociology of critique, we can say that the states of mind in action and justification are “mind-sets”. By understanding the complexity of those intentional states of mind that operate in the grammar of solidarity economy actors, the sociologist can apprehend the specific lenses through which the world appears to them.

This allows us to define in greater depth what we mean by the solidarity economy’s moral grammar: it is the synthesis of states of mind – the “specific lenses” – through which the world is experienced by a social group, interpreted and rendered meaningful at a particular point in time. From Husserl we keep the idea that a consciousness is constituted by the *synthesis of a plurality* of intentional acts, a plurality of states of mind. From Scheler we keep the idea that states of mind are not only subjective but a *collective* lens through which the world is experienced.

The grammar shared by actors in the solidarity economy is not monolithic. It is composed of a synthesis of four states of mind. And this grammar is a heuristic device, which can be understood as a syntax of action and justification. Each state of mind is a particular lens for looking at the world that is based on a particular value. Together, these states of mind form a synthesis “as if” they were the rules of a common grammar. This allows actors to submit all initiatives to the same rules of equivalency in order to evaluate their worth.

We can see in our empirical examples that actors who want to belong to the solidarity economy have to respect grammatical rules in order to be respected as legitimate representatives. Because everybody in the solidarity economy agrees that ADEL is a kind of ideal, I have tried to abstract the main values that characterized the solidarity economy according to ADEL’s leader: creativity, self-management, political activism and care. And according to most solidarity economy actors, ADEL manifests all of these values Not only in its justifications, but also in its actions, such as the creation of “Le Flamboyant”. When practices demonstrate relations with the world’s objects that embody these same four values, then the situation might be called a “state of peace”, to borrow Boltanski’s expression (1990). This is a situation in which justification and actual practices both correspond to the same state of mind (or in our case, four specific states of mind), like the lover who says to her boy/girlfriend “I love you” during the act of making love.

In a “state of peace”, when the situation does not pose any problems of incoherence, there is no need for critical reflection – for expressing the state of mind through justification or for seeking the right grammar with which to talk. When there is a balanced realization of all values, solidarity economy actors “see” the world (and act in it) through the lens of these four values. Madeleine, the

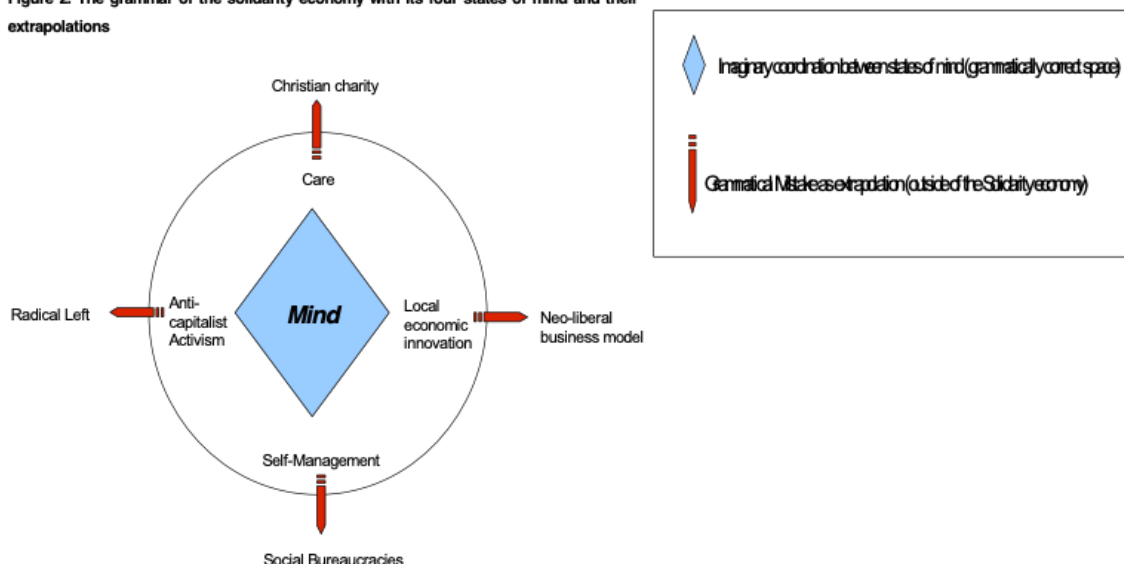
founder of ADEL, illustrates what it means when one's intentional relations with the objects in the world are mediated by several states of mind simultaneously. Her justifications navigate within the discursive space of the grammar to describe their practices as its material manifestations. She valorizes all four states of mind and draws on concrete examples to illustrate how these are actively *lived* in her cooperative and activist life. If some organizations are collectively celebrated as ideal-type material representations of the solidarity economy, then this is because both their practices and their motivations correspond to the grammar. They become what Max Scheler terms an “example to follow” (1987 [1921]), a moral champion that is praised by actors in the field.

Extrapolation as Grammatical Mistake

But situations in which we can see “examples” in action are very rare since it is very difficult for actors to realize in practice all the solidarity economy's values (even for ADEL, which a longer participatory enquiry would probably sometimes catch out). Most of the time, individual actors' justifications mobilize arguments around values, but one state of mind is emphasized over the others. Such a dominant state of mind can be regarded as a specific lens through which each association sees their activity, producing a particular way of “living” in the solidarity economy. In the ideal state, a grammar is actively mobilized through justifications that express a corresponding action *or*, in a critical situation, a grammar can give rise to self-criticism when deviations are recognized.

The values that constitute the grammar function like cardinal points, which, when not respected in different settings, provoke the feeling of a mistake having been made. A grammatical mistake (Lemieux, 2009) elicits a critical reaction, as it becomes necessary to articulate reasons for grammatical deviance. This happens when actors encounter some incoherence; it is when the moral equilibrium is violated that actors reflect on the mistake. This moment of discursive reflexivity allows us to study the critical and justificatory operations that people perform in everyday life using their common sense. They accuse themselves of a grammatical mistake and they leave the state of peace. This kind of mistake occurs when a single state of mind becomes the overriding lens through which actors relate to the world. Actors who are leaning too far towards a dominant state of mind and failing to shift back to the neglected states of minds stretch the boundaries of the grammar. In this case, we will say that they are extrapolating the value of that specific state of mind.

Figure 2. The grammar of the solidarity economy with its four states of mind and their extrapolations



When actors close their eyes (Boltanski, 2013, pp. 22-23) to certain values in their justifications and extrapolate only one of them, we can say that they are making a *grammatical mistake*, which is inevitably spotted by others. Each critical moment has the same structure: a

solidarity economy association accuses itself or is accused of *extrapolating* a value, doing which casts it into one of the non-“solidarity” worlds directly related to it.

The notion of extrapolation, understood as the result of a grammatical mistake, suggests that conflicts can arise not only out of competition between different grammatical communities, but as an effect of conflicts *between* the elements that are constitutive of a shared moral grammar and, by extension, between people who share that moral grammar. As a result, the organization departs from the moral universe of the solidarity economy. Instead of creating community services, for instance, solidarity economy organizations resemble ordinary businesses in a competitive world. The focus on “creativity”, forgetting the three other values, led to an extrapolated state of mind that is usually alien to the solidarity economy – a “muted” state of mind where profit, even on a very local scale, is the only value shaping the organization’s intentional relation to the world. Here, with the vocabulary of *On justification*, we could say that argumentation from the neo-liberal state of mind might start to justify action. As a consequence, members risk losing their social worth as social movement activists.

Such a grammatical mistake points to the limits of the solidarity economy as a political project: in the quest for concrete, immediate impact, the solidarity economy tends to sacrifice moral heroism in order to seize opportunities “here and now”. As a consequence, actors too easily fall into the dominant state of mind that satisfies the requirements of their institutional environment. In the example of POLE, a lot of community services created are not fair-trade shops or restaurants. They are just small, local, ordinary businesses that have to compete on the market. By focusing on entrepreneurial creativity to help people to get out of unemployment, actors like Manon abandon the other states of mind (self-management, political activism, care). The “creative” projects that meet with success tend to have normal legal statutes, recruit salaried workers in a vertical hierarchy, no longer care about belonging to an anti-capitalist political struggle, and do not pay special attention to care: the project can ignore the poor neighborhood where its instigator was born or recruit only employees from the middle classes – it doesn’t matter. In some sense, Manon confesses, these projects become nothing but ordinary entrepreneurship projects. She realized that, like Scheler’s capitalist, she lived for a time exclusively in a “profit” state of mind because doing so was crucial for the project holder to get out precarity.

Table 2
An example to follow and an extrapolation of a value

Solidarity economy organization	Situation	Enacting the grammar		Consequences
		Justification	Practices	
1. ADEL (Paulette)	State of peace	Yes. Confirmatory endorsement of practices	Yes. Practices realize the four key values	Attribution of social worth as an “example to follow”
2. POLE (Manon)	Critical situation	Yes. Critical reflection on mismatch	No. Extrapolation of a value	Lack of social worth within grammatical community

But as we can see with the schema, extrapolation and grammatical mistakes can also be made from within other solidarity economy values. A representation of everyday action can also be maintained in such an activist state of mind that some actors, notably those most involved in the Mouvement pour l’Economie Solidaire (a national network in France). Because they want to show the world that the solidarity economy is a credible alternative to capitalism, they spend a lot of time going between social forums, the coop 21 and the meetings of the international Transition Towns Movement. But by doing this, they were strongly criticized by some actors who saw them as

Trotskyites who spoke in the name of initiatives on the ground, yet without having been mandated to do so, and without having any links with these local economic initiatives anymore (Frère, 2019).

In the solidarity economy in France, there are also many instances when the value of care is extrapolated. This is the case, for example, in certain micro-credit organizations called Cigales⁹, where investors' concerns are often overly focused on the value of care. Most of the time these investors are ordinary citizens intending to collectively pool their savings to finance project leaders who find themselves in a highly precarious financial position. It often happens that the projects financed are singularly lacking in any sense of local innovation. We have even seen the financing of businesses whose plan rested directly on exportation, like for example the production of luxury chocolate intended for a wealthy foreign clientele (Frère, 2013, p. 286). Here, thinking about the self-managed (democratic management, etc.) and "anti-capitalist" aspects of the project was also eclipsed in the minds of the savers, but they nonetheless claimed allegiance to the solidarity economy: getting a person out of poverty or helping a person in need is in itself a victory, as Christian charity has always taught.

Meanwhile some AMAPs that have met with a certain level of success today are at risk of extrapolating self-management. Indeed, some end up having to entrust the tasks of financial and organizational management to specialists (often members of the AMAP with a degree, who have the required accounting skills). While it may not be true to say that these AMAPs are already institutionalized, the risk that emerges recalls what we know of the very first consumer and production cooperatives. By insisting that one be able to demonstrate that one has certain managerial competences in order to become a cooperator, these cooperatives – whether in the agricultural sector or the cooperative retail sector – end up forgetting that self-management properly understood was also supposed to aim to undermine capitalism while encouraging the involvement of the most precarious social classes and supporting local innovations similar to their own. Some of these long-established cooperatives – such as the Biocoop supermarkets, for example – provide a good illustration of this managerial extrapolation. They have forgotten their historical alliance with the trade unions and workers' movements against capitalism. They no longer ask for "another possible world" or claim to "act locally and think globally". They abandon public manifestation of the solidarity economy and the idea of integrating unemployed people into business. Sellers and consumers are both what in French are ironically called "Bobos" (Bourgeois-Bohèmes or hipsters). In the finance sector, some long-established cooperatives have also been significantly bureaucratized, extrapolating their self-managed origins (for example the famous "Crédit agricole" or the "Crédit coopératif" in France). Hierarchically managed by professional managers from prestigious business schools, these organizations are much more focused today on the efficiency of the cooperatives financed than on social integration or the anti-capitalist fight (Frère, 2009).

In all these cases, we can see that the synthesis of states of mind characteristic of the solidarity economy is always under threat of failure. As we can see, the advantage of the notion of intentional states of mind is that it allows us to describe both collective action and the evolution of organizations' imaginary over time (shaped by ideologies, etc.), but also individual action here and now, with all its potential grammatical contradictions.

Conclusion: moral sociology and domination

In conclusion, I will summarize the sociological contributions that this paper has made. First, our focus on the French sociology *of* critique has shown the importance of a paradigm that encourages us to transition from the usual critical sociology toward a sociology *of* critical actors' capacities, particularly in a very reflexive field such as the solidarity economy. Social actors are not always caught up in the illusion of a game (i.e. the economic game).

In our analysis, it would be convenient to describe Manon's actions as unconsciously determined by neo-liberal pressures against which she appears to be, if not completely ignorant, then

⁹. Club d'Investisseurs pour une Gestion Alternative et Locale de l'Épargne Solidaire

enacting a ready-made script of capitalist domination. Were we followers of Bourdieu's critical sociology we would be concerned with uncovering the mechanisms through which such domination is exercised. As justifications do not correspond to actions, we might accuse them as "false", because actors are not conscious of the real causes of their actions which are embodied in dispositions inherited from socio-economic contexts. It would hence be the task of the sociologist to reveal the hidden causal determinants as the *real* motives of social action. But if actors were denied reflexivity, or if the justifications provided by their own reflexivity were wrong, how could we understand the critical moment when they complain that they feel manipulated by both the European Social Fund – to create micro-capitalist businesses – and the state – to assume its social responsibilities?

The notion of grammar, which helps us understand how disparate actors in a specific social movement are held together through the recognition of a shared body of normative principles, allows us to restore to people their ability to critique. This offers a powerful framework for thinking about moral constructions of the values as organizing schemes that guide action, thought and justification. A grammar guides how actors make judgments and assign social worth (recognition and legitimacy) not only to others but also to themselves in a coherent way. In the case of the solidarity economy, the values that constitute the grammar are care, creativity, self-management and political activism. These values orient actors – in both justification and in action – away from capitalism.

But the sociology of critique has often been accused of "neglecting relations of force, thereby offering an irenic vision of the social world", as its main theorists had to recognize (Boltanski and Chiapello 2007, p. xi). And in some ways, this is true. The sociology of critique often presupposes that justification and action are always homogeneous, and that the former always gives the true ends of the latter. But then how can we understand moments where justification and action diverge without falling once again into the trap of the unconscious argument? And how can we deal with these moments where actors recognize incoherence between justification and action, accusing themselves of what we have called extrapolation? The sociology of critique can analyse disputes between different justifications, but not really disputes that actors have with themselves about the incoherence of their own practices.

As a second contribution I have tried to solve this problem. I have argued that phenomenology provides a useful way to link the level of action in the world and the level of reflexivity, expressed through justifications. Conceptualizing grammar phenomenologically articulates the lens through which an actor intentionally relates to the world of objects in a way that guides both action and (reflexive) justifications. Husserl's emphasis on synthesis draws attention to the fact that multiple intentional states of mind are forged into a composite consciousness. These states of mind are shaped by values, which are the elements of a grammar that make lived situations meaningful. Scheler's integration of phenomenological ideas into sociological analysis allows us to understand these states of mind, resting on values and linked to each other by a grammar, as giving rise to a *shared* moral imaginary and a collective identity. This enables us to interpret actors' representations and justifications as expressions of collective ways of experiencing the world, rather than just rhetorical exercises or internalized social structures. If the values of some states of mind can consciously be reflected in actors' justifications, they can also be bracketed in order to understand reality in a more specific way that no longer respects the grammar of the collective imaginary. I introduced the notions of grammatical mistakes and extrapolation to describe the moment when this occurs, and discussed the consequences it entails in terms of recognition and moral coherence.

Actors are often not only conscious of the rules that define who is a legitimate representative of the solidarity economy movement; they are also able to recognize grammatical mistakes and critically reflect on their own practices. The propensity to assign less social worth to practices that violate the moral grammar confirms that the solidarity economy's grammar is not just an abstraction that puts a theoretical frame around disparate realities. People experience grammatical mistakes consciously, as a mismatch between their representations of the world (which they try to follow when they argue about the solidarity economy in general) and their actual relation to the world (practices).

To understand a grammar at work, the sociologist has to start from both the action and actors' own representation of this action. They should not attempt to impose an epistemological break with these actors' common sense in order to propose a stronger scientific language able to show how far astray this common sense is led by illusion. But this implies that sociologists should always start from the life of actors themselves in order to understand their ordinary critiques and to translate their

power. To take common sense seriously, it is also necessary to climb down from the ivory tower of the academic. Finding critique as it is forged in the everyday life of people who may be suffering from capitalism (and who are trying to build an economy with principles beyond that of profit alone) is a much more difficult job than that of merely trying to criticize capitalism from a transcendent point of view. It is easy to extract from reality those elements that will allow us to prove the extent to which people are alienated and reduced to mere consumers or businesspeople. But then we no longer see the micro-spaces of emancipation that people are trying to build, because we are focusing on an extrapolation in order to demonstrate that these micro-spaces are always co-opted by capitalism. If we try to formalize their grammar, however, we can see how things are far more complex than that, and that it is always more difficult to criticize on the basis of fact than on the basis of theory.

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