



Bangkok, 1-3 Nov 2004, *Third International Conference* : What feasible common future?



Dhurakijpundit University

# In Search of Concepts to Integrate the Social Dimension in the Analysis of Economic Activities.

Maurice Kerroux

France, Activist



***In search of concepts to integrate the social dimension in the analysis of economic activities.***

The social value is not storable, except culturally. It can thus be created only in situ, in the exchange itself. If the idea of the creation of social value can be rejoined with capitalism in its implementation, it can be only in terms of capitalism of transformation, or renewal. The idea of renewal is a little more complete, socially, than the idea of innovation, because it does not break with the past.

From industrial districts to the (**innovating quarters**?milieux innovateurs), productive and social arrangements, biological agriculture and equitable trade, etc, one distinguishes badly which are the criteria of appreciation which are necessary to be formulated and implemented to support and maintain different types of activities.

Do the ethical or fraternal values have to be defined as such, or with a state of latency by precise characteristics of implementation and relative qualities? The fraternal economy must want itself to be inevitably integrating fundamentally humanistic dimensions, elements which characterize primarily the connection of the man to his destiny, and cannot thus conceive itself but in a spirit of interdisciplinarity as much in term of analysis than of design of objectives and organizations. To this end, are the secular concepts of architecture, discourse, and of knowledge (co-naissance in french is "co-knewing", or "co-birthing"), appreciation elements allowing a new lighting, or even the formulation of concepts of analysis, once applied to the particular field of the economy and trade? For example, does the use of outlines like:

- **economic architecture**
- **argumentative trade**
- **edition of marks, or of activities**

makes it possible it to highlight another aspect of the economic and commercial activities, and by this way to give it a social existence. Adapted or not, relevant or not in the species, isn't it initially necessary to formulate such characterizations to give a consistency to an analysis? Let us specify initially what it acts.

**I - Economic architecture.**

Between the architecture and the superstructure, the difference is that in the first case there is integration of a concept of time. The concept of time is integrated there by the form and the composition. Economically, that would relate to the social forms of productive or commercial organization, more than only the legal forms. On this point for example one can say that it is not very probable that the idea of limited company could generate a fraternal democracy by surplus. The idea of time is present in the concept of sustainable development, like before in that of the



perenniality of the company. The concept of sustainable development aims at guaranteeing the perennity of exploitable resources for the communities to come.

"Architecture and painting occupy the two poles of the plastic intelligence, one expressing with the maximum of means the collective, or social, or rational rhythms of the spirit, the other its individual, or revolutionary, or imaginative rhythms" (Histoire de l'art, Elie Faure, the Modern art 2, Introduction, 1923). The architectural building occupies common space. It transforms it into landscape. The landscape is a space inhabited by the glance of whom reads it. Architecture is a tool of communication between the subject and its environment. Esthetics is the support of this communication comparatively to the mere functionality. It characterizes moreover one time, the local representation estimated as much in regard of its geographical dimension as in chronological one. With architecture, the local character gets two dimensions: that of the ground, and that of the spirit. The spirit of the moment creates a link with time and gives a prospect.

The buildings of one time domestic use do not have vocation to be all of architectural quality. Nevertheless, aesthetic qualities of the time impose a threshold of acceptability, of which the evolution implies for example, currently in France, voluntarily destruction of the "great buildings sets" of post-war period, while at the same time the social housing misses.

Is this functioning appropriately applicable to the economy? Cannot one of the criteria of appreciation of the humanism in a form of economic or commercial activity be its capacity to induce other choices on behalf of the consumers, who would end up rejecting of their own authority certain forms of economic productions, as not being in conformity with their representation of themselves? Forms of economic and social activity can be distinguished as it should from their ability to determined from a greater whole of consumers than that of his own customership an assertion of aesthetic economic standards, integrated into the products being sold not only by its objective appearance, or other qualities, but also by the means of its production. It no more would occur delocalizations, as soon as tomorrow, if the consumer would decide on his own chief not to buy the products which they issue, by taste of a " socio-politic aesthetics ".

Philosophically, starting from the word "architecture" derive in French two adjectives: architectural and architectonic<sup>1</sup> (whereas Italian has one adjective *architettonico*<sup>2</sup>). "The two adjectives not being synonymous, it seems well that architectural is employed wrongly<sup>3</sup>". "For Aristote, a science is architectonic which prescribes the purpose and standards to which must subject subordinate sciences. Thus the strategy is architectonic compared to the ballistics which is simply the means<sup>4</sup>".

---

<sup>1</sup> Encyclopédie philosophique universelle, Presses universitaires de France

<sup>2</sup> ibid

<sup>3</sup> ibid

<sup>4</sup> ibid



## II - Argumentative trade

It is necessary to exploit to produce. Therefore this exploitation can get nobility or justification by the setting at the service of a purpose which exceeds it. The old version of "national production" can be revisited with the profit of a broader or more universal concept of producing of a common good. The capacity of not only "preserving the environment" for a way of producing, but also making up the inherent total deficit in any exploitation by a production of social or common value, is anyway a possible criterium of appreciation. Which social or common value being able to implement, per return, making decisions of environmental protection relatively to an immediate overexploitation of the resources. "Nature has horror of the vacuum", one says, and there are not thus balance in regards of exploitation, but this one is perhaps the occasion of a transformation into social value, if this element is an element recognized, identified, and voluntarily promoted.

The argumentative value of an activity can be that according to which it is put at the service of a cause which exceeds its immediate purpose of production. The discourse does not have as a function to indicate an object, but to do it appear by itself, as self evident, in the representation of the interlocutor. Perhaps the discursive character of the economic practices lies in what, in deferred results or in the long term, it appears that they build or not a common or increasingly disparate future.

"There is not only the utility which guides calculation, there is also the capacity to make recognize, and the economy becomes political economy<sup>5</sup>". Would not another way of considering the social quality of the economic or commercial activities be to estimate in what their forms or their methods of execution are carrying a valuable cause (The same Paul Ricoeur would say: "plausible"<sup>6</sup>, that litterally means "pleadable"), or on the contrary carrying a disaster in the long term. "Only the catastrophe is certain", says one. The cause which one carries with common concern (and which is not carrying for the actors, prioritarly) has thus value of argument of conviction to rejoin with types of behaviors who would be then distinctive and identifying. The surplus for engagement for a plausible cause, is a wellbeing. The argumentative value of an economic or productive activity (and acknowledged as such) is then carrying regard, and estimation. To estimate the credibility of practices, in particular in comparison with the side effects, could provide arguments for "the decision-making aid" of other behaviors. Regard being itself an immaterial secondary product which is not derived nor of no importance. The regard of oneself inevitably has a cost, which should be paid cash: is this another form of exchange, non-monetary, or not monetarist quite simply?

The "putting into causes", by an argumentative value, is perhaps besides the means by which one can connect the "local" to the "global". But here it acts to be an immaterial or cultural link. And the "local or global?" dilemma perhaps finds there an honorable exit, by the top, as the response should be : more universal.

---

<sup>5</sup> Philosophe Paul Ricoeur, in a broadcasting emission, relatively to his new issue "Parcours de la reconnaissance" (approx. "Course of the recognition"), 4/01/2004

<sup>6</sup> Conférence in Quimper, France, about Authority, 1999



### III Edition of marks, or activities

One can think that the means according to which one implements an economic activity with universal characteristic (having matter of another finality that the only material production), and whatever the form which it takes or the degree of universality that it can reach, is not promoted near its potential supporters by the usual rules of marketing. The two basic dimensions of this last are the development of market and the development of product. One bringing to the conquest even to the capture of the customers by the direct means of the advertising recipe, or the diverted means like the rights of retransmission of the television broadcasting networks as an example (and perhaps the "intellectual property", which does not have any real base, since in fact an idea is not appropriable). The other bringing the traditional technological innovation, which is paradoxically for the cantors of competition, a means of escaping from it, at least transitorily and temporarily.

The so-called edition process is articulated with the idea of architecture, if it is admitted that the edition is a means of making the work to be known (in french, according to the significance of "co-naitre", it should mean making the work "co-birth" new effects and new relationship). It is more complete or wider than the idea of diffusion, publication, or distribution, since etymologically the "co-birthing" is interested in what the practice of a certain social form of economic activity gives birth to, for the participating ones, or the actors, as a new prospect. The editing practices are then the choice of the means and the actors who allow that the defended or promoted cause is not deteriorated, is diverted, or is not canted in way. That must inevitably include the reflexion and the identification of processes of protection, so that the investment in ethical, aesthetic, or fraternal practices, is protected a little from "the remarkable faculty of absorption/denaturation by the market of any initiative which escapes from its rules<sup>7</sup>", and especially as soon as those arrive to a financial result or make it possible to be used as reliability.

The representation of new economic and commercial practices under specific marks or by specific signs makes it possible to distinguish them and to make known them with the usual meaning, but still it is necessary that the processes used and the chosen appliers make it possible indeed to make "Co-be born" new behaviors within the meaning of "publishing" new practices, and in other social or economic fields eventually. This is an element of analysis to judge range in the long term of certain forms of exchange and an element to determine a certain current discipline which allows at the same time to anticipate and to fund them. "The means in action are the end in realization" said in substance and inter alia, Martin Luther King. The mass-distribution and mass-communication are intended to nobody in particular. Conversely, the universal is what relates to everyone. The means editing one and the other are probably not the same ones.

---

<sup>7</sup> Gilles Maréchal, INPACT Bretagne, "Equity trade : what transference of experience to North/North circuits?", avril 2004



A possible criterion of analysis of new activities in economic matter, is their capacity to make and appropriate a new type of exchange, transmissible at other fields of activities or other members of its familial, social, etc...surroundings. A concept of edition of marks or of activities relates to, at the same time, the advertising aspect of the thing, and the specific practices associated at a new fashion of exchange. Its goal would be to create a symbolic association between the two, but whose effective traces on the ground must corroborate it. There is a considerable constraint in what, in a universe for the moment dominated by the market, this should be merely possible, because the social practice has a cost, and always according to the same Paul Ricoeur, "It is the no-waiting of reciprocity which founds the reciprocity". Is the observation in the real of an actual existence of actions of reciprocity the formal proof of the good "edition" of a responsible, ethical, aesthetic, or fraternal practice? Conversely, of course, the reflexes of appropriation of the profit, individually, and given they are not taxed in advance by an abusive speculation, would note the deficiency in social value and the growing deficit in this matter.

#### **IV - In search for a new theory of the own capital stock?**

The analysis must lead to best comprehension. Still perhaps it remains to determine an integrating concept which makes it possible to consider total efficiency of economic practices as for promoting another world(or a world of others) indeed, and whatever nature it has according to proper utopia one can profess or convey to oneself. Perhaps can one advance that another world is overall that one where the other is included, by principle, and whatever his culture, provided this one is a true culture. This brings to consider what constitutes indeed the own capital stock of each individual, and in what the financial version which is made by the capitalist economy would contribute to feed it or to ending the making of its constitution difficult. This emerges in all cases on another possible vision of the own capital stock concept, which should be preliminary to the constitution of the financial base which would preempt it. The existence of such a own capital stock, cultural, "civilizationnal", whatever its nature is perhaps an element of determining appreciation, beyond the new forms which it can take while transforming. What implants the development is perhaps an omen more important to consider than the usual or current forms which it takes. Progress cannot thus be defined in advance, if so it is programming. The forms of the future, at the time of the present, take a strange form inevitably rather than agreed.

What integrates and defines the future, are the final decisions of the democrat-citizen-actor. The ultimate element which makes it possible to see in which direction "progress" evolves, it is to note in which direction its decisions evolve. An economy with social character, must thus be evaluated for its auto-educational quality, or can one say cultural, which is a concept of a rigour even higher than that of autonomy. Autonomy, within the meaning of autonomy of decision is a cultural product, with the noble direction.



## V - Proposal for reflexions

To initiate or make take part in a common workshop on related subjects, one can possibly start a reflexion with wondering about architectural, argumentative, or editing dimensions, as previously defined, of practices already more or less known like biological agriculture or the equitable trade, or others.

- Rather than of architectural, argumentative, or editing dimensions or aspects, perhaps can one also reason, from a point of view more "economician", in term of architectural, argumentative or editing *values*. The editing value being possibly considered as the capacity to make take on their own account the two preceding ones by the participants in a collective project (and rather than "distant shareholders").
- How to think the articulation of the individual and collective success? What is worth for this purpose the formula: "The "réussite" (upshot) is common, but successes are personal" or "universal"?
- Doesn't the relationship between the necessary profit and the essential authenticity define a report/ratio of currency and conversion which can be implemented only in adequate practice?
- Is it not finally extremely mere to protect oneself (in the least, on the principle) at a local level, from an excessive financiarisation, by not accepting any type of financing which would in the long term give chances of lose the autonomy of decision or the auto-educativity of the practice, and by accepting the pledge of the unfavourable material consequences? Isn't this decision a clear construction, ex-nihilo, of social value (the creation of currency being a credit)?
- ...