



20th International Conference of the Charles Gide Association

Sciences Po Bordeaux,

June 20-22, 2024

Economics and Literature Symposium

Economics and Solidarity in Literary Representations and Fictional Imaginaries

Sciences Po Bordeaux

June 20, 2024

Call for papers

The aim of this symposium will be not only to see how literature and economics can meet around the question of solidarity, but beyond this specific example, to continue trying to better understand how the two disciplines can articulate. The meeting points between economics and literature were identified during the previous symposium on the history of economic thought, around the conception (shared or otherwise) of "happiness" (Pignol, 2023). The aim of the "economics and literature" symposium at the 20th Gide Conference will be not only to analyze the dialogue between economics and literature around the notion of solidarity, but also to question this very process of investigation, as there is still much to be said and understood about the approach itself, and in particular about the very rich but also sometimes complicated and difficult exchanges between literary scholars and economists.

As highlighted in the call for papers for the "literature and economics" sessions of the previous Gide Conference, work on the intersection of economics and literature has been developing over the past fifteen years. In particular, researchers are endeavoring to determine what economic analysis can contribute to the study and understanding of literary texts and, conversely, what literature can contribute to economic analysis. Everyone agrees that economists sometimes use rhetorical tools and narrative strategies to develop and discuss their economic theories (McCloskey, 1986). The literature and economics workshops at the last Gide Conference raised a further question, namely the possibility that literature might instruct us about the real economy, for example, about how it works, as well as about agents' decisions and the effects of the real economy on agents. Are there blind spots in economic theories that literature could cover? The challenge of the "economics and literature" symposium at the 2024 Gide Conference will be, like the days of the 2022 Conference, to identify the points of encounter between these two disciplines around the question of solidarity, but also to continue to seek ways of articulating two modes of knowledge and representation that differ in their objectives as well as in their form, while coming together on common issues.

The interest of economists interested in solidarity or solidarism in dialoguing with the literary world is all the greater given that the literature of modernity has dealt extensively with these issues, which have become a recurrent, even obsessive motif, particularly since the 19th century (for example, in so-called popular literature). Literary narratives, whether novels or theatrical works, have not been content to simply reflect the fact of solidarity and its individual and collective dialectics. It's a veritable laboratory, providing a singular account of individual, intimate or collective (organizations, associations) experiences of solidarity.

Literature, by its very nature, creates links, and reflects on the nature and shaping of these links, whether they be charity, fraternity, mutual aid, sharing or cooperation. It also questions the notion of organic unity, interdependence or divergence within



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a set of elements, such as a work of fiction (the canvas and the image of weaving to represent literary writing according to George Eliot), a body or a society (atomization and fragmentation produced by urbanization and industrial tasks, but also neighborhood communities or working-class communities; class conflicts and solidarity in the British industrial novel of the 19th century or in Émile Zola). Literature also considers corrupted forms of solidarity, such as Mafia solidarity (the underground economy in *Oliver Twist*). It also considers the emotions associated with solidarity, such as sympathy, compassion, care, love and altruism, but also resentment and even hatred, or good feelings (which resonate with Andreoni's behavioral economic theory of *warm glow*, 1989).

Several (non-exhaustive) avenues can be explored for the various contribution proposals within the framework of this symposium:

- ❖ We'll be looking at the ways in which literature explores the question of solidarity in relation to the economy, how it thinks about it and questions it, and how it puts it into practice and into "work". How did the authors of the period between the end of the 18th century and the middle of the 20th century - George Sand, Victor Hugo, Honoré de Balzac, but also Charles Dickens, William Morris and many others - read solidarity? In particular, the literary approach allows us to examine *the ambivalence* and polysemy of the notion of solidarity, and to mark the semantic inflections that the concept has undergone over time (*caritas, agape*; philanthropy, altruism, disinterestedness, etc.) by observing, for example, the way in which, after the Revolution, it freed itself from the religious determinants that formed its foundation.
- ❖ It may also be interesting, from the point of view of the history of representations, to consider the way in which solidarity dialogues with the ethics of debt within the framework of a bourgeois rationality that promotes the interest of the economic agent.
- ❖ What charitable structures (poorhouses, solidarity banks) and solidarity mechanisms (outside and inside the market) do the charities represent?
- ❖ Do the stories identify specific behaviors in terms of solidarity? While social criteria powerfully determine the postures of giving and receiving, it is essential, from the 19^e century onwards, to observe the way in which gendered behaviors develop around solidarity, with women often presented as the main players in solidarity practices, to the point of deploying a feminist and sensitive vision or conception of solidarity.
- ❖ On a theoretical level, do literary works reflect on the compatibility of solidarity and the market? Do any texts develop specific and original ways of thinking about the self-management or anarchist foundations of solidarity?

Each contribution to the Economics and Literature Symposium will bring **together a text, a concept or an author from the field of economic thought, with a literary work on the theme of solidarity.**

References

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Deadlines and Submission:

Proposals should take the form of an abstract of between **300 and 600 words**, with **5 keywords** and **10 bibliographical references**.

Proposals **MUST** be submitted via the conference website : <https://gide2024.sciencesconf.org>

Please note! When you submit your proposal on the conference website, there are several themes: please **specify** that your proposal falls within the **Economics and Literature Symposium theme**.

~~December 15, 2023~~: **EXTENDED DEADLINE : JANUARY 20, 2024**: Deadline for submission of paper proposals

March 25, 2024: Notification of decisions to depositors

Scientific committee:

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