

Book reviews for Volume 6, issue 1 of *Human Figurations*

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Globalizing Cricket: Englishness, Empire and Identity

Dominic Malcolm

London: Bloomsbury, 2013, £24.99 pbk, ISBN: 9781472576576

Reviewed by: Malcolm MacLean, University of Gloucestershire, England

Cricket is amongst the most paradoxical of sports: English (although Ashis Nandy sees it as Indian, accidentally invented in England), but global of a form, where global is limited by Britain's former imperial presence and England's expatriate presence. Its imagery is aristocratic, all bonhomie and indulgent, breaking for tea and wearing the most inappropriate of clothing for a sports event (white) but with legitimate flashes of colour. This imagery is at odds with a traditionally powerful working class attachment to the game, with much of the aristocratic imagery depending on the presence of working class players in teams alongside the great and the good. The global Englishness of cricket has, it seems, obfuscated the England/Britain distinction, while the emphasis on cricket as an English (which for these purposes includes Glamorgan) game obscures the presence and profile of the game elsewhere in Britain and Ireland, as well as noting cricket's presence in both the first and second British Empires. Amid all these historicising elements, cricket, as Dominic Malcolm argues here, is more about a contemporary sense of Englishness abroad, not some residual imperial vision – yet Britain's and cricket's latent, unresolved imperial attachments frame much of the understanding cricket's place in globalising the English and in asserting and understanding the identities associated with this sense of Englishness.

Perhaps more than many areas of sociological analysis, sport lends itself to and almost requires an historical sensibility: this is not, however, a question of specific modes or models of analysis best deployed in sports studies, but a recognition that sport, like many other forms of popular culture, is imbued with a profound popular historicisation – in short, its fans and followers often exhibit a deep-seated historical understanding. The banal presence of the past in contemporary sport cultures presents a challenge for academic analysts, especially for those of us who find ourselves working in and around historical sociological issues, whose attention to the past begins to determine the questions we ask and the techniques we use to explore, and sometimes answer, them. Unfortunately, Malcolm falls into the increasingly common attempt to justify historical sociology by drawing on arguments that the disciplines are the same thing in terms of their “fundamental preoccupations” (p8), and invokes C Wright Mills' case that history is vital to both ask and answer sociological questions, thus making history subservient to sociology. Despite this rocky start, that jarred with my not-so-inner Historian, Malcolm for the most part avoids the trap of teleological historical analysis, and in doing so poses important challenges to both historians and sociologists attempting to make sense not only of cricket in both national and colonial/imperial settings but also in many respects of sport more generally in the imperial world.

Malcolm's approach means that the book presents a rich view of the complexities of Englishness in and through cricket: he turns his eye not only to outposts of the game in North America but also in Ireland and Scotland. He delves into the Caribbean, highlighting the shift from class to 'race' as the trope shaping relations with Englishness, but here a recurrent focus on the question of violence in the game is weakened by a failure to unravel the politics of 'race' and Empire lying behind the 1980s focus on the 'dangers' of West Indies fast bowling, although he does note that fast bowling has been raised as an issue in other settings. Here we see Malcolm's sociologist overwhelming his Historian (where the H suggests a discipline, not 'the past') in that it seems that *theoretical rigour* (more important to sociologists than many Historians) closes down avenues that the evidence seems to suggest are worthy of further exploration. Other questions explored include a post-Imperial, UK-resident diaspora and the dynamics of changing notions of Englishness, especially the 'Barmy Army' touring supporters, which includes a valuable critique of the place of New Laddism in supporter culture.

There are two chapters that stand out as focusing on Empire and Imperialism as both cultural and political practice. The chapter on the Imperial game very clearly lays out the flaws in many Imperial assumptions about cricket (and sport more generally) based in the presumptions of even distribution and cultural uniformity. Towards the end of the book there is a sharp and insightful discussion of the process of Othering drawing on the debates around Bob Woolmer's death the day after Pakistan's unexpected ejection from the 2007 World Cup. This question Malcolm approaches through tropes of Orientalism and Primitivism, and implicit and explicit discourses of irrationality in cricket in the 'Indian' Sub-continent. These are both powerful chapters, showing both Historical nuance and sociological insight.

As with any good piece of scholarly work, there are aspects that could be stronger or that weaken the argument. While the close attention to the mitigation of violence in the game is consistent with Malcolm's emphasis of an Eliasian civilising process, there is as noted a sense that it comes at the expense of important and valuable other lines of enquiry. It might be my Historian's outlook (we tend to be theoretical magpies), but this suggests a danger where a single dominant theoretical frame shifts from a tool to help make sense of the evidence to become an 'everythingist' approach, blinkering analysts. There were several places, especially in the discussion of the Caribbean and the emergence of cricket as England's national game, where tight adherence to his Eliasian approach seemed to inhibit discussion, while in the discussion of post-Imperial diaspora it seemed to be a particularly useful tool. The discussion of gambling, described on page 41 as a 'fashion', during the early nineteenth century revival of the game is surprising in that Malcolm seems to ignore the widespread social, political and cultural struggles around what in many cases was the *raison d'être* for a sports event being held: making money from wagers. Similarly, the discussion of Celtic nations relies on ideas derived from models of internal colonialism, without any seeming recognition of the contested character of that model. It's a small point, but in my view Malcolm is dead wrong in his statement that cricket was more tolerant of apartheid South Africa than any other sport: unlike rugby union which only terminated official level tours for four years, and even then not formally while high level forms of contact continued, at least cricket, despite all the other contacts, officially excluded South African for nearly 20 years – but that is a quibble.

Malcolm's argument that the concepts are so deeply interwoven that 'Englishness and cricket' is a pleonasm (it uses more words than necessary to explain the concept) is compelling. Others have made a similar case, but none with the temporal and geographical sweep here. In considering Englishness, and its problematic relationship with Britishness however, he needed a more nuanced and carefully critical reading of models of internal colonialism and of some of Krishnan Kumar's critics (that might be my scepticism about Kumar coming through). More significantly, his adherence to Eliasian approaches is likely to alienate and frustrate some readers, just as his emphasis on the 'sociological' aspect of historical sociology raised my Historian

hackles in places. Critics would make a serious error if they did allow their theoretical disagreements to overpower the very valuable and insightful case being made here, and for the most part Malcolm mediates the tension between the danger of theoretical dogmatism, from which very many of us suffer, and the operation of his Eliasian outlook as a frame through which to read the evidence. There is much here for Historians and sociologists to consider, work with, critique, engage in scholarly and comradely contention and build upon to further not only our explorations of cricket but sport more generally in national and imperial identities.

The World within the Group: Developing Theory for Group Analysis

Martin Weegmann

London: Karnac, 2014, £25.99 pbk, ISBN: 9781780491981

Reviewed by: Claire S. Bacha, Psychotherapist and Group Analyst, Manchester, England

I am pleased to be asked to present Martin Weegmann's book to the readers of *Human Figurations*. The book fits perfectly into the remit of the journal, including elements of post-philosophical theory of knowledge and other elements of historical social psychology. Also, as the title suggests, *The World within the Group* proposes to develop theory for group analysis.

Weegmann's book brings the work of group analysis back into the world of sociology of Elias. Group analysis was founded by S.H. Foulkes, a colleague of Elias in the Frankfurt School and later friend when they were both in London. Elias was one of the central figures involved in the formation of the Group Analytic Society (now GASi). Elias and Foulkes split when Elias left London for a university job in Leicester. Did they just lose touch with each other, or did something happen between them? In any case, Elias became a prolific writer of sociological theory and Foulkes developed the technical clinical practice of group analysis, which is now an international therapeutic technique. They became footnotes in each other's works. My view is that Elias was writing about what Foulkes called the 'primordial level' of group analysis. Elias trained as a group analyst, which involved being in a group as well as doing an individual psychoanalysis (see Elias: *Reflections on a Life*, p. 64).

Weegmann's book makes a start in bringing these two sides of social psychological understanding together by breaking out of the group consulting room into the world of social philosophy and discourse beyond the group. Weegmann's book is important because it works to integrate elements of theory and practice, each essential to the other, that split when Elias and Foulkes went their separate ways.

Weegmann describes his book as an integrated series of essays. Like members of a group, each essay can stand alone. Like a group of members, the essays form subgroups and dialogue with one another. In Chapters One to Three, Weegmann cultivates connections between group analysis and philosophy. He investigates the idea that philosophy can be therapy and that 'each of us is a philosopher in our own right' (p. xv). Weegmann focusses on three philosophers – Nietzsche, Gadamer and Dewey – and makes links with the intersubjective school of psychoanalysis, personified by Stolorow. In group terms, Weegmann can be seen as proposing the various schools of philosophy as perhaps new group members, each bringing a different perspective from which to view the whole of social life on the boundary with the individual.

In Chapter Three: Perspectivism, Pragmatism, Group Analysis, Weegmann argues that the relative (to psychoanalysis?) lack of theory in group analysis is a good thing, but also, perhaps ironically, that group analysis has remained too attached to psychoanalytic thinking (p.37). Weegmann proposes philosophical

perspectives as a way of opening up group analysis to other ways of thinking. These ideas are interesting and link to Elias in an interesting way. Elias also wrote about philosophy as a backdrop to social psychological understanding, but progressively moved towards his own version of sociology. Where might group analysis move to if it becomes more philosophical?

I have more sympathy with the remaining two essay subgroups, which are more closely in accord with Elias's ideas. In Chapters Four to Seven, Weegmann moves toward a new formulation of the group analytic concept of the social unconscious, using the idea of discursive historical production, which is akin to Elias's ideas about figuration. To my mind, these two ideas are very close to each other indeed and each opens up the other. For Weegmann, the social unconscious moves and changes personal and group subjectivities through historical changes, like the Reformation. 'History does not stop ... We are always in history' (p. xvi). Here, Weegmann could have continued on to the concept, again akin to Elias, that while we are being made by history, we are also making history, as individuals and as group members.

Chapters Eight and Nine investigate story and narrative identity. Chapter Eight links group analysis to a more sociological narrative analysis related to Foulkes's idea of therapy as 'an ever more articulate communication' (p. 136). Chapter Nine associates group analysis and various aspects of modern community life: a. democracy; b. older adults; c. identity politics and d. values. Chapter Nine is the one that makes the most use of Weegmann's clinical material, pointing from the clinical vignettes to more general ideas about life outside the group.

The World Within the Group is published by Karnac as part of its New International Library of Group Analysis, edited by Earl Hopper, with links to the Institute of Group Analysis (IGA) and The Group Analytic Society (GASi). As such, it brings the rest of the world into the group, on a path to theory development. Additionally, the book works in reverse, bringing group analysis into new area of study to help to develop thinking in other disciplines. It is in this spirit that *The World within the Group* is directly relevant to the readers of *Human Figurations*.

The broken link between Foulkes and Elias was a loss for group analysis, but it was also a loss to sociology through Elias. If we are looking at the world within the group, we are also starting to look more closely at the group within the world. Weegmann's book, with its myriad links and ideas, is an important step in this re-integration, making Weegmann's integration of ideas into a fertile thinking space for sociologists, philosophers and other scientists looking to understand social life.

Civilizing Emotions: Concepts in Nineteenth-Century Asia and Europe

Margrit Pernau, Helge Jordheim, Emmanuelle Saada, Christian Bailey, Einar Wigen, Orit Bashkin, Mana Kia, Mohinder Singh, Rochona Majumdar, Angelika Messner, Oleg Benesch, Ayoungkyu Park, and Jan Ifversen.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, £65.00 hbk, ISBN: 9780198745532

Reviewed by: Wai Lau, University of Manchester, England

In *Civilizing Emotions*, the main aims of the book are two-fold. The first aim is to discuss the various debates revolving around the uses of 'civilisation', 'civility' and 'emotions', and the second aim is to trace how these three concepts shifted within and between different societies. The various authors in the book provided a rich and detailed discussion tracing how the different uses of 'civility' and 'civilisation' corresponded to different expressions of emotions across different spatial dimensions and times.

The book is split into four parts by focusing on four different geographical areas: Europe, the Middle East, South Asia and East Asia. In these four geographical areas, thirteen different societies were studied from the period between 1870 and 1920. Initially overwhelmed by the apparent ambitiousness the book presented, it did provide a coherent study to the shifts in emotions related to the uses of 'civility' and 'civilisation'. According to the authors of the book, five main themes can be identified. Correspondingly, they are: 1) emotions are at the core of civilisation; 2) civilising individuals and their emotions are geared towards the state; 3) engagement with emotions and how individuals became 'civilised' is directed not only outwards at the state, but inwards as well to intimate structures such as family and intimate relationships; 4) emotions both fuel and endanger human beings; and 5) 'civility' and 'civilisation' on an individual and societal level overlap with the idea of 'global order'. Due to the breadth and complexity the discussions encompassed in each of the four parts, it is difficult to discuss them all in-depth. However, for the sake of simplicity, I separate them into two parts for this review. In this instance, part one will summarise Europe and part two will summarise Asia.

Summarising part one, the discussions involved is concerned with the developments in Europe. When we speak of 'civility' and 'civilisation' from a European perspective, we would assume its inherent relationship with 'colonialism'. Although the book tries to distance itself from 'colonialist' connotations, it does at times refer to 'colonialist' examples to highlight how the two terms changed the emotions of the individual. Taking the notions of 'civility' and 'civilisation' from a Scandinavian, British, French and German context, this part of the book tries to display varying associations that came to represent Europe. According to the authors, from a British and French context, 'civility' and 'civilisation' represented the perceptions and practices of colonialism. In contrast, from a German and Scandinavian context, it was associated with historiographical and ethnographical comparison between peoples and civilisations across a broad spectrum. From these comparisons, the authors try to reveal how different European associations with the two terms intertwined with a specific emotional emergence that became dominant in European societal and personality formations. Subsequently, the studies undertaken in part one reveals how the emergence of different emotions related to the formation of 'civility' and 'civilisation' took a different turn when imposed on Eastern societies.

As we progress onto the summarising of part two, the discussions involved spanned from societies located in the Middle East, South Asia and East Asia. Respectively, the authors traced how the European equivalents to 'civility' and 'civilisation' took different shades of meaning in Asia. Here, upon initial examination, one would automatically assume that the original intention of the authors was to trace how European emotions towards 'civility' and 'civilisation' were diffused into non-European societies. In addition, one would further assume they implied it was through various 'civilising missions' in the nineteenth century that enabled the aforementioned diffusion to occur. However, far from this notion, the book considered the different changing dynamics between its uses. To take a specific case, the author to chapter twelve noted how the Japanese understanding of the concepts of 'civilisation' and 'civility' was originally identified with Europe. Yet, when Japan modernised in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Japanese found their 'national consciousness' and began to detach themselves from Europe. Subsequently, their emotions towards European 'civility' and 'civilisation' changed. Furthermore, in another example, chapter nine argues how the Indian notions of 'civilisation' and 'civility' became a contested concept between its 'colonisers' and the 'colonised' that amounted to different psychological and emotional formations.

After summarising the book in the two parts outlined above, I turn towards some of the issues it presented. There are three general issues: 1) the studies assume a 'progressivist' stance; 2) the link to 'Eurocentricism'; and 3) the lack of association to Norbert Elias. Discussing the first and foremost issue, the authors seem to adopt a 'progressivist' stance towards the development of 'civility' and 'civilisation'. Although it was not their original intention, the book unwittingly falls into a 'progressivist' stance at times. For instance, in the studies

located in the latter parts of the book, the authors of their respective studies acknowledge how ‘civility’ and ‘civilisation’ came to symbolise ‘progress’ within society that amounted to a ‘civilising process’ (in a non-Eliasian way). Furthermore, some studies even considered the shift from ‘barbarism’ to ‘civilisation’, through the use of ‘civility’, to explain a specific emotional formation. Despite the book stressing ‘a multiplicity of different historical times, with their own beginnings and endings, their own speed and rhythms’ (p. 13), it does, however, fall into ‘progressivism’ implicitly.

Directly linked to the first issue is the second issue of ‘Eurocentricism’. The terms ‘civility’ and ‘civilisation’ are defined in such a way that in the latter parts of the book, it inherits ‘expansionist’ connotations commonly associated with Europe and their ‘colonising missions’ in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In these studies, they argue that the European standard of ‘civility’ and ‘civilisation’ became the framework that other non-European societies built upon to create a specific civilisational discourse. Even though I have earlier highlighted how the book tries to detract itself away from ‘Eurocentricism’ by acknowledging the social identification and linguistic changes in the uses of ‘civility’ and ‘civilisation’, it still mirrors ‘Eurocentric’ beliefs.

Finally, for the third issue, despite making references to Norbert Elias and his work on *The Civilising Process* (now accurately titled *On the Process of Civilisation*), it does not do Elias any justice. The book constantly refers to ‘civilising process’ in a non-Eliasian way. Moreover, when the book does use the term ‘civilising process’ from an Eliasian perspective, it implicitly places it within a ‘progressivist’ and ‘Eurocentric’ framework. Of course, to those familiar with Elias’s work, it is not a ‘progressivist’ or ‘Eurocentric’ theory that solely explain how Europe created the notions of ‘civility’ and ‘civilisation’ that led to a specific emotional formation. In fact, Elias’s work is considered to have adopted a multi-linear approach by considering the different emotional shifts and patterns related to the uses of the terms. Therefore, as one of the aims of the book is to trace the shifts of emotions that originated in Europe and in other societies related to the uses of the two terms, Elias’s work can be an invaluable source if explicitly utilised in detail. In addition, in a small but crucial note, one of the authors, in relation to Elias, made the following remark: ‘To my knowledge, there is no detailed study of the many possible connections between the fields of emotion and civility’ (p. 291). Here, I would like to suggest the works of Cas Wouters, who researched the fields of emotions in relation to civility, as a reference point to address this connection.

To conclude this review, this book is a good starting point for unfamiliar researchers to examine the different meanings and uses of ‘civility’, ‘civilisation’ and ‘emotions’ from various societies. As for familiar researchers, this book opens further new possible comparative applications within and between societies. Crucially, if one was to expand Eliasian theory into the analysis of different societies beyond Europe, this book is a point of reference. However, caution must be taken when using this book within an Eliasian perspective, since it does implicitly link the concepts of ‘civility’, ‘civilisation’ and ‘emotions’ with ‘progressivism’ and ‘Eurocentrism’.

Los Fundamentos de la Sociología de Norbert Elias

Jesús Romero Moñivas

Valencia: Tirant lo Blanch, 2013, €25.00 pbk, ISBN:

9788415731009

Reviewed by: Diogo Silva da Cunha, University of Lisbon,
Portugal

Norbert Elias’s view on the relation between philosophy and sociology is well-known. For him, philosophy is a non-social-scientific discipline. Based on the development of the natural sciences, in the framework of

Newtonian mechanics, philosophy would be – at least in the domain of the sociological subject matter – a speculative, normative, static and individualistic way of thinking. In this sense, the *homo philosophicus* is one of the most important elements of the self-contained unit Elias called *homo clausus*. Although it has been recognized that Elias had in mind only transcendental philosophy, his view on the relations between philosophy and sociology fostered intense debates on this issue.

Romero Moñivas asserts that interpreting a unidirectional transition from philosophy to sociology is simplistic, because sociology integrates a meta-sociological framework. Even though Romero Moñivas admits that this integration can vary, he argues that this is very clear when sociologists search for conceptual alternatives in the context of theoretical debates. In this sense, Romero Moñivas points out that, despite Elias's attempt to remove the philosophical character of his subject matter by founding it empirically, he can be perceived as a meta-sociologist. In order to show this, Romero Moñivas uses different terms with diverse theoretical implications. For instance, he speaks of 'assumptions' in Elias's mind, of 'fundamentals' or of an 'intellectual structure' in his work and of 'meta-empirical', 'meta-sociological' and 'meta-scientific' questions confronting him. Thus, according to Romero Moñivas the construction of Elias's sociology has gone through a procedure of theoretical exploration and even hierarchization that is usually labelled as philosophy.

Moñivas's book is organized in three parts dedicated to what its author calls the fundamentals of Eliasian sociology: ontological, anthropological, gnosiological and epistemological fundamentals; historical, conceptual and methodological fundamentals; and, finally, thematic fundamentals. By means of this categorization, Romero Moñivas promises to provide a kind of intellectual order and some sort of hierarchy to those fundamentals. Moñivas uses the analogy of a house built from the bottom up, from the ground to the ceiling, in order to characterize his systematization. This means, according to him, that the intellectual structure of Eliasian sociology has a specific hermeneutical order. As Moñivas recognizes, there is a problem in the order he proposes: the place of the theory of the civilizing process can be understood both as a thematic fundamental but also as a pivotal component for grasping all the other fundamentals. As a consequence, this theory plays a double role in Elias's sociology: it is at the same time a thematic and a constitutive fundamental. Almost nothing in Elias's sociology can be perfectly understood without taking this theory into consideration. In the third part of his book, Romero Moñivas shows that the theory of the civilizing process contains in itself a wide range of fundamentals: the rejection of the dualism between nature and society, the rejection of the dualism between micro and macro, the rejection of ontological staticism and fixism, the rejection of metaphysic substantialistic dualism, the rejection of individualist anthropology and the rejection of presentism and theoretical speculation. In its double role, it would not be too much to consider that the theory of the civilizing process works as a kind of theoretically structured and structuring structure (this expression is not used by Romero Moñivas, but his reading of Elias suggests this type of meta-theoretical gaze, Bourdieu-inspired in its formulation). The third part of the book also refers to the themes of freedom, power, communities, leisure and sports.

In the first part of the book, Romero Moñivas characterizes Elias's general ontology, both natural and social, as dynamic, emergentist and non-dualistic. Following from this, Elias's anthropology is interpreted as a social and dialogical personalist relationism. His gnosiology is taken as a theory of knowledge opposed to the dualisms separating knowing subjects from each other and from their objects of knowledge. Elias's epistemology is situated between 'critical realism' – because he defends the possibility of reality-congruent knowledge – and 'critical idealism', since Elias does not fall into an ingenuous and dogmatic realism, recognizing the social and historical limitations of scientists. In the epistemological context, Romero Moñivas also adds that Elias argues against any type of methodological reductionism, that he tries to articulate analysis and synthesis with a special attention to the latter and that he criticizes the eternal and immutable character of the concept of scientific law. In the second part of his book, Romero Moñivas focuses on sociology as a

scientific discipline and gives special attention to certain concepts developed in Elias's thoughts about knowledge, science and sociology in particular, e.g. myths, figurations, interdependences, balances, biological evolution and social development.

Four noteworthy contributions can be identified in Romero Moñivas's ambitious intellectual adventure. The first is the characterization of Elias's fundamentals as radically dynamical: non-substantialistic, non-dualistic, relational and processual. The second noteworthy contribution is the search for the roots of Elias's sociology in different traditions of thought, particularly in the Judaic and Hebrew symbolic worlds. Although Romero Moñivas presents the reader with a creative and critical discussion of different philosophical and sociological legacies in Elias's work, the author's intuitions concerning the relevance of those symbolic worlds are the main novelty to the paradigmatic reconstruction of Eliasian sociology. I am here referring to 'intuitions' because Romero Moñivas observations on this topic are discussed mostly in footnotes and are not developed as a specific topic of his book. Despite this, Romero Moñivas not only highlights the importance of already known biographical information concerning Elias's intellectual development (e.g. being a member of the German Judaic community and being an advocate of the Zionist youth movement Blau-Weiss), but also suggests a kind of religious ambivalence in Elias's thought. It might indeed be incorrect that religion was a central theme in Elias's research, but Romero Moñivas shows that the German sociologist was intellectually influenced by religion. Let us look at two examples. The first concerns the relationship between love and apprenticeship, in which one can see, in Romero Moñivas's opinion, the shadow of Gustav Wyneken and even Martin Buber, whose dialogist and personalist philosophy has relevant similarities with Elias's sociology. The second example regards the possible influence of the hermeneutical categories of the Hebrew world over his sociology. Following Jesús Muga, an important Spanish researcher in the field of Philosophical Anthropology, Romero Moñivas argues that those categories are more dynamic and less dualistic than those the West may have inherited from the Greeks. Consequently, for Romero Moñivas the Hebrew categories might help us explain Elias generalized dynamics.

The third and fourth noteworthy contributions of this book intricately overlap: the relation between philosophy and sociology, and the relation between Elias's and Kant's gnosologies. The former is discussed in the beginning of the third part of the book. Romero Moñivas starts illustrating a paradox in the relations between philosophy and sociology: the history of sociology shows a profound dependency on philosophical assumptions, but those assumptions have been hidden by current sociology. For Romero Moñivas, the perfect example of this case is Émile Durkheim, who tried to create a sociology in opposition to philosophy and psychology but who also used philosophical arguments in order to achieve this aim. In this context, Romero Moñivas directly opposes Kilminster's canonical interpretation by arguing that this issue cannot be understood in the reductive terms of a complete rejection of philosophy or, alternatively, sociologization of philosophical questions. Answering the question of rejection, Romero Moñivas argues that philosophy is not disciplinarily and methodologically homogeneous and that Elias was rejecting a specific philosophy, a philosophy oriented towards ideality, too close to religion and metaphysics. A consequence of this argument is that it is not possible to speak of a pure philosopher and of a pure sociologist when the young Elias is contrasted with the older. Responding to the question relative to the sociologization of philosophical problems, Romero Moñivas differentiates between Elias's empirical studies, that would constitute a less speculative approach, and his theoretical considerations on sociology, that face traditional philosophical problems that can be answered using traditional philosophical tools. The significance of the empirical approach is clarified in a chapter on Elias methodology in which Romero Moñivas gives an account of a sort of underlying circularity between theoretical and empirical-historical investigation.

Finally, the fourth contribution above mentioned concerning the relation between Elias and Kant's gnosologies is treated in the chapter about gnosiology in the first part of the book. For Romero Moñivas,

Elias is trapped in a paradox, specifically when his idea of time is confronted with Kant's. On the one hand, Elias criticized Kant's work and sought to dissolve the ontological problem of time in the empirical study of physical and social times. On the other hand, studying time empirically still needs a foundation for the concept that seems lacking in Elias, who, for instance, never discussed Kant's work in detail, even misrepresenting Kant's distinction between form and content. In short, for Romero Moñivas Elias is stuck in the same Kantian apriorism which he criticized and tried to overcome. Romero Moñivas states this explicitly: 'without being aware of it, Elias continues to be in this sense as Kantian as Kant' (p. 102). For Romero Moñivas, this paradox originates in the Eliasian concept of potential for synthesis. According to the Spanish sociologist, Elias took potential as being part of the human biological endowment, but invalidated its biological interpretation in evolutionary terms by claiming that an imaginary human living in a hypothetical zero-point of history and society would also have that potential. Therefore, Romero Moñivas argues that Elias was effectively creating a kind of *a priori* located between the transcendental and the evolutionary. A similar case can be seen in Romero Moñivas's chapter on epistemology where the author contends that the dialectical tension between realism and idealism in Elias's work is similar to that found in Kant, but without the transcendental dimension. This tension can be rendered more transparent by taking Elias's symbolic theory into consideration; in fact, this theory shows a world formed by symbolic mediations that can be autonomous in relation to the human beings creating them while at the same time being part of them.

Romero Moñivas's book is presented by Stephen Mennell and Fernando Ampudia de Haro. They acknowledge that Eliasian sociology is supported by a set of fundamentals and they agree with Romero Moñivas that these fundamentals can be seen as intellectual assumptions furnishing coherence to Elias's approach, whereas they are not seen as determinants of any type. But Mennell and Ampudia de Haro are more skeptical about the role played by philosophy in these fundamentals. In their opinion, we can speak of philosophical roots of these fundamentals, but that is not the same as maintaining that they have a philosophical 'nature'. For them, we can consider developments from philosophy to sociology and from sociology to philosophy, but the latter is problematic because that passage would break the sociological feedback between theoretical exercise and empirical evidence. For this reason, Mennell and Ampudia de Haro argue that the fundamentals of Elias's sociology reside precisely in this connection.

The present reviewer does not think that for Romero Moñivas the crucial issue is the relation between the disciplines of philosophy and sociology, but precisely that of their assumed strict separation. Throughout the book, it becomes clear that for Moñivas sociology in general – and Elias's sociology in particular – operate implicitly within frameworks that are beyond the horizons of empirical research, which become explicit only in theoretical debates. Although this view is distinct from that of Elias himself, the compelling theoretical perspective offered in this book can contribute to the paradigmatic reconstruction of Eliasian sociology in a renewed confrontation with philosophy.

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