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Civilizing processes and accelerating spirals: The dynamics of social processes, after Elias

by

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Introduction

This paper will present some elements of a research project that took off, among others, from some considerations at the margins of the work of Elias. By 'margins' I do not mean issues that were marginal to the work of Elias in the sense of minor importance, rather which can be situated at a 'liminal' position there: concerns that were just barely touched by Elias, but that could be taken up from there and carried further, more according to the spirit than the letter of his work. These are the *spiral* as an analytical instrument, and the significance of *prehistory* for a long-term understanding of social processes. Following the strictures of Elias about the 'retreat of sociologists into the present' (Elias 1987a), in my view sociology needs to develop an approach to the study of culture and civilization that not only does not stop at the threshold of the modern world, but that goes back as far as the upper Palaeolithic – though not from an evolutionary/ materialist/ utilitarian perspective.

The metaphor of the spiral at the margins of Elias's works

To the best of my knowledge Elias never actually uses the term 'spiral', certainly not in any emphatic sense, as a central concept. Twice, however, he arrives at almost spelling it out; in both occasions at rather important places of his work. One is *Involvement and Detachment*, where in section entitled 'Fishermen in the maelstrom', and as an illustration of the main thesis of the book, Elias refers to a short story by Edgar Allen Poe (Elias 1987b: 45-6). The story is at a *liminal* position in the book, as it is placed just after the republication, with minor changes, of the original paper, which appeared in 1956 in the *British Journal of Sociology*, so just before the start of the new, added chapters. But the idea remains marginal, as not only the term 'spiral' never appears in the text, but even the fact that the metaphor implies a circular movement remains underdeveloped as well. The section uses expressions like 'descent into "the maelstrom" ', or 'being drawn into the abyss of the whirlpool', but Elias only emphasises the fear produced by emotional involvement on the one hand, and the need for reflexivity, to be gained by distancing, on the other. This way of proceeding reveals serious limitations: advocating an outsider position as the 'ideal' for sociologists is somewhat disturbing, especially because in the concrete example this is combined with the failure of the younger brother to help the older one who simply dies. Still, at any rate the whirling

movement is captured and presented there, at this liminal place of the book, as being potentially central for social understanding.

The other example is in *Quest for Excitement*, and shows many similar features. Here again the term 'spiral' is not present; Elias is talking rather about 'cycles of violence'. Yet, the central argument is about how such cycles can accelerate and escalate, or slow down and die out, implying not so much a circular but a gyrating or spiralling movement. Furthermore, the expression 'cycle of violence' is contained in an at once liminal and reflexive part of the book: not in the main text, only in the Introduction, written once the chapters were completed. They are products of Elias's theoretical reflection on the main body of the book; it is this meta-reflection that I would like to carry further in this paper.

The history of the term spiral in social analysis

I should start by noting that, while the term 'spiral' is not often used in social or political analysis, especially not as a possible theoretical concept, Elias was not the only thinker who got close to identifying it as an analytical instrument. Among the main philosophers of history Giambattista Vico was the only one who envisioned in his ideas about a 'poetic' form of knowledge (*sapienza poetica*) a historical movement that was neither linear, nor circular, but following a spiral-like dynamics. The imagery was taken up by two of the most important poets of the 20th century, Rainer Maria Rilke and William Butler Yeats; in what is often considered as their single most important poem: *I Live in Expanding Rings* and *The Second Coming*; each of them written at a particularly liminal moment: the first in 1905, the time of the Russo-Japanese war and the Russian Revolution, the events playing the most important role in the build-up towards WWI and the Bolshevik Revolution; the second in January 1919, just after the end of WWI and the start of the Irish War of Independence.[i] The metaphor of the spiral, through the development and effects of a storm, also played a major role in modern European literature, with Shakespeare (*The Tempest*), Dostoevsky (*Demons*), Dickens (*Great Expectations*), Thomas Mann (*The Magic Mountain*), and Michal Bulgakov (*Master and Margarita*) being some of the most prominent examples. Among social theorists, the spiral metaphor is used explicitly by Michel Foucault, who in *Volume 1* of his *History of Sexuality*, written in order to theorise the way power is exercised in modern societies, talks about the '*perpetual spirals of power and pleasure*' (Foucault 1980: 45; emphasis in original).

While Elias does not mention the word, some of his students, or people associated with his work, did use it explicitly in works that developed further his ideas. Thus, Richard Kilminster used the term in a 1995 BSA paper entitled 'The Sociology Spiral: recent theory in historical perspective';[ii] Thomas Scheff developed the idea of a 'triple shame/ rage spiral' in the works he wrote after his encounter with the works of Elias (Scheff 2001: 105); and Cas Wouters talked about the 'spiral of informalisation' in his book *Sex and Manners* (Wouters 2004: 159). However, in none of these cases can one talk about an explicit thematisation of the nature of a spiralling movement as an analytical tool.

A particularly interesting example is given by a recent article of Sam Binkley (2004). The term 'spiral' is present in the title ('Everybody's Life is Like a Spiral'); yet, the expression is in a long quote from an interview, reproduced in the last page of the paper before its concluding section, and no specific consideration is given to it. Even more strikingly, Binkley was editor of a recent issue of *Foucault Studies* where a special section was devoted to comparing the works of Elias and Foucault, with two papers, and a roundtable discussion, where Wouters also participated.[iii] The 'spiral' is therefore right at the space spanned between the works of Elias and Foucault, evidently much connected to considerations of power, violence and sexuality. One might start to wonder more seriously why it has not received sustained and specific attention so far.

This is all the more peculiar as both Elias and Foucault were literally on the brink of making a further step in this direction. In an important discussion about Foucault's just then published books, which appeared in English with the title 'The confession of the flesh', though originally entitled 'Le jeu de Michel Foucault', an interlocutor argues that in his recent book on sexuality Foucault was close to identifying the mechanisms by which power is diffused in modern societies with contagion, implying imitation. Foucault, however, evidently still entrapped in the modern philosophical dogma of 'rationalism' – immediately refuses the implication, outright claiming that he 'inwardly blushed' when he had to realise that he indeed used that metaphor (Foucault 1980: 199). Elias went even closer, as he explicitly discussed mimesis or 'mimetic excitement' in *Quest for Excitement*, again in a series of liminal sections of the book.

This starts with an introductory section of Chapter 2, the first substantive chapter of the book, which strikes the tone of the entire work – unfortunately in a highly problematic manner. Elias and Dunning locate sport at the leisure 'enclave' of 'industrial society': a place

where the boring routine of daily activities could be released (Elias and Dunning 1986: 65). This is then compared to the Dionysian festivals of Antiquity and medieval carnivals. The problem is that such a setting takes for granted the very specifically modern separation between leisure and work, failing to distinguish between leisure and ritual, and ignoring the much more basic contrast between the sacred and profane. Even further, it opens up the possibility of a bland acceptance of the need for inciting emotions, in order to get beyond the 'daily drudgery' of life, failing to heel the Platonic strictures about the inherently problematic character of the mimetic incitement. This is helped by the fact that Elias only traced back the concern with the mimetic aspects of social life to Aristotle (Ibid.: 288), thus ignoring Plato, even though the problem of mimesis was much more central for Plato's work than for Aristotle's.

Yet, in contrast to Foucault, Elias at least did explicitly discuss the problem of mimesis, and in the most liminal part of this book – a long footnote written to the Introduction (Ibid.: 287-9), published as Appendix I by the editors in 2008 (Elias and Dunning 2008: 291-2). In this, easily one of the most important and interesting parts of the book, he made a number of important points. First of all, instead of situating sport on the horizon of leisure, taking 'industrial society' for granted, he rather placed it in the context of play, thus opening up connections to the works of Huizinga (1970) and Bateson (1976), instead of the standard microeconomic dichotomy between 'work' and 'leisure'. Second, here he suggested a distinction between 'imitation' as mere mimicking, and *mimesis* that does something else: instead of simply imitating an object, or miming an action, mimesis implies the evocation of an *experience* associated with the performance of an activity, or the contemplation of an object. Elias refers here in particular to painting as an example for experiencing a work of art, defining mimesis as a 'conceptual symbol' that can account for the 'transformation' by which the feeling-aspects of the experience of an object can be as if 'transposed into a different gear' by the experience of contemplation.[iv] Finally, and again very close to the work of Huizinga, he alluded to the similarities between a real-life fight, and the 'mimetic' aspect of struggle within a sporting game.

Quest for Excitement was published when Elias was almost 90; this is as far as we can go with Elias in thematising the spiral. I suggest to go further.

Theorising the spiral

My argument in this paper is not simply that the spiral should be used as a tool for social analysis, but that it could perform a vital role there. This is related to the way in which it can moderate the relations between the 'macro' and 'micro' spheres.

The separation between 'macro' and 'micro' sociology seems to be one of those necessary evils of the discipline. Eliasian sociology, for e.g. with 'psychogenesis' and 'sociogenesis' as two interlinked concerns, is opposed to the strict separation between the individual and the society, or the 'macro' and the 'micro'; yet, there are evidently differences in scale between what happens within a family or a nation-state. In particular, it remains difficult to analyse what exactly takes place during a 'social change'; how could changes occurring at a small scale – and any major social change at first must start at a very small level, with a few human beings, as large entities like nations or classes are not persons, they cannot 'act' – eventually produce a major shift at the level of entire societies. The idea of a 'spiral' can help us understand how all this could happen. But in order to understand what happens in 'spiral'-like movements, we need to introduce a number of other terms – significantly, each from anthropology.

The first of these is liminality – fortunately, by today a quite well known term of social analysis.[v] The term was introduced by Arnold van Gennep, a major opponent of Durkheimian social anthropology, and developed further by Victor Turner, in their analysis of rites of passage. The idea is that in such rituals, where initiates are guided into a new stage in their life, like marriage, adulthood, or a special status, a kind of identity transformation takes place under temporary, suspended, transitory conditions. Liminal situation can thus be generalized into those unsettled, uncertain, unstable conditions out of which, with the expenditure of a small force, major changes can be generated at the wider social level.

In order to understand how this works, we need to refer to socio-psychological processes of 'imitation',[vi] in contrast to rationality as anthropological constant.[vii] Rational action assumes stable conditions, under which the behaviour of others can be taken as given, so the outcomes can be calculated in advance. Under liminal conditions, however, stabilities are undermined, structures are suspended, so past actions and events *as* carriers of structures cannot be considered as guides of action. This implies that under liminal conditions there will be an escalation of imitative kinds of behaviour.

At a third level, this poses the question of who will be imitated or followed, or the problem of leadership. Max Weber connected out of ordinary situations to the emergence of a charismatic leader. However, nothing guarantees that the collapse of an order, or a situation of crisis, would automatically result in the selection of a charismatic leader. The problem of Weberian sociology is further aggravated by the fact that Weber, unfortunately following here neo-Kantian rationalist prejudices,[viii] chose to ignore the entire phenomenon of imitation. Under liminal conditions in particular, however, imitation *does* happen;[ix] and furthermore, due to the emotional pressure generated by uncertainty, it is by no means certain that people follow the right kind of person. They might rather follow – and here we need to insert another anthropological concept – a 'Trickster'.

Trickster figures are present in the folktales, legends and myths of all people on the planet. They include the Irish leprechauns, Scandinavian Loki, Greek Hermes and Prometheus, and the medieval Reynard the fox. The classical identification of the figure is assigned to Paul Radin, the first PhD student of Franz Boas, and since then it is a widely researched subject in anthropology (Babcock-Abrahams 1975; Bright 1993; Guenther 1999; Pelton 1980).[x] The central feature of a trickster is that it cannot belong to a community, as it has no genuine feelings and thus cannot experience belongingness; it is the eternal homeless outsider. It also has a number of peculiar and rather repulsive features: it has an unlimited appetite, in eating, drinking and the search for sexual pleasures, but has no taste; it is also obsessed with sexual organs and bodily functions. However, he makes up for this by his ability of telling tales and cracking jokes, by which he can easily become the centre of attention, especially among people who lost their carefulness, or are in a liminal state.

This combination of drinking, sexuality and laughter already bring together three of the most imitative, and also most Dionysian, aspects of human life; but tricksters are also instrumental in stimulating the remaining ones, conflict and violence. After a time, in a society that is enchanted by tricksters, rifts and then divisions would emerge, with conflict soon becoming endemic, leading first to one violent act, which engenders another, until the entire community precipitates into chaos. The appearance of a trickster in a liminal situation therefore produces disastrous consequences, alongside an accelerating spiral, which eventually might lead to the break-up of a community, or 'schismogenic' developments.[xi]

Weberian charisma produces the exactly opposite kind of spiralling movement; not towards the unleashing, but rather the appeasing of emotions. The spiralling escalation of a

trickster logic can be opposed to the spiral of gracefulness, to be illustrated by the logic of gift-giving – another central concept developed in anthropology, this one by Marcel Mauss (2002). The logic of gift-giving and gracefulness can also be illustrated in a way that is most appropriate for the surroundings, through Botticelli's *Primavera*.

Starting from the outward limits of Elias's – and Foucault's – works, focusing on the 'spiral', and with the help of a series of anthropological concepts, it is possible to sketch the contours of a coherent social theory that can help us to understand the dynamics of social change: the manner in which processes limited in time and place can pick up a momentum on their own, leading to a mass-scale social transformation that is not wanted by everyone, yet can affect everybody, and in a lasting manner. The understanding of such changes is impossible to those who, following neo-positivist or neo-Kantian logics, are enclosed into the delusions of complete objectivity and full rationality, ignoring the reality of human lives.

Such a perspective, using the accelerating spiral as a metaphor for social change, could be especially helpful in order to capture the mechanisms that animate the current processes of globalisation, which fits into an entire series of 'global ages'. In order to understand the logics of such processes, we need to go back in time and study how periods of relative stability and social affluence could, sometimes with amazing speed, turn into a spiralling process of unlimited and easily self-destructing growth.

Prehistory

Thus, the second area I'd like to introduce in this paper concerns the study of human societies in a truly long-term perspective, returning to the Upper Palaeolithic. Archaeological findings of the last century or so, and in particular some striking discoveries over the last decades, present such a major challenge to evolutionary, utilitarian and materialist thinking that it simply decided to ignore them, at least in the social sciences. It is extremely rare that historical sociologists, civilisational analysts or students of globalisation venture into such territory – leaving aside most sociologists, safely retreated long ago into the present.

The nature of the challenge is best visible through the quality of prehistoric cave art, which exposes to its full extent the paradox of the modern Enlightenment perspective. Before the modern age, cave paintings were simply ignored. People knew about the fact that

some caves contain animal representations, but it did not interest anybody. This leads to such utter paradoxes that for e.g. the Rouffignac cave – one of the most striking examples of cave paintings in the Dordogne area, which was recognised as the centre of prehistoric art since the beginning of the 20th century – was officially only 'discovered' in 1958, though its walls are full of graffiti, going back to archaic times, including sign of an official exorcism ceremony in the 16th century. The discovery of Altamira in 1879, as it is well known, was followed by the derision of experts, who suspected 'clerical propaganda', and the authenticity of the paintings was only recognised in 1902. Still, up to the last decades, experts – led by Leroi-Gourhan – were desperately trying to salvage an evolutionary narrative in the quality and execution of these paintings, until the discovery of the Chauvet cave, in 1994, definitely ended all such possibilities. This cave contains some of the most striking works of art ever produced by human beings, and their dating demonstrated beyond any doubt that they go back to well beyond 30.000 BC (Clottes 2003).

These discoveries were accompanied in recent years by a much better understanding of the dynamics of the interaction between Homo sapiens and Neanderthal man in Europe. Previously it was assumed that Neanderthal man – who only existed in Europe, though from here spread into Central Asia and the Levant – was 'inferior' to Homo sapiens, and became extinct practically immediately after the latter's arrival – though it was never clear why and how this happened, as archaeologists never found signs of warfare or even open conflict between the two races (a term most appropriate here). Recent research, however, clearly demonstrates that the two cultures lived together for a very long time, from about 40.000 BC – the first arrival of the Homo sapiens in Europe, from Central Asia (the Altai and Zagros mountains) – up to almost 20.000 BC (Patou-Mathis 2006). Cave paintings therefore were not simply the work of Homo sapiens, but emerged out of the co-existence of the two races; a scenario that is all the more likely as some of the most important sites, not just concerning wall paintings but also mobile art, like Isturits, Brassempouy, Gargas, and Chauvet itself, are strongly associated with the so-called Castelperronian culture, which was the product of an interpenetration of Homo sapiens and Neanderthal cultures.

This gave rise to a new interpretation of the emergence of cave art, with important implications for Eliasian theory; both in a positive and negative sense. First, a serious shortcoming of Elias's theory of the 'civilising process' is its rather negative view of civilisation – no doubt due to its reliance on Freud's – untenable – ideas. Civilisation, or

even the rise of culture,[xii] from this perspective is something purely negative: a control, repression or suffocation of the – supposedly – violent, elementary force of human drives. Similar objections can be raised against the theories of Girard, also close to Freud, and much relying on a theory of imitation, or mimetic desire, which would derive the emergence of human culture out of escalating mimetic crises, leading to the 'sacrificial mechanism'. However, archaeological facts simply do not bear out these theories – there was no 'original warfare' between the Cro Magnon and Neanderthal cultures.

It is in this context that archaeologists like Marcel Otte (2009) now suggest an original hypothesis about the rise of cave art. According to this, cave painting was not part of hunting magic, or other kind of utilitarian-rationalist considerations, rather emerged as a response to the *problematisation* of hunting, as practiced by Homo sapiens. Neanderthal men, far from being primitive barbarians, lived in Europe for about half a million years, developing not only extremely sophisticated ways of adapting to various environments, but also pioneering the basic elements of human culture: the care for the dead through burial, the care for the injured, and probably art and language as well. Compared to them, the basic advantage of Homo sapiens was a simple technology of killing: the use of efficient projectiles by which animals could be killed from a long distance. This, indeed, 'worked' in terms of killing animals and increasing population density, but it also led, according to Otte, to the first serious disturbance in the ecological balance. The cave paintings, with their often harrowingly beautiful and graceful animals, represented a genuine mythology of the past; an ode to a way of life that existed before efficient mass-scale animal slaughter.

Two considerations should be added at this point. The first concerns the cave as a location, which on the one hand was a closed space, resembling closed institutions like monasteries, courts, prisons or asylums, each playing such a major role in the European civilizing process; while on the other could easily have been – thus – scenes of initiation rites, as archaeologists and anthropologists interpreting cave sanctuaries as signs of shamanism often argue.[xiii] Second, it is often argued that visits to the caves as initiation rites should be considered as some kind of 'battles' with the forces of obscurity and death, where only those who managed to obtain victory against such forces, or against one's own fears, could return to the light. Such a struggle could be compared to the effective physical struggle, or wrestling, against animals, which Neanderthal man still had to perform, in contrast to the long-distance weapons of Cro Magnon man. Such a vision of the civilising

process as a selection of excellence through face-to-face struggles is again very close to Huizinga's vision in *Homo Ludens*, of which duelling – as analysed by Elias in *The Germans* – is a late, decadent survival. All of this is extremely close to Plato's ideas, where both the image of the cave and the idea of wrestling play a fundamental role.[xiv]

Back to the spiral

Archaeological research also helps us return to the problem of the spiral. The spiral as motive often appears in some of the most famous archaeological sites, like Newgrange, Malta, Gavrinis, or Knossos. However, all these sites are Neolithic or even more recent; spirals – just as any other geometric motives, with very few, though highly significant exceptions in Ukraine – are absent from prehistoric art.

Spirals only appear, suddenly, literally out of the blue, and in a way that can only be described as highly liminal: just around 10.000 BC, or the moment when, with the end of the ice age, the entire prehistoric culture collapsed, with painted caves being abandoned and forgotten, practically until modern times. Such a collapse is extremely intriguing, and fully counterintuitive. We associate the birthplace of civilisation with the Near-East and the Mediterranean, with a sunny, dry and warm climate; but prehistoric art was thriving in Europe during the ice age, when the areas of Northern Spain and Southern France that were most affected by it had a climate close to the steppes of inner Asia; so the collapse was brought about not by a worsening but by an improving of climate. The ideas suggested by Otte truly work here: that Cro Magnon man introduced an imbalance into the nature-culture relationship can be shown by the fact that it failed to react to an *improvement* in weather conditions, while Neanderthal man managed, without harm, several very long cycles of extreme heat as well as cold.

It is under such conditions that, for the first time, as a radical innovation, the spiral appeared in cave art – at a place that was also very liminal. It was found in three caves, Arudy, Lourdes, and Lespugue, located very close to each other, in the middle of the French Pyrenees (Nougier 1982). These places have two further special features, which are connected at a certain figurative level, though it is very difficult to venture an interpretation. Lespugue is the cave where one of the most famous, particularly beautiful and even more astonishing prehistoric 'Venus' statue was found, which presents a unique combination of

female grace with abstract motives. Lourdes, on the other hand, is the place where the most famous modern Madonna apparition happened, and exactly in a cave – though not in the same cave where the prehistoric spiral was found.

The significance of 9500 BC

The end of the ice age, the collapse of cave art culture, and the first appearance of the spiral all coincide around the middle of the tenth millennium BC. It is also the period from which we start to have evidence about violence and warfare. Its best testimonies are from the *Les Dogues* cave in Eastern Spain, where carvings of large-scale armed conflict are shown, with striking vivacity, dated around 6000 BC (Nougier 1982).

The previous date has a further interest, which again takes us back to Plato. In his *Critias* and *Timaeus* the philosopher tells us that according to what the Egyptian priests told Solon, there was a major cataclysm, associated with the end of Atlantis, around 9000 years before, so just around 9500 BC. The story is usually considered as a mere myth, and those who tried to take elements of this seriously were usually met with derision. However, it might be that the time has come for a change. At least, there is a fully respected geologist, who was furthermore involved with the discovery of the Cosquer cave in 1991, another main recent developments in archaeology and cave paintings, who argues in a recent book that 20.000 years ago, at a time when sea level was 130 meters below current levels, there was an entire archipelago around the strait of Gibraltar, thus were Plato located Atlantis; and it indeed went down, partly due to rising sea levels, and partly due to a tsunami produced by a major earthquake, only comparable to major cataclysms like Lisbon in 1755 or Santorini around 1600 BC, just around 9500 BC (Collina-Girard 2009).

It might be high time that, for all sorts of reasons, and not least due to the genuine crisis *of* democracy we are currently undergoing, we should take Plato more seriously.

Notes

[i] 'Turning and turning in the widening gyre /The falcon cannot hear the falconer', William Butler Yeats, *The Second Coming*; 'Round God, the old tower, my gyres I perform, and I've gyred there centuries long;/ and I don't know whether I'm falcon or a storm or, perhaps, a mighty song', Rainer Maria Rilke, *I Live in Expanding Rings*. Interesting enough, Yeats discovered Vico only in 1924, thus *after* he wrote this poem (Carden 1969).
[ii] See *Figurations: Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation*, No.3, p.6.
[iii] See the 'Special Section: Michel Foucault and Norbert Elias', edited by Sam Binkley, in *Foucault Studies*, 2010, No.8, pp.5-77.
[iv] The ideas expressed here are close to the perspective developed by Alpers and Baxandall in their excellent and innovative work on Tiepolo (1994).
[v] For recent overviews of the idea, see Szakolczai (2009) and Thomassen (2009).
[vi] See in particular the works of René Girard (1961, 1972, 1978, 1982, 1991, 1999).
[vii] This is itself a major Eliasian preoccupation; see section 'The Muting of Drives: Psychologization and Rationalization', from the *Synopsis* of *The Civilizing Process*.
[viii] Elias became understandably sensitised to such basic shortcomings of modern philosophy through his personal experiences. This is a central undercurrent of one of his last books, *The Germans*. The following quote makes the point in particularly clear manner, related to a 1932 discussion at a Trade Union headquarter about the possibility of an escalation of violence in politics: 'The conviction of the speakers that a kind of historical providence would always ensure the victory of what they regarded as "reason" over the forces of darkness was unshakeable' (Elias 1991: 221). An anecdote told by Lewis Mumford about Karl Mannheim, Elias's PhD supervisor is particularly instructive in this regard. In November 1932 Mumford visited Europe, and was increasingly preoccupied with the rise of the Nazi movement. He went to see Mannheim, one of the main sociologists at that time. But Mannheim told him not to worry, as Hitler was just a clown, a person not to be taken seriously, and predicted that within a few months nobody would even know who Hitler was. Mannheim was of course right; Hitler was indeed a fool and a clown; but he was a *demonic* clown, and understanding the possibly devastating effects of demonic clowns lie outside the scope of 'rationalist' philosophy.
[ix] For rationalist philosophy, only children imitate; adults act rationally. Whatever 'rationality' means, this is simply wrong. Those human beings imitate who happen to be in a liminal situation. This includes, childhood, but a huge number of other states and situation – most importantly the any time spent in an educational institution. Thus university students are particularly prone to imitative forms of behaviour, which immediately reveals the true significance of the events of May 1968 in France.
[x] The bringing in of this term into social and political analysis is due to the work of Agnes Horvath.
[xi] The concept 'schismogenesis' was introduced into anthropological research by Gregory Bateson (1958, 1972). For a recent overview, see Horvath and Thomassen (2008).
[xii] The original title of Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents* was 'The Uneasiness in Culture'; for further details on 'culture' and 'civilisation', see Elias, *The Civilizing Process*.
[xiii] See Williams (2002) – for a review, see Szakolczai (2008); and Clottes and Williams (2001).
[xiv] About this, see again the recent work of Agnes Horvath (forthcoming).

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