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Directeur d'études

École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris

Born in 1958 in Bourges, France; passed away in 2025

Studied Mathematics, Physics and Economics at the École polytechnique, Applied Mathematics at the University Paris XI - Orsay, and History at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales

PROJECT

Agenda for a Reflexive History of Sciences

This book is supposed to take its place in the current discussions among social scientists dealing with the study of sciences, recapitulating and articulating three domains of inquiries: (1) a kind of history of sciences that studies the relationship between scientific objectivation and historical time, empirically focused on comparative questioning of the history of mathematics and of the history of social and economical sciences; (2) a renewal of intellectual history considered as a material history of abstraction; (3) a form of reflexive sociology of sciences that studies the formation of practical and theorical elaborations related to conditions of possibility of any kind.

Remarks for Other Fellows

For additional information see http://www.ehess.fr/acta/brian

Recommended Reading

Brian, Éric, ed. Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales: Science 141/142. March 2002.

-. Staatsvermessungen. Condorcet, Laplace, Turgot und das Denken der Verwaltung. Vienna: Springer, 2001. First published as La Mesure de l'Etat. Administrateurs et géomètres au XVIIIe siècle. Paris : Albin Michel, 1994.

-. Revue de synthèse: Objets d'échelles 1, Jan./Mar. 2001.

COLLOQUIUM, 24.03.2003

Le temps de l'abstraction, leçon de chose
Zeit der Abstraktion, Sachkunde
Time for Abstraction, Object-lesson

The talk will sketch out the first part of a book upon which I am working.

Its aim is to make a contribution to the history of science by combining in a single approach four ways of constructing an object:

- the French school of historical epistemology (Bachelard) ;

- the sociology of symbolic instruments (Bourdieu) ;

- the intellectual and cultural history of abstraction (Perrot) ;

- critical erudition (Courmet).

My presentation will take into account the renewal of Italian historiography (micro storia) and diverse recent work in the history of mathematics and the history of the social sciences.

The propositions I advance are intended as a response to work in the domain of history of science and epistemology in the 1990s - whether it be in English, German or French - which has lost its way amid the relativism fostered by a slew of local studies and the hall of mirrors erected by recent philosophic, historical and sociological work.

I will proceed by analyzing the somewhat enigmatic object pictured above. One discovers this object in various guises in the work of statisticians of the second half of the nineteenth century, in surrealist exhibitions, and in current demography and the historiography of that discipline.

Using these diverse manifestations as a set of starting points, it is possible to trace the lines leading from the scientific objects themselves to their becoming objects of analysis in the history of science. Thus, I will be attempting to show the importance of a self-reflexive history of science.

By steps, and using the pictured object above, the talk will develop a schema for analyzing the relationship between time and abstraction. The schema will then be generalized and briefly applied to other related cases. The whole is intended as a phenomenology of abstraction integral to the social sciences.

PUBLICATIONS FROM THE FELLOW LIBRARY

Brian, Eric (Paris,2023)

Histoire et sciences : recueil inédit

https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1851852840

Brian, Eric (2002)

Citoyens américains, encore un effort si vous voules être républicains!

https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1815897732

Brian, Eric (2002)

La mémoire des gestes de science et ses enjeux

https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1815897503

Brian, Eric (2002)

Vingt ans aprés

https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1815897260

Brian, Eric (2002)

Ad directionem ingenii

https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1815897066

Brian, Eric (2002)

Les objets de la chose : théorie du hasard et surréalisme au XXe siècle

https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=177076500X

Brian, Eric (Paris,2002)

La mémoire des gestes de science et ses enjeux

https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=773793445

Brian, Eric (Paris,2002)

Vingt ans après

https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=773550445

Brian, Eric (Paris,2002)

Transactions statistiques au XIXe siècle : mouvements internationaux de capitaux symboliques

https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=773547894

Brian, Eric (2002)

Ad directionem ingenii

https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=773537287