

**From the Ising model to sociophysics and back again — via the humanities:
My adventures in a distant academic world**

R. Kenna

*Statistical Physics Group, Centre for Fluid and Complex Systems, Coventry
University, England, E-mail: r.kenna@coventry.ac.uk*

Mine is an eclectic talk reflecting a variety of recent interests — all founded on the Ising model. I start with a discussion of the relationship between sociology and statistical physics and how the former inspired the latter 100 years ago. I discuss the “two cultures” and mutual distrust/misunderstanding between science and the humanities down the years, and the emergence of a third culture in the “century of complexity”. After touching on the essence of network theory, I give three examples of applications to humanities: how fraudulent Scottish poetry was integral to the rise of nationalism, an ongoing debate about Vikings in Ireland and heroic epics of the East Slavs.

I discuss some of the joys and travails of bridging the academic cultural divide before returning to safe ground of the Ising model. I end with a scientometrics slant — how the third culture can generate impact. And how this type of “payback” is important for all cultures in a complex world.