

# Figurations

## Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation

### ■ EDITORS' NOTES

**Centenary** This issue of *Figurations* is published as the Norbert Elias centenary year draws to its close. It will be the last issue to have a 'Centenary Supplement', which looks forward to the Elias Student Conference in Belfast, and to the largest gathering of the year in Amsterdam just before Christmas. This issue carries reports of events that marked the centenary in Paris, Bielefeld, Toronto and – a conference entirely unknown to the Elias Foundation until after it had happened – in Los Angeles. We have also just heard about a *seminario internacional* in Brazil entitled 'Proceso Civilizador, Cultura, Esport e Lazer: Norbert Elias 100 anos', on 20–21 November 1997. In this issue we also carry news of a new date in 1998 for the Latin American Elias Conference in Colombia, which had to be postponed this year, and of a conference in Leicester focusing on Elias's relevance to early modern European history.

**Jet setter** Professor Abram de Swaan, Director of the Amsterdam School for Social Science Research, is spending the academic year 1997–8 in Paris, as holder of the prestigious *Chaire européenne* at the Collège de France. A polymathic figurational sociologist, Bram is internationally known for his notable books *In Care of the State* and *The Management of Normality* and for classic essays such as 'The Politics of Agoraphobia'.

**Arise, Sir Johan** On the occasion of his farewell lecture as Professor of Sociology in the University of Amsterdam, Joop Goudsblom received a knighthood (in the Order of the Dutch Lion), the insignia being presented in the name of Queen Beatrix by his old friend Aad Nuis. (Before British readers become over-excited, we need to point out that the Dutch do not use titles like 'Sir'.) A report on the celebrations marking Joop's retirement will appear in *Figurations* 9.

**New Edition of Korte Biography** A new edition of Hermann Korte's intellectual biography, *Über Norbert Elias: Das Werden eines Wissenschaftlers*, the first edition of which appeared from Suhrkamp in 1988, has just been published by Leske + Budrich, Opladen. It includes an extensive new introduction.

**Figurations 9** will include Hermann Korte's account of the significance of the newly unearthed early article by Elias on anti-Semitism, and reviews of Jonathan Fletcher's book *Violence and Civilization* and of Mellor and Shilling's *Re-forming Bodies*.

### ■ DISCOVERY OF 1929 ESSAY BY ELIAS

A hitherto unknown early article by Norbert Elias has recently come to light. The new edition of my intellectual biography of Elias led a colleague in Munster to draw it to my attention.

Since then I have received a photocopy from the Mannheim Municipal Archives. Preserved there is the *Israelitisches Gemeindeblatt: Offizielles Organ der israelitischen Gemeinden Mannheim und Ludwigshafen*, which was published by Max Grünewald. In the issue of 13 December 1929 (11 Kislew 5690) No.12, pp. 3 – 6, is to be found the article 'Zur Soziologie des deutschen Antisemitismus' (On the Sociology of anti-Semitism in Germany) by Norbert Elias. It will be included in the *Early Writings* – Volume I of the *Collected Works of Norbert Elias* planned for 1999.

In the next issue of *Figurations* I will give an overview of the contents of the article.

Hermann Korte  
University of Hamburg

### ■ GERMAN NEWSPAPERS ON THE ELIAS CENTENARY

Coverage in the German language press of the centenary of Elias's birth was very uneven. While the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (NZZ) and three Berlin newspapers took it as the opportunity for comprehensive articles, the date passed without a single word appearing in the so-called 'heavy' broadsheets (the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *FrankfurterAllgemeine Zeitung* and *Die Zeit*).

The Berlin *Tagezeitung* had already, on 20 January 1997, carried an article marking the centenary. Jörg Hackeschmidt discussed the proceedings of the 1991 Essen conference, which had finally been collected and published as a book. In the same newspaper there appeared a preview of Michael Schröter's *Erfahrungen mit Norbert Elias* (Experiences with Norbert Elias), and in addition in the weekend edition of 21–22 June 1997 an interview with Schröter, whose central thesis was that Elias 'had continued to develop grand linking hypotheses which will have to be worked out and tested through further research.'

Reinhard Blomert, in his article for the *Berliner Zeitung*, also stressed *The Civilizing Process* as simply a beginning. Blomert made the point especially that *Studien über die Deutschen* contains a mass of material and guiding hypotheses which has not yet been extensively used in research on German nation-building.

In the *Tagesspiegel*, also published in Berlin, Jörg Hackeschmidt wrote about Norbert Elias's role in the Zionist rambling club Blau-Weiß. He reported the results of his research, which is the beginning of a revision of the earlier view of his biography which Elias strongly influenced through his numerous autobiographical interviews in the early 1980s. Also in the *Tagesspiegel* for 24 June there is an extensive and very positive report by Dorothy Nolte on the Bielefeld conference under the title 'Where are civilizing and decivilizing processes leading?'

None of these many-sided articles is uncritical. But they place Elias's achievements clearly in the foreground. On the other hand a half-page contribution by Rudiger Zill in the *Frankfurter Rundschau* on 21–22 June entitled 'Self-misunderstandings of a Critic of Civilization', a bad-tempered article, contains sentences such as 'Elias's contribution to the debate on time is among the most uninformed that has been written on this much aired theme'. (No comment!). Much more informed and very readable is the multi-faceted con-

tribution of Birgit Hübner-Dick in the weekend magazine of the *Südwest Zeitung*, published in Mannheim, entitled 'The tamed gaze'.

On 21–22 June the *NZZ* dedicated two whole pages to the anniversary in its renowned weekend *Literature and Art Supplement*. The then editor, Uwe Justus Wenzel, began with an article 'Human Sciences without Humans', in which he particularly discussed the advantages (and a few disadvantages) of the almost complete lack of anthropological constants in the work of Elias. Peter-Ulrich Merz-Benz writes on 'Truth in history', looking especially at the Breslau years when Elias studied philosophy with Höningwald.

I personally have described Elias's *vita activa* and the *vita gloriosa* with which it ended, mentioning the widespread reception of his work after 1977, and I have suggested hypothetically that in order to gain recognition, it is not enough to live a long life and to fight against social circumstances – and that means human relations. The times have to be right as well. One can hardly imagine that anything similar to what happened in the 1970s to a German Jewish refugee could have happened in the 1990s. The *Zeitgeist* today privileges very different, very German qualities. *FAZ*, *Süddeutsche* and *Die Zeit* have apparently confirmed this hypothesis.

Hermann Korte  
University of Hamburg

## ■ MARBACH STIPEND

The German Literature Archive and the Norbert Elias Foundation, Amsterdam will in 1998 once again award a **Six-month Marbach Graduate Stipend** to undertake research on the papers of Norbert Elias, which have been deposited in the German Literature Archive. Further details can be obtained from Dr Christoph König (Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach-am-Neckar, Tel. +49-7144-848-432) and Prof. Dr Her-

mann Korte (Universität Hamburg, Institut für Soziologie, Allende-Platz 1, 20146 Hamburg, Tel. +49-40-4123-3229). Applications should be submitted before 31 December 1997 to *Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, Personalstelle, Postfach 11 62, D-71666 Marbach am Neckar*.

## ■ ELIAS IN THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

Two extracts from Norbert Elias's *The Civilizing Process* have recently been published as part of Chris Shilling's contribution to the Open University's new 'Culture, Media and Identities' programme. Entitled 'The Body and Difference', Shilling's chapter is published in Kathryn Woodward, ed., *Identity and Difference* (London, Sage, 1997). It develops themes from his 1993 book *The Body and Social Theory* and is followed by readings from both volumes of *The Civilizing Process* (as well as readings from Bourdieu and Hochschild).

## ■ THE ANNIVERSARY EDITION OF *UBER DEN PROZESS DER ZIVILIZATION*

Right on time for the hundredth anniversary of Norbert Elias's birth, a new German edition of *The Civilizing Process* has been published by Suhrkamp. It is the starting point of a German edition of the *Collected Works of Norbert Elias*. The new text has been prepared according to the principles laid down for the collected works by the international Editorial Board, which was appointed by the Norbert Elias Foundation and consists of Heike Hammer, Johan Heilbron, Peter-Ulrich Merz-Benz, Annette Treibel and Nico Wilterdink. Each volume will be a critical text edition giving absolute precedence to Elias's original text, and the following work will be carried out on each text: references will be checked and (if possible) supplemented; variants will be documented; and translations of for-

eign language quotations, a bibliography and an index will be supplied.

For my work on *Über den Prozeß der Zivilization*, the second German edition, enlarged with a new introduction and published in 1969 by the Verlag Francke in Bern (Switzerland), was taken as the basis, and re-set with only minor alterations to obvious printing or syntactical mistakes. Nor was the punctuation modernised; changes were made only to avoid misunderstandings. In the footnotes, corrections or additions are restricted to improving incorrect or misleading references, though exact bibliographical references are given in the bibliography. All these emendations are documented in the appendix entitled 'Varianten und Zitationen'.

This appendix also details the most important variants arising from the revisions Elias made to the second volume of *The Civilizing Process* when it was translated into English, and the German text was systematically checked against the later English text. These revisions comprise notes on the translation (e.g. a note on the use of *Phänomen* [phenomenon], *Über den Prozeß*, vol. 2, 1997, p. 523); various enlargements ranging from a few words to whole passages (for instance *Über den Prozeß* 1997, vol. 2, pp. 534–5); the use of concepts which Elias had developed only after writing *Über den Prozeß der Zivilization*, the most important being 'figuration' (*Über den Prozeß* 1997, Vol. 2, p. 517), 'power balances', and the 'established-outsiders' concept (see for instance *Über den Prozeß* 1997, Vol. 2, pp. 535–6); new examples and specifications where the German text is not precise or open to different interpretations (for instance *Über den Prozeß* 1997, Vol. 2, p. 549, where Elias writes *hier* – meaning in Germany).

Documenting these revisions yields insight into the development of Elias's thinking, as he himself remarks in his acknowledgements: 'The exercise of checking the translation was in itself a most useful one for me as it enabled me to revise the text in minor but important ways, and to add notes which set the work in the context of my later thinking' (N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, Vol. 2,

Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1982, p. viii).

Last but not least, the appendix on 'Varianten und Zitationen' contains a variety of information on the quotations. Following the basic principle of maintaining Elias's style, direct changes are restricted to obvious printing or copying mistakes and defects that change the meaning of the text, thus leaving Elias's paraphrases and adaptations unchanged. These can be traced by comparing Elias's version with the sources given – in their original form – in the appendix. A close study of these variants reveals a general tendency in Elias's usage of different quotation styles: he used exact quotations especially when quoting primary sources and giving examples, and paraphrased when integrating quotations in his own sentences and/or quoting secondary literature. However, *both* were indiscriminately marked with double quotation marks; his punctuation in quotations follows the rules he applied throughout his own text – even in some of the foreign language quotations.

Another important part of the work on the new edition was checking the references. This revealed many minor inaccuracies (though the major ones assume far more importance for the editor, demanding much thought and time consuming research). Elias often makes reference to the broad section of the book from which a quotation is taken, marking only the initial page number with "ff" (These have not been 'corrected'). Whereas incorrect references have been directly changed in the text or the notes, missing references are supplied in the appendix 'Varianten und Zitationen'. Foreign language quotations and translations by Elias have been checked as well, and in rare cases new translations are supplied; if Elias only gave his translation, the foreign language original is included in the appendix. Considering the great number of sources used, surprisingly few mistakes were made. His different quotation styles indicate that Elias had been academically socialised in a time when two quoting practices co-existed. Elias's – to our mind – cavalier way of dealing with quotations and translations

is illustrated by his translation of French quotations from Goethe and Lessing back into German without comparing them with the original (see *Über den Prozeß* 1997, Vol. 1, p. 470).

Another part of the appendix offers translations of the foreign language quotations, to the great relief of many German readers who have hitherto had to cope with Latin, Old French, Italian and Middle English quotations.

The bibliography lists Elias's sources and gives detailed bibliographical information. Since Elias mainly wrote *The Civilizing Process* in the British Library, and most of his sources can still be found there (this also holds true for the old manners books!), that provided the basic source for providing missing information on the editions Elias used. If an edition could not be specified from the catalogue of the British Library, the bibliography refers to standard editions that were in current use in the 1930s. References given by the editor are marked with square brackets.

Finally, the new edition includes an index, which all earlier German editions lacked. It is based on the index of the English edition known to Elias, and has been adapted to German usage and slightly enlarged. These enlargements are printed in italics. Work on the index gave insight into the variety of language Elias used, which is partly lost through translation.

The new edition is available in hard cover and paperback. It is Volume 3 of the *Collected Works* which will comprise 19 volumes altogether. This edition is intended to take about ten years, with about two or three volumes being published each year. The next publication planned is *The Symbol Theory*, not previously published in German.

Heike Hammer

University of Hamburg

## ■ ELIAS-I E-MAIL DISCUSSION LIST

ELIAS-I is an e-mail discussion list or 'Listserv', with several hundred subscribers throughout the world.

You subscribe to the ELIAS-I list simply by sending a message to: [listserv@nic.surfnet.nl](mailto:listserv@nic.surfnet.nl) with this text in the body of the message: **subscribe ELIAS-I your full name.**

Listserv is a computer program, so please mail the listowner for help with subscribing, unsubscribing or any other problem with the list. The address of the listowner is: [Kitty@siswo.uva.nl](mailto:Kitty@siswo.uva.nl)

## ■ REVIEW SYMPOSIUM

**Hackeschmidt, Jörg, *Von Kurt Blumenfeld zu Norbert Elias: Die Erfindung einer jüdischen Nation.*** Europäische Verlagsanstalt, Hamburg 1997, 374 pp. 56 -DM

Was it more than Jewish wandering in German woods? Some early Zionists denied that. Norbert Elias also belittled it in a cursory remark: There was once, indeed, a Jewish youth-movement which was completely occupied with those German things – the landscape, the cathedrals.

Hackeschmidt's carefully researched and well-written book reaches a different conclusion. The Jewish 'Wanderbund Blau-Weiß', founded 1912, dissolved 1926, appears as a central pillar of German Zionism, and Norbert Elias as one of its central figures. Thorough study of Zionist archives revealed to Hackeschmidt a particular treasure – the correspondence of the young Elias with Martin Bandmann, Jewish youth leader, brought up and intellectually socialized in Breslau like Elias himself. Bandmann's diary and Elias's letters (written in the years 1920 and 1921) mediate a vivid picture of the time – of Jewish youth culture in general and the Breslau-based Blau-Weiß in particular. The book's main intention is to show how much German Zionism owes to these young intellectuals who tried to build up a new Jewish identity, a new We-feeling in order to cope with the humiliating experiences they had had with the German majority population before and after the war. I think it suc-

ceeds in that; when the Blau-Weiß was finally dissolved, because of the inbuilt irrationality of its Führer-principle and its character as a charismatic youth-movement which proved to be unable to cope with the serious business of preparing the exodus to Palestine, it had already fulfilled its mission of creating a self-confident and nationalist Jewish elite.

But what does Hackeschmidt's discovery mean for our picture of Norbert Elias? Do we have to revise it? That Elias had written an essay on 'Vom Sehen in der Natur' and that he was a leader in the Blau-Weiß is something we already know from Korte's Elias biography. But the letters to Bandmann do indeed shed new light on the Jewish share of Elias's German-Jewish double-bond, particularly through the passionate tone when he characterizes the Jewish lot: He speaks of the Jews 'lowly origin', their 'invertibrate (*wirbellos*), sceptical-cynical relativism', presents them as a despairing crowd, forced to shove in order to survive. For the young Elias, the main task is to forge them into a '*Kulturvolk*'. From the letters we learn of his strong emotional bonds that tied him to the 'Blau-Weiß', we hear the voice of the German youth movement with its romantic elitism of '*starken lebendigen Menschen*'.

Bewildered, we stand in face of the strength of his involvement, and we ask ourselves why Elias communicated so little of that to us. Yet perhaps we should also better not overrate the importance of this evidence. All who share the experience of the generation of 1968 know what it means when formerly strong emotions vanish. Elias was then in his early twenties. Besides that, Elias wanted to lead his confraternity towards the peak achievements of German culture – to Bach, Schiller, Kleist, Hegel, George – to Goethe and through him to the Italian Renaissance. But nevertheless, I have come now to see the study of *The Germans* in a somewhat different light than

before.

New light is also shed on the sociologist's early intellectual career. Leitmotifs, problems and habits of Elias's later thinking can already be found at the time when he was an intellectual and politically highly-involved leader of the 'Blau-Weiß'. Hackeschmidt rightly mentions the idea of the chain of generations – in this case, in order to form a Jewish intellectual elite for generations to come.

The overwhelming interest in the Italian Renaissance (not in the Protestant Ethic!) was shared by many – mediated through Hönigswald. The Jewish reflection of German, 'völkische' values led generally to stressing 'aristocracy', 'manliness' and 'naturalness' (as Moses Calvary saw Theodor Herzl). The civilizing process of noble warriors is perhaps a distant mirror of that ... And finally, we learn from those letters when Elias's 'obsession' with the concept of the individual really started. To encounter the young Norbert Elias in his lost German-Jewish hometown of Breslau after three quarters of a century is a moving experience. Strong emotions, urgent problems, pride and confidence to solve them patiently become visible ... everyone recognizes a part of himself in these letters, and it is indeed touching to compare our knowledge of what has happened since then with what these young intellectuals could not even suspect. But this is another story.

*Helmut Kuzmics*  
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That Norbert Elias in his youth was a participant in the Zionist youth movement, we have known only for a couple of years. Those gaps in the sociologist's memory, revealed by Hermann Korte in 1991 in his biographical fragment on Elias's Breslau years, were unexpected at that time. Above all the actual political nature of Elias's engagement was surprising, because it seemed to contrast with the image of the detached 'Menschenwissenschaftler'. The Zion-

ist activity of the young student of philosophy, involved something that Helmut Lethen (at the recent Bielefeld conference on the occasion of Elias's centenary) called strange bedfellows: the more we come to know about important modern thinkers, the more we are confronted with strange and inconsistent influences. We discover points of contact between intellectuals where there might have been supposed to be only mutual antipathy, and we come across connections between the reception of works that we would have located on different poles of the scientific field.

This blind area has been taken up by the historian Jörg Hackeschmidt. In his investigation he not only discovers further details of Elias's Zionist engagement but gives a general idea of the Zionist youth organization's development. His main locus is the Blau Weiß rambling club, which grew out of a Zionist youth organization into an independent political force, until it disintegrated in the mid-1920s.

Hackeschmidt logically reconstructs the social and symbolic contexts. He easily picks his way through the debates and arguments in Jewish newspapers and periodicals, which make up a part of his material. In addition he used the archival sources of the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem and the Wiener Library in Tel Aviv, which gave him insight in the institutional history of the Zionist organizations. A third source is especially important: the diaries of Martin Bandmann, which plausibly complete and deepen the whole material. Bandmann was one of the main people of Blau-Weiß's second generation and also a close friend of Elias. Three detailed letters sent by Elias to Bandmann were part of his unpublished works. They are published in full. The diaries and letters are interesting documents, throwing some light on the 'strange bedfellows'. Above all the stands taken by Bandmann's and Elias's Breslauer Kreis took in the sometimes tough debates with the Blau-Weiß already show elements of the habitus of

the later sociologist Norbert Elias: in contradiction to a Zionist vision based on socialist and religious ideas, the Breslauers leaned towards a Renaissance humanism and the Goethean ideal of *Bildung*.

Kenneth Anders  
Berlin



## ■ OTHER RECENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES

**Christien Brinkgreve and Bram van Stolk**, *Van huis uit, over de waarden die ouders aan hun kinderen meegeven* (By birth: on parental values), Amsterdam; Meulenhoff, 1977 pp.196, ISBN 90 290 4645 7.

Last year the Dutch sociologist Bram van Stolk died. He was member of the Board of the Norbert Elias Foundation. This year his last book came out posthumously. It is the final remembrance of a man known for various studies on men and women, homosexuality and incest, and who moreover published one year before his death the biographical novel *SI*, about a homosexual young man in the army. The title of his last book is *Van huis uit* - 'By birth', one could say in English. It is co-authored with Christien Brinkgreve, another Dutch sociologist, and though Van Stolk's contribution is limited, the book bears his mark. Precise observations, uncomplicated but penetrating use of language, restrained but accurate interpretations and generalizations, full of respect for the reader and for the empirical evidence. This is van Stolk's style but also that of Brinkgreve. They definitively made the book together. The evidence of *Van huis uit* consists of interviews with various parents. The question is how they raise their children

and how they have been raised themselves. That is an interesting subject where no one stays aloof. The book starts with the Dutch nobility, modest in age and importance compared to other countries, but nevertheless also here well trained in maintaining its status. Nobility does not seek profit. Its first concern is to preserve the heritage from one generation to another. Brinkgreve and van Stolk use the terminology of the French sociologist Bourdieu who discerns besides financial capital, 'cultural' and 'social' capital as power resources in human relations. That works quite well. Financial capital is important, certainly, in the way parents raise their children, but it is closely linked with cultural capital. That consists of trust in what is solid and best resists the ravages of time: land, houses and the things in them. 'Vanity, vanity, all is vanity', says Ecclesiastes. But aristocrats know about the differences. Some things endure longer than others. Striking in this respect is the aristocratic attitude to stay above the status competition by the very fact - as one of the interviewees says, half ironically, half seriously - that this social grouping simply has the highest rank. This paradox characterizes real upper class: the superiority is so evident that they have no idea of 'high and low'. Sometimes this position is a fact, sometimes it is a posture. In either case it demands a great deal from those who are involved: *noblesse oblige*. But it exists and is transferred successfully to the younger generation, even outside the innercircle when non-aristocratic sons and daughters-in-law share the enthusiasm for preserving the property. Exogamy increasing and shows that the social capital of a closed social network is losing value.

Then Brinkgreve and van Stolk turn to the child-rearing practices of the higher middle class, a less distinct but more powerful group that rules the country. What is striking in the interviews is the apparent feeling of security. The parental career is a satisfying fact that gives room for a relaxed expectation as far as the children are concerned. Financial



capital is important, and so is the social capital of the right social circles and the cultural capital of the right professional education. But the first concern is the child's chances of cultivating his or her personal talents and becoming a 'happy human being'. The authors suggest some hypocrisy in this respect. And indeed, parental honour and self-esteem is connected very strongly with what the children achieve. But here social conscience restrains the probable feelings of pride or disappointment and permits them only an ironical expression. This kind of ambivalence in wealthy and enlightened strata is linked up with the growth of the welfare state and the related social levelling in the 1960s and 1970s. Meanwhile, social processes are going in the opposite direction, with shrinking social security and increasing competition on the supply side of the labour market. Therefore the question is how far styles of bringing up children have also been changed. Brinkgreve and Van Stolk did not detect the 'swing of the pendulum'. Still the sociological prognosis must be that something is on the move already. The Dutch middle class will become more like its English or American equivalent, where the feeling of security has never been so strong and its weakening started earlier. Also the contrasts inside Dutch society will decrease, while - as the interviews show - upbringing is less lenient in less established circles and the pressure to achieve in school much stronger. The driving force is of course the expectation that the children will do better than the parents did themselves. That seems to be 'old fashioned' for those who are 'high' enough. But when they realise the risk that their children's status will be lower, 'old' turns into 'modern' very soon.

Another subject stressed in the book is the problem of the assimilation or segregation of 'foreign people' and the parental attitudes in this respect. Perhaps one can also see here a change in what became the norm in the 1960s and 1970s. An example is provided by the interview with two middle-class Jewish parents who have recently distanced themselves somewhat from dominant

secular culture. They want to distinguish themselves very obviously, and even express distaste for a mixed marriage of one of their children. What's going on here? Just a personal choice or a more general indication that the humanistic ideology of tolerance is losing ground? As already noted, Brinkgreve and Van Stolk are careful with generalising statements. The reader is left with this question. That is entirely their right. The interviews are limited in number. Therefore the book does not 'prove' anything, but it invites one to think realistically about parental ambitions. Quite naturally the reader asks himself about his place in the chain of generations. What am I doing and what has been done to me?

Paul Kapteyn  
University of Amsterdam

**Eva Barlösius, Elçin Kürsat-Ahlers, Hans-Peter Waldhoff (eds), *Distanzierte Verstrickungen: Die ambivalente Bindung soziologisch Forschender an ihren Gegenstand, Festschrift für Peter Gleichmann zum 65. Geburtstag*. Berlin: Edition Sigma 1997, pp 400.**

Peter Gleichmann is one of the main figures within the first generation of the German Elias community. Together with Johan Goudsblom and Hermann Korte he was the editor of the two volumes *Materialien zur Zivilisationstheorie* (Vol. I, 1978; Vol. II, 1984). Those three sociologists were and are concerned to make their students interested in the person and the work of Norbert Elias. During his tenure as professor of sociology at the University of Hanover, Gleichmann created a school of his own. Three younger sociologists out of this school, each of them active and well-known members of the second Elias generation, have now edited an interesting new volume in honour of Peter Gleichmann's 65th birthday.

The authors of this volume are colleagues, friends, disciples of Gleichmann, but also 'more distant observers' (p.9). This mixture reflects a balance of

involvement and detachment in the volume itself. The title's paradox, 'Detached Involvements', focuses on the ambivalences of 'doing sociology' as a citizen, as a friend, student or disciple of someone, as a participant in social and political processes. In the foreword the editors express their hope that the volume will offer 'new perspectives, discoveries, views from the distance' (p.9). I think they have succeeded. The editors wanted Gleichmann's heterogeneous research fields to be reflected in the contributions. Accordingly, the book is organised into five sections; Sociological Orientations; Sociology of Knowledge: Perspectives; Civilization and Architecture; Art, Culture and Literature; Violence and Civilization. The volume contains twenty one essays about a very wide spectrum, for example about time, Turkish intellectuals in Germany, the history of music making, the controversy about the Eichmann trial - interesting and intelligent material which offers new perspectives beyond our personal research fields. In the following I want to emphasise those essays which make a direct contribution to the main topic of the volume, the tension between involvement and detachment.

Michael Schröter tells about his first experiences with Elias since 1972, when they met first: getting to know each other, working together, coming to terms on the translations Schröter made for Elias Schröter makes clear again (as he did in his recent publication *Erfahrungen mit Elias*) that the co-operation with Elias was a burden at times. On the other hand he confirms, that he would not have found his identity as a sociologist without Elias (p. 39). Oskar Negt discusses the permanent dilemma of power the social sciences have, and argues towards more self-confidence - as one had, as Negt put it, within the humanistic tradition before Marx. Gerhard Grohs, in his essay, criticises the underdevelopment of interdisciplinary discourse within the humanities and the social sciences. Most of us are working apart, not together. The essay by Hans-Heinrich

Nolte, historian in Hanover, seems to me a personal reflection on involvement and detachment (concerning World War II, the conflicts with his father and his academic interests) which requires being an insider – to Hanover and/or to Nolte. I found it easier to appreciate the analysis of Karl-Siegbert Rehberg, who tries to develop a new – as far as I know – typology of artists in the German Democratic Republic. For Rehberg, the GDR was a 'Konsensdiktatur' (dictatorship of consensus), which offered restricted scope for artists.

The volume *Detached Involvements* reminds us sociologists that the difficult balance of detachment and involvement is not at all merely our problem but a question for all writers, painters, architects and other persons who are concerned with society.

Annette Treibel

Pädagogische Hochschule Karlsruhe

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**Herman Franke**, *The Emancipation of Prisoners: A Socio-Historical Analysis of the Dutch Prison Experience*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995, pp.365 ISBN 0 7486 0614 9.

Compared with most European countries, The Netherlands sends few of its convicted criminals to prison, and those who are imprisoned have more rights and better treatment than their European counterparts. In this study, criminologist Herman Franke presents 'the Dutch case'. Examining imprisonment in The Netherlands from the end of the eighteenth century to the present day, he gives a close historical and sociological analysis of the Dutch penal system, revealing the limitations of existing literature on the origins of imprisonment. He concludes that the work of Foucault and others fails to explain long-term developments that are typical of Western prison systems, and he provides a sociological interpretation of these changes.

Franke has two related purposes in trac-

ing these changes. The first is to explain how it came about, the second is to explain what it has meant for prisoners. As to the first purpose he argues that, because of the growing complexity of social life and interdependency of people, it became increasingly difficult during the first half of the nineteenth century to be indifferent to the physical suffering of others, and it was this growing sensitivity that was the motor for penal reform and led to the abolition of corporal and capital punishment on the scaffold. Likewise, almost a century later, it was a similar process of identification with the psychic suffering of others which led to the attack on prisons as such, and solitary confinement in particular, as various groups like former political prisoners demanded reforms, thus illustrating a long-term development that had forced people to more intense forms of identification, empathy and commiseration. 'The sufferings of others came more and more to be felt and experienced as one's own' (p. 310). This is one aspect of a broader 'civilizing process', which includes a switch from *external constraint* exerted by forms of corporal punishment and harsh prison life to *internal constraint* within the new 'penitentiaries'. Prison reformers and politicians wanted to promote the development of feelings and attitudes among convicts that would prevent them from performing criminal acts in the future; not the fear of punishment, but the awakening conscience should keep people on the rails.

According to Franke, what these changes further demonstrate – and here we come to his second purpose – is that, as this empathy increased and the purposes of imprisonment became not primarily punishment or simple retribution but improvement, prisoners came to secure rights. Prisoners came into possession of an important source of power which would slowly but surely gain in significance in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They could repeatedly undermine and cast doubt upon the justification of their

punishment by *not* improving morally and by continuing to repeat offences, even more so as the improving effect of punishment came to be seen as increasingly important. Moreover – and this constituted the *second* important source of power – their punishers were increasingly forced to justify any extra suffering (other than the deprivation of freedom) imposed on prisoners, as they became more sensitive to this suffering and as their belief in moral improvement or other positive effects diminished. Unintentionally and unconsciously, both prisoners and their punishers worked together to shift the balance of power in favour of the prisoners: prisoners by remaining bad and continuing to suffer; their punishers by continually expecting new positive effects of the punishment and making retribution, revenge and deterrence as bases of punishment increasingly problematic. At the beginning it was only a potential strengthening of prisoners' position of power, wherein they fulfilled a passive role. Later, particularly in the twentieth century, the growing power materialized in rights, rules and facilities, and prisoners made active use of the decreasing power differences. Their *emancipation process* became an *emancipation movement* as well.

Franke's theoretical motive, the 'civilizing process', is clearly drawn from the work of Norbert Elias, and this is explicitly acknowledged. Exactly how this is to be situated with other theories about the birth and evolution of the modern penal system, especially the prison, is one of Franke's central concerns. This is dealt with at various points in the text, but especially in the final chapter where he analyzes among others the work of Foucault, Melossi and Pavarini, Rush and Kirchheimer, Michael Ignatieff and Rothman. Franke criticised their explanations as being too culturally specific and *ad hoc*. Foucault is criticized for his static use of the power-concept (and blindness to the growing power of prisoners) and also for suggesting, like Rothman, that the prison was somehow consciously 'discovered' rather than having evolved.

Clearly one of the attractions of Elias's work for Franke is its evolutionary character and its potential to explain penal changes across cultures in a way that does not rely mainly on socio-economic conditions which plainly vary between one country and another while the most important penal changes were more or less similar.

Franke's work won the annual *Distinguished Book Award* of the International Division of the American Society of Criminology in 1996.

**Olle Edström**, 'Fr-a-g-me-n-ts: A Discussion on the position of critical ethnomusicology in contemporary musicology'. *Svensk Tidskrift för Musikvetenskap* 1, 1997: 9-68

Olle Edström, Professor of Musicology at the University of Gothenburg, provides a comprehensive critical survey of ethnomusicology in the light of theories of modernity and postmodernity. The final section is entitled 'Norbert Elias: All's Well that Ends Well'.

**Dominic Malcolm** 'Stacking in Cricket: A Figurational Sociological Reappraisal of Centrality' *Sociology of Sport Journal* 14, 1997: 263-282.

This paper examines the phenomenon of stacking in the sport of cricket. It is argued that cricket is a particularly revealing case study of 'race' relations in Britain because of the diversity of 'racial' groups that play it and the variety of national identities that are expressed through it. Data are presented to show that the two minority 'racial' groups in British cricket are stacked in different positions; Asians as high status batters, and blacks as low status bowlers (pitchers).

The author utilises the work of Norbert Elias to argue that stacking can best be explained, not in terms of positional centrality, but through a developmental analysis of cricket which focuses upon

historical class relations and Imperial relations in the Caribbean and Indian sub-continent.

**Gabriele Klein & Katharina Liebsch (eds.)**, *Zivilisierung des weiblichen Ich*. Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1997, 428 pp. ISBN 3-518-28905-5

An attempt at combining gender studies, women's studies, social and historical constructionism, and the figurational perspective – that was the ambition of a conference at the Institut für Soziologie of the University of Hamburg in 1995. The framework and the programme of the conference were rather comprehensive: exploring the possibility of making connections between different sociological approaches, researching the use of the theoretical concepts of figurational sociology in analysing women and gender issues, like the formation of the female self.

In *Zivilisierung des weiblichen Ich* the authors pose the question if and how the sociology of Norbert Elias may be used to enlighten the conditions and consequences of contemporary changes in the power balances between men and women. They aim at analysing the formation of female egos – and male egos or egos between male and female – as historical and relational processes. In that respect the book may be seen as critical of women's and gender studies. At the same time the authors want to fill in some blind spots of figurational sociology. They call for example attention to the role of women in the civilizing process, especially in the differentiation between the two sexes. In 'Sport – Befreiung des weiblichen Körpers oder Internalisierung von Zwängen?' Gertrud Pfister criticises Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning for, among other things, their neglect of the perspective of women in their analysis of sport and its functions.

*Zivilisierung des weiblichen Ich* contains both empirical and theoretical

studies. One may find contributions on the relation between the work of Norbert Elias and that of feminist theoreticians, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu and Ulrich Beck; one may find applications and elaborations of the theory of civilizing processes to subjects like eating or the affective, sexual and power relations between men and women. The chapters range from the eighteenth century to the present, from the bourgeois marriage to the sexual revolution. They give an impression of the richness of the field and at the same time they imply a research programme for the future.

As a Dutch reader, I want to conclude with one provincial remark: in the chapter on eating I missed references to the work of Anneke van Otterloo, in the chapter on sport I missed the names of the Dutch sociologists Ruud Stokvis and Maarten van Bottenburg. The Dutch language has its restrictions!

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## ■ ELIAS AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF ORGANIZATIONS

A recent issue of the Dutch journal *De Sociologische Gids*, 44 (1) 1997, is devoted completely to 'The relevance of Norbert Elias for organizational sociology'. Editors of this special issue: J. Soeters, W. Mastenbroek and A.L. Mok. Abstracts of the articles are given below.

'The significance of Norbert Elias's theories for the sociology of organizations', by J. Soeters, W. Mastenbroek and A.L. Mok (pp 7-14)

In the mainstream textbooks on the sociology of organizations the name of Norbert Elias can hardly be found. Except for some papers in Dutch journals and books, the potential significance of his contributions for the study of organizations is not recognized. In this paper it is argued that the work of Elias



could have an important impact on the study of international differences between organizations, the study of emotions in organizations and on general organizational theory. Furthermore, this paper emphasizes the need for a more influential role for the humanities in the organization sciences.

*'Civilization versus culture: corporate governance structures in France and Germany from the perspective of civilization sociology'*, by Ad van Iterson (pp. 15–27)

The object of this paper is to assess whether Norbert Elias's theory of civilizing processes can contribute to the analysis of productive organizations in modern capitalist societies. This paper particularly explores how the contrasting concepts of *Zivilisation* and *Kultur*, as presented in *The Civilizing Process*, can clarify persistent differences between the French and German business system. A business system comprises the general practices and value orientations which characterize both the internal organization of business units and their relations with their external environment, such as other firms, state agencies, trade unions and professional organizations. To a considerable extent, these practices and orientations are regulated by nationally specific governance principles, or 'rules of the game'. It is here, the author suggests, that the *Zivilisation-Kultur* dichotomy can be illuminated. The emphasis on civilization amongst early modern French elites contributes to the explanation of why in modern French organizations the principles of hierarchy and honour are still valid, whereas the German emphasis on *Kultur* contributes to the explanation why (technological) expertise, exchanged among peers, is highly esteemed in the contemporary German business system.

*'Norbert Elias as organizational sociologist'*, by Willem Mastenbroek (pp.28–40)

The historical development of organizations during the last five centuries in

the West shows a specific structure. The innovations by Maurice of Orange, Wedgwood, Regout, Von Moltke and Taylor, as well as many recent organizational changes, all fit in this same pattern. The work of Elias contributes in conceptualizing this pattern. Organizations are seen as changing networks of relations. These relations are best characterized as balances between interdependence and autonomy and between steering and self-organization. A promising theoretical application of this concept is the integration of action and system models into a so-called 'parties in a system model'. (An English-language version of this article is available on Internet: <http://www.usyd.edu.au/su/social/elias/wip.html>)

*'Dynamics at the top of large enterprises'*, by R. Stokvis (pp 41–56)

Inspired by the example of Norbert Elias to use a long-term perspective, this article examines the thesis of the 'managerial revolution'. The method used is that of comparing the agreements and differences between a limited number of case-histories of firms. It is argued that during the nineteenth century giant corporations were governed by the owner(s). The complexity of the management tasks was no major reason for the strengthening of the position of managers; the main cause was the fragmentation of stock-ownership. During the last two decades of the twentieth century, the availability of great amounts of investment capital and the intervention of new techniques to concentrate such capital made it possible to buy all the shares of giant companies. Big consulting firms assist new owners to govern the management hierarchies of these companies. The 'managerial revolution' was just a phase in the long term development of the government of giant firms.

*'The development of the military profession: from paradox to paradox'*, by G. Teitler (pp 57-66)

As a specific product of the civilizing process professional soldiers have an

institutional interest in distinguishing themselves from amateurs in the use of organized violence. The best way to accomplish this is to fight 'clean, short and decisive' wars. This professional ideal corresponds to what in modern military parlance is classified as manoeuvre warfare. Its counterpart, attrition warfare, is exemplified by the trench warfare of 1914–18. In its most extreme form this kind of warfare is devoid of any professional excellence and finesse. Significantly, however, manoeuvre warfare is hindered by the idea that honour can only be attained, and excellence only be proved, by opponents with the same military background and specialization – tanks against tanks, battleships against battleships, fighters against fighters. This battle of like against like leads, however, to attrition warfare in which sheer numbers are likely to decide the outcome of the fight. Manoeuvre warfare in its ultimate rationalization can degenerate into a barbarization of warfare, quite as horrible as the attrition of the trenches.

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## ■ BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RETROSPECT

Gabriele Klein: *FrauenKoerperTanz: Eine Zivilisationsgeschichte des Tanzes*. Weinheim, Berlin, Quadriga, 1992, Hardback 336 pp. ISBN 3-88679-194-7

As an interested amateur in the sociology of dance-culture and as a figurational-sociologist and historian, I am very pleased to write a review about this impressive book. Published in 1992, Klein's book deals with a typical subject that has been rather neglected in the social sciences: the socio- and psychogenetic development of dance (folk, popular and artistic dance) and its specific paradoxes in the terms of gender, body-politics and the balance between formality and informality in society. While Elias illustrates the civilizing process – the transformation from external to internal controls – with mate-

rial from books on etiquette, the development of manners and so on, Klein discusses in long-term perspective the consequences of the civilizing process for the body itself. As Elias's theory is lacking a term for the body, the author is also oriented towards Foucault.

Beginning in ancient times (3700 BC) and proceeding from classical antiquity through the Middle Ages and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries up to modern society, in the history of the dance one can see increasing body-controls as an expression of the social figurations of power between the social classes and sexes. Klein describes this development as a kind of social distinction and as an expression of opposition to the social order. The so-called disco-dancing fever of the 1970s is, as a specific dance-formation in itself, a new creation but as a phenomenon of the need to feel and express the body it is a constant element of behaviour in humankind's history for coping with life.

Recognizing that in modern dances since 1970 an enormous diversity and variety has emerged, she states what seems to be a paradox: whilst the civilizing process shows increasing controls over the emotions and bodies,

there is a mass movement celebrating the 'authentic self' besides social controls. The body being disciplined and controlled becomes the centre of the modern self. This development in itself is not new, but it demonstrates new potentials for the emancipation of men and – as the author stresses – for women.

Each of the seven chapters illustrates an epoch in Western European history, and the development of dances and the ambivalent position of the female dancers in it. In several sections there are detailed descriptions of certain dances: ancient ritual-dances; folk-dances in the Middle Ages; the minuet in eighteenth century; the waltz in bourgeois society; the Foxtrot, Shimmy and Charleston in the Roaring Twenties; expressive-dance, Rock'n'Roll, Boogie Woogie, Jitterbug and Twist after World War II. The reader is given a deep insight in the dimensions of beat-dances and disco-dances in the 1970s, and modern avant garde dance-theatre. One example of the author's convincing thesis is her interpretation of ballet-dancing, especially the ballerina as an illustration of total self-discipline, body-control and idealized femininity in a phase of revolutionary social change. Like a fairy,

the ballerina floats through time and space, serving male fantasies and voyeuristic intentions. She is the graceful Blessed Virgin, whilst her social position as an actress and dancer is mostly one of the designated prostitute.

The polarization and hierarchy between the sexes, is already evident, but whilst there is an enormous diversity in modern dance the discussion of sex and gender in the dances shows a dialectic order between idealizing femininity and breaking down the frontiers of femininity and masculinity. The androgynous dancer in modern dance-theatre demonstrates the search for new individual identity and the 'authentic body. Although the author does not explicitly discuss whether this new phenomenon is a 'controlled decontrolling of social controls', the ambivalent tendencies of the process of civilization between the sexes are analysed in a convincing and vivid way. Neither in a pessimistic nor in an euphoric manner, Klein describes the advantage and price of the civilization of the body, the dance and the sexes. One can understand new mass phenomena like the techno-dance movement as a specific development in long-term civilizing processes.

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## ELIAS CENTENARY SUPPLEMENT

### ■ ELIAS FOUNDATION CENTENARY CONFERENCE, BIELEFELD, 20-22 JUNE 1997

The actual day of the centenary of Norbert Elias's birth was marked by a Colloquium at the Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Forschung at Bielefeld, where Norbert himself had spent several highly productive years between 1978 and 1984.

The conference began on Friday 20 June, when participants were welcomed by Hermann Korte on behalf of the Elias Foundation and by Professor Peter Weingart on behalf of the Zentrum. They then split into two parallel working groups. Group I was concerned with reflection on and revision of the theory of civilizing processes, Group II with decivilizing processes.

The birthday itself, Sunday 22 June, was marked by a plenary session, at which Professor Otthein Rammstedt of the Department of Sociology at the University of Bielefeld announced the establishment there of a Norbert Elias Visiting Chair of Sociology which will be awarded annually to a prominent social scientist. The conference then closed with an address by the distinguished political scientist Martin Greiffenhagen.

#### GROUP I: REFLECTION–REVISION–FUTURE OF THE THEORY OF CIVILIZING PROCESSES

Group I, chaired by Annette Treibel, appropriately named – 'Reflection, Revision, Future' was broad enough to cover the variety of papers, most of which were on a high level of theoretical abstraction and contained much 'reflection' – much more than 'revision' and 'future'. I will give some brief impressions of most of the presentations in the chronological order in which they were presented.

Helmut Kuzmics from Graz introduced the group's theme by giving a general overview of the basic characteristics of the figurational approach as represented in particular by *The Civilizing Process*. He stressed Elias's literary side, his creative use of literary sources, his predilection for illuminating metaphors, his sensitivity for the complexity of meanings and corresponding distrust of scientific jargon. From this Kuzmics drew a connection between Elias's approach and the 'linguistic turn' in so-

cial philosophy and parts of social science which started with the later Wittgenstein. This last point was debated in the discussion: would it mean that Elias was some sort of constructionist? Kuzmics denied this implication.

The first three papers after this introduction dealt with different stages in Norbert Elias's intellectual life. Jörg Hackeschmidt, the young historian from Bonn, presented the material he had uncovered about Elias in his dissertation research on the Zionist youth movement after the First World War (*Von Kurt Blumenfeld zu Norbert Elias*, Europäische Verlagsanstalt, Hamburg 1997), throwing new light on Elias's biography. It appeared that Elias had been a central figure in the Zionist Blau-Weiß movement, just as this movement had been central to him. Quoting from letters by, to, and about Elias, Hackeschmidt depicted him as a searching, ambitious, very idealistic (in several senses) young intellectual who was immersed in the *Kultur* which he would analyse with such sociological detachment later in his life. Peter-Ulrich Merz-Benz (Zürich) presented an account of Elias's 'philosophy of history' as it appeared in his 1921 dissertation. According to Merz-Benz, the 'seeds' of his later historical sociology could already be found here. Michael Hinz (Hanover) entered into an intriguing aspect of Elias's reception in Germany after the war: his connection with the ethnologist Wilhelm Mühlmann. Mühlmann, who originally thought along the lines of nineteenth century evolutionism as well as the contrast between *Kultur* and *Zivilization*, and conformed to National Socialism in 1933–45, became highly interested in Elias's theory of civilization in the 1950s, and was the first social scientist to invite Elias to Germany. Hans-Peter Duerr was a student of Mühlmann and became acquainted with Elias's work through him, which might explain – Hinz suggested – Duerr's distorted interpretation of Elias.

The first day's last speaker, Kenneth Anders (Berlin), stressed the humanistic roots and intentions of Elias's theory of civilizing processes, noting a tension between his normative stance and his claims of scientific detachment.

The next morning the language changed from German to English. It started with a paper by Paul Stokes (Dublin), who noted both affinities and differences between the ba-

sic ideas of Norbert Elias and those of Gregory Bateson, and argued for a synthesis of the two. Dennis Smith from Birmingham compared Elias with another famous transgressor of disciplinary boundaries, Michel Foucault, particularly his *The History of Sexuality*. Both Elias and Foucault stress the dynamic, historically changing interconnections between power structures, control of bodily impulses, and the development of the self, and show some remarkable similarities in their analyses of particular historical periods, such as the 'civilizing spurt' in the Roman Empire. Nevertheless, when it comes to the assessment of the developments in modern society, their works are 'worlds apart': for Foucault, authoritarian, comprehensive, 'normalizing' control in modern society seems inescapable, whereas for Elias the civilizing process gives at least the potential for greater individual freedom and rational self-control. Smith connected this contrast with deeply ingrained differences in personal experiences and outlook: 'Foucault is the prisoner in Bentham's Panopticon, Elias the survivor in the maelstrom'.

While Stokes and Smith refused to take sides in their comparisons, the next two speakers explicitly argued for an Eliasian view. Ann Buckley (Cambridge) defended Elias's remarks on courtly love songs against his critics, who, being scholars in the literary tradition, only focused on texts and neglected the wider social context. Robert van Krieken (Sydney), in an extension of his forthcoming book on Norbert Elias (Routledge, 1997), stated that the 'Hobbesian problem of order', formulated by Talcott Parsons as sociology's fundamental problem, is based on the dualism of individual and society; and that, by criticizing this dualism, we can go beyond this problem and redefine the tasks of sociology in more fruitful ways.

The first two speakers in the final Saturday afternoon session used the theory of civilization more empirically. Michael Krüger from Tübingen presented findings of his investigation of the nineteenth century German gymnastics movement and its role in the formation of German national consciousness. Willem Mastenbroek (Amsterdam) took distance, in style and substance, from the purely academic character of the presentations and discussions up to this point in making extensive use of the overhead projector and stressing the importance of applied and applicable knowledge. He sketched in broad outlines the development of ideas and prescriptions on negotiating (starting with a treatise by Bernard du Rosier in 1436) as part of the civilizing process, pointing out the parallels with the development in the etiquette books – the emphasis on self-control followed by 'controlled decontrolling' in recent times. Roland Axtmann (Aberdeen) took us back to the world of pure scholarship by comparing Elias's theory of state formation with more recent work in this field. Did Elias have anything important to say in this respect for the present-day experts? No, Axtmann contended, apart from the theory of civilizing processes proper: what is important

is not Elias's theory of state formation as such but the connection he posits between state formation and civilizing processes. This conclusion was disputed by several participants.

The final presentation – a more or less improvised talk by the Germanist Helmuth Lethen (Rostock) – was followed by a discussion which focused on the meaning of a statement by Elias, quoted by Lethen, implying that human beings in general have a biologically given potential for civilized behaviour. The discussion did not make clear – to me at least – what was special or debatable about this (obviously true but unremarkable) statement.

In this way, the final session ended in an anticlimax. What we had heard these two days had given enough food for more interesting thought and discussion. It was instructive and sometimes exciting to learn about hitherto unexplored parts of Norbert Elias's life and work, or to reflect on how his work compares to that of other social theorists. It was encouraging to see that younger scholars made such interesting contributions. At the same time, it was striking how strongly Elias himself was the focus of attention and reflection. This testifies to his still growing influence, and is fitting for a centenary. The only risk is that it might take energy away from what should be our main task – to develop Elias's insights further in our understanding of human societies rather than merely commenting on his work.

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## GROUP II: DECIVILIZING PROCESSES

Group II perhaps did not advance our general understanding of decivilizing processes as much as it might have. As usual in conferences, not all the papers fully addressed the central topic, so although they were of a high general standard they could not form the basis for sustained debate or systematic discussion. Of course, the like-mindedness of the participants and the pleasure of seeing so many friends provided ample compensation.

The need for theory was made clear by the one – somewhat confusing and inconclusive – discussion about the standing and usefulness of the concepts of 'civilizing' and 'decivilizing' processes. Any progress had to be found in the valuable case studies such as those by Ton Zwaan (on Yugoslavia), Monçef Djaziri (the Arab world) and Elçin Kürsat-Ahlers (on the Ottoman Empire). Their work also shows that figurational (or process) sociology can now benefit much more from the study of social processes outside Europe – or more precisely 'the West'. For it to become truly global in scope – as Elias always intended such studies are indeed essential.

The discussions in our group made me rethink the relation between civilizing and decivilizing processes. These are my conclusions (preliminary, of course). To see decivilizing as the other side of civilizing and posit an ever-present 'balance' between the two as decisive for the overall process is not enough. I still consider as Elias's most important innovation in *The Civilizing Process* the long-term connection he draws between state formation and the development of the make-up of personalities. But that connection is not so easily specified at all levels of the process. It is possible to assess the development and strength of internalization of self-restraint, especially in different strata or groupings of a state-society? Solidity or thin veneer? Yugoslavia and interbellum Germany are examples of the precariousness of a high level of civilizing. Would that hold against comparably severe challenges in other state-societies?

I think we also have to distinguish between two quite different political contexts of decivilizing processes. The first arises from the inherent duality of monopolies of violence. These have functions both for those who control them and for state societies as a whole: Peaceful conflict resolution and maintaining law and order. But if the controllers themselves are not sufficiently controlled and are able to terrorise, intimidate and kill minority and opposition groups, the latter function nearly disappears. The decivilizing consequences can be described with Elias as 'barbarization', compared with the norms implicit in civilised conduct in the previous phase of development. But under different conditions – such as international supervision – civilised conduct at the previous level can return.

The second political context is a function not of the strength but of the weakness of central monopolies of violence and thus of central governments. Many new states have been constructed from administrative parts of colonial or 'classical' empires. The latter were themselves failed states, in the sense that they were unable to develop into cohesive, democratic nation-states that could have survived as such. In constructed states, the intensity of the rivalry of competing groups for control over the central state monopolies may lead to the internal wars we observe especially in Africa. Their low level of nation-formation in Elias's sense tends to include a lack of mutual identification between the different regions of the state. Different population groups (now called ethnic groups) often do not accept each other as members of the same state. They tend to think about each other as rival states do. But if such states fall apart, warlords and their youthful armies will be caught up in the dynamics of elimination struggles for the control of the central monopolies. Decivilizing processes as yet do not go as far as feudalization. But not all constructed states disintegrate. So what are the differences?

Further development of the theory of civilizing processes, I conclude, requires much more research on decivilizing processes. Another conference will then be needed.

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## AN OVERALL VIEW: SOCIOLOGY IN PROCESS

I missed the first day's proceedings of the Norbert Elias Centenary Conference at Bielefeld but as I joined the line for food in the dining hall the buzz of battle was still alive in the atmosphere. There had apparently been a good deal of comradely discord about the precise nature of decivilizing processes during the day. That particular debate was going on in 'Group II' whereas I was rostered to participate in 'Group I' whose task was to 'reflect upon' and 'revise' the theory of civilizing processes. I suspect that neither group produced a consensus, or really tried very hard to do so. Instead, what is so exciting about the current state of Elias scholarship and debate, especially on such occasions as the Bielefeld conference, is that a number of discussions are going on concurrently within a fairly loose agenda, allowing cross-fertilization, sometimes in the lecture hall or seminar room, more often, perhaps, over coffee, lunch, and dinner.

Firstly, there is continuing fascination with the biography of Elias, who he was and what he cared about, especially the previously-hidden or non-obvious aspects of this. Jörg Hackeschmidt's work is an interesting example of this work and the sooner we get an extended English version of this the better.

Secondly, there is the question of 'what Elias really meant and why it is important': this approach was well represented by, for example, a number of papers on the sociology of sport which implemented an Eliasian approach.

Thirdly, there are attempts to revise, extend or criticise Elias's ideas by exploring their applicability either to areas he wrote about, such as the *Minnesang* (discussed by Ann Buckley), or areas he largely neglected such as American society (a theme of special interest to, among others, Stephen Mennell, Edmund Leites and Cas Wouters). Finally, there is an approach overlapping with all the others mentioned which consists of exploring similarities and differences between the theoretical and empirical analyses carried out by Elias and other writers who have also tried to make sense of the character of medieval and modern societies. I am thinking of, for example, Paul Stokes's paper on Elias and Bateson, and Robert van Krieken's work. I tried to do something along these lines in my own paper on Elias and Foucault. I suspect that after our year of celebrating Elias's centenary his reputation and importance will be well enough established to let him 'stand on his own feet' within the wider canon. One way to keep the Eliasian approach vibrant and responsive to the central issues within sociology and the broader debate about modernity is to bring Elias together with other analysts, some competing, some sympathetic, and allow 'fair fights' to take place between them. Elias was, after all, fascinated by the duel as a form of human contest. Perhaps, occasionally, we can recognise that other contestants have their skills, too. We can afford, now and again, to say 'touché' on Elias's behalf.

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PLENARY CLOSING SESSION: THE GERMANS, NORBERT ELIAS AND THE RESEARCH FIELD OF POLITICAL CULTURE



Martin Greiffenhagen called Elias an 'enduring classic', which has influenced a wide range of other fields of knowledge. One of these fields is the research field of political culture – a field of which Elias may never have heard, but where he nevertheless counts as one of the great authors, claiming a special position in a debate which has been in

progress in the discipline since its beginning. The study of political culture deals with political institutions and the conscience of the population towards them. The first impulse for the foundation of the discipline was decolonization after 1945. And the second impulse came from the Nazi regime, which raised the question of how a supposed highly civilised people could descend into barbarity. How far back must we go into the history of the Germans to grasp this? Is the thesis of the *Sonderweg* right? What about influences like Luther or Nietzsche? And would the answer give the basis for solving the question of how long the Germans would take to become a democratic people? And how stable could this democratic society be? Are there links between economic prosperity and the stability of democratic society?

On the one side, there is the survey method, which measures the attitudes of a particular sample of people towards specific questions. On the other side there are research methods which try to go deep beyond the surface of survey responses, looking for things which can never be raised by the survey method, like taboos and their consequences in the strategies of argumentation. This method puts its finger on the importance of historical culture.

The second approach needs historical data, to conceive of experiences as frames of thinking and feeling. So the writings of Norbert Elias, especially *The Germans*, supply a masterpiece of research in political culture. Describing the codes of national character – or habitus — Elias showed the military ethos and morality of the German aristocracy in the *Kaiserreich*, which was adapted by middle class society: the ideal of warriors without compassion, which was the underlying principle of the *satisfaktionsfähige Gesellschaft*. This society of the 'satisfiable' excluded Jews, women, liberals and Catholics, and the exclusion ritual was one of the sources for the barbarity of the Holocaust: the German middle class maintained an historically outdated warrior ethos during the Weimar period, instead of building up a liberal-egalitarian code, which did not enter the ethics of the German middle class till 1945.

Greiffenhagen contrasted this with Daniel J. Goldhagen's argument (in *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, 1996), which has recently attracted so

much public discussion. Goldhagen's conception of the Germans as individuals who can be separated from the morals of the surrounding society is very much at odds with Elias's conception of the We-I balance. Elias never separated individuals from the matrix of the we-feelings in which they lived, felt and thought. So the borders of personal guilt are put in historical and social frames, which Goldhagen obviously and anachronistically omits. Elias showed that the conscience in the German tradition is very weak, even in adult Germans, while at the same time the state always held the position of the disciplining power. The long historical experience of loss of power is, as Elias puts it, the reason for the sentimentality and self-pity on the one side of the German character, and for the sense of power and *Realpolitik* – and the merciless use of power, when they have it – on the other hand.

Parliamentary political cultures require stronger self-disciplinary potential in their members than do autocratic regimes. This was the main topic Elias worked through: the change of personality structures does not take place in one generation in the life of a people. But this process of change from authoritarian to democratic habitus has been more or less completed during the three generations of (West) Germans following the end of the War. The scale of democratic values shows especially in the young generations, who exhibit high degrees of 'tolerance of ambiguity', which is one of the main aspects of democratic feeling and thinking: to hold out a situation which is not clear – neither totally black, nor totally white. The word 'compromise' is no more scorned in German discourse. Reunification now means the integration of two different political German cultures. In this respect too, the work of Norbert Elias offers many helpful hints – but, concluded Greiffenhagen this is a piece of research yet to be done.

Reinhard Blomert  
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## ■ OTHER RECENT CONFERENCES

THE FORMATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STATE:  
ELIAS CENTENARY COLLOQUIUM  
PARIS, 16-17 MAY 1997

When paying Norbert Elias the homage of working with his ideas, we had in mind a response to his great anxiety, about whether other people would follow up his work. The theme was not chosen arbitrarily: several of us have been researching for a long time on the subject of the parliamentary state, and the general influence of Elias's thinking has already made itself felt in several projects, completed or in progress. Moreover, even the expression 'parliamentary state' has the merit of breaking with conventional teleological views of democracy. Finally, Elias himself sketched out an analysis of the subject.

To approach the parliamentary state through dialogue with Elias means above all gathering together evidence on what Elias called 'parliamentarization' – that is to say, paying great attention to the sociogenetic analysis of the formation of the parliamentary state. Following Elias, it has to be recognised that the state is never fixed, and that the specific social figuration cannot be seen as fixed and immutable structure independent of the social relations associated with it. The parliamentary state endures and changes at the same time. Elias's work is therefore an invitation to develop a more general sociology of the state, which is neither an analysis of discourse by the state on the state, nor limited to state organizations, but encompasses the organization of social relations and of the habitus appropriate to the parliamentary state.

The conference opened with an analysis by Bernard Lacroix of the problem of the parliamentary state from an Elisian point of view. Parliamentarization is to be seen as a way of approaching the formation both of the state and of states, as well as 'the future of democracy' without teleological illusions. Besides the classic early studies by Elias – of state-formation in France, and of parliamentarization in England – research is imperative on other states (Pascal Dewitt spoke on 'Belgium: from parliamentary state to parliamentary democracy'), and on specific processes of state-formation (Stephen Mennell on 'The Frontier of What? – Pacification and Functional Democratization in American State-Formation'). In the transnational integration of states foreseen by Elias and now observable, the construction of Europe proceeds by the same mechanisms of interdependence that were the basis of state-formation in Europe, even if they take a non-violent form (Antonin Cohen, 'Making Europe: from competition to monopoly in the formation of the Community'). On the other hand, the dynamics of the emergence of local political bosses can be understood as like the 'power of notables' (Laurent Dussutour, 'Notabilization as tendency towards the local monopolization of political capital), one face of the central process of Western state-formation at the stage which Elias observed the operation of centrifugal forces (notably in the 'phase of appanages') within the movement towards state centralization, suggesting its reversibility and thus that is not a sort of ineluctable law of history. We know today how Nazism, of which Elias was both witness and victim, has left its mark on the theory of civilizing processes. The collapse of the Weimar parliamentary republic is an essential example from which to begin thinking about the parliamentary state in a non-teleological way, and particularly about the now-popular thesis of 'the end of history' (Eric Dunning spoke about 'Elias on Germany: Nazism and the Holocaust').

Part of the discussion was concerned with historical aspects of the locations and modalities of processes of parliamentarization. Some of its social milieux can be considered as 'civilised' enclaves in which codes of conduct and a

mode of personality makeup took shape. The parliamentary assemblies of the French Revolution can be analysed in this way (as Jean-Claude Bussi re and Christophe Le Digot reported), as can the development of codes of discipline within the National Assembly under the Third Republic (Herv  Fayat, 'How to belong to the Assembly: discipline in session and the pacification of parliamentary manners'). Other social circles, outside parliaments but related to parliamentary life, have however, also functioned as locuses in which codes of conduct have been formed (Jean Joanna, 'The political competence of politicians in parliament: political speeches in the nineteenth century'). And there are working practices of the state which serve to establish a new pattern of political relations as can be seen in the administrative regulation of electoral procedures (Christophe Volliot and Laurent Quero, 'Election work and regulatory administrative practices in the counting of elections under a qualified franchise') or in the invention of rules for administrative control (Marie Vogel, 'Central administration and parliament: the reorganization of administrative control in the Ministry of the Interior')

The parliamentary state also exists in the images it projects of itself of which are projected onto it. There are many forms of objectivation: the paradoxical form not only in and through discourse for example denunciation (Jean Louis Briquet, 'The misfortunes of virtue: the critique of parliamentarism in liberal Italy from 1860 to 1915'), but equally in and through the visual symbol representation of the presence of the state such as ministers wearing official uniforms (Guillaume Courty, 'Political uniform: the nineteenth-century eye and the parliamentary state'), or in the association of history with the state (Yvon Lamy, 'The invention of the historic monument under the July Monarchy, or the patrimonialization of the State'). Finally, the contribution of journalism and the media to the shaping of politics has to be acknowledged (Elsa Aurange, 'Parliamentary journalists and politicians'; Francis James, 'The Genesis of the Interview: a Factor in the Social Construction of Politics'; David Buxton, 'The Place of Television Journalism: From Personalism to Malthusianism').

It is recognised that the parliamentary state cannot be understood as the creation of a precise historic moment, even if certain times and places play a particular and decisive part in the achievement of the institution. One has to look at the processes through which the parliamentary state is legitimated, sustained and transformed. Thus, for example, children serve a practical apprenticeship in collective decision-making within the educational sphere. This observation is an example of experimental method in the social sciences of the kind that Norbert Elias suggested was possible on groups observed *in vivo* (Michel Ferri re and Alain Garri ou, 'How democracy comes to children'). Ethical initiatives by the state in connection with the introduction of new technologies show the way in which the task of civilization

is pursued. (Dominique Memmi, 'The moral climate: a secular initiative in politics and the intellect'). Furthermore, states face challenges when their monopoly of violence is threatened by a resurgence of violence in stigmatised parts of society (Philippe Juhem, *Civilizing the Suburbs: the state's means of controlling violence in deprived areas*). In contrast with popular or academic ideologies which make the free-market economy a condition for democracy, a scientific approach to the links between different parts of society can take the form of a realistic and empirical exploration of homologues between spheres of society and affinities in psychic habitus (Louis Pinto, 'Markets and Civilization: the citizenship of the seller').

The colloquium ended with Johan Goulsblom's response to certain criticisms of Norbert Elias's theory of civilizing processes, particularly those Jack Goody had expressed from the point of view of a comparative anthropologist. We hope that this will be only the beginning of a regular series of meetings, which a broader discussion of our history makes essential. For that purpose, there is hardly a better starting point than the work of Norbert Elias.

*Alain Garrigou and Bernard Lacroix*  
Université de Paris X – Nanterre

#### BEYOND ELIAS? COURT SOCIETY: THE CENTRE AS SYMBOL AND LOCUS OF POWER

WORKSHOP IN LOS ANGELES, 2–3 MAY 1997  
(ORGANISED BY THE UCLA CENTRE FOR SEVENTEENTH- AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STUDIES, AND THE WILLIAM ANDREWS CLARK MEMORIAL LIBRARY)

Clark Visiting Professor Hans Medick and Centre Director Peter Reill succeeded in organizing a workshop that reflected the major themes of Elias's historical works, continuing Elias's exploration but also questioning many of its tenets. The program showed an interest in both the concrete sphere of social, political and cultural life at the early modern court and the theme of long-term changes in behaviour and sensibilities. The well-balanced proportioning of themes and opinions ensured that animated discussion among participants and with the audience followed the lectures – and interspersed the meals and diversions. The proceedings of the conference will probably be published by the Centre.

The opening lectures examined Elias's presentation of the role of nobles at the court of Louis XIV, focusing on the interpretation of 'political' power of the *noblesse d'épée*. Albert Cremer (Göttingen) convincingly argued that such nobles in many respects indeed remained locked in their sphere, formally separated from the administrative apparatus. I maintained that nevertheless they were still right to look upon

themselves as the governing caste. The power of king and nobles was primarily defined as attached to their birth and to their representative role. Indeed, the role of style and appearance among the noble elite should not be seen as a 'compensation' for loss of power, but as one of the pillars of that power. Only an anachronistic definition of 'political power' can turn the ruling elite into the 'ceremonial' servant of an administrative apparatus. Moreover, the most successful administrators sought assimilation into the *noblesse d'épée*. Finally, in daily life the formal barrier between the king's household and the king's government proved anything but impermeable.

Contacts between robe and sword appeared again in the lecture by Malina Stefanovska (UCLA) about Saint-Simon's social bonds at court, both with other *noblesse d'épée*, and with members of the *noblesse de robe*. The discussion following the lectures pointed out that while Elias provided us with a very subtle relational model of power, he nevertheless left us an anachronistic and incomplete image of power relations at court.

Jean-Marie Apostolides (Stanford) and Rudolf zur Lippe (Oldenburg) were brave enough to leave the established trails of empirical-historical debate, and to engage in more speculative thoughts about court culture and its effects. Apostolides posed three 'roles', the feudal, the courtier and the servant, reflecting parts both of Freud's *Ich/Es/Über-Ich* model and Elias's civilizing process. Zur Lippe discussed the court in the context of what he calls 'secular monotheism'.

Three lectures focused on the relationship between art and power, though from different perspectives. Timothy Standing (Denver) minutely dissected the nature of the relationship between the 'court artist' and his princely patron. He showed that the familiar label 'court artist' can be a textbook construction, covering a quite distant and barely remunerative relationship. Cornelia Joechner (Hamburg) analysed the baroque garden as symbol and projection of the ruler's power; the enclosed hortus slowly opened, and finally absorbed the surrounding territory in its grandiose architecture. Louis Marchesano (Los Angeles) described the bewildering dynamics of art patronage among the cardinals' courts in Rome. Interestingly, in the quickly moving landscape of cardinals and popes, collections of the remnants of eternal Rome were particularly effective as sign of pre-eminence.

The relationship between cultural change and social-political change, or between the representation of power relations, and these relations themselves, however, leaves us with some important questions. Can an 'absolutist' or authoritarian princely style be seen as connected to the concrete realities of power? Is it evidence of power, or does it only show an ambition for power? Is art or ceremony an instrument of power? Are shifts in style also shifts in power relationships, or are they part of a broader cultural phenomenon? The fact that gardens or palaces (but also behaviour, or philosophy) in highly un-absolutist territories (e.g. the Dutch Republic) generally show

a similar tendency suggests that we should think about these matters more carefully.

Craig Koslofsky (Urbana-Champaign) treated changes in the rhythm of day and night. The illumination of court spectacle artificially prolonged the day into the night, and demonstrated the prince's ability to overrule even nature. Koslofsky demonstrated that the 'leap into the night' first occurred at court, and only later in cities through street lighting. Geoffrey Symcox (UCLA) gave a vivid description of changes in the court pageantry of Turin. Moreover, he underlined the fact that Turin included more than one court: senior members of the ruling family had their own courts. Rivalries 'at court' were often rivalries between these different courts. In Turin, these rivalries were often determined by international political allegiances. These two factors, the multi-court environment and the role of international allegiances, certainly occurred elsewhere too, but may have been particularly strong in Turin.

Marzio Romani and Guido Guerzoni presented their impressive reconstruction of the social and economic importance of the Gonzaga, D'Este and Farnese courts. With their research, they not only opened a new but more informed discussion in the style of Simmel and Sombart; they can also answer many of our most pressing questions about the court from the riches of their prosopographical material. They show that their method can be extremely effective - where archives permit such an ambitious venture we should certainly try to compile similar prosopographical data.

The two-day workshop in Los Angeles was very stimulating, and this report offers a meagre impression. Hans Medick not only put together an interesting programme but also provoked lively debate through his questions, always praising the lecturer's contribution but simultaneously pointing out the weak spots. The workshop made clear that Elias's model of court society is in many respects transcended by new research. His work, however, was important in revitalizing court history in the last decades. And, to be sure, it still stands as a classic study.

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#### AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION TORONTO, 12 AUGUST 1997

Special Session 370, entitled 'Norbert Elias, 1897-1990 - Centenary Session' was only one of 487 two-hour sessions scheduled by the ASA at its 1997 Annual Meetings. Nevertheless, in view of how relatively little-known Elias's work has hitherto been to American sociologists, it was remarkable enough that the session took place and drew a goodly audience of around fifty people.

The chair was taken by Jorge Ardití (SUNY Buffalo), who had convened the session jointly with Stephen Mennell. Johan Goudsblom (Amsterdam) opened with a paper on 'Norbert Elias and American Sociology'; he asked what Elias had known of American sociology ('not much'), whether Elias could have benefited from knowing more ('perhaps' - especially in view of some convergences with the views of Herbert Blumer and other symbolic interactionists) and whether American sociology could have benefited from knowing more of Elias ('yes'). As a late addition to the programme (as a result of Robert van Krieken being unable to attend), Stephen Mennell (Dublin) spoke about 'The American Civilizing Process', briefly sketching how Elias's theories might apply to the course of American history.

Bruce Wearme (Monash University) argued that both Parsons and Elias represent very different transformations of the 'problem-historical method' associated with Elias's teacher Richard Höhnigswald. Nico Wilterdink (Amsterdam) applied Elias's theories to the long-term development of inequality. Thomas Salumets (University of British Columbia), in his paper on 'Imagined Interdependencies: Literature and Process Sociology', dwelt especially on Elias as poet. Finally Dennis Smith (Aston University) drew a fascinating comparison between the work of Elias and Hannah Arendt.

Perhaps Elias's time has at last come in American sociology. It would be risky to draw too general an inference from the large portrait of him on the stall of the University of Chicago Press, who will shortly publish a selection of his writings in the *Heritage of Sociology* series. But there were also many papers in other sessions that raised questions that were of concern to Elias, including a number in the sociology of emotions, and several contributions by the ubiquitous Randall Collins. Perhaps most poignant was a special session, drawing an enthusiastic audience, at which Bob Scott (Palo Alto) spoke about the 'Sociology of Gothic Cathedrals'; students of Elias's life will know that his first paper, at Marianne Weber's salon, was on a similar subject.

#### TWENTIETH-CENTURY EUROPE: INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: GENDER, ETHNICITY, CLASS AND AGE THE ESA CONFERENCE 27-30 AUGUST 1997, UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX

After Vienna (1992) and Budapest (1995), the third ESA conference took place this summer in Colchester. Attended by over 700 delegates (the large majority coming from outside the UK), the conference aimed to consider 'whether the concepts of 'social exclusion' help to analyse new and old inequalities and the interconnections between work, welfare and citizenship or whether re-visiting classical theory is a more creative route', and was structured through a series of plenaries and semi-plenaries, streams and research networks, round table and 'meet the author' sessions. These provided ample opportunities to sample, or concentrate on, a wealth of

national and cross-national studies in such areas as work, welfare and citizenship; European processes, boundaries and institutions; cultures and identities; globalizations and inequalities. The Presidential address was delivered by Sylvia Walby, while plenary speakers included Yasemin Soysal and Alberto Melucci, and Maria Mies and Daniel Bertaux. Early publicity suggested that both Wallerstein and Giddens would also give plenary lectures, but they appear to have been replaced at the last minute by the films 'Secrets and Lies' and 'Romeo and Juliet' on the one hand, and by a disco on the other. I shall never be able to read about the 'chronic reflexivity' of 'high modern' life in quite the same way again.

My own experience of the conference was confined to two full days and is inevitably selective. There seemed enough here to interest just about anyone – from papers on 'grand theory' to detailed ethnographic studies – but there was something of a traditional social policy feel to many of the sessions which perhaps illustrates the increasing influence of research funding bodies. These were supplemented, however, by competing theoretical attempts to 'map' the 'new Europe' and 'new European institutions' through globalization narratives; theories of risk; cultural studies views of European 'discourses', 'masks', 'semiotics' and 'resistances'; and a variety of feminisms. There was genuine dialogue, but there were also plenty of sects in evidence: sects based around national sociological traditions, political positions, and identity politics. These may have been developing in terms of their own agendas, but did little to suggest that the current fragmentation of the discipline is about to be reversed, and provide evidence for Donald Levine's (in his *Visions of the Sociological Tradition*, Chicago, 1995) concerns about the unproductive 'closures' surrounding so many recent developments in the discipline.

Moving away from sects was the advertised stream on 'Cultural identities and homogenization' organised by Kitty Verrips and Peter Vihalemm. This provided a good illustration of the scope of the conference and included papers which suggested a productive union between empirical research and analytical frameworks sensitive to historical change and cultural variation.

The 'meet the author' sessions I attended were refreshingly informative and provided an opportunity for detailed discussions. Margaret Archer's *Realist Social Theory: the Morphogenetic Approach* is not an easy read, but she outlined with great clarity her realist approach toward social science while the discussant, Rob Stones, did an excellent job in stimulating debate. Why is it, though, that the morphogenetic approach and structuration theory continue to be portrayed as opposites, when both contain highly cognitive approaches to human agency which marginalize the role of 'habits', etiquette and human sensory organization in the constitution of society? Ken Plummer and Jeff Weeks shared a session on their recent books on sexual stories and invented moralities, which was especially interesting in terms of the development of their respective research.

The theoretically focused papers I attended suggest that the

body continues to grow in academic popularity, rearing its head (or at least its emotions and passions) in the most surprising of contexts. Like much recent work on gender and identity, though, I was left wanting to hear more about the precise status and workings of embodiment. One of the things that first attracted me to Elias's writings was their rarity in actually interrogating the significance of embodied interrelationships in relation to such factors as communication and thought, 'established-outsider' relations, monopolies of violence, and changing patterns of affect control, and I remain convinced that such material considerations are crucial if we are to advance beyond social constructionist sociologies that continue to treat the physical character of human beings and relationships as something of a 'ghost in the machine'.

Questions about the 'new Europe' dominated the conference, however, and papers on migration and immigration, nationalism, the fall of socialism, citizenship, welfare states, and ethnic minorities and majorities, give a taste of the rich diversity of research in progress that was reported on in this ESA conference. I understand that its next stop is in Amsterdam.

*Chris Shilling*  
University of Portsmouth.

## ■ FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

**MANNERS, EMOTIONS AND SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY**  
Norbert Elias Centenary Conference, Belfast, 27  
November 1997

This one-day conference will be held in Stranmillis College, Queen's University of Belfast. The conference is primarily for undergraduate students studying social theory modules in Northern Ireland's two universities, though others are welcome. The event will be sponsored by the Norbert Elias Foundation, the Department of Sociology and Social Policy, Queen's University of Belfast, and the Department of Sociology, University of Ulster.

### Programme:

**10.00–10.30** Opening Address by Kenneth Bishop,  
*Queen's University of Belfast*

**Chair: Fred Johnson, University of Ulster**

**10.30–11.15** Prof. dr. Stephen Mennell, *University College Dublin*: 'Civilizing and Decivilizing Processes'

**11.15–11.45** Coffee

**11.45–12.30** Dr Paul Kapteyn, *University of*



*Amsterdam: 'The Stateless Market; European Integration in Figurational Perspective'*

**12.30–14.00** Lunch

**Chair: Prof. John Brewer, Queens University of Belfast**

**14.00–14.45** Dr Cas Wouters, *Universiteit Utrecht: "Third Nature" and Informalizing Processes'*

**14.45–15.30** Prof.dr.Johan Goudsblom, *University of Amsterdam: 'The Theory of Civilizing Processes: The Rise and Formation of Ecological Regimes'*

Further details from: Kenneth Bishop, Department of Sociology and Social Policy, Queen's University of Belfast, 24 College Green, Belfast BT7 INN, Northern Ireland. E-mail: K.Bishop@qub.ac.uk Tel: +44-1-232-245133 ext. 3715

**ORGANIZED VIOLENCE: THE FORMATION AND BREAKDOWN OF MONOPOLIES OF FORCE – CONDITIONS AND CONSEQUENCES  
NORBERT ELIAS CENTENARY CONFERENCE  
18-20 December 1997 AMSTERDAM**

All subscribers to *Figurations* should by now have received the programme and registration form by post. If you are not a subscriber to the newsletter, nor the writer of an accepted paper nor a plenary speaker, please send a message including your POSTAL address to Kitty Verrips, SISWO, Plantage Muidergracht 4, 1018 TV Amsterdam, Netherlands (e-mail: verrips@siswo.uva.nl).

At the address <http://www.siswo.uva.nl/agenda/elias.html> you can browse through the provisional programme (with an English language version, including the titles of the papers in the evening sessions).

**THE CIVILIZING PROCESS AND EARLY-MODERN HISTORY  
14-16 April 1998, University of Leicester, England**

The Centre for Early-Modern Studies at the University of Leicester is pleased to announce its first annual conference. It was felt appropriate to base the conference on a theme particularly associated with the study of history and its related disciplines at Leicester, and with this in mind, we have decided to launch the series with the theme *The Civilizing Process and Early-Modern History*.

The idea of *The Civilizing Process* is indelibly associated with the name of Norbert Elias, who was a member of the Leicester Sociology Department from the 1950s to 1970s. The conference will offer an opportunity not only to reflect critically on *The Civilizing Process*' as a theoretical proposal, but also to explore the extensive range of issues covered in Elias's book, many of which remain essential themes in the study of early modern history today. Sociological perspectives will be encouraged as well as more conventional historiographical approaches.

Six themes have been selected for the programme, which will be addressed in separate sessions: (1) punishment (2) personal appearance and grooming (3) violence, mentalities, and self-control (4) domestic relations (5) art and culture (6) the state and the court (7) civility. As well as the themed sessions, the conference will also feature a number of plenary addresses. Speakers who have agreed to contribute include (inter alia) Peter Burke (Cambridge), Richard Evans (Cambridge), Mark Jenner (York), Colin Jones (Warwick), Stephen Menell (Dublin), Robert Muchembled (Paris), Alessandro Pastore (Verona), Margaret Pelling (Oxford), James Sharpe (York) and Peter Spierenburg (Rotterdam). Negotiations have already opened with a British publisher with a plan to publish a collection of essays on Elias's legacy once the conference has been completed.

The conference will be held on a site in the University of Leicester Botanical Gardens, a first-class venue in a very attractive setting. Residential accommodation (en suite), dining facilities, and lecture and seminar rooms are all located within easy walking distance of each other.

This conference should provide a very stimulating event for everyone engaged with the early-modern period, and in particular for those interested in the application of theories from other disciplines to the study of the past.

For further details about the Centre and the Elias Conference, please contact Nicholas Davidson, Department of History, University of Leicester, Leicester, LE1 7RH, England (e-mail: dav@le.ac.uk).  
tel: 0116-252-2802  
fax: 0116-252-3986

**NORBERT ELIAS AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES: TOWARDS THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY  
June 24-26 1998 Bucaramanga, Colombia**

The aim of this conference is to demonstrate on the one hand the importance of Elias's work for understanding the common future of humanity as a whole, and on the other their relevance for understanding Colombia – and Latin America more widely – at the present day. Violence will be a pre-eminent theme. The intention is to attract a broad interdisciplinary audience.

To these ends, the conference will have three elements:

1. Plenary lectures: the preliminary list includes Johan Goudsblom (The present stage of the figurational research programme: critique and counter-critique); Hermann Korte or Lutz Mättig (Civilizing processes and globalization); Stephen Mennell (Civilizing processes in and beyond Europe compared); Fred Spier (Theory of regime-formation); Pieter Spierenburg (Problems of violence: historical processes and contemporary developments); Peter Gleichmann (Can people stop killing each other?); Willem Mastenbroek (Negotiation as a civilizing process); José Esteban Castro (Monopoly formation: the control of water in Mexico).
2. Short papers: presentations on non-European topics are particularly welcome, and special attention will be paid to 'social experience and social learning in relation to globalization in Third World countries'.
3. Free registration for Latin American participants who wish not to present papers but simply to listen and perhaps participate in discussion from the floor of the conference.

For further details, contact:

Dr Vera Weiler, Departamento de Historia, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá.  
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#### INTERNATIONAL SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

ISA xiv World Congress of Sociology Montreal,  
26 July - 1 August 1998

#### Ad Hoc Sessions on Figurational Sociology

Organizing Committee:

Paul Nixon (University of Cambridge) – Telephone  
+44-1223-773966 E-mail: pn203@cam.ac.uk  
Robert van Krieken (University of Sydney) –  
E-mail: robertvk@extro.ucc.su.oz.au  
Barbara Walters (City University of New York)

Papers on the following themes are invited for the Ad Hoc Sessions on Figurational Sociology:

- a) Sociology of Knowledge, e.g., expansion of Kantian, Weberian, Mannheimian and Eliasian perspectives, together with those of American pragmatic philosophers such as Pierce and James;
- b) Figurational Analyses of Figurational Sociology;
- c) Figurational attention paid to emotions, shame, multipersonal self-steering, control and decontrol, spectrums of violence and varieties of attitudes;
- d) Figurational analyses of the psychotherapeutic movement and its implications for sociology/anthropology;
- e) Transnational interdependence and the spread of Human Rights concepts.

*NOTA BENE: This list is not exclusive. Other suggestions are welcome.*

## ■ CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIGURATIONS

The next issue of *Figurations* will be mailed in May 1998. News and notes should be sent to the Editors by 1 April, 1998.

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Contributions should preferably be e-mailed to the Editor, or sent on a disk (formatted for PC-DOS, not Apple Macintosh); WordPerfect (up to 5.1), Microsoft Word and ASCII can all be handled. Do not use embedded footnotes. Hard copy is accepted reluctantly.

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