

Figurations

Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation

■ SCOOP! – ELIAS IN WORLD TOP TEN

All individual members of the International Sociological Association worldwide were asked last year to name the sociological books published in the twentieth century that had most influenced them. Figurations has obtained a preview of the results, which are as follows:

1. Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*
2. C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*
3. Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*
4. Max Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*
5. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*
6. Pierre Bourdieu, *La Distinction: critique sociale du jugement*
7. Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation*
8. Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*
9. Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action*
10. Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*

A special session to discuss this 'Top Ten' will be held at the World Congress of Sociology in Montreal, 26 July - 1

August 1998, with as many as possible of the living authors and 'spokespersons' for the rest.

■ ON THE SOCIOLOGY OF GERMAN ANTI-SEMITISM: NORBERT ELIAS EMBARKS ON THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

As reported in Figurations 8, an early article by Norbert Elias has recently come to light. It is entitled 'Zur Soziologie des deutschen Antisemitismus', and it appeared in the 13 December 1929 (11 Kislev 5690) issue of the *Israelitisches Gemeindeblatt: Offizielles Organ der israelitischen Gemeinden Mannheim und Ludwigshafen*, No.12, pp. 3-6.

The very title of the 1929 article showed the way Elias would go. He did not want to provide yet another essay locating anti-Semitism in political-ideological terms, but rather a sociological explanation of the origin and popularisation of anti-Semitic attitudes running through the whole history of the German population. Thus Elias turned anti-Semitism into a socially relevant problem which not only touched upon the interests of a social minority – the German Jews – but was interwoven with the genesis of present state of bourgeois society.

Under the influence of Karl Mannheim, especially his 1927 essay on 'Conservative Thought' (in *Essays in Sociology and Social Psychology*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953, pp. 74-164), Elias analysed the origins of anti-Semitism in the 'changing fronts on which the German bourgeoisie has had to fight over the last 100 years', the causes of which he located predominantly in the 'diminishing economic scope' resulting from war.

In the initial phase of capitalism, the liberal sections of the German bourgeoisie spoke up for emancipation, because in the Jews they saw 'welcome allies in building the German economy' and in the struggle against the 'traditional restrictions on freedom under the established order'. But, says Elias, 'the support for Jewish emancipation by all liberal elements at that time was not the expression of any special liking for the Jews among the Christian bourgeoisie, but rather a necessary consequence of the specific location and objectives of this liberal bourgeoisie. ... Today [at the end of the 1920s], this struggle has been finally played out. The nobility no longer has any special political privileges.'

The bourgeoisie now had to turn towards a front no longer on the right 'but on the left, against the rising proletarian stratum'. So now the bourgeoisie was defending the established order against the new stratum. It had itself become a

'preserving' stratum. The opposition between conservatism and liberalism had thus been largely dissolved.

And what about the Jews? Elias saw their position as characterised by two lines of conflict. Economically belonging largely to the bourgeois strata, socially they now constituted a second-rank society within the bourgeoisie, and fell between the lines of the working class and the increasingly conservative bourgeoisie. Against the background of the economically tense situation in post-war Germany, this constellation was the 'source of many conflicts'.

The function of competition had changed. It was no longer just the motor of progress, but now also gave rise to conflicts within the declining bourgeois camp. With examples from various economic fields, Elias illustrated how the social and cultural isolation of the Jewish population had become instrumental for the German bourgeoisie in their construction of Jewish people as different, as guilty, as enemies. Jews appeared in the German public sphere only as stereotyped clichés – Elias speaks of social masks – as peddlers, money-lenders, and crafty, cunning Jews. The German bourgeoisie 'drove them [the Jews] into social segregation, sometimes by brutal and sometimes by cultivated means, with this or that ideological justification'. They pursued this battle as a struggle closely based on social and ideological interests, just as they pursued the struggle against the rising proletarian stratum.

What prospects does this diagnosis open up? None! For the author, anti-Semitism is the 'function of economic and social development which no group of German Jews can change or even influence in any way'. For anyone who wants neither to fight nor to go to Palestine, 'there remains resignation'. Elias's answer is further adaptation to the social stratum which he has just exposed as the bearer of anti-Semitism: 'One answer to anti-Semitism is always still possible for the German Jews: to

■ EDITORS' NOTES

More evidence of Norbert Elias's reception into the mainstream canon of sociology: a half-page 'profile' of Elias appears in a new introductory textbook to the discipline by John J. Macionis and Ken Plummer, *Sociology: A Global Introduction* (London, Prentice-Hall 1997) at page 560.

Joe Maguire has been promoted to a Personal Chair at the University of Loughborough. Joe is the current President of the International Sociology of Sport Association, and is writing on sport in the globalisation process and sport and national identities from a figurational point of view.

Breda McCabe and Marjorie Fitzpatrick, of the Economic and Social Research Institute and University College Dublin respectively, have carried out a search of *Sociofile* (the CD-ROM version of *Sociological Abstracts* from 1974 to 1997) for all articles concerning the work of Norbert Elias. It revealed an astonishing total of 465 items. If possible, this list – which includes abstracts – will be made available on the Internet.

The publication of Robert van Krieken's book *Norbert Elias*, in Routledge's Key Sociologists series, is imminent (an advance copy has just reached us). It can be ordered on the Web either from Routledge at: https://www.thomson.com/pub/routledge/order_blank.html or from Blackwells at: <http://bookshop.blackwell.co.uk/> A review will appear in *Figurations* 10.

Maria Goudsblom has suggested a radical solution to the problems posed by using the term 'civilising process'. We all know that, despite our best endeavours, cross-talk between the 'emic' and 'etic', between the 'everyday speech' and the 'technical' senses of 'civilisation' and 'civilising process', continues to create great confusion and controversy about Elias's theories. Discussions are often set back to square one when this problem rears its head. Maria's suggestion is that, just as economists talk of Kondratieff cycles or statisticians of Markovian or Poisson processes, sociologists should begin to speak just of 'Elias processes' to denote the linked changes in behaviour, power and habitus that Elias explored. Although Joop Goudsblom, who first pointed to the importance of the distinction between behaviour, power and habitus in Elias's work, feels less enthusiastic about the suggestion, we think it deserves consideration.

adopt an unobtrusive, resolute and self-conscious attitude to life, which is the only one appropriate to their situation.' This already heralds the outsider position to which Elias's later work gave a theoretically-grounded hallmark, and of which politics were to give terrible and fatal proof.

Klaudia Meyer
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■ EMMANUEL LE ROY LADURIE, DANIEL GORDON, AND 'THE SECOND DEATH OF NORBERT ELIAS'

On 30 January 1997 there appeared in *Le Figaro* an article by the famous French historian Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie under the slightly distasteful headline 'La deuxième mort de Norbert

Elias'. Ladurie argued that Elias's thesis about court society had been definitively refuted by the American historian Daniel Gordon in his book *Citizens without Sovereignty: Equality and Sociability in French Thought, 1670-1789* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994). Ladurie's arguments are repeated in an appendix 'Sur Norbert Elias' in his book *Saint-Simon* (Paris: Fayard, 1997). His venom, however, appeared to be directed at least as much at Pierre Bourdieu and myself, who have championed Elias's work in France.

Gordon's is one of two major studies to take issue with Elias's description of court society and definition of civility. Jeroen Duindam, in *Myths of Power: Norbert Elias and the Early Modern European Court* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995), carefully examines Elias's book in the light of empirical details revealed by later historical research; in a certain sense, this involves a degree of anachronism – obviously historical knowledge has moved on since Elias was writing in the early 1930s – but Duindam takes *The Court Society* seriously as a landmark study in the field (see *Figurations* 8 for his account of a conference on this very subject held in Los Angeles in May 1997). Daniel Gordon contends that Elias makes three main mistakes that weaken his work:

(1) 'He greatly exaggerated the power of the court as a model of refined behaviour' (p. 88); Gordon traces it back instead to a genteel sociability among an elite of mixed social background in the salons and academies, which was characterised by a freedom of speech and manner and constituted 'a space of its own outside the hierarchy of estates'.

(2) In the opposition between *Kultur* and *Civilisation* which opens the first volume of *The Civilising Process*, Elias 'imbibed some of the more nationalistic modes of self-representation that were current within the German intellectual world' (p. 91) – in other words, Gordon suggests that Elias projected backwards

some of the nationalistic tendencies of German thought in the Weimar period.

(3) Elias and his followers (among them Pierre Bourdieu and myself, explicitly criticised by Gordon) 'have treated civility as a set of forms designed to make all encounters hierarchical'. This interpretation is described by Gordon as 'Elias's monolithic interpretation of courtesy as a form of hierarchy'.

I have to say that I strongly disagree with both Duindam's and Gordon's critical interpretation of Elias's work, and to spell out why.

I shall leave aside Gordon's second accusation, which is very poorly sustained and which transformed an objective sociological analysis of the uses of the two concepts of *Kultur* and *civilisation* in early modern Germany and France into an ideological and nationalistic preference. To avoid such confusion, it is enough to quote Elias himself: 'The concept of *civilisation* is first, like *Kultur*, an instrument of middle-class circles – above all the middle-class intelligentsia – in the *internal* social conflict', long before these notions came to express opposing national we-images. We also know from *Reflections on a Life* that Elias was opposed to German nationalism from his teenage years, and that all through his life Elias was engaged in a vigorous polemic against the German mandarin and intellectual tradition.

Gordon's first and third criticisms seem much more serious.

Did Elias exaggerate the power of the court in *The Civilising Process*? I do not think so. But in order to understand why not, we have to come back to *The Court Society*. What is at stake there is not at all a 'monolithic interpretation of courtesy' but an understanding of the psychological conditions that made possible *any* form of courtesy, whether hierarchical or not, inside the courtly social circles themselves or outside the court. From this stems the plurality of meanings assigned by Elias – and his

followers – to the category of 'civility':

First, civility has to be understood as the codified norms which guarantee the conformity of behaviour or speeches with the social distance existing between the individuals involved in the interrelation. This strictly hierarchised civility is the civility of the treatises, for example Antoine de Courtin's *Nouveau traité de la civilité qui se pratique en France parmi les honnêtes gens* (1671). It governed not only courtly etiquette but also the requirements of the *bienséance* or the epistolary rules as defined by Puget de la Serre's *secrétaires*.

But civility – with or without the word – has also to be understood in another way: as the art of prudence necessary for avoiding the traps and dangers of courtly life. It is for this reason that Elias stressed the particular importance of the French translation – which was a 'courtisation' – of Gracián's *Oraculo manual y arte de prudencia* (originally 1647). Forty years later, the translation was published as *L'Homme du cour* in spite of the fact that the Spanish Jesuit made no reference to the court, nor did he address the work to courtiers. For Elias, this text was 'the first handbook of courtly psychology' because – as he wrote in a note to *The Civilising Process* – 'we find in Gracián, and after him in La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère, in the form of general maxims, all the modes of behaviour which we encounter for example in Saint-Simon, in the practice of court life itself. Again and again we find injunctions of the necessity to hold back the affects'. From this perspective, civility acquired a new meaning. The behaviour of individuals is thought of as neither an expression of their intentions, thoughts or feelings, nor of a formalised code of politeness, but as something that has to be calculated in order to manipulate the other, to oblige him or her to feel and act as one desires that he feels or acts. In the court society behaviour, conduct and speech are like theatrical machines which have to produce visible effects without being disclosed. As Gracián wrote, 'Hide

your purpose. The passions are windows to the soul', or 'Be first master of yourself, and you will thereafter be the master of others'.

'Be first master of yourself': civility can be defined as civilisation because it is the process by which the control of impulses was transformed from an external prohibition into stable, regulated and differentiated mechanisms of self-restraint capable of ensuring the tempering of affects and the muting of drives.

That is why, in my opinion, the free and egalitarian conviviality of elite sociability can be separated neither from the conditions that make it possible – that is, the courtly psychology that allows the aristocratic freedom, urbanity and *douceur* – nor from the rules that governed the inegalitarian world in which the relatively egalitarian *bonnes compagnies* had their existence. The *salons* indeed may be an early instance of what Elias was later to call 'a highly controlled decontrolling of emotional controls'.

Finally, Gordon – and in consequence Ladorie – are surely wrong to suggest that the persistence of civility after the collapse of the *ancien régime* and with it court society in the narrow sense in any way undermines Elias's thesis. The formation of courts and the rise of royal absolutism played a crucial part historically in the taming of warriors, but the effects do not disappear with absolutism. Moreover, Elias never argued that court society was the sole means nor the pinnacle of the civilising of affects. On the contrary, he pointed out that the 'social constraint towards self-constraint' exerted upon merchants by the market was still higher – something which Mandeville and especially Adam Smith in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* pointed out even in the eighteenth century.

Roger Chartier

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[See also Roger Chartier's essay 'From Court Festivity to City Spectators', in his book *Forms and Meanings*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995, and the essays on Elias's work in Chartier, *On the Edge of the Cliff: History, Language, and Practices*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. – Eds.]

■ JOHAN GOUDSBLOM EMERITUS



In October 1997, Johan (Joop) Goudsblom, the unofficial doyen of the figuration of figurational sociologists, attained the age of retirement and resigned as professor of sociology at the University of Amsterdam, a position he had held for 29 years. The farewell celebration took place on 10 October in the University Aula – the Old Lutheran Church – where several hundred people were present. Goudsblom gave here his valedictory lecture under the title 'Het belang van sociologie' ('The Importance of Sociology' – published in the last issue of *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift*, 24 (3 4) 1997). As a starting point, he defined sociology as the study of social processes. This broad definition reflects the Comtean ideal of sociology as the encompassing study of human social behaviour and society, but does not quite correspond to the social reality of a division of labour between several be-

havioural and social sciences. This division, Goudsblom remarked, is rooted in nineteenth-century distinctions: between the past and the present (history versus sociology), between individual and society (psychology versus sociology), between modern or civilised and traditional or primitive societies (sociology versus anthropology), and between different sectors or aspects of modern society. The formation of this constellation of social sciences is itself an example of a largely unplanned social process.

Goudsblom argued for the broad definition of sociology; in this sense, as the most general social science, it can provide the context for the findings of other, more specialised disciplines. He distinguished between two kinds of social processes, which he labelled with Comte's terms: social statics and social dynamics. Social statics refers to cyclical processes which account for the recurrence of similar situations; social dynamics to non-cyclical processes which account for the long-term socio-genesis of any given social situation. Both kinds of processes always occur at the same time, and are complementary; cyclical processes do not imply the repetition of exactly the same, and are part of a non-repetitive development. Recurring social processes have been studied by social psychologists (such as Stanley Milgram in his famous experiments), sociologists (for instance Warner and Lunt in their description of 'Yankee City'), and anthropologists (such as Ruth Benedict in *Patterns of Culture*). Whereas Ruth Benedict described the typical traits of different cultures, Elias demonstrated that cultural differences at a given time are the result of a long-term development, and can only be explained by relating them to social figurations consisting of interdependent human beings who change by learning.

After this eloquent plea for sociology and the processual approach, the celebration continued with a series of laudatory speeches. The chairman of the university board gave Goudsblom a

special medal of the University of Amsterdam. Abram de Swaan handed Joop and Maria Goudsblom the first two copies of a *liber amicorum* (Nico Wilterdink, Johan Heilbron, Abram de Swaan, eds, *Alles verandert: Opstellen voor en over J. Goudsblom* [Everything Changes: Essays for and about J. Goudsblom], Meulenhoff, Amsterdam, 390 pp.), a 'book of friends' in which thirty-five colleagues, students and others who know him well describe and discuss various aspects of his life and work. On top of this, Goudsblom received a royal distinction from the State Secretary of Culture in the Dutch Cabinet, who is also an old friend of his.

After the animated reception there was a dinner for a smaller circle of friends. Eric Dunning, Peter Gleichmann, and Stephen Mennell were among them. They all gave table speeches in which they referred to Joop Goudsblom's crucial role in making Norbert Elias's work and the Eliasian approach known to the world – through his own scholarly work, by organising a group of 'figurational sociologists' in the Netherlands and playing an active role in the evolving international network, and by creating the conditions in which Elias could be productive until the end of his life.

Goudsblom's retirement did not remain unnoticed for the Dutch public. After the celebration day he was interviewed many times for the radio and the press. The *liber amicorum* received favourable reviews. So it seems that Goudsblom finally gained the recognition – at least in the Netherlands – he has long deserved. But of course, this is not really the end of his career. As he put it in the last sentences of his lecture: 'One of the things I could learn myself through my long relation with Norbert Elias is: life does not necessarily stop at the age of sixty-five, and neither does one's sociological work. I have good hope to be able to continue with it for some time'.

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■ FAREWELL LECTURE BY GODFRIED VAN BENTHEM VAN DEN BERGH

On 28 January, Godfried van Benthem van den Bergh gave a farewell lecture to mark his retirement from his post as Associate Professor of International Relations at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague. He has also retired from his part-time chair at the Erasmus University, Rotterdam. From the late 1960s Van Benthem van den Bergh and Joop Goudsblom were the main driving forces behind the development of figurational and process sociology in the Netherlands. His interests include the position of intellectuals, political and military violence, the development of the state and international relations, the significance of nuclear weapons, and nationalism. He is a prolific writer, has published numerous articles in journals, newspapers and periodicals, and has written several books (in Dutch), among others *The Ideology of the West* (1969), *Intellectuals between Power and Science* (ed., 1973), *The State of Violence* (1980), and *The Taming of the Great Powers: Nuclear Weapons and Global Integration* (1988; in English 1990).

In his farewell address (*Development and the Riddle of the Nation*. The Hague: Institute of Social Studies, 1998, 16 pp.), Van Benthem van den Bergh analyses the 'riddle of the nation'. At the end of our century the globe is almost wholly covered by nation-states. In large parts of the world this is a quite recent development, mainly due to the desintegration of empires. Many of the ensuing nation-states seem stable and viable enough, but quite a few, especially in Africa, can be characterized as 'failed states' – a United Nations euphemism for violent desintegration, terror and civil war. Contrary to most nationalist opinion, dynastic states and empires have been the main precursors of nation-states, not tribes or clans. Most dynastic states

have developed into nation-states in a gradual way without an urgent need to change their boundaries or populations. In the case of nation-states developing out of former empires, however, there have often been deep and disturbing problems: fierce nationalist ideologies, an intense preoccupation with boundaries and ethnic-cultural identity and homogeneity, and therefore usually also with 'minorities'. The 'riddle of the nation', as Van Benthem van den Bergh sees it, has several aspects. Notwithstanding the large amount of research invested thus far, it is still rather unclear why some movements claiming nations have been successful and others not. Moreover, the question 'what is a nation?' has still not been satisfactorily answered. As a consequence it is virtually impossible to distinguish scientifically between 'nations' and 'non-nations'. Nevertheless, we are often compelled to assume the existence of nations. In search of a solution to the riddle Van Benthem van den Bergh takes his lead from Elias's insight that a 'nation' can best be seen as a development process, thus shifting the focus of research to processes of national integration between regions, social strata and hierarchical levels of authority. Analysed from this perspective, it turns out that 'failed states', for different historical reasons, have levels of national integration which are too low to withstand the centrifugal forces that eventually produce their desintegration. Van Benthem van den Bergh concludes that it would be worthwhile to contemplate new goals for development policies which should perhaps be aimed at strengthening weak states and fostering national integration rather than exclusively devoted to economic development. It is to be hoped that Van Benthem van den Bergh, although formally retired, will continue in his own vigorous and enthusiastic way to point out important problems and contribute to their solution, as he has done so often before.

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■ ELIAS AND THE STUDY OF HOMICIDE

Modern industrial nations are very much alike in their general social characteristics – longevity and morbidity rates, the approximate standard of living, the size of families, the divorce and literacy rates, and so on. Indeed, homicide is one of the very few rates that varies *enormously* between countries; from as low as 1 per 100,000 population per annum (as in England, Ireland and Japan, for example) to ten or twenty times that rate (as in the USA, or the Russian Federation).

Despite this unique significance of homicide, little work has been done on national rates. Readers of *Figurations* may be interested in my own recent attempt to use the ideas of Norbert Elias to explain the comparatively low homicide rates in England. In *Men of Blood: Murder in Modern England* (published in 1997 by Penguin Books in London, and by McClelland and Stewart in Toronto), I noted how the peculiarly low English rate had begun to form as early as the mid-thirteenth century, when the traditional blood feud had been criminalised, and the obligations of personal vengeance transferred to the expanding national legal system.

The precise means by which English culture rewrote the rules of disorder and restructured an individual's sensibility to violence are not well understood. In *Men of Blood*, I argue that one of the cultural mechanisms in this essentially Eliasian 'civilising process' was the proliferation of relatively non-violent culture heroes, or role models – from Robin Hood's mastery of disguise and stratagem as alternatives to violence, to the phlegmatic pipe-sucking heroes of the British Empire. These themes were echoed in the restrained early Bond films, contemporaneous with the US 'Rambo' films (in which violence-for-violence's-sake was the driving imperative).

Whatever the mechanisms may have been, it seems clear that the early mod-

ern English ruling elites protected their persons and their estates by the encouragement of what Elias called the advance of the shame frontier beyond personal aggression. This process extended down the social hierarchy and replaced the earlier pleasure in aggressivity with a new set of cultural notions, a new 'sensibility' that bracketed violence with fear, embarrassment, and revulsion. This new standard appears to have been reinforced by anxiety-arousing social taboos, internalised in socially nurtured 'feelings of displeasure, distaste, fear, or shame'. Thus the cultural apparatus which shapes the individual was harnessed to produce an array of fears, 'experienced as shame and delicacy', which increasingly invalidated physical aggression. In this fashion, the strengthening English state was able to increase its social controls over its citizens, attuning them 'from infancy, to a highly regulated and differentiated pattern of self-restraint'.

Thus England seems to have become one of the very first nations in the world to abandon the unending cycle of retaliation and counter-retaliation endemic to the primitive form of justice enforced by the blood feud (gone in England, according to most commentators, as early as the fifteenth century). It also appears to have had one of the very lowest personal assault rates, and to have established this pattern long before the nineteenth century. Despite recent increases, the homicide rate in England remains among the very lowest in the world.

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■ TWO ELIAS 'READERS' PUBLISHED

Johan Goudsblom and Stephen Menell have edited two separate selections of Norbert Elias's writings, one for Chicago University Press and the other for Blackwells. The two are quite different. *The Norbert Elias Reader: A*

Biographical Selection, from Blackwells, is aimed mainly but not exclusively at the European market and at an audience which already knows a little of Elias's main works. It contains a relatively large number of quite short pieces, including many that are somewhat unfamiliar and several which



have not been available before in English. They are organised more or less chronologically, and each is prefaced by a short introduction by the editors. *Norbert Elias: On Civilisation, Power and Knowledge*, from Chicago, is aimed mainly but not exclusively at the North American market and at an audience which is approaching Elias's work for the first time. It contains a relatively small number of quite long pieces, including some of the major gems of Elias's writing. They are arranged to provide an analytical introduction to his sociology, with a single long overall introduction by the editors. The Chicago volume appears in the celebrated *Heritage of Sociology* series, inclusion in which surely constitutes the nearest thing to canonisation available for a sociologist.

Details of the two books are as follows:

Norbert Elias: On Civilisation, Power and Knowledge, eds. Stephen Mennell and Johan Goudsblom. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. ix + 302 pp. ISBN: 0-226-20431-6 (cloth); 0-226-20432-4 (paper). Contents include some of the most famous passages from *The Civilising Process* as well as the 'Game Models', 'The Thinking Statues', 'Observations on Gossip', and discussions of the decay of the state monopoly of violence in the Weimar Republic, the changing balance of power between the sexes in ancient Rome, and the genesis of sport.

The Norbert Elias Reader: a biographical selection, eds Johan Goudsblom and Stephen Mennell. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998. xi + 295 pp. ISBN: 0-631-19308-1 (cloth); 0-631-19309-X (paper). Selections not previously available in English are: the opening pages of Elias's 1924 Breslau DrPhil thesis; the 1928 conference contribution on 'Primitive Art'; 'The Expulsion of the Huguenots from France' (1935); 'The Kitsch Style and the Age of Kitsch' (1935); 'On the Concept of Everyday Life' (1978); 'Renate Rubinstein' (1980); and 'The Civilising of Parents' (1980). The 1964 paper on 'Group Charisma and Group Disgrace', written in English for the Max Weber centenary conference, is published here for the first time; and Johan Goudsblom's 1970 interview with Elias, though originally published in English in a Dutch journal, has not previously been easily accessible.

Full contents of the two books can be found on the internet at:

<http://www.usyd.edu.au/su/social/Elias/readers.html>

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RECENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES

LIBER AMICORUM FOR GOUDSBLOM

Nico Wilterdink, Johan Heilbron, Abram de Swaan (eds.), *Alles verandert. Opstellen voor en over J. Goudsblom*. Amsterdam, Meulenhoff, 1997, 390 pp.

On the occasion of his retirement as professor of sociology at the University of Amsterdam in the fall of last year this beautifully produced book was presented to Johan Goudsblom as a *liber amicorum*. Its title, *Everything is in flux* (Essays for and about J. Goudsblom), can be read in three ways: as a statement of fact – everything changes – as a short-hand expression of a programme for sociology – study change and development – and lastly as a token of homage to a man who through a long and very fruitful career has time and again delivered original and outstanding contributions to sociology and greatly stimulated the development of social science in the Netherlands and elsewhere. As a student in the 1950s Goudsblom became known as a poet and a writer of essays and aphorisms and in the 1960s he published among other things a brilliant dissertation on nihilism and culture, and a concise sociological study of Dutch society. After a stay in America, at Princeton and Berkeley, he became professor of sociology in Amsterdam in 1968. Thereafter he further developed his great talents as teacher, researcher and writer; the bibliography of his work up till now runs to over thirty-five pages in this book. In the 1970s and 1980s

Goudsblom became known, nationally and internationally, as a steadfast champion of the work of Norbert Elias. Together with others he succeeded in bringing about the latter's international recognition as an important sociologist. In his own work Goudsblom has made extensive use of Elias's insights and theories but during the last decade or so he has moved on to the even larger perspective of world history and evolutionary theory as is shown in his recent *Fire and Civilisation*.

Alles verandert contains 35 contributions by friends, colleagues, students and former students. In the first section of the book personal memories and recollections of several friends of Goudsblom loom large, together with pieces about Goudsblom's style of writing, his teaching and his work as supervisor of doctoral dissertations. The short personal profile of Goudsblom by Abram de Swaan is a small masterpiece. It clearly shows the 'hard core' of Goudsblom: usually reserved, at a distance, sceptical, always ready to doubt and to relativise, but devoted to finding the truth and nothing but the truth, and once convinced of it, fully committed to defend it. In *De twijfelkunst* (The art of doubt) by Johan Heilbron in the second section of the book, devoted to the sociology of culture, this theme is taken up again. Heilbron argues convincingly that Goudsblom belongs to a tradition which can be called 'constructive scepticism': an alternative for the pseudo-security of dogmatists and the facile non-committed stance of relativists, modern and post-modern. The other three sections of the book are about aspects of Dutch society, the theory of civilisation and about world history. The book is completed by a short biographical sketch of Goudsblom by Nico Wilterdink, a bibliography of Goudsblom's work and a list of all the dissertations he has supervised. The book is a pleasure to read, it contains many valuable pieces apart from the few mentioned here, and as a whole it is a small monument for one of the greatest minds in sociology today. At the end of his farewell address Goudsblom

stated in his characteristic way that one of the things he learned from Elias was that life does not stop at 65 and that he has a 'good hope' of being able to continue working as a sociologist for 'some time' to come. Let us all indeed hope so, for him, for ourselves and for sociology.

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THE INVERTED 'RUE D'AMOUR': ON HANS PETER DUERR'S *DER EROTISCHE LEIB*

Der erotische Leib (The Erotic Body), Hans Peter Duerr's latest book [Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a.M. 1997] and the fourth instalment of his *Der Mythos vom Zivilisationsprozess* (The Myth of the Civilizing Process), deals with differences and similarities through time and place in the erotic appeal of breasts and in the standard of shame that surrounds them. It is an interesting topic and an amusing book, generously illustrated like the other volumes, even in the notes, with sexual and erotic pictures. As can be expected, there is a striking similarity between the 'breast pictures' on the one hand, and Duerr's writing on what could be called 'breast cultures', on the other hand: both the pictures of women in all kinds of situations and from all kinds of times and places and the text on all kinds of 'breast cultures' are characterised by their large variety.

Although the topic is titillating enough and Duerr has an entertaining style of writing, the description of 'breast cultures' is almost as flat as the pictures; that is, after a while they become rather boring, despite all variation, because Duerr's theoretical framework is quite thin. In his description of the appearance on the scene of see-through blouses and monokinis (with pictures), for example, he fails to raise the question of why this development – in the direction of greater shamelessness? – has occurred. Instead, he spends all his

energy in attempting to prove again and again that even naked breasts are surrounded by shame feelings and shame barriers. Yes, amen. Only in his concluding section did Duerr succeed in arousing some intellectual excitement in me. This tiny chapter finally reveals his theoretical affinities.

Here, Duerr turns out to be a sociobiologist closely affiliated to Desmond Morris. The chapter's title reads 'Why are breasts actually erotic?' and according to its last sentence, the answer for women is simply that touching them, the nipples in particular, can produce a hormone that affects her uterus and vagina, which can lead to an orgasm. Put in plain language, breasts are sexually exciting because touching them can sexually excite a woman. But what about men? Duerr begins this chapter by recalling Desmond Morris's theory that knockers can make men randy because they look like buttocks, and from an evolutionary perspective, buttocks form the classical arched gateway to the most female opening. In the course of evolution, the *rue d'amour* (street of/to love), as the French (not Duerr) call the cleavage between the breasts, would have increasingly become a replacement of the main sexual stimulant, the *rue d'amour* of the buttocks. For, according to this theory, the evolutionary phase in which women (or female primates) offered their buttocks as their main or only way of seducing men (or male primates) was succeeded by a phase in which they offered their front side, which supposedly led to the 'missionary position'. Women, the upper front part of whose body was a better 'imitation' of their bottom parts – as an inverted *rue d'amour* – would have had a selection advantage. Duerr somewhat hedges this view by stating that breasts are unlikely to have ever functioned as the 'main sexual stimulus ... because their continual visibility would probably have led to a socially dysfunctional overstimulation of the other sex' (p. 346). Therefore, he assumes, they were a 'milder' stimulus. But why? His answer, 'sociobiologically expressed,' reads, 'that men who felt attracted by

women with bigger and solid breasts and copulated with them, had better chances for reproduction as these women had larger fat reserves, which converted into calories – an advantage particularly during pregnancy and breast-feeding, when women essentially need more calories than at other times' (p. 347). Perhaps, continues Duerr, this also explains 'why very big breasts generally did not and do not appeal as particularly attractive: because a woman thus shaped signalled to men that she had already been made pregnant, or that the chances to fertilise her were small because at the time she was breast-feeding' (p. 348).

This is all that Duerr's theory amounts to. Implicitly it means that all 'breast cultures' are only variations upon these unchanged sociobiological points of departure, while neither the variations themselves nor changes in them need any further theoretical explanation. Only one loose theoretical remark indicates that social and psychic processes towards prudery are perceived as capable of explaining the American shift in sexual interest from buttocks to bosom. However interesting they might be, these processes themselves do not attract any of Duerr's attention. Yet I would be interested to find out how they would fit into the long-term process of eroticisation and sexualisation of Western images of breasts, as observed by Marilyn Yalom in her *A History of the Breast* (1997). According to her, the milk-producing function of breasts dominated the history of human kind until the late Middle Ages; from then on, images of breasts became increasingly erotic and sexual. Duerr does not devote a word to such trends. Quite the contrary: he tends to mock any attempt directed at further, more sociological, explanation.

Granting some biological basis for the attraction of female breasts for both men and women, the difference between their shape and presentation as a selection and reproduction advantage on the one hand, and their function in enhancing the chance of a female or-

gasm on the other hand, remains quite problematic. In what way do the functions of foreplay with breasts and of female orgasm relate to the functions of selection and reproduction? This loose connection in particular, I think, allows for a great many of the variations and changes, as women can be selected and made pregnant without any foreplay and without ever experiencing an orgasm. If Duerr had thought (and written) more strongly in terms of changing power and dependency relationships, he might have described this development as a success of women in their power struggle with men, particularly with respect to enlarging their chances of enjoyment in making love by prolonging foreplay. However, Duerr has made it perfectly clear that he does not want to take notice of them. Thus, he robs himself of the possibility of interpreting the development towards an inverted *rue d'amour* – from a primordial a tergo approach via the missionary position to a much larger variety of sexual intercourse and a prolongation of foreplay – in terms of changing interdependencies, including the emancipation of women.

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Jonathan Fletcher, *Violence and Civilisation: an Introduction to the Work of Norbert Elias*. Cambridge, Polity Press, 1997. ISBN: 0-7456-1434-5

'How can one talk of a *civilising process* when one considers events of the twentieth century such as the holocaust in Nazi Germany?' – such was my initial reaction when confronted with just the title of Elias's *magnum opus*. Of course, after the merest of introductions to his work, it became clear to me that Elias aimed to use the term 'civilisation' in a non-normative manner: to 'rescue' the term from its colonialist, ideological associations just as other sociologists have sought to 'rescue' terms such as 'culture', 'bureaucracy'

and 'class'. In other words, it quickly became clear to me that by 'civilisation' Elias did not mean to imply a 'progressive triumph of rationality'. Yet the question with which I started this review would seem to embody many of the most persistent critical objections to Elias's work. It is tempting to dismiss such objections as based upon simple misinterpretations of the concept of 'civilisation'. In response, one is tempted to point out that, since Elias was a German Jew himself, and since his mother was murdered by the Nazis, he was of course aware of the horrors of the twentieth century. However, if such criticisms are not based upon simple misunderstandings of Elias's work, do they raise questions over its empirical viability? It is Jonathan Fletcher's central aim to address this and other related questions in *Violence and Civilisation*. Indeed, Fletcher examines the extent to which Elias's work was actually 'inspired by a pressing need to develop a more detached understanding of social processes including the rise of Nazism and the "barbarization" of the twentieth century' (p. 3). He aims to explicate and develop the concepts of 'civilisation' 'decivilisation' and the role of 'violence' within these processes, partly through responding to Elias's critics.

Fletcher's book is divided into eight chapters (including his introduction): in chapters two to four he provides critical expositions of Elias's key ideas; in chapters five, six and seven, Fletcher looks in some detail at how well Elias's concepts connect to historical examples in Britain and Germany. Here, Fletcher also draws out a comparative dimension in Elias's work – one which has previously received little attention.

It is clear from the outset that *Violence and Civilisation* is a very skilfully written piece of work. Fletcher has the ability to summarise succinctly large amounts of material without sacrificing important detail. It is also clear that Fletcher has not written a 'blind defence' of Elias's work – his book is a welcome critical appraisal of Elias's contribution to sociological understanding.

In Chapter two, the reader is introduced to Elias's discussion of the sociogenesis of the antithesis between *Kultur* and *Zivilization* in Germany as part of a more general introduction to the concept of 'civilisation'. Fletcher then goes on to provide explication of other key concepts such as *habitus*, *sociogenesis* and *psychogenesis*. Chapter three focuses centrally on the concepts of violence, civilizing processes and decivilizing processes. Most importantly, Fletcher considers critiques such as Duerr's (1988) in which Elias is accused of ignoring evidence of self-restraint in 'simpler' societies in order to create the 'myth' of a civilizing process. Fletcher also considers the charges of evolutionism and teleology that have been made in relation to Elias's work. In Chapter four, Fletcher introduces Elias's concepts of power, figurations and established-outsider relations. It is in this chapter that Fletcher makes one of his most significant contributions by tentatively outlining a model of the conditions under which decivilizing processes are most likely to occur. In Chapter five, Fletcher examines the development of social habitus in England. In particular, he looks at the development of national identity and public opinion in relation to violence. Chapter six contains a discussion of the rise of nationalism and decivilizing processes in Germany. Within this chapter, Fletcher highlights comparative aspects of Elias's work in explaining differences in the social habituses of English and German people. In Chapter seven, Fletcher focuses on the breakdown of civilisation in Nazi Germany. He goes on to consider the changing character of violence in the twentieth century. Drawing upon the work of Zygmunt Bauman, Fletcher examines the 'specifically modern' aspects of social interdependencies which might, indeed, have helped to give rise to the holocaust. In Chapter 8 – the book's conclusion – Fletcher summarises and further clarifies his main critical developments.

Overall, in *Violence and Civilisation* Fletcher has provided both a very useful introduction to Elias's ideas, and a

significant contribution to the sociological study of violence. He has answered many of Elias's critics on the subject of violence in processes of civilisation, and has substantially developed the concept of decivilisation. While I welcome the critical 'cutting edge' to Fletcher's analysis of Elias's work, I felt that he was sometimes too quick to dismiss some of Elias's ideas. For example, on page 19 he discusses Van Krieken's (1989) suggestion that it is only situations that change, not personality structures as Elias proposes. Fletcher states that 'Elias effectively by-passes these issues by arguing that the distinction between "situational" and "personality-traits" is a spurious one. But it is simply very difficult to establish the extent to which "traits" of personality – for example, stability or aggressiveness – are the result of inter-generationally reproduced patterns, the law, the economy, or the product of training in early childhood' (1997: 19). Surely Elias's counter-critique should not be dismissed so readily? After all, a distinction between 'personalities' and 'situations' would seem to involve a variant of the structure–agency dilemma. Is there not a danger here of being drawn into debates which Elias helped us to move beyond?

Of course the bulk of Fletcher's analysis does not involve a return to philosophical dualisms, and is the kind of systematic theoretical-empirical assessment which, indeed, will help to take Elias's ideas further.

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Norbert Elias 'Towards a Theory of Social Processes', *British Journal of Sociology* 48 (3) 1997: 355 – 83.

This article was first published in German in 1977 and has now been translated into English by Eric Dunning and Robert van Krieken, who also contribute an introduction (pp. 353–4). Abstract: A theory of social processes

must diagnose and explain those long-term and unplanned, yet structured and directional trends in the development of social and personality structures that constitute the infrastructure of what is commonly called 'history'. The reception of such a theoretical approach is hampered by the self-image of contemporary sociology as a discipline primarily concerned with the present and devoted to research on short-term changes and casual relationships within given social systems. This self-image results from a problematic division of intellectual labour between history and sociology, but also from sociology's increasing involvement in social practice, that is bureaucratically controlled social planning. While contributing to such planning, sociologists ignore the long-term, unplanned developments which produce the conditions for the present-day practice of planning and in which all planned social development is entangled. Complementary processes of functional differentiation, social integration, and civilisation are strands of this complex long-term development. Its dynamics require further exploration.

SJM

Philip A. Mellor & Chris Shilling, *Re-forming the Body: Religion, Community and Modernity*. London: Sage, 1997. 234 pp. ISBN: 0-8039-7722-0 (hb); 0-8039-7723-9 (pb)

By providing a theoretical analysis of successive 'reformations of the body', Mellor and Shilling give a new insight into the way modern western society has emerged and been transformed through these intimately related aspects of the body and various forms of cultural and religious life.

Three forms of embodiment which are central to the development of western culture are examined – medieval, Protestant modern and baroque modern. 'Ideal types' are constructed to show both what sets apart contemporary

forms of embodiment from the past and to show the overlap with previous forms. Having traced the main contours of these forms of embodiment, chapter three examines the religious, cultural and social environments which were shaped by and helped to re-shape these forms of embodiment. The Catholic church provides us with the first re-formation of medieval bodies through its attempt to harness pre-existing carnal ways of sensing the world. The Catholic church 'ate into' the bodies of its members by structuring their contact with the sacred and encouraged a 'limited increase in mutual identification and a partial growth in those webs of interdependency which bound together people into situations of co-presence'. (p.29) What is highlighted in chapter four is the different human capacities and capabilities which Protestantism and Catholicism draw on and shows how Protestantism reconstructed Catholic communities by undermining the central role of the church as an institution and encouraged both a social and religious individualism which sought to terminate contact with the sacred. The Protestant body became so far removed from the sacred so as to encourage patterns of greater reflexivity. Chapter five examines how Protestantism encourages a separation of mind and body, emotions and spirituality which has shaped modern societies. The Catholic Counter-Reformation and the 'baroque' culture it promoted, on the other hand, recognised both the dangers and the importance of the senses. This 'Janus-faced baroque modern body' which is emerging symbolises social, religious and cultural life today. It forms a bridge between the much-discussed conditions of modern and postmodern society and the relatively neglected corporeal constituents of these conditions. It is a form of embodiment which seeks to rectify this ambivalence by suggesting that the dualities of early modernity have been reshaped within those divergent forms of sociality, and are associated with the emergence of a baroque modern culture.

Norbert Elias has often been criticised for leaving religion out of his account

of changes in outward bodily propriety. This book deals with issues of 'embodiment' which were central to his concerns but relates them closely to the main currents of religion in modern western society.

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Jose Antonio Jáuregui, *The Emotional Computer*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995. Originally published in Spanish as *El Ordenador Cerebral*. Barcelona: Labor, 1990.

Norbert Elias often criticised the misleading dichotomy between 'nature' and 'society', or 'nature' and 'culture', which has traditionally characterised the social sciences. Much of his work can in fact be seen as an attempt to reveal the interrelations between the biological nature of human beings, and the social webs of interdependence which can mould this malleable nature in different ways. In particular, Elias focused on the emotions. He believed that any scientific study of human beings that ignored the importance of their 'affects' would necessarily be inadequate. In some of his writings, he even argued that the function of emotional signals such as smiling, laughing, and weeping illustrated the ways in which humans are by nature constituted for life in the company of others – in other words, for life in society.

For all of these reasons, I believe that the interdisciplinary community of scholars which has been inspired by the work of Norbert Elias will undoubtedly find Jose Antonio Jáuregui's *The Emotional Computer* a fascinating book. The fact that I am not only one of its translators, but also the author's son, inevitably makes it rather difficult for me to present a detached judgement of its content. Hence, what I would like to offer the readers of *Figurations* is not so much a critical review, but simply an invitation to a book which in my view coincides with and develops some im-

portant themes in Elias's work (although its author was not in fact familiar with Elias when he wrote it).

In *The Emotional Computer*, Jáuregui argues that human beings, and the societies they form with each other, cannot be properly understood without taking into account what he calls the 'emotional system' of the brain. The author suggests that an old tradition in Western philosophy has led to a neglect of the emotions. He notes that Descartes, in particular, erroneously belittled their importance by defining them as 'confusi status mentis' ('confused states of the mind'). Jáuregui, however, argues that in fact the human brain is equipped with an 'emotional system', which crucially functions as an internal system of communication that informs and pressures the 'subject' about what he must do in order to maintain his body or his society.

The author uses the metaphor of a computer to suggest that the brain contains both 'bionatural' programmes, such as those which regulate the functioning of the digestive system, as well as 'biocultural' programmes, such as a particular society's code of etiquette or ethics. Through such programmes – which are innately installed in the case of bionatural programmes, and socially acquired in the case of biocultural ones – the brain pressures the individual to perform certain actions through what Jáuregui calls 'emotional whips': the uncomfortable sensation of hunger in order to nourish the body, the threat of ridicule or shame in order to maintain a particular code of manners, and so on. Often, of course, these programmes can conflict: an innate bionatural programme which pressures the individual to expel a gas from his digestive system can conflict with a modern European biocultural programme which prohibits him from doing so in public. The 'subject', according to the author, possesses some limited freedom to obey or disobey the commands of his brain, but he cannot avoid feeling the emotional pressures which this dictatorial 'computer' constantly triggers. Like Elias,

Jáuregui believes that smiling, crying, laughter, and other emotional signals play a fundamental role in social life, and hence that the rigid division between 'nature' and 'society' which still characterises the human sciences today must be revised.

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Laurence E. Klein, 'Coffeehouse Civility 1660-1714: An Aspect of Post-Courtly Culture in England.' *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 59 (1) 1997: 31-51.

The coffee-house, as Klein points out, was in obvious ways a very different venue from the princely court. He remarks that 'civility is the last thing one might expect in this inclusive commercial, and often boisterous setting' (p.33), but goes on to show that the English coffee-houses of the late Stuart period were indeed places where 'the domestication of civility' took place outside the court. He argues that 'it belongs to a history of civility larger than that imagined by Elias that interweaves many modes of civility and alternative venues for it. In England, coffee-house civility was part of the larger process, by which an elite cultural regime centred on a court was transmitted into a post-courtly one. Indeed ... the polite and gentlemanly cultural regime: the civilising process was a function not of courts but of an escape from them.' (p50)

Klein presents material of much interest to students of civilising processes in Europe, but his article is marked by the use of the static notion of 'civility' (this is especially prevalent among historians and in America where the second volume of *The Civilising Process* was published, against Elias's wishes, under the title *Power and Civility*). Klein also misunderstands the scope of Elias's theory in representing it as being 'monolithically' about princely courts. His misreading of Elias appears to be exactly like that of Daniel Gordon, about

which Roger Chartier writes elsewhere in this issue of *Figurations*. – SJM

Anton Blok, 'The Narcissism of Minor Differences', *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift* 24 (2) 1997: 159–87 (in Dutch)

Abstract: This essay explores the theoretical implications of Freud's notion of 'the narcissism of minor differences' – the idea that it is precisely the minor differences between people who are otherwise alike that form the basis of feelings of strangeness and hostility between them. A comparative *tour d'horizon* shows that minor differences underlie a wide range of conflicts: from relatively benign forms of *campanilismo* to bloody civil wars. Freud's tentative statements link up with the insights of Simmel, Durkheim, Lévi-Strauss, Dumont, Elias, and Girard. Especially helpful is what Bourdieu writes in *Distinction*: social identity lies in difference, and difference is asserted against what is closest, which represents the greatest threat. An outline of a general theory of power and violence should include a consideration of the narcissism of minor differences, also because its counterpart – hierarchy and large differences – makes for relative stability and peace.

Thesis Eleven 50, August 1997: Special Issue on Southeast Asia: Civilisation, State Formation, Modernisation Includes, among other articles:

Georg Stauth, 'Elias in Singapore: Civilising Processes in a Tropical City', pp. 51–70.

In recent years Singapore has come to be seen as a successful project of economic transformation and capitalist development. What is more remarkable – but less discussed – is Singapore's success in building a multi-ethnic society and the unique concomitant civilising processes that have accompanied this. Singapore represents today a proj-

ect of a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural polity and post-modern global city that combines civility, nostalgia and economic functionality. Here it is argued that – despite some well known and decisive dark spots on the political landscape – this success has to do with two concomitant processes. One is the functionally administered extension of the state into the meaning-sphere of the individual, totalising it from within his own nostalgia in an exoticised urban space. The other is the soteriological transcendence of individual and intra-individual relations within and beyond the culturally recognised 'communities'. Westerners will not be able to learn from the Singapore process of multi-cultural civilisation should they continue to merely understand it in terms of 'Asian authoritarianism'.

Ken Young, 'State Formation in South-east Asia', pp. 71–97.

The processes of state formation in the agrarian states of south-east Asia lend themselves to fruitful comparative analysis using Eliasian concepts. However, in the difficult physical environment of a region endowed with plentiful land relative to population, the control of labour was more important than control of territory, as demonstrated by the cases of Siam and Java. Moreover, the religious, ceremonial and symbolic significance of kingship remained very important even when the coercive power of the centre was weak. Courts made absolutist claims, but their dominance depended on symbolic power and on complex intrigues and networks of patronage. Elias is useful to analyse these endogenous processes of state formation. However, the modern states of the region were forged by colonialism, nationalist movements and the more recent technocratic developmentalist programmes of authoritarian elites. Rapid economic transformation and industrialisation have brought new classes and new tensions to test the adequacy of state structures, now far removed from the elite territorial competition of the past.

Special issue of *Group Analysis*

In the years after the Second World War, Norbert Elias collaborated with his old friend S.H Foulkes in creating the theory and techniques of group analysis which are now the basis of one of the most widespread forms of psychoanalysis used in Britain and elsewhere. *Group Analysis: The Journal of Group Analytic Psychotherapy* devoted the bulk of its December 1997 issue (volume 30, number 4) to a special section commemorating the centenary of Elias's birth. The contents are as follows:

Malcolm Pines, 'Foulkes and Elias' (pp. 475 – 6)

Eric Dunning, 'Sport in the Quest for Excitement: Norbert Elias's contributions to the Sociology of Sport' (pp. 477 – 87)

Stephen Mennell, 'A Sociologist at the Outset of Group Analysis: Norbert Elias and his Sociology' (pp. 489 – 514)

Dennis Brown, 'Conversation with Norbert Elias' (pp. 515 – 24)

Patrick B. de Maré, 'Norbert as I knew him in the early 1950s' (p. 525)

Elizabeth Foulkes, 'Some personal recollections of Norbert Elias' (pp. 525 – 9)

A further article, by Paul Nixon, was held over to the subsequent issue. The reference is: 'Foulkes, Elias, and Human Figurations', *Group Analysis* 31 (1) March 1998: 5–19. Paul's review of *The Germans* is planned for the next issue of the same journal, 31 (2) June 1998.

Cas Wouters, 'How Strange to Ourselves are our Feelings of Superiority and Inferiority?' *Theory, Culture and Society* 15 (1) 1998: 131-50.

This is a 'review essay' on Hans-Peter Waldhoff's important book *Fremde und Zivilisierung* (Frankfurt:

Suhrkamp 1995), but it also stands as an important essay in its own right. Waldhoff built upon Wouters's writings on informalisation, and Wouters in turn pays generous tribute to the considerable contribution made by Waldhoff to the theory of civilising and informalising processes. A central point is that in *The Civilising Process*, Elias was mainly concerned with Superego controls, but that the theory needs to be extended to take account also of Ego controls. Wouters introduces the notion of 'Third Nature' to label this. An abbreviated version of Wouters's review essay appeared in *Figurations* 5.

Martin Roderick, 'The Sociology of Risk, Pain and Injury: A comment on the work of Howard L. Nixon II'. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 15 (1) 1998.

This paper presents a sociological assessment of Howard L. Nixon II's work on risk, pain and injury in sport. Nixon employs a variant of social network analysis in order to understand the 'culture of risk' which, he claims, constrains athletes to play with pain and injuries. By drawing on aspects of figurational sociology one might expand Nixon's work and account for the broader social processes connected to the development of modern sport and, concurrently, the networks of relationships in which athletes are bound up. His notion of the 'sportsnet' is examined, and further research is recommended to enable an understanding of how socially appropriate modes of behaviour in sport come to be embedded at subconscious levels for all members of the sportsnet.

Norman Gabriel, Abertay University, Dundee, Scotland: 'Court Ballet and the 'Civilizing Process': self-control and the gendered body'. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the British Sociological Association, Edinburgh, 6-9 April, 1998.

Abstract: There have been relatively few sociological and historical studies of ballet. Ballet is an expressive art which occupies a specific position in the spectrum of high and popular culture – it is a form which is increasingly marketed as a cultural product, yet also invites responses to virtuoso performances of the body. Previous dance histories have tended to concentrate on the biographical details of the great dancers, or the innovative teachers and choreographers who influenced its development. This paper provides a context for understanding one particular development within the history of ballet, the transition from court ballet with its highly restricted movements to romantic ballet based on a lessening of the formalised rituals associated with female performances.

The history of ballet in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries offers an important research site to study the increasing self-control and management of the female body in the civilising process. In early court ballet, women dancers could not participate in the male preserve of dance – because of their restrictive clothes, freedom of movement was restricted by heavy skirts, and shoes with heels. In the 1830s male supremacy in dancing began to decline with the introduction of one of the most important technical advances, pointe techniques, or dancing on toes. Although ballerinas transformed ballet through a new subtle style that combined virtuosity with precarious balance, their characters were usually inhabitants of the supernatural world which perpetuated the ethos of female frailty and dependence on male authority.

Artur Bogner, 'Gewaltkonflikte und der Wandel sozialer Fremdheit in Nordghana' in Herfried Münkler, ed. *Die Herausforderung durch das Fremde*. Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1998, pp. 201-303.

Artur Bogner, who was one of Elias's assistants in the early 1980s, has be-

come a specialist in West African society. This long essay – or short monograph – is a study of 'tribal' warfare in North Ghana. Bogner offers a sociological interpretation of the escalation of violence and the long-term development of the Konkomba from a proto-ethnic they-group into an ethnic we-group.

Helmut Kuzmics, 'Von der Habsburgmonarchie zu "Österreich": Reichspatriotismus, "habsburgischer Mythos" und Nationalismus in den Romanen von Joseph Roth' [From the Habsburg monarchy to 'Austria': Empire patriotism, the 'Habsburg Myth' and Nationalism in the novels of Joseph Roth], *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 79 (1) 1997: 195-22.

Helmut Kuzmics, 'State Formation, Economic Development in North-Western and Central Europe: A Comparison of Long-Term Civilising Processes in Austria and England' *Geschichte und Gegenwart* 16 (2) 1997: 80-21.

Abstract: To what extent can Elias's general model, derived from the analysis of French absolutism, be applied to two rather different types of development? What are the central 'mints' which coined civilised behaviour in 'Austria' (i.e. the Habsburg monarchy) and 'England'? To answer these questions, Elias's own explanations for the English case and the developmental path of the Holy Roman Empire are reconstructed. His insights are confronted with selected interpretations for both processes which can be found in the writings of comparative historical sociologists and historians. Two highly contrasting civilisation patterns can be identified, described and theoretically interpreted. There is an English habitus which contains a 'gentlemanly' and a more 'Puritan' code of behaviour, securing the gradual extension of political participation to lower strata. On the

other hand, we find a Central European 'Austrian' pattern, containing pacification and bureaucratic rationalisation from above, with only limited power to provide loyalty in the rising industrial classes of the nineteenth century. The findings reveal the general fruitfulness of the model and its adaptations made by Elias himself to cover different national developmental paths, its only major weaknesses being the neglect of the broader economic and legal aspects of development in the English case and, also of the aspect of 'policing'; and a certain Prusso-centrism in his analysis of the Holy Roman Empire, underrating the weight and peculiarity of the Austrian civilising pattern.

Mustafa Emirbayer, 'Manifesto for a Relational Sociology', *American Journal of Sociology* 103 (2) 1997: 281-317.

In this article, Mustafa Emirbayer of the New School for Social Research sets out a viewpoint highly consonant with the figurational approach. The abstract reads: Sociologists today are faced with a fundamental dilemma: whether to conceive of the social world as consisting primarily in substances or processes, in static 'things' or in dynamic, unfolding relations. Rational-actor and norm-based models, diverse holisms and structuralisms, and statistical 'variable' analyses continue implicitly or explicitly to prefer the former point of view. By contrast, this 'manifesto' presents an alternative, 'relational' perspective, first in broad, philosophical outlines, then by exploring its implications for both theory and empirical research. In the closing pages, it ponders some of the difficulties and challenges now facing relational analysis, taking up in turn the issues of boundaries and entities, network dynamics, causality, and normative implications.

What is curious, however is that although Emirbayer mentions Elias in passing – citing the Game Models in *What is Sociology?* – he seems quite unaware of Elias's more extensive

methodological writings including, for instance the notion of process-reduction (*Zustandsreduktion*) and the whole *homo clausus* critique. Nor did he make use of Goudsblom's *Sociology in the Balance*, where similar methodological ideas are developed.

Paul Langford, 'British Politeness and the Progress of Western Manners: An Eighteenth-Century Enigma'. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series, VII, 1997: 53-72.

This article by a prominent British historian discusses the perception of British manners and 'national character' by the British themselves and by their fellow-Europeans in the eighteenth century. It contains much interest to students of the work of Norbert Elias. Curiously, however, although Langford makes passing reference to the currency of the notion of 'civilisation', to sources such as Alfred Franklin used by Elias, and to Habermas and Sennett, he makes no reference to Elias himself or to Lucien Febvre; this is a work of British historical empiricism.

Special issue of *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 7 (2) 1997

Contents include:

J. Hackeschmidt, "'The cultural force of the group". Norbert Elias as a pioneering thinker of the Zionist youth movement. Two previously unknown letters from 1920 and 1921'.

R. Blomert, 'Sociological vision – Stages of intellectual development for the young Elias', p. 169ff.

P.U. Merz-Benz, 'Ideological criticism, or removing ideology from society: Karl Mannheim and Norbert Elias', p. 183ff.

S. Neckel, 'Involvement and Detachment in Unified Germany: A recon-

structive process analysis with Elias and Simmel', p. 205ff.

W. Engler, 'Present-day Capitalism and Civilisation. Looking for answers in Norbert Elias's theory of the civilising process' pp 217ff.

Angewandte Sozialforschung: Zeitschrift für Mitteleuropa [*Applied Social Research: Journal for Central Europe*] 19 (2) 1995.

A special section on 'Evolution of Civilisation: Debate on Norbert Elias's Theses' contains the following articles:

Bart Tromp, 'The Demise of the State?' pp. 167-175.

Peter R. Gleichmann, 'Soziologisches Orientierungswissen für europäisch Staatgesellschaften', pp. 177-88.

Johan Goudsblom, 'Das Unbehagen an der Theorie vom Prozeß der Zivilisation', [The Theory of Civilising Processes and its Discontents], pp.189-200.

Roman Kellner, 'Norbert Elias und die Ethnologie - Über die Probleme der Ethnologie mit der Zivilisationstheorie'. [Norbert Elias and Anthropology: On the Problems Anthropologists have with the Theory of Civilising Processes], pp. 201-212.

Henrik Kreutz, 'Eine globale Entwicklungstheorie menschlicher Zivilisation als Alternative zu reduktionistischen Theorien menschlicher Handelns? Kritischen Bemerkungen zum Werk von Norbert Elias und seiner Rezeption' [A global theory of the development of human society as an alternating to a reductionist theory of human action? Critical notes on the work of Norbert Elias and its reception.], pp. 213-220.

Abram de Swaan, *De mensenmaatschappij*. Amsterdam, Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 1996. 164pp.

This brilliant little book represents Bram de Swaan's distillation of three decades of thinking about the fundamentals of sociology and how to teach them. It is addressed to beginners, but perhaps especially to adult beginners who can draw on their own accumulated experience of social life.

De Swaan begins from what people need from one another as interdependent beings: food, security, affection, orientation. Then, in an approach that is at once analytical and historical, he looks at how people are mutually connected in more and more extensive networks. Next, what people expect of each other – including the problem of unintended consequences and blind processes. Then how people distinguish themselves from each other; how they educate each other (socialisation *and* civilisation); what they believe; how they accomplish tasks together; how states are formed, and how a global society may be emerging.

Translations of this scintillating book into English, German and other languages are urgently needed. The title means literally 'The People Society'. The editors of *Figurations* will offer a small prize to whoever suggests the most elegant English title capturing this idea (Bram's judgement is final). Entries to Stephen.Mennell@ucd.ie

SJM

Nathalie Heinich, *La sociologie de Norbert Elias*. Paris: La Decouverte, 1997. pp.122. ISBN: 2-7071-2810-4.

A general introduction in French to the work of Elias was long overdue. Now Nathalie Heinich has met the need admirably. As someone whose own book about Elias ran to over 300 pages, I am astonished at how succinct – brief yet comprehensive – Nathalie Heinich's book is. Brevity has great virtues here, for it puts the book well within the student pocket.

The first chapter is entitled 'A sociology of civilisation', and covers *The Civilising Process* and *The Court Society*, with a keen eye for their methodological and theoretical implications. Chapter 2, 'A sociology of the emotions' deals with the theory of involvement and detachment and its application to the sciences as well as the work on sports, *The Loneliness of the Dying*, and *Mozart*, situating Elias's ideas on the social constraint towards self-constraint 'between psychoanalysis and anthropology'. Chapter 3 'A sociology of the long term' gives an account of *Time: An Essay* and his critique of the philosophers, showing how Elias advocates 'a non-evolutionist evolution', posing a 'challenge to history'. Chapter 4, 'A sociology of the interactional sphere' includes established – outsider relations, figurations and the game models, and the problem of *homo clausus*.

Finally, the conclusion is structured around what Elias was *against* – metaphysics, telcology, 'normativity', 'logicism', 'causalism', 'caesuralism', and disciplinary boundaries – adding up, however not to a negative critique but to a positive challenge to sociology.

Heinich makes excellent use of feature boxes to explain significant ideas with eye-catching titles such as 'From the Monopoly of Violence to the Mastery of the Self', 'From Hunting to Sport', 'Critique of Freud'.

Nathalie Heinich's previous books include several on the history of art, especially modern art, and one on feminine identity in Western fiction. That perhaps gives us a clue as to why she has such a lively sympathy with and insight into the thinking of Elias, who took such a keen personal interest in just those subjects himself.

SJM

Jason Hughes: *From Panacea to Pandemic: Towards a Process-Sociology of Tobacco-Use in the West*. PhD thesis, University of Leicester, 1997.

The central aim of this study is to lay the foundations for a process-sociological understanding of tobacco-use in the West. The central argument is that through adopting a process-sociological approach, it is possible to move beyond both 'deterministic' theories of tobacco-use in which the practice is viewed as a biological 'addiction', and 'voluntaristic' understandings in which it is viewed as an act of 'free-choice'. Through adopting such an approach, the central focus is upon the *dynamic interplay* of processes occurring at (what we currently label as) 'social-psychological' and 'bio-pharmacological' levels which together constitute the *experience* of tobacco-use.

The research was split into two stages. The first involved the 'discourse analysis' of a large amount of historical data which relate to smoking. Both primary and secondary documentary sources were examined in order to build an understanding of the long-term development of tobacco-use since its introduction into Europe in the sixteenth century, and beyond, by examining tobacco-use among Native American peoples prior to, and after, their initial contact with Europeans. This stage of the research draws extensively on the work of Norbert Elias. A central question asked is whether the development of tobacco-use is related to processes of civilisation.

The second stage of the research was concerned with the development of tobacco-use at the level of 'individuals'. This stage involved the collection of tobacco-users' 'biographies'. A total of 50 in-depth, semi-structured interviews was conducted with smokers, ex-smokers and non-smokers. Howard Becker's 1963 study of 'Becoming a Marijuana User' was drawn upon as a model for this stage of the research. Following this model, the central focus was upon the processes involved in becoming a 'smoker'.

Ultimately, the thesis sought to draw upon and develop Elias's concept of

habitus in order to explore the interrelationship between the development of tobacco-use at the broad scale, 'macro' level, and processes of development at the 'micro' level of individuals.

The thesis will be published as a book in due course.

Tom Scheff has recently completed the draft of an article entitled 'Three Pioneers in the Sociology of Emotions'. It describes and compares key studies by Elias, Richard Sennett, and Helen Lynd. Tom would appreciate any comments; the article can be accessed at his website as one of the 'Linked Articles' at

<http://sscf.ucsb.edu/~scheff/scheff.html>

■ BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RETROSPECT

Thomas J. Scheff 'Rationality and Emotion: Homage to Norbert Elias', in James S. Coleman and Thomas J. Fararo, eds, *Rational Choice Theory: Advocacy and Critique*. London: Sage, 1992, pp. 101 – 19.

In this paper – in a book broadly sympathetic to rational choice theory – Scheff strongly criticises that fashionable approach. Drawing in part on Elias, Scheff contends that the rational choice approach is devoid of treatment of the emotional element in human action, and therefore cannot make the transition to the macro-level without severe conceptual limitations.

■ RECENT CONFERENCES

NORBERT ELIAS CENTENARY CONFERENCE, AMSTERDAM 18 – 20 December 1997

The final conference of Elias's centenary year was organised by Johan

Goudsblom, Johan Heilbron, Kitty Roukens, Saskia Visser and Nico Wilterdink and the programme took its structure from a preliminary paper written by the organisers. The paper distinguished three stages in the development of monopolies of organised violence:

1. a stage in which organised violence became the monopoly of adult males, who excluded women and children from the use of weapons. Initiation rites and taboos served to uphold the adult males' monopoly.
2. a stage in which organised violence became the monopoly of specialists, the warriors, to the exclusion of other adult males. This may be called the stage of military-agrarian societies, of which medieval Europe is an example.
3. a stage during which the relatively autonomous warrior elites were forced to yield the monopoly of violence to central state organisations. This is the process of state formation described by Elias for early modern Europe.

The first day of the plenary sessions in the conference centred on stage (1) of this model. Johan Goudsblom presented the ideas of the preliminary paper and other speakers were Ronald Glassman on the male monopoly of weapons among hunter-gatherers, Paul Richards on young warriors in present-day Africa, and Judith Herrin on organised violence in the Byzantine Empire, with Jojada Verrips as discussant. The second day focused on monopolies of violence in military-agrarian societies. Speakers included Johann Arnason on state-formation in Japan, Sam Adshad on China, Elçin Kürsat-Ahlers on the Ottoman Empire, Fred Spier on the Inca (wielding a fearsome club by way of illustration), and Robert Moore on clerics and warriors in the European High Middle Ages. The final day centred on stage three. Stephen Mennell led off on the USA and the 'Wild West', followed by Randall Collins on the collapse of the USSR. Bram de Swaan spoke on mass extermination and the breakdown of civilisation (in which he introduced the interesting distinction between de-civilising and dys-civilising processes),

Frank Bovenkerk on organised crime, and Eric Dunning on football hooliganism as a world problem. The conference was brought to a close with a vivid video of cage-fighting in the USA, shown by Martin van Bottenburg and Johan Heilbron as a preface to their discussion on the brutalisation of fighting contests.

Besides the plenary sessions there were parallel paper sessions in the evenings, in which (as usual) many brilliant papers were presented in highly compressed form. In the group on 'The Sociology of Norbert Elias', the vexed relationship between civilising and de-civilising processes was once more debated by Dennis Smith, Chris Shilling, Robert van Krieken, Cas Wouters, Heike Hammer, Paul Sérgio Pinheiro (on the military police in Brazil), and Jiri Subrt (on monasteries and time discipline). In the sessions on 'Monopolies of Force in World History' Rafal Mazanek spoke on the decline of the state in early modern Poland, Moncef Djaziri on North Africa, Magdalen Rzechowka on nomadic violence in central Asia, Frank Pearce on the defeat of the Aztecs, Francesco Ambrogetti on new elites, and Wilbert van Vree on meetings and manners. In the group on 'Violence/Sports/Gender', Alex Twitchen discussed motor racing, Dirck van Bekkum post-modern sport, Stefanie Ernst female leadership and Steve Russell witch-hunting. Finally in the group on inter-personal violence, Rineke van Daalen, Eric Monkkonen, Xavier Rousseaux and Eli Lissenberg all discussed murder and violence in various times and places.

Participants came from every continent of the world, and the papers discussed every continent except Australasia.

MANNERS, EMOTIONS AND SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Norbert Elias Centenary Conference, Stranmillis College, Belfast, 27 November 1997.

Unlike the many other gatherings which marked the Elias centenary, this confer-

ence was specifically designed for undergraduate students of sociology. Students from the two universities in Northern Ireland, Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster made up most of the audience. The opening address was given by Ken Bishop, who organised the conference and who first learned about Elias as a student at University of Ulster before moving to Queen's University Belfast as a postgraduate. The other lectures were given by Stephen Mennell on 'Civilising and Decivilising Processes' Paul Kapteyn on 'The Stateless Market: European Integration in Figurational Perspective', Cas Wouters on "'Third Nature" and Decivilising Processes", and Johan Goudsblom on 'The Rise and Fall of Ecological Regimes'. The sessions were chaired by John Brewer, Head of the Sociology Department at Queen's, and Fred Johnson of UU.

For the Dutch speakers, it was their first visit to Northern Ireland and they were able to savour the civilisational paradox of the warm hospitality to be found in one of the world's longest running (if relatively low-key) trouble spots.

■ FORTHCOMING EVENTS

WORLD CONGRESS OF SOCIOLOGY, MONTREAL, 26TH JULY- 1ST AUGUST 1998

Meetings of an Ad Hoc Group on Figurational Sociology are being organised by Paul Nixon (Cambridge), with Robert van Krieken (Sydney) and Barbara Walters (New York). The following will present papers:

Catelijne Akkermans (Amsterdam): 'The interactions between societal circumstances, social psychiatry and developments in municipal mental health care in Amsterdam during the period 1933 - 1988'.

Eric Dunning (Leicester): 'An Eliasian critique of Webster's *Why Freud Was Wrong*'

Norman Gabriel (Dundee): 'Freud and Psychoanalysis: established - outsider relationships in nineteenth-century Vienna'.

Monica Greco (London): 'Psychosomatic discourse analysed from a figurational perspective'.

Jason Hughes (Leicester): 'From Panacea to Pandemic: Towards a Process-Sociology of Tobacco-Use in the West'.

Joseph Maguire (Loughborough): 'Sport, Identity Politics and National Habitus Codes'.

Willem Mastenbroek (Amsterdam): 'Norbert Elias as Organisational Sociologist'.

Stephen Mennell (Dublin): 'Network Theory and the Social Constraint towards Self-Constraint'.

Thomas Scheff (Santa Barbara): 'Norbert Elias and Richard Sennett: the Discovery of Collective Shame'.

Denis Smith (Birmingham): 'Norbert Elias, Democracy and the New Europe'

Peter Ludes (Siegen), Pat Mulready - topics to be announced.

Details of registration, accommodation etc. may be requested from the ISA Secretariat, as follows:

Congress Secretariat
14th World Congress of Sociology Secretariat
Université de Montréal
P.O. Box 6128, Station Downtown
Montréal (Québec)
Canada H3C 3J7

Tel. +1-514-343.6942
Fax +1-514-343.6544
E-mail: congres@bcoc.umontreal.ca

Registration forms are also available via the internet, as follows:

[Http://www.bcoc.umontreal.ca/](http://www.bcoc.umontreal.ca/)

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SOCIOLOGY - TEL AVIV CONGRESS 1999

Sasha Weitman is on the organising committee of the Congress of the International Institute of Sociology (IIS), scheduled to take place at Tel Aviv University on 10- 15 July 1999, on the broad theme of 'Multiple Modernities in an Era of Globalization'.

Within this broad framework he would like to organise a series of sessions around the leitmotiv of 'sociality'. Sociality - however designated ('bonding', 'affiliation', 'relatedness', 'solidarity', etc.) - is again fast emerging as a major issue all over the world, just as it did in nineteenth-century Europe, when it gave birth to, among other things, sociology itself.

Any reader who would like to offer a paper in this general area should send Sasha their provisional topic (and any suggestions they may have for themes for the sessions). He would particularly like to hear from colleagues from outside the usual Western circles - for example from Islamic countries, Latin America, Africa, the countries of the former USSR, and South and East Asia.

Please contact:

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General details of the Congress may be obtained from:

iis99@spirit.tau.ac.il
[Http://spirit.tau.ac.il/soc/IIS99](http://spirit.tau.ac.il/soc/IIS99)

■ EUROPEAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Amsterdam, 18 - 21 August 1999

SISWO is the organising agency for the next ESA congress, 'Will Europe Work?' to be held at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, 18 - 21 August 1999.

It is proposed that figurational/process sociologists should become organised as a regular research network within the ESA, and/or that there should be figurational sessions at the congress. Paul Kapteyn is on the local organising committee of the congress as a whole, and Kitty Roukens is willing to organise our sessions. Suggestions for an overall theme for our sessions should be sent urgently to Kitty at: kitty@siswo.uva.nl

■ ELIAS WEBSITES

Fairly soon, the Norbert Elias Foundation will have its own website, to which most of the material now held on the site at University College Dublin will be transferred. Robert van Krieken's site at the University of Sydney already holds a great many resources useful to social scientists interested in Elias and the figurational research tradition. The

URL for this site, entitled 'Norbert Elias and Process Sociology' is

[Http://www.usyd.edu.au/social/elias/elias.html](http://www.usyd.edu.au/social/elias/elias.html)

Robert tells us that by crawling round the Internet, he found the following

Japanese site on Elias:

[Http://risya3.hus.osaka-u.ac.jp/utsumi/Elias/EliasE.html](http://risya3.hus.osaka-u.ac.jp/utsumi/Elias/EliasE.html)

Unfortunately the Japanese script comes out as computer code, but it's the thought that counts.

■ CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIGURATIONS

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